

Region 3
FLEET First
Program



January 2016
version 1

Acknowledgments:

This manual was written by Jeremy Carsten, with inputs provided by Sarah Hays, and Steve Sardeson. This manual borrows, heavily from the work of the USS Zavala for both table setup inspiration, as well as dress code (almost entirely copied from the work of Lucy Ferron-Franck of the USS Zavala). This guide also attempts to address issues noted by after actions reports from Randolph Allen, Andy McDonald. This work would not be possible without these, and many more individual's efforts. Anyone missing from these acknowledgments is not intended, and will be remedied in future revisions.

Introduction:

What is FLEET First? It is a program, started by Region 3, to change the way STARFLEET conducts itself in the eyes of the public, expand awareness of our organization and actives and establish a professional reputation throughout the fandom circles. There are many parts to this, this manual will focus on the broad goals of the program.

Charity:

We begin by engaging with a charity. It is recommended that this be a lasting relationship (at least a year) that all collected funds go toward. This makes it easier to highlight our impact on a given charity, without having to break it down to the random member of the public. (i.e. "We've raised \$400 so for this year for Children's miracle network, plus other local charities." Vs "We've raised \$50 for the local Animal shelter in San Antonio, \$100 for the local children's hospital in Dallas, \$250 for the local women's shelter in Houston, ...").

Picking a charity to partner with also gives us a point to begin conversations with. No longer are we asking "Do you want to join my Star Trek fan club" now we're asking them to support our charity as an introductory topic. Recruiting will come later after they decide they like what they have seen.

Region 3, via the Congress of Commanding officers (CCO), shall select a charity for the upcoming year before August 1 of each year, unless a longer term charity is selected by the CCO.

The specific mechanism for raising money/taking donations will be left to the Mission Leader, but a minimum will be a collection jar.

Who we are:

In the FLEET First program who we are is **STARFLEET International** (It is important NOT to just use the term “Starfleet” as that gets confused with the fictional organization, not our fan org). One front, one message. Chapters will be talked about later. We will discuss STARFLEET’s programs and benefits (member perks, specific departments like The Academy, Technical Services or the STARFLEET Marine Corps, etc.). Once they are interested in joining we provide them a menu of chapters for THEM, the prospective member, to choose from. This menu will highlight chapters that were present at the event, followed by other FLEET First chapters, and then the link to the chapter finder page on SFI.org. On this menu will be contact information and a quick highlight of that chapter’s activities and interests. More importantly we will provide resource for the prospective member to start their own chapter; they can recruit more friends and bring another voice and new ideas to our organization.

Why this vs. individual chapter focus? Chapter focus detracts from the larger group. It doesn’t sell as well as ‘the oldest and largest Star Trek Fan organization in the world’ or as well as a group of over 4000 fans. Chapters generally don’t have membership perks, and chapters can’t claim the bigger numbers that larger sections of the overall organization can. And, to address the issue – chapters sometimes don’t get along. It leads to the discussion of what chapter is better... and that is bickering in front of the public – tarnishing the reputation for all of STARFLEET.

To address that uncomfortable fact...”FLEET First” aims to help with that. With multiple chapters working together on a common goal, and upholding the standards of professionalism and enthusiasm, we might just begin to see each other – even the ones we don’t get along with – as just that: Professionals and enthusiastic fans. If we can see our rivals as such, we can see ourselves as professionals too. We might just help quell some of the internal conflicts that do, unfortunately, exist within our organization.

Also, think about it. All you have to do is say what you enjoy, and not try to compete with anyone. Without competing with each other there, it’s much easier to be professional and have fun. That will make the event more enjoyable AND more successful.

Organization:

Presently FLEET First is run by the Region 3 staff. Region 3 Operations department (OPS) handles coordination between the event venue (i.e. convention staff) and the chapters (gathering a list of who all is attending, what days, and with what, if any, uniforms). The Communications department (COMMS) organizes and provides marketing materials, produces the Convention specific Chapter Menu and responds, after the fact, as the main focal point for potential recruits. The Region Quartermaster (RQM) oversees the movement and condition of the Region fan table kits, as well as tracks collected charity funds and issues said funds to the charity in a timely manner.

