



Success through Growth



The greatest challenge you will have in your club is to grow your Club by attracting new members. New members enhance who you are as a club and how effectively you serve youth. Growth makes you more successful!

As the "Chief Executive Officer" of your Club it is your challenge to make your Club successful!

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Success equals Service

Our mission as Optimists is to serve youth and our communities. The more service we provide, the more successful we become. Only volunteers can provide that service, so it follows that growth in members equates with growth in service.

Not only do new members increase service but they also provide new ideas, expanded resources, enhanced visibility in the community and they bring future leaders.

It has been said that each new member provides an average of increased service to 35 more young people. This is based on an approximation from the "Annual Activities Reports" that clubs send in at the end of each year. Certainly the impact on a young person's life is immeasurable. Service is also

somewhat subjective, that is why we look toward members as a measure of our success. Growth equals Service which equals Success!

The President's primary job is to nurture the Club's volunteers. Your accomplishments come only through your members, your volunteers.

Member Sponsor Recognition



Volunteers are your greatest asset.

One of the greatest things a member can do in your club is to sponsor a new Optimist Member! By doing this single act they have essentially doubled the amount of service they can provide for the club.

As president this should be one of the greatest recognitions that you could bestow upon that member. It would be nice to present a personal gift to someone who sponsors a new member into your Club to show your genuine appreciation. You might add a bit of fun to the recognition by offering the new member sponsor a "president's fine exemption card" to make him/her exempt from fining for the next three months.

Club Growth Strategies

Attracting and making a member feel appreciated can be achieved in a variety of ways. Ways in which you "cultivate" your members can become effective strategies for growth.

Recruitment

The foundation of getting new members is simply to ASK! You can encourage members to ask others to join by conducting periodic fun recruitment games and incentives.

Certainly every member should be equipped with the basic tool for recruitment - a "new member application". They should be encouraged to wear their lapel pin and know the initiation fee your Club charges. Certainly some you ask will say no, but some will say "yes"! Simply ask, ask, ask!

Installation & Orientation

You only have one chance to make a first impression. You can leave a lasting emotional tie to your new member by installing him with respect, appreciation and pride.

After Board approval the Club secretary-treasurer will add him/her to the roster by submitting a "Club Roster Adjustment" form.

Making a member feel welcome includes a good education as to what the club does and how it works.

Participation

Members can become an invested member by participating in club activities. Keys to fostering participation are: a) developing a calendar of club activities for the year, b) placing every member on a committee and c) recognizing the contributions of member's participation.

Maintenance

Take care of your members by nurturing them. Certainly some losses are unavoidable (death, transfer, etc.) but most can be saved. Never delete a member without making a personal visit to express your sincerity in their affiliation and understanding if they must leave.

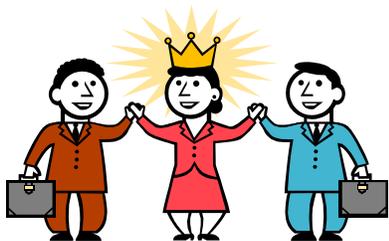
Members "at risk" can be identified by slipping behind in dues. Contact these people immediately and incorporate them into your club activities in small but meaningful ways.

Attendance

Good meetings based on good food, fun and fellowship can attract members in large numbers. In addition use incentives for attendance, an active fellowship committee and good follow-up on absentees.

Building New Clubs

You would not be an Optimist if someone had not taken the time to create your Club. Someone said that to be a good Optimist means helping kids in your community but being a "great" Optimist means bringing Optimism to a new Community! As the "founder" of a new Optimist Club you can make a difference in a huge way, leaving a legacy to thousands of future beneficiaries of the "Optimist experience."



Recognition of "Distinguished" is bestowed on the Club that obtains "Honor" status and brings Optimism to another community. The Distinguished President's Watch is a highly coveted memento for this accomplishment. "Builder of Excellence" is the highest award any individual can earn – to be the key builder forming a new club.

Begin by requesting a "New Club Building Kit" from Optimist International Headquarters newclub@optimist.org or 1-800-500-8130. To form a new club sign up 25 members and pay an affiliation fee of \$425+ \$1 for each additional member. You will receive plenty of help to assist in the organization process.

Personal Growth and Involvement (P.G.I.)

This is a program to develop "Optimism as a Philosophy of Life" by developing personal skills while advancing through ten levels of involvement, personal growth and achievement.

How PGI works: To begin your journey through PGI, download your passport from www.optimistleaders.org or request a Passport from your District Director of Personal Growth, your Governor or Optimist International.

Use your passport to record the completion of requirements for each level. All Activities at each level must be attested to by your Club Director of Personal Growth, Secretary-Treasurer or President in the passport for Levels I through VII and by your Lieutenant Governor or Governor for Levels VIII through X.

Each level of PGI contains the following elements: Attendance, Activity, Growth, Knowledge of Organization, Self Development and Communication.

The Award: Round colored pin backings (which fit behind your member pin) representing the Level attained (Levels I through VII) will be distributed upon completion of each Level. Pin backings are presented to the Club (at a District meeting) and to the individual at a club meeting.

Ten Levels of PGI Recognition:
A colored pin backing can be worn behind your member pin.
Level I Bronze, Level II Green, Level III Burgundy, Level IV Blue, Level V Black, Level VI Purple, Level VII Gold, Level X International President's Lapel Pin

Skills Development Modules: Along your PGI journey you will have the opportunity to take workshops from the District or Optimist International on a number of topics. These are generally two hour workshops and include such topics as: Public Speaking, Effective Time Management, Creative Problem Solving, Choosing Optimism as a Philosophy of Life, Parliamentary Procedures, Orientation to Optimism for New Members, Team Building, Leadership Styles and Profiles, Mentoring and Managing Change.

For additional information or passports or "Skills Development Modules" see www.optimistleaders.org or call Optimist International Leadership Development Department, 800-500-8130 or 314-371-6000 extension 242.

Public Relations

Community awareness of who you are and what you are doing as Optimists can not only enhance your image but attract the interest of prospective members.

Use our "Public Service Announcement" audio tapes on CD or download from www.optimist.org . Personally deliver them to someone you know at your local radio station. Each station is required by law to play P.S.A.'s. Use them, spread the word, and grow.

Another good strategy is to hold a club "media appreciation" day at one of your first general meetings. Invite a local news celebrity and honor them for reporting the "positive" aspect of community news. This honor will endear them to your cause and future publicity.

More information is also available on "public relations".

Newsletters and Emails



Emails are replacing hard copy newsletters as the internal communication method of choice. They are inexpensive and low maintenance. Hardcopies may be sent for special effect.

The ideal Email newsletter should include:

- Announcements of coming events
- Recognize many people for their contributions
- Announce next week's program to peek interest and attendance

Keep it short, positive, and informative. Maybe a "joke of the week" at the end. Don't tell them everything. Entice them to come to the next meeting.

Good communication gives everyone "ownership" in your Club!



The End of part 6: Success through Growth

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