

OPERATIONS MANUAL

For a

LIONS CLUB

PLANNING SESSION

(Club Retreats)



Prepared for
Multiple District 19 Lions Leadership Enhancement Program

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PURPOSE

You may have wondered how successful clubs are able to grow and maintain a higher level of performance, while others seem to survive in spite of their small size and lack of change year after year. This document is designed to explain the Annual Club Planning Session, a process used by successful clubs, thus illustrating the value of planning ahead.

Information in the boxes is provided by the writer as an explanation to accompany the description of the club planning process.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS DOCUMENT?

As a District Governor, Zone Chairman or Club President you may be responsible for a club that you feel is adrift and without direction. With that in mind, review the following Club Planning Process, which will provide you with the information you need to encourage such a club to schedule a planning meeting. It may be just what you need to get on course and experience success in their projects and membership growth. If you have never been involved in a retreat or club planning session, it is difficult to imagine the interaction and creativity that flows when everything is stated in the positive and no one is allowed to say, "We tried that 10 years ago and it didn't work!" Reading this document will make you familiar with the process so that you can decide if it will be of help to your club that is adrift.

EXPECTATIONS FROM A CLUB RETREAT

This booklet is based on the experiences of the Good Times Lions Club as they have held Club Retreats (Planning Sessions). Three years ago, the club, led by an experienced facilitator, completed a Club Plan. The President and committee chairs applied the results with enthusiasm with growth and success following. Two years later another retreat was held with no real dead lines to complete the process. Nothing really happened except that two of the committees did some planning and that probable would have happened even without the retreat. Last year the president included the Annual Retreat as a major item in the club goals for the year. The retreat was held and the executive board agreed on a date for submission of final reports from the committees. Time lines are important if you expect results.

THE NEED FOR SETTING GOALS

There are many different sayings about the need to know where you're going before you can tell if you have arrived. That also applies to your Lions Club. Each year a new slate of officers is given the leadership role and they are expected to excel with their new responsibility.

If the single criteria used to measure our success or failure is membership, then many of the clubs in the Multiple District are failing. This leads to the observation that we have a convoluted process that asks, "Do we increase membership so we can do bigger projects, or do we do bigger projects to attract more members?"

GOALS HAVE DIFFERENT NAMES

Regardless of the direction you choose you need a plan. Many of you have been exposed to various planning techniques while traveling through the business world and you bring that experience back to our Lions Clubs. Some of these techniques are "The Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Retreat, Club Planning Session" etc. In all cases, a group of people gathers to look at the future and to create a document which, if it looks and feels like a plan, then it must be "THE PLAN". A review of the techniques mentioned above:

MISSION STATEMENT - This is a direct implementation of our motto "We Serve" to the community you live in. You may strive for growth, recognition and successful projects at both the local and worldwide arenas. This statement is often reviewed and edited after completing the club plan and you try to summarize everything into a single paragraph. This summary is a great beginning for a club brochure.

VISION STATEMENT - This is your dream; what you want to become; something that is challenging yet realistic and attainable. The Vision statement often looks at a longer time period such as two or five years and is often the responsibility of the Long Range Planning Committee.

CLUB RETREAT - The title implies that the club members meet in a location different than their normal meeting location and with some degree of isolation or privacy in order to promote an open and creative environment. An experienced facilitator is important to preclude any single member from monopolizing the process and to assure completion of the club plan.

CLUB PLANNING SESSION - Whether you have a club planning session or a retreat, the results should be identical because they are the same thing. If a club is conducting their first planning session the facilitator may gather all the information and notes and prepare an "Annual Club Plan" as part of the facilitators duties. If the club has been conducting meetings annually, they may choose to continue refining their plan by having individual committees meet again at a later time. All committee reports are then edited and joined into a single report at an agreed time. When the Board of Directors approves the "Report", it becomes the plan for the year.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CONDUCT YOUR PLANNING SESSION?

It doesn't seem to make any difference when you conduct your retreat as long as everyone agrees on when the plan will become effective. Planning after the club election enables the new officers to plan their year, but time is short and calendars are crowded. Planning in the Fall permits you to make it effective on January 1 for the calendar year and encourages club continuity through two presidents.

GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL CLUB

If you are to create a plan for the coming year, you need common criteria against which to measure your progress. The following six criteria have existed in our Lions world for many years and you should use them in the club planning process to assure that you are addressing all aspects of a successful club.

A MAJOR SERVICE ACTIVITY, one the community needs and wants and also attracts the imagination and notice of the entire community. This is the corner stone of all successful clubs and without such an activity any club will deteriorate, and its members will lose interest.

