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Subject: Senior Ambassador Programs Installment 2
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Recruitment: Q&A, letters, referrals, etc.

The most difficult step to setting up a viable ambassador program is recruitment, which is why some studios never get their program off the ground. Why is recruitment deemed difficult? Let us look at a few key factors:

1. Timing - late summer is best for setting up a program for the first time, Spring is too late.
2. Failure to ask seniors for referrals from the junior class.
3. Looking at the wrong people to become ambassadors.
4. Setting expectations too high.

Late summer is the time to begin recruiting next years ambassadors from the junior class by asking for referrals from the seniors currently being photographed. Keep in mind that many high school clubs, honorary groups and sport teams consist of a mix or both seniors and juniors. At this stage you are only compiling a list of possible candidates. Full name and address is basically all you need. *(Note: when you have your ambassador program up and running, current ambassadors can be asked to suggest and can even recruit future ambassadors for you.)* Some studios conduct ongoing recruitment using their website. We do not recommend the sole use of the website to initiate or launch an ambassador program. A website is only one of several methods used to maintain a well organized ambassador program.

After you have compiled your recruitment list, a letter should be sent to each candidate describing your program, explaining how it works and include the enclosure of your ambassador benefits. You will also need to stress the fact that parental approval is required. Several samples of typical recruiting letters are shown below.

Some studios enclose a form requesting personal information such as: memberships in clubs and groups (inside and outside of school), sport teams, a 100 word paragraph on why the candidate wants to be an ambassador, and a list of friends. Recruitment letters can vary greatly in complexity. Can your recruitment letter pass muster? Ask yourself one question, "Would you answer your letter if you were back in high school?"

All interviews must take place, preferably, with mom present. Now you can ask those very important questions to determine each candidate's sphere of influence and communication skills to adequately promote your studio. Could they promote your studio to their friends? Why do they want to be an ambassador? Important questions that need answers.

Middle class students often make the best candidates because they view ambassador benefits as having perceived value. They work hard in clubs, groups and sports because they want to get ahead. Money can be an

issue in their lives, thus a motivator. Such students may not always be good looking and can be easily passed over because most studio photographers want photogenic seniors-models. You must strike a balance between the two. Suggestion: the use of photogenic seniors are well suited for your brochures and website which is totally separate from an ambassador program. Your goal is the use of ambassadors that can successfully market for you even if they are not deemed model quality. This step cannot be overstated enough because far too many ambassador programs fail because of it.

Your primary concern is **sphere of influence** i.e. those candidates that can easily be accountable for five booked referrals plus the opportunity to add to your public relations efforts. Examples of this are: photographing a whole sports team, the cheerleader squad, glee club, etc.; not for profit but for displays in the school. What coach would not want a large team wall print in his or her office? What do you get from it? Well, everyone on the team (seniors and juniors) will know who you are in person, not just in name. This also applies to the cheerleader squad, etc. So where will those juniors go for their senior portraits next year, most probably to your studio. As a concept, an ambassador's **sphere of influence** can easily become building blocks for your studio's future growth. That is why 50% of senior photographers have an ambassador program. Need more be said?

[Sample 1](#)

[Sample 2](#)

[Sample 3](#)

[Sample 4](#)

[Sample 5](#)

[Sample 6](#)

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