

The Art of Recruitment

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Foreword

In the beginning, there was a campaign – a campaign unlike any other before it. This is the knowledge provided by that first campaign. This is the textbook of their success.

Every successful campaign (recruitment drive) hinges upon knowing your own abilities, as well as knowing the audience you are addressing. Once you assess your own abilities, designing your campaign to most effectively target those people becomes simple in the extreme. The following suggestions should help you in determining your campaign's target audience, based on what is available in your area. The sections that follow are your guide to waging a successful campaign that will reward your domain for years to come.

Benefits of Using This Campaign Guide:

You will benefit from the knowledge and experience of many Camarilla members who have come before and suffered through the trial and error method of recruiting. You will save time and frustration by avoiding costly mistakes that waste time, resources, and in some cases, prospective members. You also gain a number of useful tools, gathered from throughout the club and made available to you to simplify the process of creating your own recruitment material for future use as well. You are welcome to make use of these materials in constructing your own flyers and advertisements.

This is meant to be a professional guide to accomplish a professional-quality job. While recruiting, you are the first and only impression the public has of our club. Take care to be sure the impression you leave them with is a good one.

By using this guide, you will:

- Save time and effort.
- Minimize planning and stress.
- Maximize your efforts and results.
- Build upon proven strategies.
- Have access to sample materials for use by your local members.

Define Your Targets

Local Colleges – Populations vary from one college to the next, but all have student organizations commonly comprised of creative, intelligent, and outgoing individuals. Gaming clubs and organizations dedicated to sci-fi and the theatrical arts are the most logical places to begin a successful recruitment campaign. However, due to the cyclical nature of the college experience (typically four years), focusing on gaining memberships from these sources may actually lead to a decline of the overall membership in the long run. If the Camarilla is to continue to thrive, new, grounded memberships are needed. Thus, you should also pursue a campaign upon other targets as well.

Game/Comic Shops – Most cities boast multiple gaming and/or comic emporiums, and even small towns usually have one or two. Recruitment material placed in these shops will easily and very effectively reach our target audience. Such material often catches the eye of younger consumers, laying the groundwork to reap future members – when they have reached the requisite age.

Theatre Arts – Many areas support varied diverse arts communities, often including theatre. From community-based to semi-professional, the theatre is an excellent non-college area on which to focus recruiting. Actors, technical staff, and box office personnel may be drawn to the impromptu theatricality of the Camarilla's different venues, as they each tell widely varied stories and appeal to the imagination. These people could also be an excellent resource for costumes, props, sites, and other opportunities for increasing the appeal of the various venues that they are drawn to, enriching the experiences of all your members.

Bookstores and Book Clubs – Bookstores offer many community-based events, from readings and performances to how-to workshops. This is an oft-untapped resource, previously unused by our entire organization. By having recruitment materials available at these places on nights that they expect to provide genre-related material, we could significantly recruit from a varied pool of people, ranging widely in age, background, and resources.

Book clubs exist as a way for fans to interact (primarily through readings and discussion) with others about their favorite authors and literature. Recruitment in this area would be quite successful, but will require the presence of at least one person well informed about the Camarilla's policies and procedures, as well as our more artistic side.

Conventions – Many cities host a wide variety of different conventions, not just for the gaming and Sci-Fi/Fantasy genres, but also for many of the categories listed above and others. From local college gaming conventions to Sci-fi conventions with national exposure, all provide the chance to get Camarilla products and information out to those who will appreciate the unique audience we have built around our various venues. Many members go to local, regional, and national conventions throughout the year. Making it a policy to always bring information on our organization for the freebie tables or for the Camarilla table (if there is one present) would greatly help to promote our global

community and family. There is often a shortage of volunteers for this duty at many events, and volunteering your time to inform potentially interested individuals is highly valuable to the global recruiting effort.

