

Your Lions Club: Moving Into the New Millennium With Effective Communications—Community Service—Membership Membership Retention Programs

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A strong, effective Community Service Program, plus viable, proactive Public Relations and Communications can help open new vistas, especially in the areas of building new membership and membership retention for Lions Clubs across the state of Ohio. Consider the following thought-starters:

1) Community Service—Does your club have an effective ongoing PR–Community Service Program? If not, get one going. If one is already in progress, then is it relevant and acceptable in today’s socioeconomic climate? Make sure it is helping the folks really requiring assistance—the young, the handicapped, the seniors and the sight-impaired. The type of services your club can provide has a direct bearing on building membership and membership retention. Also, unless your Community Service Program is meaningful and acceptable to the leadership and media in the community, an ineffective communications program will result.

2) Communications—High and sustained visibility of your Club in the community is imperative if your Club is to be a winner. Most folks do not like to back a losing organization. Aggressive communications can project your Club as a winner. A proactive PR program will not only make your fundraising projects a lot easier and more effective, but will help with your new member acquisition program. In addition to establishing an ongoing media relations program, you might consider networking with other organizations, establishing promotional news-making events and perhaps even setting up a limited type speakers bureau to hype your Club’s activities.

3) Membership—With a new, revitalized and relevant Community Service Program and a vigorous proactive Communications Program online and in operation, your Club will be in a better position to attract new members, especially younger professionals, women and retirees. An important note: Lowering the average age of your membership should be an important objective. Other considerations: Is your Club meeting time convenient to your membership? How about the younger, busy prospective members? Should your meeting time be a breakfast, luncheon or dinner? What about a husband-wife combination membership? If your club sponsors a high school Leo Club, invite parents to become Lions. Again, these are only thought-starters—be creative, there are many other effective approaches.

4) Membership Retention—Your current members, regardless of age, like to be with a winning organization. Keep them active and involved with the Club activities. It is difficult to beat a “hands-on” relationship. A strong, well-publicized community relations activity, plus effective public relations to project a winning image, will work wonders for the morale of your membership. Also, recognition of individual members’ service records and awards for exceptional performance is most important. Always take advantage of your members’ professional abilities and put them to effective use for the Club.

In conclusion, please keep in mind that there is a very close relationship between effective Community Service Programs, Communications, New Membership Acquisition and Membership Retention. Each has a direct bearing on the other!