



Membership Satisfaction Guide

How to keep members engaged,
happy and coming back



Lions Clubs International

Introduction

To ensure your Lions club remains healthy and active, you need to consider the experience and expectations of the members belonging to your club. If you went to a restaurant and it did not meet your expectations, would you go back?

The same goes for a Lions club!

Along with welcoming new members, it is important to engage them in club activities as soon as possible. If your club members feel welcome, comfortable and involved in community service, they will remain part of your club.

Research has been conducted on new members with less than three years of experience as well as members with longer tenure as a Lion. The research shows that regardless of the length of tenure as a Lion, there are some key needs, listed in order, that most members want to have met to remain a part of your club:

- 1) Being able to “take pride” in service activities
- 2) Being confident that they are “making a difference”
- 3) Being informed of club goals.

In addition, new members require some special attention their sponsor should provide in order to be highly satisfied with their experience:

- 1) Be able to develop friendships
- 2) Feel like they have a sense of belonging.

How can your club provide the experiences your members are seeking?

Keeping your club efficient, productive and meaningful to your members results in many benefits:

- A club that is a vital and respected part of your community
- The ability to provide and support both local and global service
- The ability to offer personal and professional growth opportunities to your members
- A club that provides enjoyable fellowship

Be sure your club has a mission statement, objectives and defined goals. Communicate these to your members clearly and openly, and ensure that your communication methods work for all members in the club. This guide will help you in three easy steps:

- 1) Define membership satisfaction for your club
- 2) Create your club’s membership satisfaction plan.
- 3) Implement and review your plan

Lions International has many additional resources available to support your club. Contact the Membership Division at membership@lionsclubs.org or go to the website www.lionsclubs.org. A good place to start is the club membership chairpersons page, www.lionsclubs.org/membershipchair which has a variety of resources to attract and engage members. You should also connect with your zone and region chairpersons as well as your district's Global Action Team (GAT) and encourage members to enroll in Lions Learning Center for Leadership Development.

If your club is not thriving, it cannot serve as effectively as possible.



STEP 1: Define Membership Satisfaction for Your Club

Once your club has established its Global Action Team (GAT) consisting of the Club President, Club Membership Chair (Global Membership Team), Club Service Chair (Global Service Team), and Club Vice President (Global Leadership Team), the first step to ensuring your members have a positive experience is to know what they want in your Lions club. Understanding this is a great task for your membership committee to take on. Let your club leaders know what your members think about being a Lion, and work with club leadership to direct your efforts. Making changes based on your club members' needs and desires is the key to a good experience for them. The club GAT must work together to strengthen membership, and for each of the team members to be successful in their role. While there are some brief questionnaires in this guide, consider conducting a "How are your Ratings" survey to learn how your members feel about your club. This comprehensive resource is available at www.lionsclubs.org/membershipchair. This will help align your club activities to your member expectations. Successful implementation will resolve many issues that lead to members not being satisfied with their experience.



To learn more & access additional resources, visit lionsclubs.org/MembershipChair

One segment of your membership that you will want to take into consideration is your new members. Lions clubs around the world only retain about half of the new members recruited for more than 3 years. The good news is that there are tools and resources available to help ensure that you are providing a good experience for new members. All members of your club will benefit by intentionally creating an environment in which new members feel welcomed and are engaged.

Here are a few tips that will help you get started in defining member satisfaction in your club:

- Ask your members! Members feel involved when you ask for their opinions. Ask your members: Why is the club here? Do our activities demonstrate this? If a non Lion looked at one year of our activities, what would they think is important to our club?
 - o You can use the *Member Questionnaire* in the back of this guide facilitate this conversation, and modify it to fit your needs.
- Assess why your members have left in the past. While there are some common themes worldwide, it will help if you contact former members to learn why they left. Along with the *New Member Questionnaire* in this guide, there is a *Former Member Questionnaire* that you can modify to fit your needs as well.
 - o Consider devoting time during a club meeting or holding a special meeting to talk about member satisfaction.
- Carefully consider whether your club's stated objectives, goals and mission statement reflect what your current members want your club to be.

If your club has not gone through the *Club Quality Initiative* (CQI), you could consider doing it now. CQI is designed to help clubs align their efforts with the LCI Forward strategic plan. CQI will help your club locate tools and resources in order to help it achieve its full potential through the four quadrants of the strategic plan: Improve Membership Value and Reach New Markets, Pursue Club, District and Organizational Excellence, Enhance Service Impact and

Focus and Reshape Public Opinion and Improve Visibility.



Step 2: Create Your Club's Membership Satisfaction Plan

Losing members is an issue for many clubs, and the reason that members leave is often the same. Research has been conducted on dropped members, and has found that there are three areas that are most influential on why someone may leave a club.