Alternative Press Newspapers – There are usually several specialty press and alternative press newspapers in any area that would be an excellent place in which to run advertising, if your area can budget for it. Some papers will even allow classified ads at low or no charge, with which you can attract additional new members to your regular events. Many people new to an area fall back on these papers to learn what manner of events are available in a given area, and you never know whether the person who just moved to your area might need to know about our organization.

If at all possible, an even better approach is to arrange for one of the staff writers to interview the officers of the area and run an article on the organization in your area. This would quickly and effectively reach a large number of people.

Bulletin Boards – Many smaller stores and shops provide areas for local community organizations and business people to offer handouts, flyers, or business cards relating to events and services. Flyers, advertisements, and event announcements would be appropriate to post in such areas. Even a tastefully designed card with a name and email or contact number for more information may result in interested parties inquiring and eventually joining us.

Specialty Stores – Stores and shops that cater to the current youth subcultures are perfect for posters and small flyers. Many of these are run by private individuals, who will often see the benefit of promoting anything that is likely to tie into their own livelihood and possibly promote their business indirectly as well. It never hurts to ask.

Internet – A well-designed, informative webpage has become a necessity in the developing and unique Internet culture. Try to have someone experienced design it in a fashion to attract people searching for alternative activities in your area.

Customize Your Campaign

Now that you have some solid ideas about where you will begin your glorious campaign, whether you merely want to add a few new members or build yourself a new chapter in an area, you should begin by defining your specific recruitment targets. Start small, narrowing your search, and utilizing the resources most readily available to you. Write down the targets you already know of locally, and discuss with your friends their ideas of the best places to target. They might surprise you with ideas you had never thought of. Next, go online and do some research, being sure to set aside a good hour or more, because there are an abundance of potentially valid material online you. Unfortunately, weeding through the less applicable information can easily be one of the longest tasks you will face. You should also be sure to check the Yellow Pages because, even now, you won't find everything on the web.

Start Recruiting

With your list of recruitment targets in hand, you are ready to begin the next phase. I strongly suggest you find some like-minded friends to help you with this phase of your campaign. This is important for the following reasons:

- When done alone, recruitment is boring, tedious, and basically is no fun!
- Friends make the “work” seem less like work and more like play.
- Organized effectively, you will spend significantly less time.
- You will accomplish more.
- Your friends will also learn recruitment strategies they may use on their continuing your initial efforts.

Now, sit down with your friends and plan your attack. Decide which places you want to visit and in what order. Building a timeline for accomplishing your team's goals is an essential strategy to accomplishing this phase. A sample timeline follows for you to use as a guideline when implementing this stage. Be sure to divide tasks between team members when possible, and keep everyone's workload as equitable as possible.

Sample Timeline:

- Week #1:** Familiarize/Update yourself on Camarilla policies, procedures, and this Guide.
- Week #2:** Select initial recruitment target locations. Try to visit each of these and get a feel for what kind of support you can expect to receive for your efforts.
- Week #3:** Gather friends to help and get commitment from them to assist your efforts.
- Week #4:** Plan your campaign, and divide the workload between your recruitment team members.
- Week #5:** Begin gathering, preparing, proof-reading, editing, and copying your flyers, brochures, business cards, and other materials.
- Week #6:** Begin distribution. While putting out your flyers and brochures, try to hang around the display area for a while, chatting casually either with friends or shopkeepers, so you can speak directly with anyone that might

be there initially and be interested by materials you post. If possible, try to distribute these materials at a time of day that you can expect heavy traffic. The more people that notice you, the more people that will notice your advertisements and the greater audience your campaign will be likely to reach.

Week #7+: Maintain your sites and try to find new sites to put up flyers or distribute brochures. Try to add a new site every other week or so if time allows, as long as you keep track of everywhere you have advertisements. Be sure someone visits them regularly to ensure they are still there and in good condition. If you are using a few different styles, try rotating them around every few weeks for a change of pace and see if you get better results. Try to arrange times for a “demo” game or similar activity at some of the locations where you have posted information.

