



friendship force

INTERNATIONAL

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## The 'Taupo Experience' Membership Plan

Friendship Force Taupo developed a Membership Recruitment programme which resulted in obtaining 21 new members. Three other clubs in New Zealand have also used this programme and obtained 34, 17 and 12 members respectively. Several other clubs are using the same formula to boost their membership numbers and in each case, it looks as though they will be very successful in doing so.

At the International Conference at Hiroshima, FFI awarded FF Taupo an 'Outstanding Club for 2012' award for this initiative, and have included it as a FFI best practise for clubs on the FFI website under Leadership Toolkit.

The following is how the concept operates.

### Preamble:

- Clubs throughout the world are suffering from the 'aging of members' problem. This has meant that their operating pool of members is diminishing and the club will fade away unless if this pool is replenished.
- Generally FF members are not good salesmen and tend to be a little timid in asking people to join our organisation. The fear of rejection features in this timidity, and this results in many excellent possible members not even being asked.
- Let's change this by saying to people '**we have an outstanding organisation, and an outstanding club, and you're missing out if you don't become part of it**'.
- The Taupo Experience plan adopts this thinking and progresses it into the whole project.
- Nothing is new in this project, only the way it has been put together.

### First Steps: To run the project, the Club must

- Make a firm decision to run a Membership Recruitment drive, and fully commit to this. Half hearted will not work! This is your most important project this year.
- Appoint the best member as the Membership Director – the person in the club who gets things done and will enthuse the club.
- Add three further top members to assist – any more than this number waters the Committee down. The President can be 'ex officio'.
- Adopt the concept of running an '**Information Evening to which Attendance is by Invitation only**'.
- Grant whatever funds the Committee requires to make the project a success. Do you want money or members? In any case, new members will bring new money.

- Inform all members that they have a part to play in this project and must be prepared to contribute where asked.

**Getting Names to Invite to the Evening.** This is not as difficult as it may seem and is where your members make their contribution.

- Ask your members to provide names to invite. Their friends are probably already members, but not their ‘acquaintances’ – that next ring of people beyond their friends that they associate with. (Note: FF members are the type of people who join other groups, and between them your members know 100’s of people outside your club who would make excellent FF members).
- Ask them to check through these people and nominate anyone who **might – repeat might** - be possibly interested in joining your club. Your member should not make that decision – let their nominee make the decision for themselves.
- **Your member is NOT to approach these people** – the invitation comes from your club. This has the advantage of taking away the fear of rejection and thus your members are likely to bring forward more names.
- Note that every club that has tried this approach has received over 110 possible names.
- Take time (4-6 weeks) over this part. Your members usually needing prompting to start making their contribution.

#### **Approval of Invitees.**

- As is normal for proposed new members, these names should be presented to your board for approval.
- Once this approval is received, these people are deemed ‘pre approved’ for membership.

#### **The Invitation.**

- This should be in colour (don’t present your club as cheap) and include wording along the lines.....
  - ‘Have you ever travelled overseas but never met the local people, stayed in their houses, eaten their food, and learned about their culture, customs and traditions’
  - ‘Have you ever wished you could host people from all parts of the world’.
  - ‘If the answer to these questions is YES, then Friendship Force may be for you, so answer YES to the Invitation to come and learn’

#### **The Mailing Process.**

- The Invitation should be mailed out **3 weeks prior** to your Information Evening. Any longer than this and recipients are not ready to make their plans, less is too short.
- All recipients must be phoned by the four Committee members **10 days prior** to your Evening with the question.....
  - ‘You have received an Invitation to our Evening – are you coming?’

- The answer will be Yes or No.
- For the No's, ask a further question 'Do you wish to learn more about Friendship Force?' (These people may not be able to make your evening date but still be interested).
- The answer will be Yes or No.
- An interesting statistic here – all clubs that have carried out the above process have received between 42% and 60% favourable 'Yes' responses towards Friendship Force from the two questions. We are well received.

**Plan your evening** This is a vital step in the process. Do this part wrong, and you may waste all your previous efforts.

- **You must not present your club as cheap.** When your guests arrive, give them a name badge (the plastic type is okay) and not an 'Introducing' sticker.
- **The Presentation.....** (Refer to Appendix One for Presenter Instructions).
  - **Should not be more than an hour.** Short, sharp and to the point is more acceptable than a long drawn out presentation where you will probably lose the interest of your guests.
  - **Should be done by 4-5 younger enthusiastic members – Don't present your club as old.**
  - The subjects should be about their experiences as an Ambassador or Host and not a travelogue.
  - **Should be written down and read** – how many of our members are excellent ad lib speakers who can keep to the time and subject.
  - **Should be rehearsed** with all members present so that each knows what the other is doing.
  - **Should include a break in the middle** (drink and nibbles) where your members can mix and mingle with your guests. (This effectively means that you have three opportunities to talk to your guests – before, middle and end).
  - Should include a question time near the end, and a strong summing up.
  - Give out (2?) bottles of wine to guests for attending – lucky draw.
- Don't let your guests depart without Membership Application forms, Host Application forms, FFI and/or Club brochures, and anything else you deem relevant.
- (For the Taupo presentation, see appendix Two).

