

# The Ohio Plan



- **A Structured Method for Recruiting New Lions.**
- **This Plan Works Every Time it is Used, if the Procedures are Carefully Followed.**

## **Summary:**

This document provides a turnkey, step-by-step procedure that can be used by Lion Clubs to recruit new members. The Plan is definitive, highly detailed and targets individuals and couples that have a good chance of becoming excellent Lions.

In short, follow the plan **carefully** and you will be successful. There is, however, little room for creativity. We do not recommend anyone "doing their own thing!"

The Membership Chairman and his/her assistants will normally require a more detailed explanation of the Plan. The following information is available at: [www.ohiolions.org/ohio\\_plan.htm](http://www.ohiolions.org/ohio_plan.htm)

- a. A number of supporting documents and forms that are required to run the program: letters, time schedules, meeting agendas, advertising material, new member package, etc.
- b. There is also a Powerpoint file and overheads that can be used for a presentation.

## KEY FACTORS for a Successful New Member Night

### General Guidelines:

- Always remember the old saying “*You only get one chance to make a good First Impression.*” Think about this every time you are about to make a decision. Prospective members are your guests, and you must show them every possible consideration! Put yourself in their shoes and ask how you would respond to any and all situations.
- Recruiting new members cannot be undertaken in a haphazard manner. Recruiting is a **PROJECT**, just like fund raising or community service activities. There must be a Project Chairman, assistants, and really good planning.
- Many Lions are reluctant to recommend friends or associates as new Lions. This is usually for fear of embarrassment or failure. However, you can normally get the support of these people by assuring them they will not have to personally make any approaches or phone calls.
- There are numerous places where the text reads “the committee ….” These are critical tasks that are best performed by the Membership Committee.

**Before the Meeting:** 4 to 6 weeks before the New Member Event, which is best done in March or September.

### **GATHER NAMES:**

- Each member submits names of potential members at a meeting.
- Suggested categories are listed on the LCI Membership Wheel (RS).
- A really “hot category” are couples whose last child just graduated from high school. Many of these people have been active in sports, band boosters and other activities. They are accustomed to attending meetings during the week and will now have some empty evenings. The Lions can help them fill this void.
- Review the suggested names with your members. Reconsider anyone who might be controversial or could cause disunity. This process must be performed “delicately.”
- The Committee fills in any gaps in the addresses and phone numbers.

### **LETTER OF INTRODUCTION (see addendum page 5):**

- The Committee sends the Letter of Introduction to the prospects.
- A club advertising flier may accompany the letter or reference club website
- There is a sample letter as an addendum on page 5 of this document.
- Make sure the details about time, place, dress code etc are all correct!

### **TELEPHONE CALLS (see addendum page 6):**

- Call each Prospect about one week after the Letter is mailed to clarify any issues and answer any questions.
- The Committee should make this call, but it is essential that the call be made. If the sponsor wants to make the call allow them to do it.
- It is very important to ask the Prospect to commit to attending the meeting!

- The committee should call again a few days before the meeting and offer to give the Prospect a ride to the meeting or the sponsor may do so.
- You may want to send a reminder post card a week before

### **PLANNING THE MEETING:**

- Venue: Best choice is a restaurant with a private room. Public rooms at Libraries, Community Centers, etc. are acceptable if you can serve food and the background noise level is acceptable.
- Menu: Best choice is a buffet because it is the easier to provide a wide variety of foods, including vegetarian. If using a sit-down meal, pick something simple and light.
- Schedule speakers and their topics. Get agreement on the time limit.
- From start to finish, the meeting should not exceed an hour and a half.
- Decorate the room with Lions flags, banners, scrapbooks, etc.
- Prepare name tags, agenda and New Member Packets. Double check all the information and spelling.

### **The Meeting Format:**

#### **GREETING:**

- Put a “glad hander” on the door to greet the guests. That first friendly handshake and smile are invaluable.
- Remember, make a *good first impression*.
- Your members should arrive early and be on their feet moving around the room.
- Everyone should have a name tag.
- Sponsors should be on the lookout for their guests.
- **NO GUEST CAN BE LEFT STANDING ALONE!**

#### **SEATING:**

- Encourage the sponsors to sit with their potential members so they can guide them through the proceedings during the evening.
- **MAKE SURE** there are no tables with just guests sitting there!
- Consider pre-assigning members to each table so the guests will have to fill-in the gaps.
- Have Agendas, New Member Packets and LCI Booklets for each Guest on the tables.

#### **PROGRAM:**

- **Gear the program to the potential members.** Aside from a favorable first impression, the factor that will most determine whether a prospect joins your club is how much good you do for your local community!
- This is a Lions meeting, so the President should start with the Pledge and the Invocation.
- Everyone knows how to eat, so get to it!
- 1<sup>st</sup> Speaker. An enthusiastic Lion who can talk about how much good your club does, how strongly your members feel about your efforts and how much fun you have. (5 minutes)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> speakers. Two Project Chairmen; one fund raising and one community service. Tell the guests what you do and why you do it. (5 minutes each)
- A District Officer: Overview on Melvin started it, Helen challenged us and we work on hundreds of activities around the world. Then provide some details on SightFirst, disaster relief or another major topic. (5 minutes)
- Treasurer: Can discuss how project and administrative funds are raised and dues structures (5 minutes)

- President: Make a donation to the worthy cause. It shows your club in the best possible light.
- Close the deal –ask for questions and provide a membership application to each guest attending

**After the Meeting:**

**FOLLOW UP:**

- Send follow-up letters to those who joined (**see addendum page 8**), those who attended (**see addendum page 7**), and those that said they would attend but didn't.
- The committee must keep in contact with the Prospects.
- Keep after **Every Prospect** until they either join or definitively tell you “I have no interest.”

