

**THE OHIO PLAN -
RECRUITING NEW LIONS**

CHAIRMAN'S MANUAL

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Summary:

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

This plan works every time it is PROPERLY applied!

And therein lays the catch. To paraphrase a well-known Frank Sinatra song "... you have to do it our way!" The Plan leaves nothing to chance, but in doing so it also provides very few opportunities for the user to be creative. Over the years the authors have made virtually every possible mistake, so there is little risk of the user repeating those errors.

Follow the plan and you will succeed. Go off on your own, however, and

The Plan can be visualized as a set of blocks. Each block is a specific activity, and the user knocks them over one at a time. As each block falls, another is revealed and must be dealt with in a sequential manner. When all the blocks have fallen, what remains standing is a larger and stronger Lions club.



This document is directed toward the Membership Chairman and his/her assistants. The authors admit to providing more, rather than less, detailed information. Our philosophy is that the Chairman may choose to pass over material that proves to be too elementary, but nothing can rectify a situation where essential material is not present somewhere in the report.

In the final analysis, the Ohio Plan provides Lion Clubs with the ability to increase their membership with a minimum amount of effort while avoiding false starts and major errors. And this activity can be repeated as often as needed until the club reaches the size the members and officers desire.

Finally, the authors would greatly appreciate feedback, positive or negative, from any club that uses this plan to increase their membership.

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History:

The information in this document is not new. In fact, portions of this material date back at least 30 years. Here is a brief synopsis of where this material came from.

- a. In the early 1970s, a number of Jaycee clubs in the Cleveland area used a systematic method of identifying people who might be good Jaycees. The program was not very formalized and the documentation was sparse, but it did work fairly well.
- b. In the early 1980s, the Broadview Heights Lions -- some of whose members came from the Jaycees, including Lion K. Marshall -- adopted and enhanced the Jaycee plan. A one page write-up was produced and used successfully for many years by the Broadview Heights Lions.
- c. In the early 1990s, Lion J. Hillis independently developed a recruiting plan in District 13-B. This plan has been used for approximately 15 years and it has been highly successful for clubs that have faithfully followed the methodology.
- d. The Jaycee and the Hillis plan had many similarities, but the Hillis plan was considerably more modern, better organized and very well documented.
- e. The bulk of the Ohio Plan is thus based on Hillis' work, but certain enhancements from the Jaycee program are included where they proved useful. We have made no attempt to identify where the various parts of the Ohio Plan came from.

What you have before you, therefore, is a compendium of the best ideas from over a quarter century of looking for ways to recruit members into service organizations, and particularly the Lions.

It is logical and reasonable for a person to ask "I've heard about a lot of different membership plans, and most of them are worthless. Does this really work?"

We live in an era where many, if not most, service clubs are having enormous difficulty staying afloat. We would suggest, therefore, that any organization which is able to at least maintain a stable membership over a significant period of time is the model of success.

With this in mind, if you examine the Table below we think you will agree that the answer is Yes, this really works! Remember that the majority of District 13-C never utilized any type of organized membership plan, and the District shrunk by over 30 percent. District 13-B was better than stable. What more needs to be said!

Organization	Clubs & Total Members		Number of Members		
	1990 *	January 2005	1980	1995	2005
District 13-B	60 - 2050	62 - 2350			
District 13-C	62 - 1980	43 - 1270			
Broadview Hts. Lions			30	68	78

* 1990 numbers are approximate.

Having said this, however, a few words of caution are required.

1. It is unrealistic for a Lions Club to employ the techniques discussed in this document one time and expect their membership problems to be forever solved. It is essential that membership recruitment become a continuing commitment, and that a formal recruitment effort needs to be performed every year.
2. In the early years of starting to grow, a smaller club should conduct a recruitment program twice a year.
3. Experience has shown that in order for a club to **maintain** its membership at a stable level, it needs to recruit 7% of its members each year. That is, if a club has 30 members it needs to recruit 2 new members each year ($30 \times 0.07 = 2.1$). That means the club needs 2 new people this year, next year, and forever thereafter.
4. To **increase** their membership, a club needs a percentage increase that is larger than 7%.