**The Follow Up.** Another vital step.

- You must follow up a few days later and ask them if they have filled in their forms. Offer to call and collect them in need.
- **If you don't do this, most will get away, if you do do this, most will join.**
- Perhaps give them their name badge free, or a reduced subscription – anything to get them to join.

**You've got 'em, now keep 'em.**

- Give them the opportunity to be involved in your club as soon as possible.
- Buddy them with board members for six months.
- Invite them to take part in or even organise your social or other activities.
- Give them priority hosting rights for your next Journey(s).
- Invite them onto your board – some will accept.
- But involve them.

**Does it Work?** - You bet it does.

- Taupo NZ got 21 members, other NZ clubs got 34, 17 and 12 members using the concept.
- It works providing your members and board make the effort and support your MD.
- It works if you are well prepared, informative, interesting and professional.
- It works providing you present your club and FF as special.
- It works if you treat your guests as special.
- And it works if you generally follow the formula outlined above.

**Appendix One.**  
**Guidelines for Presenters.**

**General.**

1. Keep within time limit. Outward & Inward Journeys get a **total** of 5 minutes, not 5 minutes each if a joint presentation.
2. Write your presentation down so that it is to the point and does not go over the time limit.
3. Have a practise so you do not duplicate or miss things, and so that other presenters know what the other is saying.

**Outward Journeys.**

1. Start with Simple Introduction – *‘My name is ....., I have been a member for ..... years and been on .....Outward Journeys and Hosted ..... times.*
2. Do not give a travelogue – mention places visited without dates or timing.
3. No need to mention duties of ED’s – this will be covered elsewhere.
4. Mention some highlight(s) that appealed to the group.
5. Mention some thing(s) that appealed to you personally.
6. Whatever else you think might interest our guests.
7. Why you enjoy travelling with FF.

**Inward Journeys.**

1. Start with Simple Introduction – *‘My name is ....., I have been a member for ..... years and been on.....Outward Journeys and Hosted ..... times.*
2. What you do as an ED....
  - initial contact between ED’s – *this will be briefly mentioned earlier in the evening.*
  - host matching - *this will be briefly mentioned earlier in the evening.*
  - programme planning – what do we typically do.
  - budget – mention how Club Host fees are spent.
  - managing during the week.
  - final reports.
3. Whatever else you think might interest our guests.
4. Benefit to members.

**Being a Host.**

1. Outline good host practises.
2. Outline why you enjoy being a host.

## Appendix Two.

### Presentations by FF Taupo Members to Information Evenings.

#### 1. Introduction by President.

- Introduced herself, welcome the guests, and speak briefly of her experiences with Friendship Force.

#### 2. Members One and Two spoke about Journey to Japan 2010.

- Five minute joint presentation speaking about their experiences as first time Ambassadors who thoroughly enjoyed their Journey.

#### 3. Member Three spoke about Outward Journeys generally.

- FF has a slogan – ‘**Changing the way you see the world**’.
- **How do Journeys Happen?**
  1. Each year, clubs are invited to apply for
    - Inward and Outward Journeys to Head Office in Atlanta who
    - Take these requests,
    - Mix them up, and
    - Create an Journey Programme
    - Which Clubs generally accept.
  2. The next step is Clubs appoint **Journey Coordinators** (which we abbreviate to ED’s)
    - These members Organise and Run these Journeys.
    - There are two types
      - There are Host ED’s for Inward Journeys, and
      - Ambassador ED’s for Outward Journeys.
    - When we travel, we call ourselves Ambassadors because that’s what we are –
      - Ambassadors for FF and its Mission
      - Ambassadors for NZ as Kiwis, and
      - Ambassadors for Taupo. We promote Taupo etc.
  3. The next step is for ED’s for both Outward and Inward Journeys to communicate to establish the programme.
  4. Once this is done, the **Ambassador ED promotes** Journey to our members & to other clubs using the mechanisms available.
    - you can join other clubs Journey from NZ
    - or even Australian or World Global Journeys is this suits you.
    - each year, there are 100’s of Journeys involving 1000’s of Ambassadors.
  5. Anyone wishing to travel fills in **Application forms**.
    - details of which are sent to the Host ED of clubs being visited,
    - who makes the host matchings or pairings and
    - Communication can begin between Ambassador and Host can begin.
  6. Ambassadors ED calls one or preferably two **workshops** to discuss the Itinerary, Ambassador duties and responsibilities, and the culture and so on of the country being visited.
    - we have one saying when travelling ‘*be yourself, but be your best self*’.

