



Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance

Guide to Prospecting New Members



CONNECT.
ADVANCE.
LEAD.

Guide to Prospecting New Members

In this guide, we hope to provide chapters ideas and best practices for growing their local chapter. We will include recommendations on where to find individuals and businesses where you can find prospective members, suggestions on how to reach out and finally best practices for what is and is not working with local chapters currently.

1. Prospecting Corporate Memberships
2. Prospecting Individuals
3. Strategies Working for Local Chapters
4. Strategies Not Working for Local Chapters
5. Next Steps



Prospecting Corporate Memberships

When it comes to growing your local chapter, approaching businesses that have large accounting departments and especially accounting firms will give you the best opportunity to grow the chapter efficiently. Instead of selling individual memberships, selling corporate memberships allows you to put AFWA's value and benefits in front of a larger group.

In order to sell a corporate membership, there are traditionally four steps to follow:

1. Create a list of prospective businesses that are headquartered or have a location in your chapter's area. This includes the name of the business, 2-3 potential contacts for outreach and email/phone numbers for each.
2. Create an outreach strategy for businesses that allows you to get a meeting and present the value of AFWA.
3. Gather all valuable information for the business and present the value of an AFWA corporate membership.
4. Create a nurture strategy for any business that is not ready to commit.

Step 1a: Resources to Create a Prospect List



Use the following websites and recommendations to find businesses in your area that would be a good fit for an AFWA membership:

1. Accounting Firms:
 - a. Inside Public Accounting Top 400 firms:
<https://insidepublicaccounting.com/top-firms/ipa-400/>

- b. State Society Websites -> search for accounting firms.
2. Top Employers for DEI:
- a. Forbes's Best Employers for Diversity: <https://www.forbes.com/best-employers-diversity/#55218c709b9e>
 - b. Fortune.com's Best Workplaces for Diversity: <https://fortune.com/best-workplaces-for-diversity/>
 - c. HR Drive's Top Companies for DEI Focus: <https://www.hrdrive.com/news/top-companies-for-dei-focus-on-recruiting-advancement-report-says/584404/>
 - d. Refinitiv's Top DEI Companies: <https://www.refinitiv.com/en/sustainable-finance/diversity-and-inclusion-top-100#full-list>
 - e. Diversity Inc: <https://www.diversityinc.com/diversityinc-announces-the-2021-top-50-companies-for-diversity-list/>
3. Top Places to Work for Women:
- a. Forbes's Best Employers for Women: <https://www.forbes.com/best-employers-women/#2e72e3167de9>
 - b. Great Place to Work's Best Workplaces for Women: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/best-workplaces/women/2020>
 - c. In Her Sight's Best Companies for Women: <https://www.inhersight.com/companies/best>
 - d. Fortune: <https://fortune.com/best-workplaces-for-women/>
 - e. Business Insider: <https://www.businessinsider.com/best-large-companies-for-women-according-to-female-employees-2020-12>
 - f. Companies Invested in the Success of Women at Work: <https://ripplematch.com/journal/article/companies-invested-in-the-success-of-women-at-work-d819cb0b/>
4. Miscellaneous:
- a. Chamber publications
 - b. Business journals
 - c. Search for local companies excelling at DEI
 - d. Search for local companies that rank high for women employers
 - e. Local business awards
 - f. Annual Local Book of Lists published by your Business Journal

Step 1b: Create the Prospect list



Find contact information for the best individuals at each organization using the steps below:

1. Titles to search for are:
 - a. Finance Director/VP Finance/CFO (essentially the leader in the accounting department of businesses)
 - b. Managing Partner/CEO (the decision maker in an accounting firm)
 - c. HR titles for both accounting firms and businesses
 - d. DEI titles for both accounting firms and businesses
 - e. Training for both accounting firms and businesses (highest ranking title you can find)
2. Where to find individuals:
 - a. Search business or accounting firm website. You will likely have more success on the accounting firm website because they want to be found.
 - b. Search LinkedIn using the business/firm name and title you are looking for.
 - c. Google the business + the title or business + the individual to try to find contact information.
 - d. Look for connections to that organization you have through LinkedIn.

3. Try to find both email and phone number if possible.

Here are some tools you can use to find email addresses:

- [Apollo.io](#) (first 1,000 contacts free)
- [Skout](#) (free, but labor-intensive)
- [Email Hunter](#) (paid plans start at \$49/mo)
- [LeadIQ](#) (\$60/mo + [LinkedIn Sales Navigator](#) subscription)

Action: Find 2-3 contacts for each company you will be reaching out to.

Prospecting Individuals



When it comes to growing your local chapter, individual memberships have long been the keys to growth. While individual memberships don't get you the volume that a corporate membership does, these members can be easier to acquire because there isn't a long decision-making process with multiple people involved. Typically, these are quicker and easier wins, but you will need a large pipeline of individuals to meet membership goals.