1) Club conflict: This is the number one reason Lions Club members leave their club. Club conflict can look different in different clubs and includes conflict with other members, too many disagreements, personality clashes, drama, cliques, too many politics, and not feeling respected by other members of the club.

2) Feeling like they are “Not Making a Difference”. If clubs don't match members up with activities they want to do, or if they feel as though their voice isn't heard, then even if the service is great, your members may not feel as though they made a difference.

3) Not having a “Sense of Belonging”. If members do not feel like they belong, then they will not stay a member for very long.

This guide offers suggestions for adjustments that will encourage members to remain with your club, however, it is important that you form relationships with your members, so you understand what each person's expectations may be. What may feel like “making a difference” to one person, may not feel the same to another. Being in relationship is the only way to understand the needs of your members.

A. Club Conflict.

Often, club conflict can stem from the organization and leadership of club meetings. Club meetings that are well organized will help prevent conflict between members, and will provide an opportunity for all members to be involved, as well as keep conflict or disagreement at a meeting to a minimum. Common responses include:

- Meetings are unproductive
- Meetings were not enjoyable
- Meetings are too hierarchical and formal

You can improve your meetings with some thoughtful planning prior to the meeting. First start by answering these 5 questions:

1) Why are we meeting?

- Is the purpose of the meeting to conduct club business or for social or public relations reasons?
 - Only include business that is necessary – do not have reports from inactive committees or report information that is not relevant to the meeting topic.
 - Adjust the style of the meeting to your members. Do they prefer formal presentations, or active discussions
 - Keep partisan politics and sectarian religion out of club meetings.

2) How long will the meeting last?

- Do your members enjoy certain customs and traditions? Are there some that they may prefer to eliminate? Could the time be more productively used to address club business, or for more social time?
 - Set a realistic time schedule for the meeting, and build in some additional time to address unanticipated issues.

3) When are we meeting?

- A different day or time may increase attendance.
- Consider forming a club branch if your club has two or more distinct times.

4) Where are we meeting?

- Consider a new place for your meetings. A different place could bring a different perspective. Even a different room arrangement can have an effect.
- Is there an option for club members to participate remotely? Using a virtual format may increase participation. Also consider forming a club branch for members who wish to meet online, rather than in person to keep your members engaged.

5) What do we want to accomplish by the end of the meeting?

- Distribute an agenda and supporting materials (such as financial reports, or previous meeting minutes) to let your members know what will be covered. Include a time for members to bring up ideas or concerns since the last meeting. Be flexible to allow your members' thoughts and opinions to be heard. Ensure that all members feel welcome to participate, and that it is not always the same group of members who dominate the conversation.
- An important purpose of a meeting is also fellowship and social time, ensure that all members feel welcome, and that they are not excluded from the discussion.

With the answers to these questions, you can organize a productive meeting, develop your agenda and prepare any materials you need. You may visit the Lions Learning Center, where there are courses on managing meetings.

B. Not making a difference

When people feel like they are not making a difference, it may stem from a few different areas that need to be addressed. Remember that the common bond that your members have is that they are interested in service. That is why they joined a Lions Club and not another social organization or activity. Some of the common reasons members may feel as though they aren't making a difference are listed in below.

- 1) There are not enough opportunities to serve the community.** If your club does not provide a variety of options that appeal to your members then they may feel like they are not making a difference. When planning activities and you want your members to get involved, remember to ask for their input. If your members have other obligations, such as family obligations, job obligations, or other hobbies, do your activities fit in their schedule?
- 2) The club did not have the types of activities that interested me.** Even if your club has highly impactful service activities planned, and they are offered during times that allow everyone to participate, if the cause that you are serving does not connect with a member's personal interest, they may feel like they are not making a difference.



3) The tasks I was assigned didn't match my interests or skills. Sometimes even if the service activity aligns with your member's interest, the task you are asking them to do may not be. Have you asked your members how they would like to serve? A common example is having someone whose profession is an accountant serve as the club's treasurer. While this may be OK for some, it should not be assumed for everyone. Some people join Lions Clubs to explore other opportunities that are different from what they do professionally.

C. When people don't have a sense of belonging.

Often when people feel that they don't have a sense of belonging it may be an issue with the culture of the club. The goal is to get your new members involved, and feel like they have voice, while keeping your current members excited about what your club is doing. Some of the reasons that may create the feeling of not being welcome, or not belonging to the group could include:

- Club felt too political
- Club felt too old-fashioned and stodgy
- The leadership in my club changed, and I did not like the changes
- The club is too hierarchal and formal
- There were not enough opportunities to socialize
- I had been with the club for a while and began to feel unappreciated
- I did not connect with other members of my club
- I felt as though my voice was unheard

Make every member feel that they contribute to your club, and that their contribution is important.

