A simple question yields big results

Chicago service officers triple recruits by asking this one thing

It can be difficult to think of recruiting new members in the context of sales, but that is precisely the direction the Chicago NSO office took to increase their membership sign-ups by 222 percent.

The question they asked, “Are you ready to become a DAV member?” It really was simple as that. They asked for membership.

There is a psychological science behind sales, and closing a potential client, customer, or in this case, member is dependent on your understanding of that science. If you want to recruit more members, which we all do, ask for their membership.

That doesn’t mean just walking up to a random veteran and asking them to become a DAV member though. If you follow these simple steps, you will recruit more members, and maybe yours will be the next office, chapter or department with a 222 percent increase in membership sign-ups.

The first thing: sell DAV. Explain the value in representing veterans for their claims and other areas that substantively improve veterans’ lives. Tell prospective members about our voluntary service and all the work we do to help veterans, from career fairs to our transportation network. There are so
many great things we do on behalf of veterans and the veteran community.

Once you’ve effectively sold DAV, simply ask, “Are you ready to become a DAV member?” Then pause. Resist the urge to keep the conversation going, just wait. They’ll want to fill the silence eventually and there is a much greater chance they will fill it with a yes.

If you aren’t comfortable with asking as directly as we’ve outlined, there are a number of other ways to ask for membership.

Be sure to go through all the wonderful things we do for veterans, never skip that part, but when you’re ready to ask you can say:

- “When can we make you a DAV member?”
- “How can we get you signed up as our newest DAV member?”
- “We can get this membership form filled out now. Does that work for you?”

The key to Chicago’s success was asking the question, and that will be the key to your success too. Don’t be shy in approaching potential members and donors. You never know who will join until you ask.