Specific Goals:

- Choose a specific Charity for the Region. For 2015/2016 Children's Miracle Network (to include Extra Life) has been selected.
- Establish a baseline for events, including; attire, presentation, and consistent message.
- Run one fan table per zone (Region 3 currently has 5 zones) per year as the FLEET First focus. The chapters within each zone shall choose which event they feel is best for their geographical area.
- Run one game day per zone, hosted by STARFLEET, again in support of the given charity. This should invite and advertise to the public for all to come join in. This can be done in or around November 7th, the normal National Extra-Life game day, or select another. Specifics of this goal will be addressed in another guide.
- Run other events as opportunities are presented (Star Trek Beyond opening, etc), as FLEET First events.
- Establish a reputation for STARFLEET as professionals throughout fandom.
- Attempt to heal old wounds, and genuinely see each other as professionals with a shared passion, despite our differences.
- Mature the FLEET First Program and document successful practices.
- Present the program to the SFI Admiralty Board to encourage wider adoption.
- Grow better leaders by mentoring them as Mission Leaders for specific events.

Recruiting:

To say that recruiting is not a big part of FLEET First would be disingenuous. We are recruiting, but instead of focusing on ourselves, and our chapter, we're moving the conversation to the organization as a whole and what we do. We are demonstrating our professionalism, our enthusiasm, and what we offer. Recruiting should flow naturally out of people wanting to be a part of what they see before them, and continuing good, fun conversations that they enjoyed having with us. We will then find the right chapter for them, or help them start a new one, depending on their wishes.

Often a convention does not generate recruits. We are there to collect for a charity and get our name out. By always representing STARFLEET vs. a chapter, people will begin to recognize us, remember us, and realize that we are a larger, cohesive group. This is a long term project. Many people who go to conventions go to many conventions. When they see the same message, the same professional image, we will be remembered. Name recognition! So it might not be the first, or second time they see us that makes them want to join, but later on they see we are consistently present and fun!

This is not to say there is NO room for Chapter specific items and talk. Far from it! The initial conversation should be about SFI, but natural, enjoyable conversations will move on. Talk about

what you are excited about! If they want your information give it to them! Chapters should have business cards available. Further, while the Event Planning Guide will detail the minimum of a table set up, the cool filler (props, toys, etc) are left to the chapter to provide their personal touch.

Code of conduct:

Two of the stated goals of this program are to establish a reputation as professionals and attempt to heal some of the various 'grudge' issues that do exist here in R3, and throughout the fleet. To achieve that, we need to consistently follow a respectable code of conduct. The nature of this program is to bring people from various chapters together, working together, regardless of how individuals might feel personally. As such, we will ALWAYS be respectful to each other, and the public we interface with. If you wouldn't say it to a potential recruit, or your mother, don't say it at a FLEET First function. We need to be presentable in our actions and words, not simply our attire and signage. This is true of the tone of voice we use as well, not merely specific words. In short – be good to each other, even if it 'hurts'. It will hurt a lot less than failing to showcase STARFLEET properly in the eyes of the public. In this program a lack of professionalism IS mission failure.

To think that conflict resolution will not be needed at all is far too optimistic. The Mission Leader for the event will be the final authority on all matters. The only person who can override or replace an appointed Mission Leader is the Regional Coordinator. It will be the responsibility of every member present for an event to support the Mission Leader as best they possibly can.

If, for whatever reason, a you, as an individual, simply cannot work with another individual or group – please be professional enough to admit that, and refrain from attending the event in question. We will far more respect your choice in this, as opposed to dealing with the fallout if things turn sour at a public event.

Mission Leaders:

All events will have a Mission Leader appointed by the Regional Coordinator and R3 Chief of Operations. Recommendations can come from anyone and Zone Leaders and chapter Commanding Officers will be solicited for their input on candidates for events in their zone. The Mission Leader will become a temporary member of R3 staff as part of the Operations department from time of appointment until 30 days after their event (to collect input for and send in an after actions report); reporting to the Chief of Operations.

