

THE BRA MEMBERSHIP PLAN

“A good Pilot is like a good bra: she perks you up, holds you up when you’re sagging, and she’s hard to find!” Created and presented by Mimi Wold, at the Pilot International Convention, Phoenix, AZ on July 11, 2008 for the Best of the Best Workshop)

The Pilot Club of Winnfield, LA, began the BRA Plan (**Big Results Anticipated) in 2005-2006, increasing our membership by 60% from 23 to 38. Our goal: a perfect fit for every member ...**their** talents and **Pilot** projects and goals.**

In preparing for the BRA plan, we learned there are three types of bras that pretty much correspond to our stages of life:

- The strapless band-aid bra: just covers the essentials.
- The knickknack shelf bra: for those who want to show things off
- The hanging basket bra:... there were 3 older women sitting at the beauty parlor having their hair “fixed” and catching up on the latest gossip when in sashayed a beautiful young woman with a low cut blouse revealing a tattoo of a rosebud on one breast. One feisty woman smiled knowingly and turned to the others, saying, “She doesn’t know it yet, but in 50 years she’ll be wearing a long stemmed rose in a hanging basket.”

In the same way you would shop for a bra, we shop for potential Pilots:

First we:

1. **Choose the right “store” to find the best**
Look for potential Pilots at church, work, other civic activities.
2. **Try them on.**
Rideshare with pledges to interesting meetings and Share Pilot. Build relationships. Encourage immediate participation. Our membership has fluctuated because those who poke, pinch, twist, or bind don’t fit. Don’t expect them all to fit.
3. **Make adjustments**
Find each pledge’s niche and interest. Showcase her talent. What better way for your seasoned members to get to know the newbies than to see them in action? What can Pilot do for them?
4. **Remember the “cross your heart” bra.**
Use mentors to stay close to each pledge’s heart. Socialize after the meetings. Have a PilotPlus visit after the meeting is over (just a cup of coffee for 15 or 20 minutes and get to know each other).

Every club goes through sagging membership, but we “bust”ed out of a slump with:

A. The Hook Committee:

1. *Publicity! Publicity! Publicity!
2. *Sell Pilot like Victoria’s Secret! Flaunt what ‘cha got!
3. *If you believe in Pilot, sell Pilot like you were on commission!

B. The Strap Committee:

1. *Lift each member up for her ideas, participation, and contributions.
2. *Treat her like a comfy bra, not a pain in the ribs.
3. *The older I get, the more it seems that life is not so much about learning new things as it is about learning to look at old things in new ways.

C. The Padding Committee:

1. *Fill up empty spaces. Call absentees, don't let them think you didn't miss them; remember birthdays; brag on children; recognize achievements outside of Pilot; celebrate successes.

HOWEVER, no cute committee name works for increased membership if you and your club are not motivated;

“A young man was very successful in college and moved right on into an impressive and successful career. He moved up the corporate ladder quickly and seemed to have everything. The one thing that was missing was a family, and he was ready to address that need. However, in the process of school and the stress of moving up in his career he had allowed himself to become overweight and was physically out of shape. He went to his pastor and expressed his desire to find the love of his life and his need to shed some weight and get in better shape. His pastor told him to have his running shoes and clothes on the next morning at 6:00 a.m. He was ready and the doorbell rang. Standing there was the girl of his dreams, and she said, “The pastor said to tell you that if you can catch me, you can marry me.”

The race was on, and day after day he tried as hard as he could. He soon began to realize he was shedding some pounds and getting in pretty good shape. The day finally came when he realized he could catch his beautiful inspiration. He was so excited when the doorbell rang the next morning, knowing that this was the day he would catch his dream girl. When he opened the door, there was another woman standing there. She was a little overweight and a little out of shape and quite a bit less attractive. He was stunned, but she answered his unasked question when she said, “The pastor said if I can catch you, I can marry you.” And the race was on ...IT'S ALL ABOUT MOTIVATION!”

Mary Fallis, the president of our club in '05-'06 lost her husband five years earlier to a brain tumor. He was only 52. It was her dedication to do all she could to prevent the same heartache from happening to others that was our motivation to increase membership so we could have an impact on changing lives.

It's all about motivation and inspiration if you want to add and keep members. Even a dead fish can swim downstream. But all the best things in life are upstream. Don't let even one member be a dead fish.

Seniority in the club doesn't mean senility. New member status doesn't mean a five year probation until she's memorized the manual. The members in the middle can't carry it all. The success of the club depends on everyone...get everyone to contribute in some way. There is no retirement from friendship or service. It is a privilege and honor to join Pilot. And if it's good enough for you, it's good enough for you friends. If you don't value Pilot, don't expect anyone else to.

Do you remember Wonder Woman and her incredible Wonder Bra? Pilots are Wonder Women too! We juggle home and church and work and family, and it's a wonder we have the time to give to others. But we do because, no matter what size the bra is, our hearts are huge because of our dedication to all matters associated with brain-related disorders.