

## AFA FLORIDA CHAPTER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The strength of our association lies in its foundation at the grassroots level, the Chapter. Each Chapter is challenged to execute the AFA mission while at the same time find and develop new leaders who will execute the mission in the future. This section will provide guidelines and methods that can be used by Florida Chapter Presidents and their officers to build a strong on-going Chapter Leadership Development Program. A successful Leadership Development Program can be divided into four distinct yet interrelated steps:

**Step 1: Select a Leadership Development Vice President.** This is extremely important. Leadership is so important that one person should be assigned by the Chapter President to perform this extremely important function. Where do you look for this Vice President? The person should optimally be someone familiar with the AFA mission. A past Chapter President would be an excellent choice. Or look to present or past National leaders that are Chapter members and reside in the Chapter's locality. Also important in selecting this Vice President is someone who is familiar with potential leaders in the Chapter vicinity outside of the Chapter's AFA membership. More will be said about the importance of this in Step 2; but keep in mind that since we are a civilian association, we can tap a real source of leadership talent outside the AFA! We can and should go to the civilian, business, fraternal, and industrial communities for our talent. The leadership Vice President will be responsible for finding new leaders, getting them to accept a Chapter assignment, and working to keep them challenged, rewarded and promoted as appropriate. These three activities comprise Steps 2, 3 and 4.

**Step 2: Focus on identifying future AFA leaders.** Volunteer leadership talent exists throughout our nation. Since we are a civilian organization we should first realize that any American is a potential AFA member and leader. When looking for a potential AFA leader there are a few attributes that will help in finding such a person. First, the person should be someone who is interested in Aerospace and National Defense issues. This simply provides some focus for the kind of person you should be looking for. Potential sources for these Aerospace defense-oriented people are the following organizations/ communities:

- 1) Aerospace Industrial Community
- 2) Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee
- 3) ROTC, JROTC leaders and students
- 4) Civil Air Patrol (CAP) members
- 5) USAF (active, reserve, guard, enlisted, officer, civilian, etc.)
- 6) USAF retired personnel
- 7) Community Partners
- 8) Teachers
- 9) Spouses

Within the above, some additional attributes are important. You should look for a person who has demonstrated the ability to lead, speak and organize. Keep in mind, the people we are after,

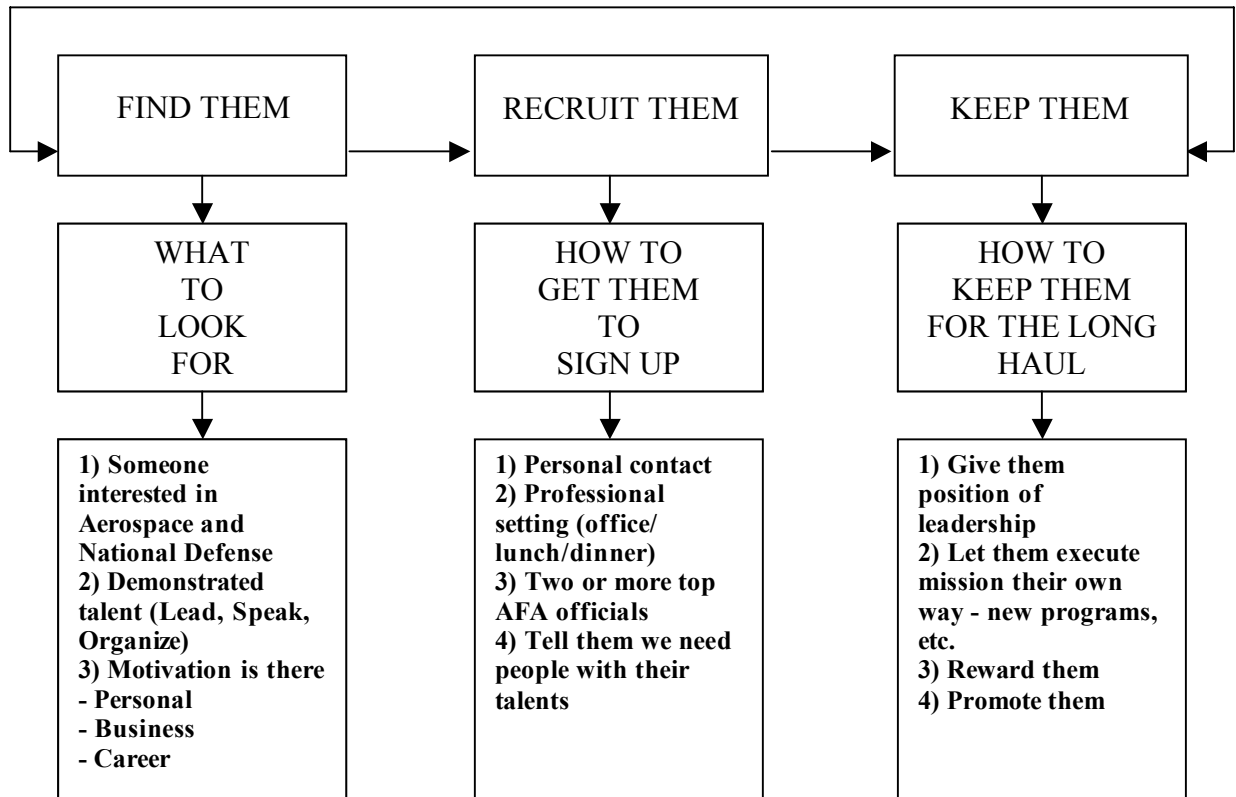
must have leadership qualities. You need people who can be self-starters and will easily find their place in our organization to help us carry out our mission. Finally, you should do your best to find individuals with the above attributes and the following key requirement: They must be motivated to work the AFA Mission People will want to be leaders and support our mission for a variety of reasons. The best is simply a personal one. They believe in the absolute essential need for a strong National Defense and understand the key part that Aerospace power plays in that defense. Another motivation that reinforces the above is that the person's career or business is involved in Aerospace issues and he/she can see the value of learning more about these issues through the AFA. Another could be a retired USAF person who wants to help AFA since he/she observed what help AFA provided to their career in the form of advocacy for increased spending on pay, benefits, and many quality of life issues. In any event, it is important to remember that the person you are looking for must be interested in what we do, have the talent to lead and have a personal or career motive to get involved and help us execute the AFA mission.