The Mission Leaders will be charged with planning, organizing and coordinating all items, personnel and tasks required for their event. Coordination will be a HUGE piece, as no one person can do it all, and various R3 staff functions exist to support (COMMS dept, quartermaster, etc). It is also planned that these posts should be used to mentor future leaders of

SFI, so appointed Mission Leaders may not have all the experience required and will need some help. This is both OK and entirely part of the plan. Once selected they have the authority to contact anyone needed on behalf of the region, internal or external. It will be the expectation of all R3 staff to support them fully. They should also enjoy the support from all Region 3 members, in whatever capacity each member can help.

A Mission Leader checklist and time line will be found in the R3 Event Planning Guide.

Event Specifics:

Below are some specifics to give us that united front and single message. Being consistent with these areas, over time, will make us memorable and lead to being viewed as an organization, vs individual chapters.

Talking Points – There is a specific page for talking points attached to this and the Event Planning Guide. It is important we all follow the same talking points, and provide a consistent message. These are starting points to a conversation however. Don't be too stiff; start the conversation and let it flow naturally. Highlight as many aspects as you can without sounding like a recording. Conversations at conventions should be fun for all involved. Be excited to give information on our organization, but also listen to who you are speaking with. We should want to recruit them because they are good to talk to and believe in these things; they should want to join for the same reasons.

Dress Code – Not everyone will have a screen accurate uniform, nor should they be expected to. We should, however, all be recognizable as being part of the same organization. As such a chart is attached for the 'uniform' preferences for each type of event. Our basic starting point should be SFI polo shirts (available from the SFI quartermaster) and slacks/appropriate skirts. Those that have Star Trek uniforms should coordinate the wear with the Mission Leader; the more matching uniforms on each day we can get, the better our overall presentation will be. Conventions generally last three days, so coordinate a day for each main era: TOS/JJ verse on one day (Fridays or Sundays are often best, as these are more comfortable and easy to change into and out of), TNG/VOY era another day, and late DS9/First Contact the other day – as examples.

Part of a dress code is to look professional, no matter what you are wearing. All items should be clean, free of lint and wrinkles and in good repair. Personal grooming and hygiene is a must! Conventions can eat up a lot of your time, but it is critical to find time shower and groom yourself each day before interacting with the public and your fellow STARFLEET members. No one smells good after 2 days of wearing polyester shirts/uniforms walking around large crowds people.

On the topic of uniforms. If you are going to wear one, it should be recognizable to all as something from Star Trek. As such, many STARFLEET Marine uniforms are not appropriate.

The Class C' black BDU and Flight/Vehicle suits, and Class A/B 'Salt and Pepper' uniform are not immediately recognizable as part of Star Trek, and worse, often mistaken for real world police or military. These uniforms are best reserved for STARFLEET focused events like Summit, the International Conference, Musters, and the like. If in doubt, please check with your Mission Leader.

Summary:

FLEET First is intended to be a growing, ever evolving, program to change the way SFI is regarded and marketed, while providing leadership and mentoring opportunities to interested members. This guide will be updated regularly fro as long as Region 3 is attempting this ambitious program. Ultimately the goal is to expand this beyond Region 3 to the entire organization.

Appendices:

- Talking points
- Dress Code

Attachment A

Region 3's FLEET First Program

Talking Points

To assist in providing the public with a clear, cohesive message, the following talking points have been assembled. They are presented in question (from the perspective of the public member) and answer (our response) format

Helpful tips:

- Ask open ended questions (examples: Who is your favorite character on Star Trek? Tell me about your costume/uniform? What panels have you seen today?)
- Memorize a few opening lines (see above Open ended questions for ideas!) and a few concluding lines ("thanks for stopping by", but if you are talking to someone who seems really interested it might be better to say "where do we go from here?" or "how would you like me to follow up?")
- Be approachable, smile and engage with people as they walk by. Don't be checking your smart phone every two seconds.
- Please stand (if possible) to talk to person. Eye contact is important! Make sure there is a person or two IN FRONT of the table.
- Do not to eat at the table, make sure drinks are discreet. No vaping, tobacco, etc at the table. Keep the table professional in appearance. Other useful items: hand sanitizer, breath mints, wet wipes.
- DO NOT overwhelm the person with information. Offer literature to take with them, or better yet, get their contact information to follow up. And be sure to provide collected contacts to info@region3.org within 48 hours of the conclusion of the convention (so they can reach out within 72 hours)!
- Listen to what they are saying, steer the conversation to items they are interested in (costuming, charity, more active activities). Use other table workers as resources if they know more about something, and pass the potential member off to them.
- Be prepared with a few personal stories about why YOU'RE in STARFLEET.

