

R3 Outreach 101

Guidelines for Izaak Walton League Leaders and Volunteers

What is R3?

R3 stands for:

- Recruit
 - New hunters / recreational shooting enthusiasts
- Retain
 - Existing participants
- Reactivate
 - Former participants who have stopped



Recruit | Retain | Reactivate

State wildlife agencies, the firearms and archery industries, and hunting, shooting sports, and conservation groups, including the League, have come together nationally behind a comprehensive strategy to reverse declining participation in hunting and shooting sports

Why is R3 Important to IWLA?

We want to sustain and grow participation in hunting and recreational shooting sports well into the future.



Achieving this goal is harder than it used to be. We all know about demographic changes, urbanization, habitat degradation, loss of access to private lands, competition for our time

States, the firearms industry, groups like the League are grappling with this, and we're being forced to change our strategy, tactics, the audiences we engage, and how we engage those audiences

For decades new participants were brought to us – literally delivered to our doorsteps: by parents and grandparents who grew up hunting and target shooting; by state agencies through mandated hunter education that required folks to sit in a classroom and listen to an instructor for weeks

State agencies never had to think about marketing, communications, doing anything to meet the needs of participants because participants kept showing up every year, buying licenses, they'd read 100 pages of regulations in tiny print

Industry just had to think about middle age white guys and gals, industry knew them backward and forward, knew exactly which buttons to push, where to advertise, how to convince them to buy the next gun or additional gear

That's all changed. Our job is harder now: we have to proactively reach out to and

engage new audiences with different interests and motivations, and little to no experience with the sports, no family or social support structure; we have engage them on their terms; we need to do it electronically and in person

The good news is there are millions of people out there with a latent interest, there is untapped demand – we need to tap it

And deep down, their interests aren't much different than many traditional participants: having fun, spending time with family and friends, being outside, knowing where their food comes from

Basic Principles

- Focus on people without a family history of participation
- Basic messages are simple:
 - Recreational shooting is a safe, fun activity you can do with friends
 - Hunting is a way to sustainably get meat for you (and your family)
- Reach out to groups of individuals that already share common interests or connections



There's been a lot of work done over the past 5 years to better understand the audiences, how to engage them, what motivates them. And through the outreach that many have already done, we have refined our tactics and learned some important lessons

These are some of the overarching principles that should guide our work, and that will help us succeed

Target audiences belong to groups – not just same groups we've focused on for decades, NOT needle in haystack situation

Basic Principles

- Make events social, fun, simple to do, and relatively short
- Emphasize safety – audiences want to know activity is safe
- Partner - with long-standing colleagues and establish new partnerships



Much like traditional participants, new participants are attracted to the social aspects of the sports

Partnering with other groups – especially groups to which new audiences likely belong – makes “finding” these audiences much easier

Basic Principles

- R3 cannot be just about kids. Focus more on adults
- Don't talk politics or religion
- Set aside your motivations, your experiences
- LISTEN to new participants



Widespread consensus that past efforts to attract new participants too focused on kids of current participants. Continuous decline in number of hunters over 30 years demonstrates isn't enough to focus on kids

Young adults represent a large, untapped audience with their own cars, discretionary income, and social networks

Success depends on making this about THEM - NOT US

Basic Principles

- New audiences need to see themselves in our materials, faces, events
- Some will share our interest in conservation
- Using electronic communications, social media and mobile devices are essential



First bullet is marketing 101 - needs no further explanation

Here's another huge potential benefit for the League when we engage new audiences – many of these folks share our interest in conservation, getting involved in their community to conserve natural resources. The League has so much more to offer than many colleague groups – people will be surprised to know the League is about so much more than hunting or shooting sports, and some of them will grow the ranks of volunteers, some may even become members

Electronic communications is essential, and being dismissive of the technology dooms your outreach from the start. Every chapter has younger members adept with this technology – let them run with it, give them an opportunity to lead and not just sending the tweet, but personally engaging their peers

Steps for Success



1) Identify your target audience: Start simply – focus on one promising audience

2) Engage with partners before meeting new audience

Our goal is to proactively engage new audiences – meet with them, tell them about hunting and shooting sports, and invite them to try it or take a simple first step that will increase likelihood they will try it in the future

The steps for success are going to sound really simple - and they are. Many of us have done them all before – just with more familiar audiences or in other contexts

First step – identify one audience to engage

Not hard to find audience – look to partners, start conversation with partners

Steps for Success



3) Meet with new audience

4) Quickly highlight the activity, LISTEN to their interests

Steps for Success



5) Identify barriers to participation

6) Address barriers in chapter programs & events

5) Identify barriers to participation: One of the most important things to do in your initial meeting is to listen for reasons new audience members cannot participate. This is essential because we have the best chance of successfully engaging them when we can remove some of the barriers to participation.

6) Address barriers in chapter programs/events: For many League chapters, addressing barriers to participation may be quite simple. Think about a very likely scenario with recent college graduates, for example, and target shooting. What are some of the barriers they are likely to identify?: don't own guns/bows, no one to teach them, don't know where to shoot/don't have a safe place to shoot; not sure what friends might think.