A MAJOR FUND RAISING PROJECT in which the community will participate and to which the community will contribute. No project can be successful without the above mentioned major service activity and the proper communication to the community as to the ultimate use of the funds raised.

GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS, both inside and outside the club. Within the club this requires an informative, well written bulletin as well as a strong and active committee organization with frequent reports to inform the club members. Outside the club proper use of local news media will develop public support and appreciation of club projects. While news media will ignore trivial activities with no real significance or interest to the community, they will publicize and support the service activity which will prove beneficial to the community and likewise support the fundraising project which supports the service activity.

GOOD MEETINGS. The criteria for a good meeting include regular meetings and adequate meeting places, good meals at a fair price, proper greeters, unusual and acceptable tail twisting, suitable programs and "on time" adjournment. Committee meetings and Board of Directors meetings should also be well planned and conducted efficiently.

TEAM SPIRIT. Constant Lions information and education with active participation by the members in Zone, District, Multiple District and International Association affairs is essential. This participation by the members of a successful club develops pride, fellowship, and a competitive spirit and thus provides leadership for the District and the Association.

A MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM must include a good induction and immediate indoctrination and involvement for the new member. Any club which has successfully developed the preceding five characteristics should have no membership problem. All active members of the community will desire to join such a club and thereby become a part of the community program.

The purpose and process described below is explained by the facilitator at the beginning of the planning session so that each person will understand what is supposed to happen during the day. The items under purpose are tailored to the individual club after a discussion between the facilitator and the President and/or the Executive Board.

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ:

The following agenda is that of a Lions club which has held retreats for several years. The procedure has become familiar to the club members and they decide in advance what issues they would like to address at their annual planning session. If a club is considering an Annual Planning Session for the first time, this initial meeting may be more of a brainstorming session to prioritize the issues that are specific to the club's current needs. At this first session, the members will need to determine what it is that they do well and what areas need to be improved upon. During subsequent planning sessions, the club members may chose to have an agenda in place prior to the retreat as is suggested in the following outline. Please do not be discouraged if your first session does not have such a detailed outline.

Facilitator Presentation

A Purpose

1. To focus member attention on five areas of concern:
 - a. Leadership/Board of Directors
 - b. Membership
 - c. Community Service
 - d. Fund Raising
 - e. Public Relations
2. To develop an Action Plan (short and long range) for each area.

B Process

1. Review Problem Statement for each area.
2. Discuss example of Action Plan Process
3. Break into five Action Groups.

The number of action groups depends on how many are present and what their interests are. The Good Times Club chose to use only four groups.
The groups may be filled by counting 1 thru 4, all around the room OR members may select their cell due to personal preference.

- a Develop Short Range Action Plan (6 months)
 - b Develop Long Range Action Plan (2 years)
 - c Each plan will include WHO, WHAT, WHEN & HOW MUCH.
 - Measurable goal(s).
 - List of events (prioritized).
 - Time line (date driven).
 - Major review points.
 - Required resources
 - ◆ People
 - ◆ Dollars
 - ◆ Other
4. Reassemble.
 - a Each action group presents their plans.
 - b Group critique.
 - c Agree on final version.
 5. Finalize Action Plans.
 6. Club Board approves.
 7. Implement.

There cannot be enough emphasis placed on the items in section B 3.c above. The finished Club Plan is in effect a list of goals and goals must be measurable so that progress can be monitored.

The following sample was prepared by the facilitator as a proposed statement of the problem and modified at the beginning of the session by those present. It is generic and could apply to most Clubs. Specific areas of concern have been noted. This Problem Statement may be identical to the items in the GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL CLUB above or changed to reflect the needs of the club as they are below.

*** * * Sample * * ***

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

LEADERSHIP/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

How do we identify, encourage and prepare members for positions of leadership? How do we encourage our incumbent leaders to be active, committed and reliable? How do we make leadership in the Good Times Lions Club more attractive? How do we increase our Board of Directors and improve their participation?

MEMBERSHIP

How do we make becoming a new member of the Good Times Lions Club more attractive (new member recruiting)? How do we make continuing membership more attractive - to encourage our members to make a long-term commitment (retention)? How do we increase member involvement in club (and other Lions) activities, projects and events (participation)?

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Are our community service projects relevant in today's environment? Are we meeting the needs of our community? Are the current community service projects relevant to our membership? Are they meeting the needs of our membership? What service projects could we consider that would allow us flexibility, a source for public recognition, and an opportunity to involve a wide range of member's skills, experience and abilities?