Disperse Your Information

Posters and Flyers – Camarilla flyers are great for getting word around that we exist. You really have a lot of freedom here to do what you want. You can make large posters with markers and paint, or 8.5x11 posters with your computer. It really doesn't matter. The important part is that you have something you can put up on the walls, doors, posterboards, and kiosks around town. In my experience, **two** 8.5x11's have worked best. One sheet contains the cool graphics and eye-candy and the other contains the important event information. Both flyers should have a statement similar to "The Camarilla is looking for members in the <insert your city name here> area!" and should contain your contact person's email address, your domain's web address, as well as the Camarilla's main web address.

It's good to advertise your area's strengths, focus on your major selling points. Include "Normal" or routine charity or community events your area sponsors or partakes in to show more of the depth and structure of our organization. Here's the catch though: disperse the information your audience needs to go to your games, but don't sound like a salesperson. No one likes a salesperson. You are all friends. This is the true key to winning your campaign. Don't be pushy or overbearing, just be yourself, and offer to answer their questions and assist them whenever they appear confused or look like they have a question unanswered.

Graphics and Eye-Candy – Essential for catching the attention of a prospective target, graphics attract the oft-artistically-minded individuals our organization appeals to. Roses and masks are excellent graphics to begin with, as well as tasteful borders and framework, and are easily found online in a wide variety of designs, keeping in mind not to violate copyright laws. It should take less than 5 minutes to start finding some usable materials, whether you are designing a webpage or a flyer. For cool graphics, try some of the websites listed below, or search for your own. Try looking for "art" or similar concepts, and see what you find.

It's also a good idea to gather some friends together and take some quality pictures of them. Have them in costume whenever possible, and have them assume poses that fit their character's personalities. Keep the wild ones down in front and have the more serious characters standing imposingly behind our beloved "crazies." This will offer an appealing and rich aura to the scene you seek to create. Digital cameras and Photoshop are excellent tools at this stage of your campaign and should be used whenever possible. Garnering the assistance of a photographer or graphic designer among your friends or local chapters is another excellent idea.

After seeing the flyers, new players may start attending your games in costume and with character concept ideas. The principal idea here is to offer enough variety to entice your targeted audience into contacting someone to learn more about the organization. This, in turn, offers you an opportunity to draw them into visiting and experiencing our club first hand.

If you ever have events at particularly cool game-sites, site and event pictures can help significantly -- even if it's not a prominent local landmark, it will add flavor to the initial experience of prospective members. And remember; take the time to make a quality, lasting impression, because the first impression your target receives is likely the most lasting as well.

Information – It's important to deliver as much accurate information as is necessary to help the new people find the Camarilla in person. Try to include the following four items in a readable format, either online or on whatever media you decide to advertise in:

- Contact information that is accurate and up-to-date (i.e. your email address, your chapter or domain officer's web addresses, and the official Camarilla web address). This is probably the most important information you need to include. This way you do not lose interested parties because they have old and useless contact information.
- List of events for your area that is current and up-to-date, covering the upcoming 2-3 months (i.e. informational meeting, chapter/domain meeting, Garou meeting, Vampire Live Action Game, Mage Live Action Game). Be as descriptive as you can, without giving out too much information. Select a few key words in describing your functions are essential at this point.
- Event locations that are accurate (i.e. give the addresses). If the location is subject to change or alternates, be sure to mention that too. Try to include small maps if necessary or available.
- Time and date of described events (i.e. 7:00PM on 1st and 3rd Saturdays).

Try to use words like "Vampire" rather than "Cam/Anarch" or "Sabbat," and "Werewolf" rather than "Garou;" this helps those who don't know about us but who are potentially interested to relate to what you are talking about. Their first time at an event, many people often prefer to sneak past the door and decide if they like what they see before actually setting foot in your game. This way, they avoid the discomfort of approaching someone they don't know or think might try to "sell" them on something. Listing your event times allows them to do this.

You may want to incorporate three to five testimonials from your local members, or use those provided with this Recruitment Strategy Guide, on your flyers and advertisements. This strengthens your appeal by showing potential members what real people think about the Camarilla first hand and enforces a positive image.