In order to sell an individual membership, there are traditionally three steps to follow:

1. Create and maintain a list of prospects that work in accounting and finance in your area.
2. Create an outreach strategy for individuals that is centered around upcoming events and opportunities for development.
3. Create a nurture strategy for any individual who does not sign up after attending an event.

Step 1: Create a Prospect List



There are multiple ways to create a prospect list of individuals (including both names and emails) including the following:

1. Ask each person in the chapter to give the names of 3-5 women in accounting or finance that they think would benefit from AFWA (ideally, they should be able to do so anonymously).
2. Search the websites of local accounting firms, financial institutions, finance departments, etc. and make a list of all of the women listed on the website.
3. Review local publications for award recipients.
4. Search LinkedIn for women in the accounting and finance industry in your area. You could also search based on college degree.

5. Home office to provide lists of individuals who previously attended conferences.

Step 2: Create an Outreach Strategy



1. Connect with the individual on LinkedIn (assuming you have references to AFWA on your profile – if not, make sure to include or update).
2. Email introduction with AFWA's information, your brief info and an invite to the upcoming AFWA event.
3. Follow up just prior to the event saying that you hope to see them there and even let them know you will meet them at the door and make introductions for them.
4. Reach out every 1-2 months over the course of a year letting them know about the upcoming event and would love to see them there. Different people resonate more with different types of events so vary your invites to find something they are interested in.
5. Make sure outreach is personalized to the individual you are reaching out to and not generic.
6. After a response, make sure to remove the individual to any automations you might be using for these types of campaigns.

Step 3: Create a Nurture Schedule



This nurture schedule is different from the one where you are trying to get the individual to join an event. This is for anyone who attended, but they weren't ready to pull the trigger yet.

1. Ideally, you would assign a "buddy" to this person that not only would be their partner at the event, but also doing the nurture outreach after the event.
2. The buddy should follow up within in the next 2 days thanking the individual for attending the event and asking for feedback.
3. The buddy should reach out to the individual with additional invites to send someone to an event or a free seat to CPE or any other way for them to see what AFWA has to offer every 1-2 months. (Max 3 free things)
4. The buddy should alert the prospect to upcoming conferences and encourage prospect to register/attend.
5. Make sure whoever is responsible for the outreach knows when to reach out and what to offer even through transitions.
6. If an individual asks you to reach out at a certain time (maybe during budgeting), keep track of those notes and don't miss these follow-up opportunities.

Best Practices for Local Chapters



Sharing information among all chapters is important to brainstorm ideas of what is working and what is not working. Some of the recent successful initiatives and ideas to consider include:

1. Using LinkedIn to find women who have recently changed jobs and reach out with a congratulations to start conversations.
2. LinkedIn campaigns to others in your area. These are paid marketing campaigns to get AFWA information in front of more people.
3. Gift a membership – allow individuals to gift memberships to others around the holidays.
4. Membership drives – where individuals are asked to bring a friend to an event.
5. Membership appreciation week – where the chapters celebrate their members and it's on social media and in person.
6. Consider opening up some awards to non-members and solicit nominations.
7. Application fee waiver.
8. Email to guests after events with testimonials.
9. Membership recruitment/social events where guests can come at no charge a few times a year.

10. Quality programs offered to members at a lower price than guests.
11. Speaking at colleges about benefits of AFWA including scholarships.
12. Asking each member of the chapter to bring in at least one new member.
13. Using Sales Navigator as a prospecting tool. [Article: How to Use LinkedIn Sales Navigator](#)
14. Making membership a priority for the chapter.
15. Personal invitations asking members to join – the number one reason people don't join an organization is because they were never asked.

What is NOT working: (Comments from prior meetings)

1. Virtual happy hours.
2. Membership drives with a cash incentive (memberships aren't covering cash/price incentive).
3. Gifting a membership as a door prize at a paid educational seminar.
4. Gifting memberships to scholarship recipients – they weren't attending meetings since they were during the day (during class time) and others moved out of town after graduation. Must engage the member for this to work.
5. Allowing non-members to attend chapter events at the same price or a slightly higher price than members. There is no incentive to join if they can attend for the same or slightly higher price as members.
6. Any incentives that don't have proper follow or engagement.
7. Leaving the recruitment and retention process up to 1 or 2 individuals. All members should be involved with getting new members and keeping existing members.



What's Next?



1. Set up a chapter meeting to discuss the need to increase membership and retain existing members.
2. Gather resources and share with all members of the chapter.
3. Make a plan.
4. Attend national membership meetings to learn from other chapters.
5. Follow the steps in this guide.

Start Today!

Focusing on your Chapter's membership today will ensure a better tomorrow!