Finally, signing up new members is not the end of the process, it is just the start.

On the Lions Membership Application you will find the following statement:

**INDUCT SOLEMNLY
EDUCATE COMPLETELY
INVOLVE IMMEDIATELY**

We couldn't agree more. If you recruit new people and don't educate them about Lionism, don't involve them in your activities, and leave them to fend for themselves, they won't remain Lions for very long.

You also must be cordial to your new members. It is astonishing how many Lions Clubs recruit new members and then treat them like dirt by ignoring them or expecting the new blood to be knowledgeable about the operations of the club. Did you know everything about your club in the first year? Of course not, so give the new people a chance to grow.

**It is the responsibility of the club to train the new members.
It is NOT the responsibility a new member to seek the necessary information.**

Introduction and Achilles Heels:

Have you ever been in this situation? Midway through the meeting the King Lion stands up and says "OK, we're going to have a membership drive at our next meeting. Everybody please bring a guest."

So what happens? Well, typically not much. If your lucky maybe one or two members will invite a guest. As often as not, however, nobody brings anyone.

Why does this happen time after time?

The answer is that there are a couple of Achilles Heels you have to overcome. And unless you understand the dynamics of the situation history will probably repeat itself.

- The announcement made by the King Lion was essentially an after-thought, and most of the members read it that way. The King Lions knows he/she should be doing something about getting new members, but they are reluctant to start down that path because so many of their predecessors have previously failed at recruiting new members. Losing face isn't fun, and deciding not to try is an easy alternative choice.

Recruiting new members is serious business, and the future of your club may depend on doing it successfully. So buck up your courage and get started. We'll show you how to be a winner!

First of all, don't approach recruiting in a lackadaisical manner. You wouldn't think about running a fund raiser or a community services project without doing some good planning, so why should recruiting new members be any different? It's not!

Recruiting members is a PROJECT, and it requires careful planning.

This means there must be a Project Chairman and preferably one or two assistants. Their job is to lead the way and insure that the activities discussed in this document are carefully followed. If they do their job, the membership drive will be a success.

- The main reason your members resist inviting guests to a meeting is a FEAR OF FAILURE, or a FEAR OF IMPOSING. Suppose Tom is thinking about inviting his good friend Leo to a Lions meeting. In his mind, Tom may say to himself,

"Leo's a good buddy. If I ask him to attend a meeting and he says 'no,' it could ruin our friendship. It's not worth the risk."

Even if Leo is just an acquaintance, rather than a good friend, Tom may not want to take the chance that he might impose on Leo. So, year after year, Tom never talks to Leo.

These are very real possibilities, and they go a long way toward explaining why many, if not most, membership nights fail.

The problem is that Tom, and other people like Tom, know a lot of folks who would be good Lions. You're missing a lot of excellent opportunities unless you can get all those "Toms" to contribute to the process.

How do you get Tom's cooperation? The answer is you need to make the situation non-threatening to him.

Explain to Tom that he won't personally have to ask Leo to attend a meeting, and he won't have to call him, or do anything at all for that matter. In fact, if Tom doesn't even want his name used that's OK. You just want Tom to provide some names, addresses and phone numbers. Other people will do the rest of the job.

Once Tom understands he's off the hook, and that the club won't think he is being uncooperative because he doesn't want to call someone, the information should flow freely.

Eventually somebody is going to have to talk to Leo on the phone, and since it won't be Tom who will be making the calls? Most clubs have at least a couple of people who don't mind making cold calls. (And, as you will soon see, these are not really "frigid" calls.) Salespeople are particularly good at this since they do it every day. Other good choices are bank tellers, teachers, clergy, undertakers (no kidding) and virtually anyone who deals with the public on a regular basis.

The Project Chairman needs to identify a few people in the club who are willing to help with the calling.

Actually, you will quickly discover that Tom is normally the exception rather than the rule. Many of your members will be willing to call the people they recommended. So don't panic. Things will work out.

Time Line

It is very important to allow a sufficient amount of time to organize and conduct a membership drive. A wide time window allows a more detailed and thoughtful approach to the project. This is always very beneficial.

