

PRESIDENT'S NOTES



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District A-15 Leadership Seminar

Revised May 2017

These notes are intended to provide information for those Lions assuming the role of club President for the first time, for those Lions considering taking on a leadership role in the future, as well any Lions member interested in knowing more about the position.

Responsibilities:

- Conduct club meetings-you can design meetings to meet your club's individual needs
- Oversee the operations of the club and meet monthly with the club's Executive
- Aid in the administration of the committees that operate within the club
- Try to avoid taking on the role of a committee chair unless your club is very small
- Provide information/updates to club members on a regular basis in conjunction with the club secretary
- Provide information received from Lions International
- Work together with the club secretary who has a vital role to play in the functioning of the club in delivering your messages as well as those received from the District Governor and from Lions Clubs International
- Utilize feedback from club members –let club members know they are being heard
- Encourage members to join committees of their choosing
- During your year in office attend all Zone meetings [within your Zone] and all District Cabinet meetings with your Secretary and Membership chair and any interested club members
- Encourage club members to visit other clubs and participate in District events

Communication and organization are the keys to carrying out these responsibilities effectively.

The root of most challenges within a club stems from a failure in communication

Getting Started

Before your Lions year begins there are a few essential steps to take:

- ✓ Review your upcoming year and make sure meeting times are booked
- ✓ Check for any conflicts in time e.g. statutory holidays
- ✓ Review the **Club President training section** on the Lions website
- ✓ Appoint a club member to begin arranging for several interesting speakers to visit your club. Not all speakers should be talking about Lions- related subjects
- ✓ Document the dates your Zone Chair, Region Chair and District Governor will be making visits. Official visits to your club: this information will be available when the district directory is printed. District directories are available at the August Cabinet meeting. Protocol dictates there should be no other speakers on the night of an official visit
- ✓ Make a detailed list of the committees that will make up the structure of your club
- ✓ Be critical when making up the list of committees-be sure that the committee is active and functional- review committees at the beginning of each Lions year. Some committees may have outlived their effectiveness
- ✓ Conduct a meeting of the club officers **prior** to your first club meeting to review your goals and to organize for the year. This is a time when you can assess the value and continued need for some of your committees
- ✓ In discussion with the club officers, name a potential Chairperson for each of the committees. The Chairperson may be any club member thought to have the interest and skill to head up a particular committee
- ✓ Always extend a **personal** invitation to members being asked to volunteer their time to chair a committee
- ✓ Many club members are willing to help, but often do not want the task of being a committee chair –consider job sharing
- ✓ Consider appointing a club member to the position of Public Relations officer-this is an effective way to showcase your club by having an individual who will inform the Information Technology (IT) chair, so your club events can be added to the District website. This member can also inform the media of community events that are being sponsored by your club
- ✓ Develop a club website and keep it updated –appoint a member(s) who has an interest in this area

During the year

A major responsibility for the club President is the **running of meetings:**

According to Lions International information a primary reason former members cite for dropping out of their Lions clubs is “lengthy/boring meetings”.

To streamline meetings consider the following:

- Always have a prepared agenda –send it out electronically a few days prior to the meeting and have copies available for all members and guests at the meeting
- Review information at www.lionsclubs.org for formatting an agenda
- Have a “Greeter”- this is important to make guests , as well as new and seasoned members, feel welcome
- If there is a meal with the meeting have the Lions Grace printed on the agenda
- Circulate the minutes of the previous meeting in advance, giving members a chance to “digest” the information and formulate any questions/suggestions they may have. This way members are knowledgeable when they motion to accept the minutes
- It should not be necessary to read minutes at a meeting
- As President, decide in advance the purpose of the meeting –there is need throughout the year to have a number of planning/business type meetings in order to keep the club running smoothly. It is also important for meetings to be FUN. Confer with the Tail Twister, whose duty it is to promote good fellowship and excitement among the members at every meeting. It is encouraged to have some meetings that are purely social
- Be sure that meetings are not “mini-committee” meetings. Committees need to have separate meetings and then report to the club a synopsis of the committee’s activity
- Convey enthusiasm as you direct the meeting

- Get to know the members' interests and provide recognition for their commitment
- Have some meetings where the emphasis is on motivation/personal growth or human interest –guest speakers planned well in advance are a key element of such meetings
- Adhere to a timeline-even with a meal a meeting should rarely exceed two hours. Guest speakers, who should be notified well in advance, should be limited to 20-30 minutes
- Learn to recognize different communication styles and body language clues in others
- Have a crew for set-up and tear down-this can be a rotational job so it is not always the same members doing the work or have each member put away their own chair

A second important duty of the President is **providing information/updates** to the club members:

It is essential to keep club members updated. There are a number of ways to accomplish this:

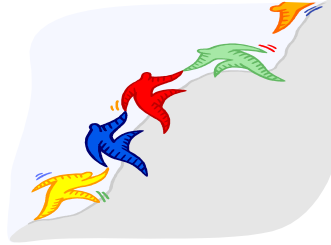
- Have an “Information Table” at every meeting. This may contain sign-up sheets for help at upcoming club events; flyers/information about the activities of neighboring clubs; information from Lions International etc.
- Have a list of events/ fundraisers that will be occurring in the next few months typed at the bottom of every meeting *agenda*
- In conjunction with the club secretary's help, have a list of upcoming events listed at the conclusion of the meeting *minutes*- this way members will be given the relevant information several times
- Have a club website –Lions e-Clubhouse and a Facebook page. It is important that these sites be kept fresh. Members of the public seeking information about your club need to be given current information

