



Membership Satisfaction Guide

How to keep members
engaged and involved



Lions Clubs International

Introduction

This guide was developed to help you consider the experience and expectations of your members — and plan accordingly. The guide has been updated to better reflect what we heard in the membership satisfaction survey.

The survey showed that regardless of how long Lions had been members, there are some critical needs that most members want met in order to remain in your club. Here they are listed in order of importance:

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

The Global Membership Approach

The Global Membership Approach’s goal is to **engage members** to foster a strong membership culture focused on recruiting new members, retaining current members and recapturing former members. If a Lions club has not yet completed the Global Membership Approach steps, we recommend that you contact your district Global Action Team or a region and zone chairperson who has been trained on the Global Membership Approach to get started with incorporating the approach to:

- Revitalize your club with new service opportunities.
- Rejuvenate your club with new members.
- Excel in leadership development and club operations.
- Share your club’s achievements with your community.

To ensure that your Lions club remains strong, you need to consider the experience and expectations of your members. This guide will help you in three easy steps:

- **Step 1: Get started by analyzing and defining membership satisfaction for your club.** There is a list of resources to help identify your membership’s strengths, experiences and expectations.
- **Step 2: Create your club’s membership satisfaction plan.** Keep your club efficient, productive and meaningful to your Lions by avoiding the primary causes of why members leave, which are:
 - Club conflict
 - Feeling they are not making a difference
 - Not having a sense of belonging
- **Step 3: Implement and review your membership satisfaction plan.** Communicate expectations and objectives, define club goals to your members clearly and openly, and ensure that your communication methods work for all members.

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



Get started

Analyze and define membership satisfaction for your club

Before your club can begin analyzing and defining membership satisfaction, you must identify who else besides the club membership chairperson will be a part of your membership working group that supports your club's recruitment and retention efforts. The first step is understanding each member's strengths and preferences for taking roles (see table below).

The second step is ensuring your members have a positive experience knowing what they want in your Lions club. Understanding this is an excellent task for your membership working group. 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.

ROLES	DESCRIPTION
Organizer	Some members are planners; they see each step and can prioritize what needs to be done. These Lions should focus on guiding your club's recruiting effort and fellowship events.
Promoter	Tech-savvy and creative members can create brochures, issue press releases and update your website and social media networks. They can provide members with club marketing materials and a calendar of events.
Outreach	These are your Lions who are comfortable talking to new people and current members about your club. Encourage them to promote Lions Clubs International to your target group via community groups on social media, email and community-based events to begin engaging with prospective new members.
Welcome	Lions who are trained to conduct new member orientation and coordinate mentoring will ensure your new members feel welcome and quickly settle into your club. Lions International provides training for both new member orientation and the basic mentoring program, which can be found at lionsclubs.org/MembershipChair .

After you've assembled your membership working group, coordinate the information you will need to build your plan. Conduct an "Exceeding Expectations" survey to determine what your members think of your club and how it operates. This assessment and administrator's guide are available at www.lionsclubs.org/membershipchair.

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 events, what would they think is essential to our club?
 - o You can use the *Member Questionnaire* at the back of this guide to 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.
 - o Consider devoting time during a club meeting or holding a special meeting to discuss member satisfaction.
- Carefully consider whether your club's stated objectives, goals and mission statement reflect what your current members want your club to be.

Club Quality Initiative

The Quality Club Initiative (CQI) is intended to help clubs align their efforts with the Global Membership Approach process. Furthermore, CQI is a strategic planning tool that assists clubs in assessing club operations and identifying areas where they can improve the member experience. Every club can be even better by understanding feedback from members regarding the previous year's activities to achieve your club's current goals.

Revitalize your club

Create your club's membership satisfaction plan

Losing members is an issue for many clubs, and the reasons members leave are often the same. The three areas that are most influential on why someone may leave a club include the following.

- 1) Club conflict** is the number one reason Lions club members leave. Club conflict can look different in different clubs and includes conflict with other members, cliques, politics and not feeling respected by other members.
- 2) Feeling like they are not making a difference.** Clubs must provide service opportunities that match their members' interests and significantly impact their communities.
- 3) Not having a sense of belonging.** People can serve their communities by themselves. They become Lions because of the fellowship they feel with like-minded people.

It would help if you formed relationships with your members to understand each person's expectations. What may feel like "making a difference" to one person may not feel the same for another.

