

Regional Membership Strategies To Build AZA/BBG

There are countless ways to build BBYO in any community. As regional leaders you will know your community and audience best. That's why we present five different techniques to build your regional membership, so that you can work with your peer leaders and regional staff to determine which strategy will bring you closest to your goals. In some regions, all of these methods may apply, and in others, only a couple. Consider all of them, and figure out how you might implement them back home. These tactics work best when applied collectively. The growth AZA and BBG have enjoyed these last few years are a result of the success these efforts are having across the Orders.

Set and Break Chapter Benchmarks

In many regions, chapter membership is all over the place. For starters, some chapters fall below the chapter charter minimum (12 members). Chapter membership levels can easily lend themselves to realistic goals and "easy wins".

Some examples:

If you have a chapter with 9 members set a one-month goal for them to reach 12.

If you have a chapter at 13 or 14, set a two-month goal of reaching 20.

If you have a chapter at 23, set a three month goal of 30.

Each time a chapter reaches a goal, set another. This will build momentum and spread enthusiasm among your membership. You will see your regional membership rise steadily as chapters continuously reach and break through their original goal levels, and teen leaders will begin to seek the adrenaline rush of exceeding the routine goals they set for expansion.

Two Members a Month Plan

Fixes Retention Woes: The quickest way to increase membership in your regions is to have your chapters reach their high point from the year before by the early fall. What we learned a few years ago was that regions (and thereby, chapters) were spending the bulk of the program year chasing retention, thus only eclipsing their previous year's involvement total by Spring or later. By advancing the retention goal, the majority of the year becomes one that is fueled by growth. Consistent expansion becomes easier and total involvement becomes a goal rooted in enthusiasm and not driven by pressure. If each of your chapters re-registers their membership (with the exception of graduated seniors) by early Fall and works to recruit 2 members a month, per chapter, for 8, 9, or 10 months, your region will grow considerably (even, automatically).

For All Communities: Recruiting a minimum of 2 members a month is also a good strategy because it provides a period of time for every pair recruited to have specialized attention from the rest of the chapter. Remember, 2 are the minimum. You want to strive for more. Some of our communities can afford to take on much more than 2. Some need to set a different regiment to account for a smaller community. This tool also makes regional/council management of chapters easier. While membership is only one of many metrics for success, when a chapter misses their 'steady recruitment goal' for a month or two months, it is a clear sign that attention is needed versus chapters that are succeeding at regular growth patterns. This helps prioritize things for your regional/council leadership.

Consistent AZA and BBG Education: This cycle will also help in building a strong AIT or MIT class each semester. Each semester will bring in a defined class of teens. Their second semester of involvement becomes an AIT/MIT training semester where they are groomed for future leadership roles, and shadow existing chapter leadership on projects and chapter administration. This is done while the next class is being recruited. The newly trained teens later assume chapter leadership roles, and the new class moves into training, while a third class is then recruited – and so on. The cycle builds a rhythm to the chapter's existence ensuring that there's never an unfilled role in chapter leadership, and everyone has a purpose for being in the program. Experienced, older chapter members/leaders no longer serving in official roles, become mentors and big brothers/sisters to new recruits.

The Formula

Region X ended 2010-2011 at 400 members. In Region X there are 5 AZA chapters, 4 BBG chapters, and 1 BBYO chapter.

<u>June 2011</u>	<u>June 2011</u>	<u>June 2011</u>
AZA Chapter 1: 25 members	BBG Chapter 1: 25 members	BBYO Chapter: 15 members
AZA Chapter 2: 50 members	BBG Chapter 2: 60 members	
AZA Chapter 3: 75 members	BBG Chapter 3: 45 members	
AZA Chapter 4: 20 members	BBG Chapter 4: 50 members	
AZA Chapter 5: 35 members	180 members	
205 members		

2/3 Retention Goal (roughly after graduation and other variables): 280 for October 15, 2011

<u>June 2011</u>	<u>June 2011</u>	<u>June 2011</u>
AZA Chapter 1: 21 members	BBG Chapter 1: 19 members	BBYO Chapter: 10 members
AZA Chapter 2: 28 members	BBG Chapter 2: 45 members	
AZA Chapter 3: 52 members	BBG Chapter 3: 28 members	
AZA Chapter 4: 17 members	BBG Chapter 4: 36 members	
AZA Chapter 5: 24 members	128 members	
142 members		

So, with 2 members a month for 10 months, per chapter, (which translates to 20 new members a month as a minimum) year-end totals will be:

<u>June 2011</u>	<u>June 2011</u>	<u>June 2011</u>
AZA Chapter 1: 41 members	BBG Chapter 1: 39 members	BBYO Chapter: 30 members
AZA Chapter 2: 48 members	BBG Chapter 2: 65 members	
AZA Chapter 3: 72 members	BBG Chapter 3: 48 members	
AZA Chapter 4: 37 members	BBG Chapter 4: 56 members	
AZA Chapter 5: 44 members	208 members	
242 members		

By June 30, 2012, Region X could potentially have: 480 as a minimum. **This plan doesn't account for new chapters launched, Fall/Spring/Eighth grade membership spikes, or chapters exceeding their 2-members a month minimum (which many can easily do given communal demographics).** Think about two, three, and five years from now. If Region X practices this each year over the next few years, it will grow to 550, 600, 650, etc. Your opportunities are limitless. Take advantage of the year ahead of you to lay the foundation for the years after you.