Brochures – The brochure is a great medium for communication. It's a perfect place to include pictures of your friends in costume, to talk a bit about the Camarilla, and to list the activities your local group is involved in. The brochure should include times, dates, and locations of your regular chapter meetings and should promote the idea that newcomers are welcome. Again, do not forget to list the main Camarilla website and up-to-date contact info. Brochures are excellent items to leave at bookstores, game stores, and universities. Try finding locations near campus information booths, club boards, or checkout counters, as well as any other high-traffic areas that might catch a passerby's attention and curiosity.

Conversation – Don't be afraid to talk with store managers. They will want to know you're dropping off brochures or posting flyers. Always ask for their permission, out of respect, and to confirm they will not be torn down as soon as you have left. Be sure to prepare some good speaking points about the Camarilla beforehand, beyond being a gaming organization. This is often another excellent time to promote the community service and involvement activities of the Camarilla as a whole, even if your local members are primarily game-oriented.

First Impressions – First impressions are important. The response you receive from prospective members and business owners varies from one person to the next, but all encounters will be improved if you act properly. Be friendly and polite, try to meet questions with enthusiasm, and practice your winning smile. Don't try to persuade people; you are not there to "sell" them on the Camarilla. Just tell them about the cool stuff we do, and see if they have any questions for you. If people are reluctant to work with (or learn more about) the Camarilla, that's fine. It's their decision and we respect their honesty.

Free White Wolf Stuff – Many gaming stores (and book stores in general) get shipments of White Wolf products (i.e. the books you see on display; the ones you purchase, and the ones that ultimately just sit there). These stores sometimes get lots of other really cool promotional stuff along with the shipments, like huge WW posters, Vampire posters, and various WW Catalogs. You can often acquire these and make use of them: the Camarilla as the Official Fan Club has more leeway to use White Wolf graphics in their publication. If you are unsure as to the rules for using White Wolf images, ask your Chapter or Domain Coordinator. You should also have sample materials for potential members to peruse and learn more about our sponsor, and generally show the extent of the venues and pseudo-culture that has developed around the products. Many of these "extras" are simply thrown away by stores; don't let that happen! Talk with the managers and try to salvage as many of these as you can. Not all stores get cool stuff, but you'll never find out unless you ask.

Major Selling Points

This section has been taken directly from the Camarilla website and should give you some ideas about what to focus on when talking with new people about joining the organization. It's also some good information to toss into your flyers and, more importantly, your brochures. Some of the major selling points are:

- Participation in the largest ongoing world-wide Live Action role-playing game.
- Subscription to our quarterly newsletter.
- Access to "In Character" and "Out of Character" functions within the Fan Club.
- Members Only product discounts.
- Special release information and highlights before the general public.
- Access to Members Only services through White Wolf's Camarilla Fan Club Site.

Use Chronicle and Troupe LARPs for Recruitment

The single most popular way to get a candidate for Camarilla membership hooked on the Fan Club is via roleplay. Currently, as an organization, we have a standing policy of allowing non-members to attend three games, portraying a zero member class PC, before they must decide to join. Why “zero”? Because every player feels they get an immediate reward upon joining if they are told they can add five experience points immediately to their character.

LARP as a recruitment tool will be covered in two parts: Chronicle-Affecting Recruitment Events and Troupe Kit/One Shots.

Chronicle-Affecting Recruitment LARPs (CARLs) can take place from the local level upward and currently enjoy Global Support for the high profile gaming-industry conventions: Origins, GenCon, DragonCon and GenCon So-Cal.

