

A Growth Revolution

Rebuilding a Small Club

Small, struggling clubs can increase their membership. All it takes is a team of enthusiastic Kiwanians to see the challenge as an opportunity to raise awareness about their organization and to refocus service plans on the needs of the community.

Chances are remaining members of a struggling club may feel overburdened by club operations, and the club environment may restrict enthusiasm, fellowship, community service, and growth. Hard decisions about the club need to be made with input from the lieutenant governor, club members, and perhaps other district officers. Answers to the following questions will help determine what is best for the club.

- How long has the club been struggling?
- When did it fall below 20 members?
- What attempts already have been made to grow?
- What circumstances are responsible for the club's decline in membership?
- How much service is the club providing to the community?
- Are there people in the club who are capable of attracting and keeping new members?
- Is it possible to build upon the existing membership?
- Would it be better to encourage the club to disband and start a new club?

This membership kit contains tools to assist small Kiwanis clubs (less than 25 members) that have made a commitment to grow. The step-by-step process has provided positive results for clubs that have followed the outline below. Also included is a successful membership plan titled "Using Service Projects to Attract New Members."

Prerequisite

To be successful, there must be an intense desire and commitment among the club's current members to increase membership.

Step 1: Club Assessment

The assessment should have an internal and external focus to determine what changes are needed to attract new members.

Internally, this relates to how the club functions by rating the quality of the club meeting, the leadership, committees, and similar activities. Use the Annual Club Assessment form in the Membership Development Manual to identify strengths and weaknesses. Contact the Growth Department for a spreadsheet to tabulate and analyze the results.

Externally, the club needs to assess its image in the community. Interview recent speakers, public officials, the news media, and school administrators. Also conduct a community assessment to determine ways to expand service and attract members.

Step 2: Establish Commitment to Change

Based on the assessment results, the club may have to consider changes, such as:

- Dropping traditional fund-raisers and programs
- Giving club leadership to new members
- Making the club meeting efficient and worthwhile
- Changing the meeting location, day, time, and length of meeting
- Reducing membership costs
- Changing attendance requirements

Use the club improvement plan in the Membership Development Manual to implement changes.

Step 3: Obtain Assistance

Potential resources include the lieutenant governor, district membership growth committee members, and members of other clubs in the division. They can help identify prospects, recruit, and increase meeting attendance.

Step 4: Recruitment Planning and Preparation

The recipe for growing a small club contains several essential ingredients:

1. Formulate a timeline. For example:

April 1	Request/develop membership materials.
April 8	Identify a chairman and four committee members from committed Kiwanians willing to recruit.
April 15	Develop a prospect list (see attachment 3).
April 22	Mail letters to list.
April 29 - June 1	Follow up on letters. Visit in teams of two and sign up new members.
June 8	Host meeting for new and potential members.
June 9 – 30	Recruit. New members can help provide names.
July 1	Complete the rebuilding effort, but do not stop recruiting—that is ongoing.

2. Set an aggressive goal for the minimum number of new members.
3. Develop and/or obtain recruitment materials, including:
 - Information about Kiwanis International. Use the “Changing Tomorrows Today” brochure, which includes a membership form for recruitment visits. Use the “Serving the Children of the World” tri-fold for the prospect mailing.
 - A brochure about the club, including a list of current members and their professions (see attachment 1). A CD-ROM with templates also is available from the Marketing Department to help develop a club brochure.
 - Letter of invitation (see attachment 2).
4. Develop a list of prospective members (see attachment 3). Dun & Bradstreet information is available from Kiwanis International to supplement the list.
5. Pre-authorize recruiters to sign up people on the prospect list.

Step 5: The Recruitment Effort

The effort here is similar to that for building a new Kiwanis club.

- **The mailing**
Letters must be attractive, crisp, and personal. No mailing labels, meter stamps, or “dear friend” salutations. A form letter is fine as long as it appears to be an original. Each letter must convey that it is an honor to be a member and that his or her help is needed to increase service to the community. Include the club profile and the “Serving the Children of the World” brochure. A hand-written, personalized note in the margin is a plus.
- **The follow-up**
In teams of two, visit those who received letters. Use a copy of the letter and work-related business cards as an introduction. During the brief meeting, explain Kiwanis

and the rebuilding effort. Present the “Changing Tomorrows Today” brochure and a list of the club’s current members.

- **The ask**

Invite prospects to be a valued part of the newly rebuilt club. Ask them to join Kiwanis by completing a membership form and paying the fee. Provide the date of the first meeting for the “new” club with a promise to be in touch prior to the meeting.

Follow Up:

It is important to have the first meeting when the recruiters have at least 10-15 committed members. A poor attendance number could create an uncomfortable atmosphere for the prospective members and lead them to ask themselves, “Do I really want to join an organization that appears to be small and inactive.”

Call new members who joined and those who expressed interest to remind them about the meeting. Organize a high-quality program about Kiwanis and the club’s contributions to the community. At the end of the club program, invite guests to join the club.

Schedule quality program speakers for several weeks to follow (see attachment 4). At the second meeting, brainstorm potential service projects. Obtain commitments from club members to attend regularly. Invite a different inter-club to join you each week. Ask two members from neighboring clubs and past lieutenant governors to attend until the rebuilt club is up and running well to create an atmosphere of a thriving and growing Kiwanis club.

Summary:

After completing the Growth Revolution, contact the Growth Department to request the Kiwanis Membership Six Pak. It contains six recruitment outlines and the necessary tools to help your club continue to grow.