Charter New Chapters - Bring AZA & BBG to New Communities In Your Regions

Starting chapters in new areas is time intensive, but also very rewarding – and the fastest way to grow an AZA and BBG community significantly. The first thing to keep in mind when starting a new chapter is about building it for the future, not creating a quick patchwork of chapters that is under equipped to survive the long haul. When starting a new chapter in a new area, it is key to understand that they will not start off planning their own programs and being a fully functioning chapter for a while. Lots of hand holding, going slowly and taking it step by step is something that is necessary to build a strong leadership base.

One of the first steps that must occur is identifying the needs of the community. What can the community support at the current time? What do AZA and BBG have to offer that is unique to the Jewish teens in a specific community? Are you looking to start an AZA chapter, a BBG chapter, or a BBYO chapter? It's helpful to think about each chapter as a franchise (business metaphor)/stronghold (war metaphor). Each new chapter you establish amplifies your communal visibility and makes AZA/BBG that much more accessible in every neighborhood/school district/town, etc. (Once you have identified the needs of the community you are ready to start.

There is no defined way to "begin" a chapter, but the first uniform step is being able to offer them something they don't currently have in the community. The central question of starting a new chapter in any area, urban, suburban or rural is identifying what the Jewish teens want and providing it for them.

Start them off slow, gather parent's support and plan some fun programs that will leave them wanting to return. Finally, if you are in a large city and will be starting a new chapter from members breaking off of other chapters, you have to be extremely careful the leadership in both the new chapter and in the old chapter is sustainable not only for the next 6 months, but in 2 years from the break. Starting a chapter with seniors is not a lasting situation and one that won't likely be pragmatic for the coming board. The new chapter charter process will help steward a new chapter toward stability and sustainability.

AZA and BBG Own BBYO Connect

BBYO Connect is now serving 10,000+ middle school students on an annual basis. These are teens that, for the most part, are having positive experiences with BBYO already. The rate of transition from BBYO Connect to AZA and BBG is far from where it should be! **AZA and BBG own BBYO Connect.**

We understand that in many communities that it is a staff-run experience. That said, it shouldn't be, and there isn't a staff person worldwide that wouldn't be enthusiastic about teens expressing interest in helping with the implementation of a successful BBYO Connect experience. Work with your local staff to build teen leadership roles into your local BBYO Connect program.

- Create Regional and Council BBYO Connect Representatives, Positions, Chair People
- Attend BBYO Connect events (with AZA and BBG representatives from every Chapter)
- Add it to Position Portfolios at the Chapter, Council, and/or Regional level
- Create special 8th grade kickoff/transition program that lead to AZA and BBG excitement

***The only regions to grow significantly over the last 5 years have strong, vibrant and exciting BBYO Connect programs with AZA and BBG buy-in and positive community reputations.**

Engage Everyone, Everywhere

This is the broadest goal of all, but once achieved, it will serve as a vibrant platform for all growth. If AZA and BBG grow to be the popular Jewish youth group of choice in your community then you have succeeded. It's important to recognize that this takes time – even years. This is accomplished through many ways. Are siblings of past members seeking BBYO and AZA and BBG on their own before even being recruited? Do your JCCs, Jewish Federation, and community organizations work, promote, and program with BBYO on an ongoing basis? Are your alumni active? Are there consistent opportunities for growth and expansion? Is your membership stable?

You need face-time with Jewish teens. Your presence is hugely instrumental in building your local BBYO brand. You're an ambassador for the local program. The more credibility, relationships and network savvy you have, the more agencies, families and funders will think of you when looking to engage teens. Even if your BBYO program isn't where it will be over time, you can gain buy-in on a vision for excellence (and the pathway of getting there can be made easier with community support).

Have BBYO partner with other teen programs in your communities including sport leagues, community service initiatives, town fairs, civic projects, or local political campaigns. BBYO Connect can be a tremendously valuable tool in this effort. If BBYO is a presence in Jewish teens lives, you will find pockets and social circles of Jewish teens that would have otherwise not come into contact with BBYO or AZA and BBG. From these partnerships you may find groups of Jewish teens that are interested in joining current chapters, taking part in summer programs, or starting new chapters.

Become the Jewish teen presence in your area and it will lead to a culture of involvement. If over time your membership continues to climb, your region has a positive and meaningful image in the community, and AZA and BBG have a cool, fun, and satisfying reputation, recruitment challenges will dissipate. The more members your region has, the more teens in general you'll engage through Jewish programming. This is the product of strong programming, effective membership efforts, and responsible teen leadership over the course of many years. Put your regions on the path toward this goal this year so that in the near future, AZA and BBG are strong, and the premier Jewish experience for Jewish teens where you live.