FUND RAISING

Are our current fund-raisers relevant and sufficient to support our community service projects? In light of a significant "signature" fund raiser that is very labor intensive, do we want to consider adding fund raising opportunities for those members that do not buy into the "signature" event? Do we need to identify a replacement for the Big Show fund-raiser which has been a hands-on type of project?

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Is our current public relations program relevant and adequate? How do we compensate for the loss of exposure we have come to expect from the now defunct Weekly Journal newspaper?

The following sample action plan prepared for the officers and board of directors was furnished by the facilitator to serve as a format example for the teams or groups that will be meeting together. Note the dates and time periods covered. Also note that not all of the reports by the committees use the sample format exactly, but they accomplish the same purpose.

*** * * Sample * * ***

ACTION PLAN FOR LEADERSHIP/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

- How do we identify, encourage and prepare members for positions of leadership?
- How do we encourage our incumbent leaders to be active, committed and reliable?
- How do we make leadership in the Lakewood First Lions Club more attractive?
- How do we increase our Board of Directors and improve their participation?

B. PERIOD COVERED BY PLAN

January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2001

C. GOAL

Develop a continuous supply of highly motivated, reliable and committed volunteer leaders that will by their actions:

- Encourage an annual net growth of 10% in membership.
- Encourage an annual 5% growth in community services.
- Encourage an annual 5% increase in net fund raising dollars.

D. LIST OF EVENTS

1. Create an in-house Leadership Development Team made up of club leaders, (2/01/01)
2. Recognize exceptional leadership on a continuing basis. (2/15/01)
3. Encourage and pay for participation in Zone, District and MD leadership training.
4. Encourage and underwrite participation in the LCI Leadership Institutes. (2/15/02)
5. Underwrite all expenses involved with sending First Vice President to annual USA/Canada Leadership Forum. (9/01/02)

REQUIRED RESOURCES FOR LEADERSHIP EVENTS (above)

EVENT	LIONS	DOLLARS	DETAILS
1	5 **	\$ 50	Overhead
2	0	100	Awards
3	0	350	Registration fees, room & meals.
4	0	250	Meals, trips, awards, etc.
5	0	500	Air fare
6	0	700	Air fare, registration, room & meals
	5	\$2100	total

** Members of Leadership Development Team

Below is the first team report submitted as a result of the planning session. Because this is the third retreat for this club, they chose to meet after the retreat and complete their reports at a later time. All reports were presented at a board meeting in January. While this report does not follow the suggested format with dates and dollars included, the committee is meeting regularly and good things are happening.

*** * * * LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT * * * ***

CO-CHAIRS - JIM AND MARY
COMMITTEE - TOM, DICK AND HARRY

All committee reports should include the names of the chairperson and committee members. This will provide pride of ownership and who to contact for future action. Chair and members will be omitted in the remaining discussion.

GOAL: Develop a continuous supply of motivated, reliable and committed volunteer leaders that will encourage growth, community service and increased fundraising.

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: Ask for approval of nominating committee structure to consist of: (1) Leadership co-chair, Membership chair, Senior director, ^{1st} V. P, President

JOB DESCRIPTIONS: committee is still working on job descriptions of officers and suggestions for Club Policy manual.

MELVIN JONES FELLOWS: Will discuss and recommend criteria for recipients.

RETREAT: Committee will meet with President to discuss best date and location for the next retreat.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING: Schedule New Club Officer Training. All incoming officers (including VPs) will be encouraged to attend. A makeup session will be offered in June.

RECRUITING FOR FUTURE OFFICERS: An information meeting (rap session) will be offered for those interested in leadership roles - suggested 90 minutes in a comfortable setting.

CLUB SURVEY: Survey was distributed in January offering a variety of eight leadership classes depending on the interest of Club members. The composite results will be shared and classes will be formulated based on your requests. Classes will be presented quarterly.

ABOVE CLUB LEADERSHIP TRAINING: Zone meetings, District Spring Conference, MD Conference and Fall Forum, USA/CANADA Leadership Forum, Leadership training for "Emerging Lion" and "Senior Lion" - all these are available and valuable - possibly assist in paying expenses.

TEAMWORK: The Leadership committee will interact with the other committees formed at the retreat - MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNITY SERVICE, FUNDRAISING and PUBLIC RELATIONS.

Any Good Times Lion is welcome to join our meetings or offer suggestions at any time. We are here to make recommendations and ask for member approval. The committee is not limited to the issues addressed in this report.

*** * * * FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT * * * ***

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

How do we generate funds for administration and service projects?

PERIOD COVERED BY PLAN

January 1, 2001 - December 31, 2001

GOALS

1. Increase the source of funds to administration accounts (increase by 50%).
2. To involve all members in fundraising efforts.
3. Increase fundraising activities (increase by 20%).

LIST OF EVENTS

1. Food stand at City Skate Park on weekends.
2. Poinsettias Sale.
3. Wood sales to Lions Club members and the public.
4. Expand auction to two nights to include a silent auction on Friday night and a live auction and "Senior Ball" dance on Saturday night.
5. Afghan Sales to Lions.
6. Rest Stop Area Coffee Sales.

FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Rest Stop Coffee Sales - Eric
Skate Park Food Stand - John
Afghans - Sherry, Dorna, Mary
Poinsettias - Eric and Anne
Fire Wood Sales - Mike, Bill, Dick

Note the identification of a different chair for each project. Spreading the workload is better for everyone.

TIMELINES

FEBRUARY

1. Investigate getting food handler's permit, business license, food and drink sources and use of old fire works stand for City Skate Park.
2. Talk to Vancouver WA Lion's Club about poinsettia sales.

MARCH

1. Research other area running events to determine when held and how done, locate mentors for our run, find a run course, determine location of Cinco de Mayo dinner.
2. Determine wood sources for potential sales.

*** * * * SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE REPORT * * * ***

OBJECTIVE: To assess current Club activities and determine the future direction of our Club and membership in the "We Serve" to our community.

1. Develop three "service areas" which will allow the necessary coordination of service projects and activities, to enhance the quality of life for citizens and community.
2. Assign responsibilities of these "service areas" to coordinators and/or Club leaders, who will oversee the development of this program and work closely with the membership in assuring success in such activities
3. Assure that necessary Club funds are made available to support service activities deemed necessary by the Club by allocating a specific annual amount from income received through the annual auction.

SERVICE AREAS

SENIOR RELATED - Helping hands for seniors.

- "Adopt a gran" (Grandma or Grandpa)
- Health fairs
- Meals on wheels
- Fish food bank
- Nursing homes
- Paint Lakewood
- Poinsettia deliveries
- Transportation assistance
- Clean-a-home
- Partner projects;
- AARP and other groups

YOUTH RELATED - Partners with youth.

- Leos club
- Peace poster, Youth essay
- Skate park
- Caring for kids
- Joint projects; YMCA, Boys-Girls Club
- Adopt a school, Quest

COMMUNITY RELATED - Commitment to community.

Adopt-a-park (Harry Todd)
Adopt-a-park (Bridgeport)
City / Lions Club sign
Clothing drive
Daffodil Parade
Health van
International festival
Recycling services
Run for Diabetes
Golden Ears
White Canes

RESPONSIBILITIES

Coordinate planning and completion of projects within their service area.
Designate project chairs.
Present updates to board and members on all ongoing and proposed projects.
Serve as point of contact (POC) for club to community.
Work with Lions to develop ideas and present them to the board for approval.
Provide input to public relations committee.

*** * * * MEMBERSHIP RETENTION COMMITTEE * * * ***

In November of 1999, the first meeting of the Retention Committee was conducted after the regular business meeting of the Good Times Lions Club. The members present were part of the retention component at the annual retreat in October.

Tasks that were identified are:

1. Keeping members better informed.
2. Contacting all members who do not attend general meetings.
3. Developing an ongoing orientation program for all members through the newsletter, committee reports at the business meetings, and annual retreats.

For the last year we have been meeting on the third Tuesday of the month. Our agendas mainly focused on who was not attending monthly meetings. Each committee member was assigned that month to call two or three members on the list. That way we found out various reasons for non-attendance. To keep members better informed we always assigned one committee member to write an article for the newsletter. Some of the articles were direct answers to questions that were in the Question Box that sat on the President's table at each meeting.

Another task for this committee is to update the Orientation Packet for new members. This will be an ongoing project with a growth of 10 to 15 members annually. Recently another new project is to have new members help with the duties of running the meetings. At present we have two involved as greeter and helping with the raffle.

*** * * PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE * * * ***

The Public Relations committee was formed after the first club retreat three years ago. Due to their success it was agreed that a team would not be formed for this planning session. The PR committee has been meeting monthly at 7:00 AM at one of the member's homes. Each of the five members is responsible for different areas of PR. These areas are the Bulletin Editor, local media contact, club committee reports, advertising, Club Brochure and budget.