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 friction between members and will provide an opportunity for all members to be involved.

We recommend taking the following courses in the Lions Learning Center to help manage conflict between members and discover strategies to support you in identifying solutions:

- Conflict Resolution
- Effective Listening
- Meeting Management

Common complaints about meetings include:

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

You can improve your meetings with thoughtful planning before the meeting. First, start by answering these five 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 necessary business – do not have reports from inactive committees or report information that is irrelevant to the meeting topic.
- Adjust the style of the meeting for 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 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 preferred meeting times.

4) Where are we meeting?

- Consider a new place for your meetings. A different location could bring a different perspective. Even another 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 discuss 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 that dominates the conversation.
- An essential meeting purpose is fellowship and social time, ensuring that all members feel welcome and are not excluded from the discussion.
- Have fun!

With the answers to these questions, you can organize a productive meeting, develop your agenda and prepare any materials you need. You can visit the Lions Learning Center, where you'll find courses such as *Meeting Management* and *Conflict Resolution*, to name a few, on managing your club's meetings.

B. Not making a difference

When people don't feel like they are making a difference, it may stem from a few areas that need to be addressed. Some common reasons members may feel they are not making a difference are listed below.

- 1) There are not enough opportunities to serve the community.** Lions want to make a difference, so it's essential to give them as many service opportunities as possible. Remember to ask for their input when planning activities. If your members have other obligations, such as family, jobs, or other hobbies, do your activities fit their schedule?
- 2) The club did not have activities that interested me.** Your club members have different causes they want to support and service activities they'd like to participate in. Ask them how they would like to serve and pass this information on to your service chairperson.



3) The assigned tasks did not match my interests or skills.

Sometimes even if the service activity aligns with your members' interests, the job you are asking them to do may not be. Have you asked your members how they would like to serve? A typical 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 professional opportunities that differ from what they do.

C. Not having a sense of belonging

Often when people feel that they do not have a sense of belonging, it may be an issue with the club's culture. The goal is to get your new members involved and feel like they have a 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 the following:

- The club felt too political.
- The club felt too old-fashioned and stodgy.
- The leadership in my club changed, and I was not too fond of 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 essential.

- 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 participate in a committee.

- Use Member Orientation and the Mentoring Program at <https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/resources-center> to help your club make new members feel welcome.

Allow 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 it a practice to review your club activities and plans. Be open to your members' evaluations of existing ideas and any new ideas for improvement.

Encourage all club members to invite others in the community to join your club whenever they meet someone who may enjoy being a Lion. Ensure prospective members feel welcomed if they participate in an activity.

Make sure that club officers are adequately trained. The Leadership Development division has many 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 your club's culture is inviting and welcoming to all members.



Remotivate existing members

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 at the back of this guide as a suggestion for your proposal.

A. Communicate your membership satisfaction plan

Seventy-five percent of new members indicated that being adequately informed about the goals and objectives of their club was essential to them. Remember, one of the reasons that people stay in clubs is because they feel like they understand the club's goals. When Lions feel like they know what is going on with their club, they feel like they are an essential part of it. Some tools that your club can use include:

- Email
- Social media platforms
- 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

You will likely encounter resistance when addressing issues by making changes to your club. 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.
- Make changes over time. Making changes too quickly may be difficult for members to accept. However, if they see the success of one shift, 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.

Celebrating new members to your club

Ongoing implementation

A. Conclusion

Your members are critical to the success of your plan, so make an effort to acknowledge their contributions to the success of your satisfaction plan. Using the Global Membership Approach process helps foster a club culture that regularly reviews and adjusts your club's plan. Your satisfaction plan will change as your membership changes.

New members will bring unique perspectives as well as a variety of interests and skills to your club, so take advantage of their abilities. Remember to share your satisfaction plan with your club's current members, who will share their ideas on improving the club experience and supporting you in meeting your membership goals and objectives.

Finally, membership satisfaction is ongoing regardless of where you start (see Global Membership Approach Wheel). Ongoing implementation means continuously revising your strategy and determining the best course of action to ensure success. If you need additional assistance or want to learn more about membership satisfaction, you can reach us at Membership@lionsclubs.org.



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 others that may require significant change based on your member feedback. Use this as a guideline, and alter it as necessary to suit your club's needs.

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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