**CLEANUP:**

- Give a big “Atta-Lion” to everyone who helped make the New Member Night a success. Praising your members is always warranted for work well done.
- Make sure your Club starts working on Inducting, Orienting and Involving the new members. If your Club fails to perform these three steps the new members will not remain Lions for very long.
- Keep accurate records of the New Member Night. They have long term value. Setting up a database or spreadsheet is the key to a good records system.

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Update Revision – Fall 2011  
Prior Update – Summer 2005  
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## Addendum

*(Sample - Invitation Letter)*



Anytown Lions Club  
Anytown, Ohio

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

At a recent meeting of our Lions Club, your name was recommended for possible membership. To let you know a little bit about us, we are members of the largest service club organization in the world.... Lions Clubs International. Our membership is made up of community minded men and women like you who are interested in making our community a better place to live.

Our club was organized in \_\_\_\_ and we have served the community with pride and with the knowledge that we made a difference for the past \_\_ years. You have probably seen us in the community working to raise money for our projects or know of one of the many service activities we complete every year. But do you know that besides the hard work we have lots of fun and fellowship. As a Lion you will make friendships that will last a lifetime.

We are proud of our club and all we do, and we could do more if we had more members like you. We are extending an invitation to you to be our guest for dinner at our NEW MEMBER NIGHT on \_\_\_\_\_, (date) at \_\_\_\_ (place)\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (time). Following dinner we will spend time explaining in more detail our club service and fund raising activities. We will complete our meeting no later than \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. Between now and \_\_\_\_ (date noted above)\_\_\_\_ a Lions Club member will be calling to talk to you about this event. We hope that you will accept our invitation. In the meantime, if you have any questions please feel free to call me or any other Lion that you may know for more information.

Thank you for taking the time to consider Lions, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Title, \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club

Phone number

*(Reminder Call)*

Hello (Candidate's Name). This is (Your Name) from the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club. You recently received a letter from our membership chairperson inviting you to our membership meeting on  (date)  at  (time)  . at  (location)  .

I'm just calling to make sure you received the letter. The attire for the evening is casual and we anticipate an evening of good fellowship mixed with an opportunity for you to learn a little bit about Lionism. We promise to have you out of there no later than  (time)  .

We are required to give the restaurant reservations so we'd like to know how many guests to expect. Can we count on your attendance? Do you need directions or a ride to the restaurant?

Thank you.

**(Sample - Thank You for Attending Letter)**



Anytown Lions Club  
Anytown, Ohio

Date

Dear ----

On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club, I sincerely want to thank you for attending our New Member Night on \_\_\_\_\_

As you discovered at the meeting, we have a very active club. We are therefore always looking for good people so we can expand our services to our community and beyond. The more good people we have, the more we can do.

The members who met you at the recent event are convinced that you would be a terrific addition to our membership! I am certain you would find Lionism a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Not only will you help us fulfill our motto, "We Serve," but you will quickly begin developing many new friendships, many of which will last a lifetime.

I am therefore encouraging you to take a few minutes right now and fill out the Membership Application. You can return the completed application at one of our regularly scheduled meetings. Your sponsor, Lion ..... will also be contacting you in the near future.

To keep you informed of when we meet and what we are doing, we will add your name to the distribution list for our club newsletter. The newsletter is published monthly and provides important information about the happenings within our Lions Club and our future events. (and/or refer them to club website but make sure it's up to date and contains the club calendar)

Once again, I want to encourage you to join the ..... Lions Club. I'll be looking forward to seeing you at a future meeting.

Sincerely,

Title, \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club

## (Sample - Thank You for Joining Letter)



Anytown Lions Club  
Anytown, Ohio

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club, I sincerely want to thank you for deciding to join our organization.

As you discovered by visiting our club meetings, we have a very active club. We are therefore always searching for good people to enable us to expand our services to our community and beyond. The more good people we have, the more we can do, and we believe you will be a terrific addition to our club!

I am certain you will find our Lions Club a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Not only will you help us fulfill our motto, "We Serve," but you will quickly begin developing new friendships, many of which will last a lifetime.

Typically our club meets \_\_\_dates & time\_\_\_. Our next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. A Lion will call you prior to the meeting to secure reservations for dinner. The cost of the meal is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

You will also begin receiving Lion Clubs International's publication "The Lion" in the near future. It typically takes LCI about six weeks to process a new member application. If you don't start seeing "The Lion" within two months, please let me know.

Once again, I want to welcome you to the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club. I'll be looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Sincerely,

Title, \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club