

Club Strengthening

I'm Al Riggle and I've been a member of Kiwanis for almost 15 years. I've served as my club's president nine years and served my division as Lt governor for three years. In this short time, I've seen what Kiwanis can do for our kids. We can't let them down! We need to stay strong!

"People can talk all they want, but their actions reveal their heart!"

Trends

- a. Declining Membership.
- b. Failing Clubs
- c. Aging Membership

Many of our clubs have experienced declining membership.

Members not coming back after COVID.

We're seeing more and more of our established clubs failing. In the Indiana District we lose an average of six clubs per year. In 2022-2023 we lost nine clubs.

There are many different reasons and we need to dig deep to learn more about what the root causes are.

I hear many clubs say they cannot attract younger members and their core membership are aging and not able to do what they used to.

But these are not all our clubs. We have clubs that are growing! We have clubs who are attracting younger members.

How do we work together to make all our clubs healthier?

2. Impact

- a. Less hands to serve the kids
- b. Reduced impact
- c. Loss of member satisfaction

The impact of these trends directly effects our ability to serve the kids in our communities. It puts a greater burden on our smaller and aging membership. It reduces the range of projects we can conduct!

This reduced impact is felt across our communities and in our clubs. Our communities see we are not making a difference, we're becoming irrelevant!

If we don't make a difference for our kids! Then we have no leg to stand on to ask for volunteers, to recruit new members or to ask for donations. There is no reason for our communities to support us.

Further, we lose member satisfaction! When we're not making a difference, not making an impact, not getting results for our kids, our members lose heart! They lose their desire to volunteer and serve. They don't see a purpose for all the effort.

They don't see a reason to volunteer, to engage in club training, to serve in leadership positions and to attend District events.

3. Stop the Bleeding

- a. What are we doing?
- b. How many kids are we supporting?
- c. Are we making a difference?

So, do we give up and close our club to the detriment of the kids in our community? Nothing ever stays the same—it either is getting better or getting worse! I've never been a part of an organization that got worse, not in my 31 years in the Air Force or my time in Kiwanis!

We need to start with our community and those who are our partners supporting our kids. What are we doing? How are we doing? What is the perception of the community? How many kids are we supporting? We can improve our communities one child at a time, but where do we get the biggest bang for the buck?

Do we look proudly on our past as we go blindly into the future, or

Are we willing to adjust to better serve our kids? We need to know what things we're doing that are addressing needs in our community and making a difference. We also need to know what we're doing that's fluff. It's really not making a difference or an impact and is wasting our resources.

4. How well do we know the environment?
 - a. Who is engaged with kids in our community?
 - b. What are the needs?
 - c. How does the community perceive Kiwanis?

What groups are engaged in serving the kids in our community? Are we partnering with them? What needs are they addressing? What is our role? What strengths do we have that can make a difference? Are we good partners?

Where are the gaps? Look at the data from the Indiana Youth Institute. Look at the feedback from other groups working with kids in our community. What needs require more assistance? What needs are not being met at all? Do we have the capacity to help meet those needs? Do we have the capacity to help others meet those needs. Can we make a difference?

Are we considered partners serving the kids in our community? Are we leaders others will follow to address the needs of our kids? Are we noun club or a verb club? Are we just a person, place or thing? Or are we actively engaged in addressing the needs of our kids in our community?

Would you want to join you?

5. Our Goal should be to be the Service Club of Choice in our community!

- a. We have to be relevant!
- b. We have to make a difference!
- c. The community has to see our impact!

If we are going to be relevant, we need to assess the needs of the kids in our community. We need to listen to hard feedback and be willing to adjust. We must identify the needs and determine where we fit in to make a difference.

We don't have to change things over night, but our community needs to understand we're serious about addressing the needs of our kids. They need to see us as a reliable partner. They need to know they can go to us for constructive discussions on how to improve our efforts to support our kids.

We have to demonstrate that we can make a difference!

The community has to see and accept us as part of the solution. We need to earn a seat at the table! Then we have to be actively engaged to make things better.

We have to bring the resources Kiwanis has to offer to directly impact our kids! We have to develop a relationship with our kids to develop their confidence, enhance their resilience and make sure they know we're there to support them!

Kids need Kiwanis is not a slogan-----It's a fact!

Share our successes! Kiwanis does not want to be the best kept secret! We want people to see us as a reliable part of the team!

6. Getting Started

- a. Engage individuals and groups in the community.
- b. Who are our partners?
- c. Where can we make a difference?

Identify who is actively engaged in any way in supporting kids in our community. Talk to other service organizations, educators, religious, law enforcement, health care professionals, business leaders, anyone who is knowledgeable about the plight of our kids and we can have a productive discussion to help us identify what role we can play to make things better. We have to listen!

Identify who our partners are? Who are we already working with? Who do we need to work with? How do we fit in? Is it donations, is it labor, is it support, is it coordination????

How can we make a difference? How do we become a stronger part of the team? What is our role?

7. Engage

- a. Use your strengths to address needs
- b. Establish credibility by partnering with others
- c. Measure your progress

Assess what you learn and how you can use your strengths and resources to partner with those who need help to address the needs. Identify what needs you can focus on and look for ways to improve your role in the community.

Remember, you get a lot more done if you don't worry about who gets the credit. You also establish stronger relationships with your partners to merge your efforts.

Your actions will speak volumes more than what you say!

Measure your progress! Are you making a dent in the need? How many kids are you impacting? How many parents and family members are you impacting? What results are you achieving? How many kids have you developed positive relationships with that will impact those kids for a lifetime?

Talk about the Kiwanis Moments you encounter along the way! That significantly improves member satisfaction and it is a testimony to others in the community that you are a partner worth serving with!

8. Build

- a. Grow partnerships and plans
- b. Grow interest and satisfaction
- c. Grow effectiveness

As you make progress, grow your partnerships and engage with anyone who is trying to serve the kids in our community. We want to partner, not compete! Make plans on what is achievable and how you can continue to grow your impact in the community.

You will not only grow interest in the community, but you will grow interest in your club from within and without and you will grow satisfaction. Your members will get the satisfaction they are really making a difference and the community will be satisfied that you are a force for kids they need to partner with or be a part of.

You will see your effectiveness grow! Continue to engage! Continue to pursue new opportunities. Don't be afraid to stop something that costs too much effort for the amount of positive impact.

Turn your effectiveness into plans for continued improvement in the future!

Our kids depend on us! We can't let them down!!

“All kids need is a little help, a little hope and someone who believes in them.”
Magic Johnson

Be that someone!!