What do you do?

We are here to Support The Children's Miracle Network

Your Donations will support:

Research

Training

Equipment and Supplies

Uncompensated for Care

And More!

We also support other charities – each chapter, in addition to this, helps with local organizations that are important to them.

The Region has selected the Children's Miracle Network as our group charity for 2016!
This includes Extra Life and similar programs.

Who are you?

We are STARFLEET International – the largest and oldest Star Trek fan organization on this, or any known planet.

What else do you do?

- We support other charities
- Enjoy our Academies for fun courses on all sorts of geeky topics
- Social Media (Facebook, Google+)
- Sub-organizations, such as the STARFLEET Marine Corps
- Away Missions (Johnson Space Center, Hosting Game Days, etc)
- Regional Summits [State where the next upcoming Summit will be]
- Annual International Conference [State where the next upcoming IC will be]

What is STARFLEET?

- We are made of Chapters. STARFLEET has over 200 chapters across the world.
- We have over 4200 active members (Not all members are on a chapter).
- Every Member gets the same perks, no matter the chapter, or even if not on one.
- Chapters are part of a Region.
- Our Region is 3, comprised of all chapters and members in Texas and Louisiana.
- Region 3 has ____ Chapters and over _____ members.

What do you get out of it?

- Discounts on costumes from Cosplaysky.com and Cosplaysupplies.com
- Discounts on Rental cars! (Enterprise and RentalCarPerks.com)
- Discounts on hotels! (Choice Hotels and Red Roof Inn)
- And MORE!
- All for annual \$10 for e-Membership (and much less for family members, \$5 for first additional, \$2 for every family member after that!)

Attachment B

Region 3 and FLEET First Dress Code

Dress Code Level	Requirements (in order of preference)	Mission Examples
Level 1	No specific requirements. Star Trek and chapter t-shirts encouraged	Joint group to see a movie, home parties, casual group meals, travel
Level 2	SFI Polo shirts, Chapter t-shirts. (shorts/footwear options authorized at Mission Leader discretion)	Chapter specific events, outdoor activities
Level 3	Star Trek uniform (coordinated with Mission Leader) Other Star Trek Alien costumes SFMC uniforms that are recognizably 'trek' SFI Polo and slacks/skirt Closed toed footwear (if in a 'Trek uniform, at least have black footwear)	FLEET First public charity/info tables (Conventions, tables for events in public, etc).
Level 4	Star Trek Uniforms SFMC Uniforms SFI Polo shirts Chapter T-shirts Other Star trek t-shirts/attire (No specific requirements unless in a specific function that has their own needs)	STARFLEET private events (IC, Summit, Muster, etc)
Level 5	As dictated by event organizer	Other Chapter Events

Clothing – All clothing must be clean and wrinkle free with no spots, stains or holes/damage.

Star Trek Uniforms will be worn in one of two ways:

- Cosplay as a specific character, or as yourself -a member of STARFLEET International.
- If Cosplaying a specific character, achieve the greatest accuracy available to you
- If as a member of STARFLEET International, please have appropriate rank and insignia
- Foot wear will be black, as will socks if they can become exposed (boots may make this irrelevant)
- Undershirts are highly encouraged if possible, especially if planning to wear the uniform multiple days

SFI polo shirt may be worn with slacks/appropriate skirts and closed toed footwear. Appropriate deviations can be approved depending on the event by the Mission Leader.

Hygiene – We much be profession in appearance. Look to the actor who portrayed our favorite characters in their on-screen/at work appearance:

- Look and smell clean and neat, regardless of attire
- Appropriate shave, trim cut and styling
- All appropriate grooming for your gender

Mission Leaders for each event make the final call on any dress code issues.