Then think about most chapter programs/events that offer beginners an opportunity to try shooting sports. They provide: instruction, safe places to shoot, and basic firearms/bows and ammunition. Without changing anything, the chapter can immediately highlight how it addresses key barriers making it easier for folks to try the activity.

In some cases, a target audience will identify a major barrier that would require a chapter to take specific steps to address it. The most important thing is to keep an open mind when considering if the chapter can reasonably address the barrier. Perhaps addressing it involves a schedule change or doing some additional outreach within the

chapter to find instructors or members with specific knowledge or experience.

Steps for Success



7) Invite people to try the activity

8) Follow-up and stay connected

Following up is key, many folks won't act immediately to try activity; get contact info and follow up; and follow-up a couple times

Work with partners to organize an event; invite folks to an existing event – leverage that partnership for follow-up and a structure to facilitate participation among an existing social network

Target Audiences

- Millennials (born between 1980 and 2000)
- Food-motivated (often younger, more urban and female)
- Experience motivated (potential hunters, may have some history of participation)
- Recent college grads / current college students
- Young professionals
- Women (fastest growing segment of participants in shooting sports)

**PRIORITY TO ENGAGE PEOPLE WITHOUT
FAMILY HISTORY OF PARTICIPATION**

Research and practical experience in the hunting and shooting sports communities have identified specific audiences of potential new participants. These audiences offer a concrete starting point for outreach and initial engagement

General Messages - Hunting

- Focus on the food first!
- Emphasize hunting provides healthy, local food
- Offer opportunity to taste wild game, learn more about hunting
- Don't focus on antlers, gear, or competition



Like with audience identification, research and practical experience have identified some high level messaging that resonates positively across these target audiences.

General Messages - Shooting Sports

- Target shooting is a fun, safe activity people can enjoy with friends
- Safety is important.
People:
 - are apprehensive about handling firearms
 - want a safe experience
 - seek guidance from knowledgeable experts
- Don't shy away from using words like:
 - Safe
 - Safety
 - Safe environment



Target Audience - Millennials

Messages

- Emphasize activities are social, fun, safe
- Highlight how participants can learn new skills/try new activity
- DON'T refer to them as millennials

Where to find them

- Groups representing young professionals
- Alumni associations at local colleges and universities
- Breweries/restaurants that focus on locally-sourced foods
- Organizations representing younger veterans



Where to find them: The local chamber of commerce may have a section or group for young professionals; chapters of professional societies in the community may also have a section or subgroup for younger members

Target Audience – Food Motivated

Messages

- Use words like:
 - Sustainable
 - Local
 - Self-sufficient
 - Providing for family
- Emphasize opportunity to taste wild game, learn more about hunting
- Focus on the food first!



Where to find them

- Farmers markets
- Food co-ops
- Other locations/events where locally-sourced food is a focus

This audience is especially relevant for recruiting new hunters

Target Audience – Experience Motivated

Message

- Emphasize fun, adventure, being active outdoors

Where to find them

- Outdoor clubs colleges and universities
- Groups representing young professionals
- Outdoor recreation programs or skills-building activities hosted by local libraries or park and recreation departments



This audience is already engaged in various types of outdoor recreation, they are active outdoors. Hunting and recreational shooting sports are additional activities that might interest them

Potential partners: Think about local government agencies; libraries offer a wide array of activities, how-tos – may not focus specifically on hunting, but focus on sustainable food, organic food / active outdoor recreation

Target Audience – College Age

Messaging

- Emphasize fun, adventure, friends
- Shooting sports and hunting are safe activities they can do with friends



Where to find

- Partner with/reach out to college shooting club
- Outdoor clubs/outing groups at colleges and universities

Target Audience - Women

Messaging

- Emphasize social, family, safe
- Emphasize collaboration, taking things at own pace
- Do NOT focus on competition
- DON'T use pink guns



Outreach 101 – Recap

- Keep it simple
- Expand beyond kids - engage adults too!
- Promising audiences with interest
- Work with partners
- Start a conversation - THEN LISTEN
- Address barriers – many chapter programs already do!
- Play to our strengths: safe places and skilled mentors
- Hunting – focus on food first
- Invite to try
- Stay connected and follow up
- Capitalize on other interests – conservation locally

League Support

- National office working with 6 – 8 chapters on pilot projects, will develop and test proactive outreach strategies
- R3 outreach guidelines (this presentation)
- *Outdoor America* articles (see League web site)
- Paid NSSF membership for all chapters with shooting sports facilities. Provides:
 - free technical support on shooting range management
 - access to NSSF discounted materials and publications

League Support

- Archery academies train new instructors, expand programs
 - Indiana April 27-28, 2019
 - Iowa May 4-5, 2019
- Explore Bow Hunting instructor resources from ATA
- National Shooting Sports Month – August 2019
- Ikes On Target newsletter (quarterly)

Let's Challenge Ourselves

League chapters uniquely positioned to succeed

- Safe places to shoot, learn about hunting
- Skilled and experienced instructors and mentors
- Already remove many barriers for beginners

Stretch Goals for 2019

- At least 50 percent of League chapters with shooting sports facilities hold a public event during National Shooting Sports Month
- Be proactive about engaging new audiences – start the conversation, invite to try