- Respond when members make suggestions or offer input. Always follow up.
- Create opportunities for all members to be involved as they want to be.
- Encourage new members to explore multiple opportunities within the club. Let them start where they are most excited to be, but be clear that there are leadership development opportunities should they wish to take on committee participation.

- Use resources available on the www.lionsclubs.org resource center such as Member Orientation and the Mentoring Program to help your club make new members feel welcome.

Allow an opportunity for all members to offer suggestions, and be open and receptive to new suggestions.

- Use your club's existing service projects as a source of ideas and guidance, on what has worked, or not worked well for your club, but NOT as a list of "what we MUST do".
- Make a practice of conducting a review of your club activities as well as the plans. Be open to your members' evaluations of existing ideas and any new ideas for improvement.

Encourage all club members to invite other people in the community to join your club whenever they meet someone who may enjoy being a Lion, and ensure that prospective members feel welcomed if they participate in an activity.

Ensure that club officers are properly trained. The leadership development division has many different resources, online tools, and suggestions for local training. Having leaders with the training and tools required for the job can make a huge difference in ensuring the culture of your club is inviting and welcoming to all members.



Step 3: Implement and Review your Plan.

After you have surveyed your members, and brainstormed solutions to their concerns, it is time to propose changes to your club that will address barriers to highly satisfied members. You can use the template in the back of this guide as a suggestion for your proposal.

A. Communicate your membership satisfaction plan

Remember one of the reasons that people stay in clubs is because they felt like they understood club goals. When Lions feel like they know what is going on with their club, they feel like they are an important part of their club. Use available technology to inform your members of club goals, activities and projects. Using an online newsletter is faster and cheaper than traditional paper, and can be easily distributed. Some tools that your club can use include:

- MyLion – this tool allows you to communicate with members in your club and is available in both a phone app as well as a web version. It also allows you to manage club activities.
- Email
- Social Media Networks
- Social invitation sites for events and activities.
- Financial sites for dues, donations, and fees

Choose the tools that work best for your club, and can easily be kept up to date. Be sure that your members are trained and comfortable using the technology available.

B. Dealing with Resistance

When addressing issues by making changes to your club, you are likely to encounter resistance. To minimize it, use the Why-What-When-How process to implement changes.

- Why – clearly explain the reasons for the proposed changes
- What – Explain what your members can expect to see happen
- When – have a definite starting point for any proposed changes
- How – Outline what you expect the result to be

Once the process has begun:

- Encourage your members to give feedback on the changes. Respond to the feedback that you receive.
- Be flexible to make adjustments in the process if they do not provide the expected results to be.
- Make changes over time. Making changes too quickly may be difficult for members to accept, however, if they see success of one change, they may be more likely to accept the next.

Continue to evaluate changes at your club's board meeting to ensure that club leadership is on the same page.

C. Ongoing Implementation.

Go through the process of reviewing and adjusting your plan on a regular basis. As your membership changes, so will your satisfaction plan. New members will bring new perspectives and a variety of interests and skills to your club, so utilize their talents.

New Member Questionnaire

Club Name: _____ Date: _____

Why did you join our Lions club? _____

What are you looking for in your involvement with our club? _____

What personal skills do you have that might be an asset to our club? _____

What club activities would you like to be involved in? _____

What ideas do you have to improve our club experience? _____

What ideas do you have for service projects that we are not currently involved in? _____

Is there anything else you feel is important? _____



Former Member Questionnaire

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why did you leave our Lions club? _____

How long were you a member of our Lions Club? _____

Did you leave our club or Lions as an organization? _____

Were you given an opportunity to transfer to another club to remain a Lion? _____

What club service project was most important to you? Why? _____

What club service project was least important to you? Why? _____

What changes in our club would have encouraged you to remain a member? _____

What activities would you have liked our Lions Club to be involved in? _____

What ideas do you have to improve our Lions Club experience? _____

Would you consider rejoining this club? _____



Membership Satisfaction Action Plan

Use this template to help start your action plan to improve member satisfaction. You may have found some areas that do not need any changes, and other areas that may need significant change based on your member feedback. Use this as a guideline, and alter it as necessary to suit the needs of your club.

Service Activities:

We should consider retiring the current service activity: _____

We should consider adding this type of service activity: _____

Club Meetings:

We should discontinue the following traditions at club meetings: _____

We should include more of this at club meetings: _____

We should consider the following changes to our meeting location: _____

We should consider the following changes to our meeting format: _____

Other Ideas:

Use this area to suggest other ideas, such as recognition, communication, or other areas that members identified as a barrier to having a great experience.

Timeline – be sure to include review time to ensure that changes are effective and well received:

In the next meeting we will: _____

In the next quarter, we will: _____

In the next year, we will: _____





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Membership Division

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