

Recruiting for the Missional Women Conference

Looking back over a lifetime of fruitful service, John Mott, one of the founding fathers of the Student Volunteer Movement, said this: *"If I had to do it all over again, I would have had more conferences because at conferences more critical decisions are made than at any other place."*

What conferences accomplish

- Conferences are catalytic. Things happen at conferences that do not happen in small groups, at your weekly meeting, at church, or during your discipleship.
- Conferences change lives. Studies show that we develop convictions during times of personal crisis, from personal Bible study and at conferences.
- Conferences are a time of bonding. Often at a conference friendships are formed.
- Conferences build momentum. Conferences get people moving in the same direction.
- Conferences help to build multiplying disciples. The Missional Women Conference will come along side you to help build disciples. It's also a place for women to bring their friends and other women they are ministering to.
- Conferences can serve as a rallying point--something that everyone is looking forward to.
- Conferences build vision.
- Conferences raise the level of commitment.
- Conferences provide opportunities for training.
- The Missional Women Conference will give women hands-on ministry experience.
- The Missional Women Conference will provide high-quality resources and tools.

The importance of recruiting

We make at least two wrong assumptions when it comes to conferences.

- 1) Women know what is going on.
- 2) Women will go to the conference on their own and don't need to be recruited, persuaded or convinced.

For sake of illustration, let's say that when you give the opportunity to sign up for the the conference, 20% immediately decide they want to go. To them it doesn't matter if the conference is expensive or is a thousand miles away. For one reason or another, they know they want to be there or need to be there. This percentage is affected by the size and maturity of your leadership, the health of the movement, the strength of relationships, as well as the past history of conferences. Another 20% has no intention of going... never. It wouldn't matter if the conference were across the street, it was free, and Billy Graham was the main speaker--they just are not going to go. It is the 60% in the middle that is affected by our recruiting efforts. Women in this segment are wondering if they will be alone at the conference, if it will be worth the time, expense and effort of attending. These questions are answered in the recruiting process.

Why women go to conferences

Women do not go to conferences solely because they are good, although that is important, but

- 1) Because their friends will be there. Generally speaking, the strength of the relationships will determine the strength of the recruiting effort. Unless there is a strong web of relationships within the movement, recruiting will be very difficult.
- 2) Because they are asked.
- 3) Because they see themselves as an integral part of the conference or ministry going.

Here are common reasons why people attend conferences:

Wanted to learn and grow in my walk with God--39%

Had attended before--12%

Wanted to be with my friends--12%

Wanted to renew my commitment to God--8%

A friend encouraged me to come--6%

To deal with my future--5%

I knew it was where God wanted me--5%

Other--11%

Four phases of recruiting to conferences.

1) **Inform.** This is where you arouse interest with publicity, announcements, testimonies, and skits.

2) **Educate.** "Let me tell you what will go on....We're going to carpool....We'll be staying at the _____ Hotel....Here's who will be speaking...on these topics.... (Highlight speakers and seminars that you have benefited from.) The price will be....Here's the schedule....You can register by...."

3) **Motivate.** This is where you answer, "What difference does it make if I go?" In your own words, share the benefits of going to the conference.

- A time to pull away from a busy schedule and grow in your relationship with God.
- A time to get to know other Christians from your campus.
- Excellent training.
- You'll come back a different person.
- Ask, "What do you think you'd get out of this conference?"
- It'll be a great time.

This is where you say, "I'd really like you to come with me to the Missional Women Conference. Let me tell you how God has used conferences in my life and how I can see you benefiting from being there." (Think back on your own life changes, impressions, reservations and fears.) Motivation is helping them want to go. The more important it is to you, the more important it will be for them.

4) **Challenge.** Side shows, skits, testimonies, films, banners, and brochures are all helpful in promoting a conference, but ultimately recruiting comes down to a person-to-person challenge: "Would you like to go?" "Can you think of anything that would keep you from going?" "Would you pray about it this week and ask God if He wants you to go?" Ask women to come along with you as opposed to "You should go to the Missional Women Conference."

In this phase you list all the women that could possibly be asked. The challenge is done best in a one-to-one setting. Make sure there is accountability and follow-through by getting a definite "yes" or "no" from each person. The unseen ingredient in recruiting is genuine enthusiasm and expectancy of what God will do at the conference.

As good and complete your conference brochure may be, don't assume that you can ever say, "Everything you need to know is in the brochure. Just read it" and expect people to come. People come because of people.

Goals versus desires

Goals are statements of faith. Goals are a statement of what we believe God wants us to do. "We're praying for two car loads of women to go to the Missional Women Conference." Goals are a focal point for trusting God together as a ministry. Goals become our "prayer targets." In setting recruiting goals, it is useful to remember the difference between goals and desires. A goal is an objective that can be achieved without anyone else's cooperation, i.e. "My goal is to personally challenge 20 women to the conference with me." A desire is an objective that cannot be achieved without someone else's cooperation. This is your prayer target, i.e. "We're praying for 30 women to go to the conference." It is essential that we pray for our desires and hold ourselves accountable for our goals.

Using obstacles to build faith

In challenging people it is necessary that we don't make the decision for them but help them to trust God in overcoming the barriers if they really want to go. Barriers and obstacles (no money, work commitments, etc.) are not final but are opportunities to see God work. Assuming someone wants to go to the conference, our job is to help him to believe God to meet her need to get her there. There is a great difference between, "Well, I guess I'll go if God provides the money" and "I believe God wants me to go and I'm trusting Him for the money." God can often do as much in the life of a person getting them to the conference as at the conference itself--sometimes more.

Conferences and your ministry

The Missional Women Conference can be seen as an integral part of your ministry--a rallying point. If a ministry expands only as leadership is developed, then the Missional Women Conference can be a helpful part of building your ministry by helping develop strong leaders.