7. So you can see that the Journeys are **properly organised and managed** as far as possible, and if there are any hiccups while on Journey, these only add to the overall experience.

- **Other Advantages of the FFI Journey system.**
  - You travel in a safe and secure group environment.
  - Excellent for both novice and experienced travellers.
  - Excellent for those who do not have a travelling companion.
  - Not only do Hosts become friends, but also your fellow Ambassadors.
  - Another point that needs to be made - you do not have to travel with the group, but can make it as part of a longer overseas holiday.
    - Example – while for travel to Indonesia, Japan or Brazil (for example) you probably will travel there as a group, whereas for such countries as Australia, USA and Europe, you can make your own way there, join the Journey on day one, and leave the Journey at it's completion.
- **Cost of Journey**
  - Own travelling costs to destination and between clubs, plus add-ons.
  - The only other cost NZ\$300 FFI & Host fees plus dinner **per Journey.**
    - about half goes to FFI Administration which is 75% of their income,
    - the other half goes to the Host club to spend on your behalf.
- **For this you get**
  - Accommodation, Meals, Transport and your Host's knowledge of the area.
  - **AND you get a new family**, a new home, experience their life style, learn new cultures, new traditions, new customs, see new sights, taste new foods and most of all, meet new people who become friends.
  - New names on your Christmas Card list.
- **There are 4 ways to be involved with Friendship Force and you can be involved with these as much or as little as you wish.**
  - Outward Journeys as above are one.
  - A second is by hosting Ambassadors when they visit .....

#### 4. Member Four spoke about Inward Journeys.

- Five minute presentation speaking about being a Host ED and the involvement.

#### 5. Member Five spoke about 'Being a Host.

- Five minute presentation speaking about being a Host and the involvement.

#### 6. Member Three spoke about FF International and NZ general.

- **Some background on FFI.**
  - 1977 March 1<sup>st</sup> - FFI introduced by US Pres. Jimmy Carter.
  - Mission '*To promote global understanding across barriers that separate people*'.
  - 1992 - Nobel Peace Prize nomination.
  - In over 60 countries, there are 366 clubs throughout the world.
  - NZ has 23 clubs loosely controlled by 4 volunteer Field Reps.
    - The NZ Programme
      - Conferences
      - Regional Field Days
      - Domestic Journeys.
  - Taking part in these is a third way of making and renewing friendships.
- **We're going to take a break now**

- Mingle with our members
- Look at items on tables – power point displays, trip diaries, etc.
- Drink (alcoholic and non alcoholic) and nibbles.
- Reconvene in 15 minutes.

**7. Half Time.**

**8. Members Six and Seven Spoke about Journey to Indonesia.**

- Five minute joint presentation speaking about their experiences to this fascinating country and how they thoroughly enjoyed their Journey.

**9. Member Three spoke about FF Taupo future Social and Journey programmes.**

- A few minutes about Taupo's future plans.

**10. Question Time with a Moderator Member Three.**

**11. Final Summary by Leading Member.**

Okay everybody, its time to review and summarize the highlights of this evening's presentation.

We are grateful that you have come to this function and we hope you have found it interesting and instructive.

Obviously, like any club or society we are seeking new members and we very much hope you will be motivated to become a member of Friendship Force Taupo. We would welcome you.

The important point we must emphasize is that the Friendship Force is not a travel club. However, it is a club that travels and there is a difference.

The Friendship Force is an international, non-political, non-religious, and non-profit organization. Our underlying principle is that we are an international cultural Journey programme.

The sole aim of the Friendship Force is to foster peace and understanding throughout the world by means of personal contacts and shared experiences achieved through a programme of home hosting. Staying in private homes is a central feature of the program.

Being a member of Friendship Force does not require you to travel, or participate in an outward Journey. It's your choice entirely. Similarly, you are completely free to decide if you wish to host anyone in your home. You can participate socially to whatever extent appeals to you. But like anything that you do, your level of pleasure and satisfaction will be in direct proportion to how much time and effort you put into it.

One thing we can guarantee, when you become a member of Friendship Force you will immediately extend your circle of local friends, you will have the opportunity to participate in our regular and varied social events, and you can join in New Zealand social activities, such as our annual conference or occasional domestic Journeys.

We have regional functions from time to time and because Taupo is so well located we can have the best of both worlds and attend north or south.

Most clubs in New Zealand participate in at least one outward and two inbound Journeys per year. Each year clubs all over the world nominate clubs they would like to visit and the clubs they would like to host.

You are welcome to join any outward Journey arranged by the 23 FF clubs in New Zealand.

You can enjoy:

- Unique travel experiences focused on friendships.
- Host interesting people from around the world.

- Participate in community activities that promote lasting friendships.

### **Friendship Force Is Changing The Way You See The World**

**Will you become part of it?**