Characteristics of a CARL

- Plotkit is created from canon/chronicle materials, with a focus on low-powered characters.
- The game scenario will be played only one time.
- Results from the game will affect other parts of the global ongoing story, sometimes with a big impact.
- The plotkit will have elements or problems to be resolved that offer players the chance to gravitate toward any of the three most common attribute focuses – Physical, Social or Mental. The plot is created to appeal to a broad spectrum of player styles this way, even if the dominant style of a local area may be purely social with combat only as a result of long-term RP.
- New players are all given characters with no benefit of MC or extra experience points beyond the standard creation rules of the venue.
- Established game PC’s are present and involved. The current Camarilla members have agreed to mentor, educate, and interact with newly created characters. These Cammies are willing to bend character concept if required.
- All members, staff and players alike, are committed to providing opportunities for the guests to have fun and get to be in the spotlight.
- Prospective players may be offered their choice of a pre-generated character, or help in creating a playable character from scratch. If the later, characters could be created beforehand in a separate session or on site at the event proper.
- There is no limit to the number of characters that can be in play at a game, other than any limits imposed by the ST staff to ensure that there are enough narrators.
- If the staff is well-prepared, there may be ‘State of the Chronicle’ information sheets with common knowledge items for the new characters. Cheat sheets with discipline or challenge explanations may also be on hand.

Preparing to run a CARL

Of the two types of recruitment LARPs, this one takes more time to prepare, but tends to have a higher return on investment in the form of more membership signups and new players to get involved in the local games.

You should start working on a CARL no less than three months before the event is due to occur. Six months' ramp-up is more desirable, particularly if your STs want to seed the plot and get approval for special items or get special NPCs into play in preparation for the CARL event.

Running a Chronicle Affecting LARP (Coordinator and ST General Checklist)

3-6 Months Before

- Select a location.
- Select the venues to be offered.
- Draft a budget. - Turn it in at least 9-12 weeks before the event to the proper coordinator so you can have pre-event funds for expenses.
- Hire your team leads. At a minimum, hire the Event Coordinator and Second, Lead ST for each venue. Also recommended are the Webmaster and Volunteer Coordinator.
- Begin an event checklist. Assign dates and responsibilities to staff and volunteers. For example, STs draft plotkits for events and submit requests up the chain for any approval items that are needed.
- Arrange for overnight crash space for out of town visitors, or find information on hotels in the nearby area to distribute on flyers and the Camarilla email lists.
- Design a website. Write up forum and cam-announce messages.
- Reserve any specialty equipment.

3 Months Before

- Issue first big announcements to Cammies if they need to make travel arrangements.
- List out physical needs: tables, stage, podium, chairs, etc.

5 Weeks Before

- Based on your list, start purchasing equipment or collecting physical donations of needed items.
- Confirm facility arrangements and any guest STs/NPCs.
- Contact local gaming shops for charity/prize support. Get donations from members. Write the Conventions Coordinator for possible donations.
- Plan out program contents if some are going to be printed.
- Print any tickets or other special forms for event.
- Write up pre-gen PC's – character sheets, XP logs, backgrounds, and info they would know coming into the game.

3 Weeks Before

- Send another publicity email to the regional lists and to cam-announce. Post in the forums as well.
- Finalize plotkit and pre-gen PCs.

2 Weeks Before

- Buy last minute decorations or supplies.
- Print programs, character sheets, info booklets, etc.
- Review all deposits and make sure they have been received.
- Confirm special needs with event facility: audio-visual, tables, chairs, electrical, setup, etc.

1 Week Before

- Confirm attendance with event facility.
- Hold packet-stuffing and badge-making party.
- Finish off any outstanding items on the to-do list.
- Set recap meeting one to two weeks following the event.

1 Week After

- Post thank you notes to the club lists.
- Email the guest/prospective members. Ask for feedback on event, open a conversation.

1 Month After

- File event report. Get prestige awards approved by appropriate coordinator.

