

Proposal for Growth, Sustainability and Recruitment

Growth Strategy

The May First strategy is based on two approaches: recruitment and involvement in movement work. So far, these have been fairly separate. Our strategic goal should be to unite those two approaches using our movement work to enhance recruitment. To do that, we have to enhance our movement communications because one of the reasons we can't recruit is that people don't know much about us and don't really see how our work is important to them.

Stability Strategy

Growth, however, is not our only problem. In fact, our more significant problem is our internal communications and consciousness of our members. Most May First members are not integrated into our work at all. They seldom contact each other or our leadership. While it's probable most of them support (and are even proud of) our movement work, they don't view it as important to them or part of their membership.

What's more, when the person in many organization members who signed up with us leaves, the organization often either leaves or sends us an email asking who we are. Our relationship with many members is only as deep as the staff person or leader we have contact with.

There is no internal education and/or targeted communications among May First members. Curing that problem would turn many of our members into recruiters (which supports the first goal) and improve our organization's work in every way.

Goals

Double membership within next two years:

While it's ambitious given our numbers, this is actually a very realistic goal given our situation. We are currently working in coalitions and networks comprising over a thousand organizations. It should be noted that, up to about 2007, MF/PL routinely enrolled three new members every day. While the conditions today are very different, we can still return to that rate of recruitment.

Intensify communications with movement

We will never recruit without greatly improving and enhancing our movement communications program. We send nothing to media. Our outreach lists are very sparse and small (although we have a large members' email list). Our website is nicely presented but it's not geared to recruitment and is very confusing. And we do not use any video which is almost ridiculous given who we are.

Deepen Member relationships and communications

The point is straightforward. Getting our leaders, staff and rank and file members to talk to each other is a priority for this organization.

Plan

Resource Sustainability Policy

In recognition of the need to maintain solid, reliable infrastructure to grow the organization, the board will set a quota on the amount of disk space allocated to each member by default. In addition, the board will create a sub-committee to review member requests for additional resources (including additional disk space, but also covering dedicated virtual guests and new services not yet offered). The board will also provide sliding scale chart so members have an idea of how much they may be expected to increase their dues in order to get additional resources.

Additionally, we will fully support the infrastructure re-organization project passed during the summer of 2018 (<https://support.mayfirst.org/wiki/infrastructure-2018>) to fundamentally rebuild our software, server and services allocation systems to more efficiently use our hardware and our labor.

Internal Education

New Member Orientation

Starting April 10, a monthly one-hour new member orientation will involve a mumble meeting opening with an overview of our organization and its work, a short presentation on a specific topic that is drawing our interest and then an open question and answer and discussion session.

Membership Meetings

These are member discussion sessions on specific "work topics" that the leadership defines. Examples: What's our role in the Radical Connections Network? or What should we be doing inside the alternative economy movement? or How to pursue new software work?

The objective is to glean from as many members as possible ideas and thinking to assist our leadership in these "day to day" decisions.

May 9 -- Where Should Technology Be Going? -- conversation about our tech work and how much we should be involved in "new project" work.

June 6 -- Technology at the Center? -- What exactly is the role of technology in the larger struggle and in the development of society? How did our society get to where it is and where, exactly, is it?

July 11 -- Who the Heck Are We? -- Is May First really this community of all movements in this country? What about Mexico? Which movements does our organization actually comprise and what is their role to us and to the technology program we espouse.

September 5 -- Back to School -- Do we do enough education? Training? What's the role of that and how should we be doing it?

November 7 -- Who's in Charge? -- How democratic is our organization and how do we improve that?

Membership Guide

By April 1 -- a two-page Q and A format explanation of who we are, what we do and what membership means. It should be automatically attached to all emails going to new members in response to their joining us.

"Issue Affinity" email list mailings:

We are already organizing our member list into "issue areas" or "work concentrations" so we can do "issue specific" emails to our members. We plan to commence those specific emails in April -- one a month for every concentration group.

Recruitment

Reasons Why Series:

Series of 10 emails -- one for each of the "argument" topics made in the first one -- issued every two weeks. (original email below)

Video Work:

The continuation of both Points Taken and Need to Know is listed in a point above but it's included in this recruitment section to note that it should now have its own, discreet web presence whether that's a special website section or a separate website.

Complete Revamp of Website (including fixing the how-tos, etc.):

Keeping the design, which is very nice, we should reorganize the entire site. It should be little more than a list of links to other minor websites (howto, membership, video/audio, join system) and all those links should be prominent, in a list, on the site. All "linked" sites should be on white background so they're much more readable than the main site.

Continue and Deepen Movement Tech Congresses:

We are going to keep doing these. Our sixth is in Illinois area. Around June, we should start talking about organizing a major summit of the Left around technology sometime in 2020. That would be a major step forward.

Technologist Recruitment

Develop a program of recruitment, skill-specific activity and general involvement by technologists prioritizing people of color, women and LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people.

Establish a "technologist group" that will not only directly participate in the maintenance and expansion of our technology but will engage in the development of new technology approaches we can share with our movements.

Encourage and facilitate the engagement of these technologists with our members.

Addendum:

This is the email sent as kick-off to "Reasons Why"

Hello,

We're May First/People Link. We're sending this to people who have been to our events.

Some of you are members and we think this email might be worth reading. But many of you have not joined us yet and are using a commercial internet provider for website, email and other services. That's what we want to talk about.

We think it's worth a couple of minutes of your time to consider some comparisons between your provider and us that explain why you may want to join us.

- Your provider is a business that doesn't know a thing about you and doesn't care. We're a membership organization whose members decide everything we do.
- Your provider will shut you down if you're attacked. We'll protect your website, bring it back on-line and never never shut you down. Never!
- Your provider is in touch with you every month...with a bill. We send our members information every week, organize monthly educationals like the Need to Know series and have all kinds of consultative and informative meetings all the time.
- Your provider doesn't work to build a sustainable, just and democratic world. We're a movement organization: leaders in many coalitions and networks on a diversity of issues involving technology and we're the organizers of the Technology and Revolution convergence process for the last three years.
- Your provider thinks of Mexico when someone says "wall". Over 20 percent of our members and leaders live and work there.
- Your provider wants business to control the Internet. We want all people to democratically "own" it and work to keep it free, neutral and productive.
- Your provider probably belongs to some "trade association" whose purpose is to maximize profits. We belong to the Radical Connections Network: a network of movement technologists whose purpose is to maximize the progressive and productive use of technology.
- Your provider will charge you for all services. We don't. We each pay our dues and have access to our collective resources: website, email, storage, phone meeting...over 15 different Internet services.
- You see...your provider's business model is charging you as much as they can. Our organizational model is supporting you to do everything you can.

They profit from you. We support your work.

It's like this:

Your provider is in it for the money. We're in it for the revolution.

We don't know who your provider is and it doesn't matter. They're pretty much all the same.

We're May First/People Link -- the left-wing membership Internet organization and, as you can see, we're different.

So shouldn't you be a member? Join us.

<https://mayfirst.org/join>

For info, our website is: <https://mayfirst.org>

And I'm Alfredo and you can email me with questions or comments: alfredo@mayfirst.org

Thanks for reading this.