- Be sure to keep the list of members email addresses current so that information can be sent out in a timely manner
- Provide a “tidbit” of Lions information/history at each meeting –for e.g. the difference between a welfare [activity] account and an administration account. This is very helpful for new members and is a refresher for veteran members

A third important task for the President is **utilizing feedback from your club members:**

It is important to frequently evaluate your club. All club members should be involved in this process. To accomplish this:

- Initially ask yourself: *Are the attendance numbers dropping? Do club members seem interested at meetings? Is it always the same few members running events/fundraisers? Do you encourage members to express their opinions? Does the club implement new ideas?*
- LISTEN carefully to comments and concerns expressed by members
- Prepare a club survey and have members answer it anonymously-examples of questions to be asked can be found in the publications- **How Are Your Ratings?** and **Blueprint for a Stronger Club**, found on the LCI website. Discuss survey findings with the club
- ENCOURAGE, in a non-threatening way, quieter members to express their opinion
- SUPPORT visits to other clubs –this will always be a source of new ideas
- Undertake the **CQI –Club Quality Initiative**. This was previously known as CEP –Club Excellence Process. CQI is an interactive process to assess your club health. This can be done as :
 - ✓ CEP Pro –facilitator directed workshop
 - ✓ CEP Lite-club facilitated workshop
 - ✓ This process will provide a detailed survey of your club health as well as your community needs assessment and will start to have your club members take “ownership” in the way the club is run



THE TEAM APPROACH

Remember that as club President you do not function alone. Learn to delegate tasks and utilize a **team approach** in leading your club.

“Team” Characteristics	Goals	Obstacles to Success
Positive direction and function	Group collaboration leads to clearly defined goals	Goals are unclear. Team/committee lacks purpose and members are disinterested
Commitment	All team members are dedicated to the task at hand	There is lack of enthusiasm and effort
Procedures and Plans	There are guidelines in place. The committee or group involved with a project has an outline for the task to be carried out efficiently within a practical time frame	Poor communication among team members; no discussion as problems arise; members act independently
Leadership	The leader is designated by the team; leader is supportive of group efforts and gives direction to achieve the intended goal. New leaders should always be encouraged	The group is not cohesive and ignores the leader
Interdependence	All members of team work together and learn from each other	Failure to value the contribution of other members

Handling Difficult Situations

- ✓ As stated at the outset good communication skills are a valuable asset in carrying out one's responsibilities as President, but particularly valuable when faced with challenging situations. It is important to keep in mind that every group will be made up of individuals with varying personality and temperament types. As well, individuals will vary in their communication styles. Below is an overview of personality types :

Driver	These individuals like to be in charge. They work well independently, can be competitive and want to get things done their way
Socializer	These individuals are optimistic and like to socialize. They like to focus on people, rather than tasks and can be impulsive and disorganized .They are good at motivating others
Relater	These individuals prefer working in teams. They are predictable, slow paced and play by the rules. They are non-confrontational and are consistent in their performance
Thinker	These individuals are the perfectionists. They focus on the task. They are factual and orderly but can be very critical

Source: Lions Leadership Institute

Try and assess the personalities in your club and have members from each of the above groups contribute to the team/committee

Clubs that function smoothly have members who work together well, have committees made up of different personality types, respect one another, share ideas and come to decisions co-operatively. Obstacles/challenges to accomplishing this are:

Challenge	Possible Strategies / Management Skills
There are established cliques in the club leaving some members feeling they are not part of the club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -welcome new members warmly -change up seating arrangements from meeting to meeting -rotate committee members, where possible, from year to year -personally invite a member to join one of the service activities of the club
Negative club members-those who find the worst in every idea and are “the complainers”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -stay positive and ask the member(s) for their ideas/solutions for making the situation “better” -retain order at the meeting; do not let the complainer talk on and on -do not take the comments personally Use phrases such as: “Thank you for your opinion”
The “monopoly players” –those who always have an opinion and sometimes prevent others from speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -impose a timeline -ask for a summary -use reflective listening
Shy/silent members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -call on occasionally with a very direct question -make eye contact and extend a genuine thank you for answer
The chatter box type-those members who always talk to others to the point of disruption of the audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -call on the member to express an opinion in order to keep them focused -in a fun way have the Tail Twister fine them if this will not embarrass them
Personality conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -remain non-judgmental -have these members work in large groups -try to discern why the conflict exists -use tact and respect in dealing with differing behaviors
“Same old” club activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -avoid the “We’ve always done it this way” syndrome -set this as a goal at the outset of the year -attend other club and zone meetings to gain a fresh perspective -recognition award for new ideas

It is essential to recognize challenges as they present themselves and deal with them **promptly**.

Members want to be heard and feel their opinions are valued by others. There are three important communication tools to accomplish this:

Open ended questions

- ✓ These are questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no
- ✓ This works well to obtain more information especially with the shy club member
- ✓ These questions demonstrate genuine interest
- ✓ Use of these questions encourages involvement
- ✓ For e.g. “How do you feel about that?” rather than “Are you happy with that suggestion?”

Empathic statements

- ✓ These statements let the club member(s) know you respect them
- ✓ For e.g. “I appreciate your concern” or “I value your opinion” or “The club understands this is very important to you.” This does not necessarily mean you are in agreement with the expressed opinion
- ✓ It works well with the negative club member

Reflective listening

- ✓ This is the communication skill of paraphrasing or re-stating what you have heard
- ✓ It clarifies understanding
- ✓ For e.g. “I understand you to mean...” “*Do I understand correctly...?*”

As you move into the role of Club President capitalize on the diversity of your members, learn from them and take pride in your leadership role.

Hopefully the information contained in these pages will assist you and your club in experiencing a rewarding and productive Lions year.