Characteristics of a Troupe Kit/One-Shot Larp

- Plotkit is created from canon/chronicle materials, with a focus on low powered characters.
- The game scenario may be recycled for a different group of players.
- Results from the game are self-contained and do not affect the Cam chronicle.
- The plotkit will have elements or problems to be resolved that offer players the chance to gravitate toward any of the three most common attribute focuses – Physical, Social or Mental. The plot is created to appeal to a broad spectrum of player styles this way, even if the dominant style of a local area may be purely social with combat only as a result of long-term RP.
- There is no restriction on the character creation process for the production staff.
- The current Camarilla members have agreed to mentor, educate, and interact with newly created characters. They are generally playing pre-generated characters with specific guidelines and goals that will not require bending character concept in order to be playable.
- All members, staff and players alike, are committed to providing opportunities for the guests to have fun and get to be in the spotlight.
- Troupe kits have a finite number of characters. And some may be required to be put into play first, while others are released only if the attendance is big enough.
- Players are usually asked to fill out an “Application Form” or a casting sheet. This document helps the staff to match available PCs to the player on the basis of a series of questions that may include some of the following:

- Are you familiar with the World of Darkness?
- Have you LARPed before?
- If so, what other LARPs have you participated in?
- Do you want to be a leader, follower, loner?
- Are you feeling Heroic tonight, or just Villainous?
- Is there a particular character type you enjoy playing?
- All of the players are given packets with character sheets, scenario information, rules information, contact information for the staff in case they want to join later, and other materials like badges.

Given the large spread of MC in the Camarilla, with long-established members and the always growing pool of new ones, it can be useful to entice players looking at the Camarilla for the first time, or those coming up to their renewal month, by giving them a taste of what they can look forward to in the coming years. The recruitment LARP in troupe format is designed for just such a purpose.

Don't Scare Away the Newbies!

Give a Warm Welcome – The first thing new players face is the challenge of willingly entering an environment where existing friendships are established. Those who have been members a while generally enjoy chatting before games. They may not realize there's a new player who needs some attention. That's why it is important that you be the person to welcome them into your gaming community. Be friendly and patient – newbies are sure to ask questions that you've heard a thousand times before, but it is your job to answer them professionally and, if possible, with enthusiasm. If this is a task you feel you are not up to, find someone who is.

Get Contact Info – Do this the first time they attend, because if you aren't able to tell them when or where the next game is or send that reminder email or let them know about any important changes, you may never see that person again! This is also an excellent time to gauge their interest by informing them of any area email lists or other local communication by which they can stay informed about local happenings and keep current on the organization, even if they haven't made up their minds yet and want to see a little more before purchasing a membership.

Hold Orientation Sessions – Some chapters hold orientation sessions for new players. These can be held at someone's house, at the game-site a couple hours before game, or by inviting newbies out to lunch to chat. You can even incorporate them into your chapter meetings if you have time, letting these people see a large range of club activities at once. If you implement orientation sessions, you'll want to cover the following points:

- Talk about the history of the venue they are most interested in.
- Describe the current IC situations in your area.

- Help prospective members build their first character and develop an appropriate background.
- Answer any questions they may have.
- Introduce them to the proverbial “My First Cammie Book,” for example, in a vampire venue this would be Laws of the Night: Revised.
- Practice tests, describe some common game situations, flesh out goals, describe the common politics, etc.

By doing these things, the prospective member is more excited about the idea of the organization as a community instead of showing up to game and being “thrown to the wolves” so to speak.

Retaining New Members - So a new member has seen your recruitment materials, made contact, wanted to be part of all the fun your local Camarilla area has, attended the orientation, obtained a membership, attended a game or social, but then what? Most new members base their decision to continue spending their spare time with the Camarilla in the first few months of membership. In this time it is crucial to keep personal contact with these members to convey to them that we do care about our members past recruitment, and they no doubt will welcome the contact to learn more about our venue gaming and organization as a whole. A simple follow up email message or phone call after a game can go a long way in preserving a member who may have been overwhelmed after a game or, even worse, ignored during such because they were new. In doing so, new members will often remain active until they themselves are familiar enough with the Camarilla to want to get their friends involved. Proper recruitment and follow-up habits are passed on to these new members, because they can reference the welcome they received and duplicate it.

Credits

The following Authors contributed to developing this Guide:

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