**Step 3: Get them to join the AFA team.** The following are some key considerations in signing up a future leader.

- 1) Personal Contact: Enough cannot be said about this approach. Mailings and telephone calls are too impersonal. You must show this future leader that you care enough to take your time to come talk with him/her.
- 2) What to say: Tell them you need people with their talents. Don't say that you need a warm body to fill a square or that you are only talking to him/her because no one else wants the job. Tell them about the process you've gone through to select them for this important job and let them know that you recognize their interests and talents.
- 3) Where to say it: A professional setting is best. Meet at the person's office or at a mutually agreed to business setting. If your budget permits, take the future leader to lunch or dinner. This gives you plenty of time to sell AFA, its mission, and why you have selected him/her (talent, interest and motivation).
- 4) Who should say it: Take advantage of all AFA leaders in your Chapter's area. If you have a State President, National Vice President, or National Director (active or emeritus) that the future leader knows or would respect, then enlist their help. Two or more people's (Chapter President and other AFA leaders) enthusiasm will increase the probability of getting a new AFA leader in your Chapter.

**Step 4: Keep leaders for the long haul.** The person you have signed up is talented, motivated and interested in our mission. He/she will want to contribute. Assign them to a committee or if they are ready at the time, appoint them to chair a committee or event. Invite them to the chapter executive council meeting and make sure they are introduced and recognized. When they are leading, let them do it their own way. As long as their activities are focused on the AFA mission, the methodology they use can and should be their own. Their new ideas will only serve to strengthen the Chapter. When they perform well, reward them and promote them. Many national awards are available and each Chapter can and should have their own awards and recognition program. Use these to provide visible recognition of the job they are doing. In many cases, another very efficient recognition is a sincere “Thank You” from the Chapter President. Use State and National Officers to pass on thanks as well. We all respond and want to help when that help is appreciated. Another recognition of a job well done is a promotion. If the higher position that the leader needs to fill is appointive, the Chapter President can implement the promotion. If the higher position is an elective office within the Chapter or State organization, then encourage them to run for that office. This is a visible recognition and appreciation for the job that they’ve done. In summary, the leadership development process can be shown pictorially by:

### Leadership Development Process



Implementing the above by taking the first step of appointing a Leadership Development Vice President will help you build a strong and effective AFA Chapter.

**A Final Note**

The Air Force Association is a premier National Defense Association. Our successfully executed mission helps keep our great nation strong. It is a privilege to belong and serve an association that does so much for our country's Aerospace excellence and that assures that our men and women of the United States Air Force have the absolute best training and equipment wherever we send them in the world to serve in our nation's interest. We should be proud of our Association and enthusiastic about what we are doing! This enthusiasm and pride will be a key ingredient in finding, recruiting and keeping the AFA leader of the future.

SOURCE: National Membership Committee -- 1998