

# Communication Strategies for Successful Recruiting

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Many SigEps have an idea of what it means to be a successful communicator at recruitment events, and many of the general guidelines we have been taught are right; greeting a recruit with a firm handshake and remembering his name are two seemingly small gestures that can make an invaluable first impression on a recruit. In addition to handshakes and eye contact, though, there are many other communication strategies which are underused during the recruitment process, and with a little extra work, you can improve yourself as a communicator, and this can also help you as a recruiter.

## I. Syntonic *or* The Art of Establishing a Connection

**Syntonic** is the linguistic term given to the process of establishing a connection with your conversation partner where you are both operating on the same wavelength. To create a syntonic environment, you should be aware of several things, which are detailed below.

## II. Sweat the Details

**Little differences in a conversation can mean a lot**—remember that. **There is no need to overhaul your entire conversational style** for recruitment. Instead, you can focus on making **a few positive changes at a time**. Recruitment is a hectic time for brothers and recruits alike; if you cannot remember a recruit's name, when you re-introduce yourself to him, be sure to say, "Nice to **see you** again," rather than, "Nice to **meet you**." Seemingly small steps such as these can help a recruit feel more welcome and give him the impression that he is more than just another face. If you take the opportunity to make adjustments such as this, the positive effects can really start to pile up.

## III. Listening

Listening is a natural process; we do it whether we like it or not. Listening well is an acquired skill. Being a good listener means **adapting** to the style of the person with whom you are speaking. First of all, good posture and body language are key (more on this later). Second, **really focus on what the other person is saying. Don't rehearse what you are going to say or interrupt—this is not good listening.** Be sure to let the other person know you are listening, whether by nodding or inserting such phrases as "I agree" or "That makes sense" as often as you feel necessary. A conversation should not be a competition; you should not attempt to grab control of the conversation as soon as the other person stops to take a breath.

## IV. Metaphorically Speaking

**Metaphors are pieces of figurative language that make a comparison between objects by saying one object is another.** Perhaps you've got a brother in the chapter who's a little surly before he's had his coffee in the morning. If you've referred to him as a "bear," that's

a metaphor. Metaphors are so prevalent in our speech that we hardly notice them and may overlook them as an important conversational tool; in fact, **metaphors are a large part of what we use to mediate information.**

**As a good listener, you should try and make yourself aware of what the other person's preferred metaphors are.** While, "We're trying to hit a home run with recruitment this year," might make excellent sense to use as a metaphor with your roommate who is a baseball fan, it's not the right metaphor to use with everyone. **With some brothers, it may be helpful to re-cast what you would like to say in a metaphor better suited to their personalities.** For example, you might try, "John, in order for recruitment to be a success this year, we need each brother to perform his function so the whole thing runs like a well-oiled machine." **This demonstrates a high-level attunement to the person you are talking to, and can be invaluable as a motivational tool.**

## **V. The Value of What Isn't Said**

**In a conversation, the listener will be affected as much, if not more so, by what you do not say than what you do say.** Keep this in mind as the recruitment period progresses; as previously mentioned, it is a busy and hectic time for all involved, but if you can stay positive in your non-verbal communication, you will go far. **Stand up straight, be sure to give the other person your attention, make eye contact when needed, emphasizing it when the person appears to be making a particularly salient point.**

One of the most important rules about conversation is that **what you say is only true insofar as the person who you're speaking to believes it.** **Therefore, if you negate your own statements by tone of voice or bad posture, or failure to make eye contact, you will never be able to convince another person that they are true.** Keep this rule in mind more than any of the others—you need to believe yourself so that others will believe you. Make sure your non-verbal behavior addresses this.

## **VI. Further Reading**

Many books have been written on the subject of syntonics and conversational strategies. Recognizing that it would take ages to read all of them, I will recommend George Thompson's *Verbal Judo* and Suzette Haden Elgin's *The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense* series. Both Thompson and Elgin provide effective conversational strategies for all facets of life.