In this document we assume a time window of six (6) weeks. This may initially seem an excessive amount of time, but we strongly suggest giving yourself as much time as possible, and particularly so the first time you run the membership plan detailed in this report.

In the Resource Section on the CD you'll find a typical Time Line. Adjust as needed. You may wish to refer to this schedule as you read the following sections, so make a copy.

Note that the day of membership meeting, "M-DAY," time equals zero.

Before M-DAY the times are negative

After M-DAY the times are positive

The Name Game

To have a successful membership drive, your club needs to develop a list of people you wish to invite to the event.

Possible sources of prospective members includes family members, friends, co-employees, church associates, etc. Lions International has a couple of excellent document that can assist you in identifying prospects; the “Recruiting Wheel” and the “Member Referral Form.” Copies of these documents can be found in the CD in the “Recruiting Material” section. The Referral Form also provides a place to write down the names of the prospects, but you can also use 3x5 cards. Pick the method you like best.

Before starting to gather the names, remind your club members about “Target Groups.” This involved seeking out special interest group(s) to join your club. This allows a group to expand their horizons while still maintaining the bonds that initially brought them together. By becoming part of LCI, the group can continue promoting their interest and have the additional value of being part of the world’s largest service club.

- Merchant Associations
- Retirees
- Sport clubs
- Grandparents clubs
- Photography/Video clubs
- Agriculture clubs
- Computer groups
- Ethnic or culture group
- Parenting Group
- Travel group
- Business cooperatives
- etc.....

Experienced has also shown that one of the most important and productive target groups are parents whose youngest child has just graduated from high school, or has recently graduated. Many of these people will have worked together as couples for many years, and are often highly committed members of sports or band boosters, PTA and other school related clubs. Once the last child has graduated, and possibly headed off to college, the parents will discover they have some free evenings. Your Lions club can help them to productively fill this time period. You might even get a “twofer,” a husband/wife team.

Here’s a checklist on how to acquire the names. We’ll assume you are using 3x5 cards.

1. Select the day/evening when the names will be gathered. Tell your club members ahead of time when this is going to take place. It is very important to include in the notice that the members will not have to call the prospects themselves if they don’t wish too!
2. At the beginning of the meeting, pass out the materials you plan to use: the Recruiting Wheel, several 3x5 cards, etc. This gives people a chance to do some thinking before you start asking for input.
3. Get any club business out of the way first. Once you start asking for names, don’t let anything distract or interfere with the process until you are completely finished.
4. For each category on the Recruiting Wheel, ask “Who is the One?” Example: *Who is the relative or relatives you feel could make a contribution to improving the community?* Give people enough time to think up the names.

5. Have the members put the pertinent information for each prospect on the 3x5 card. Try to get the proper spelling and the correct address and telephone number. Missing information will have to be gathered later by the Committee.
6. At the bottom of the card have the members indicate if they are willing to make a telephone call. Have them write “yes” or “no.” Encourage the members to agree to do this. It will definitely make life easier for the Committee, and a friend calling is always better than an unknown. But remember you promised not to berate anyone if they choose not too do any calling. The most important factor is getting those names!

After the names have been gathered, collect the cards and tell the members that they are now going to review the suggested names or groups.

The purpose of this review process is to determine if anyone in your club has strong reservations about inviting one or more of the people/groups on the list. This “weeding out” can be a delicate and emotional process. This is not a blackball procedure, but if an individual/group will result in a controversy or a disruptive situation the earlier you learn about it the better.

As in all Lion activities, the collective judgment of the membership should be allowed to determine if an individual/group should be invited.

The day after acquiring the names is

Tabulation Time: Prospective member information has important long term value. You have spent a considerable amount of time gathering the data, so this is a great time to develop a spread sheet or a data base to keep things straight. The 3x5 cards are convenient, but a computer file is more user-friendly. If you can’t do this yourself, get a computer guru in your club to do the job, or maybe ask you son/daughter or grandson/granddaughter for their help. They usually have more computer-smarts than we do.

You and the committee will have to fill in the gaps in the data.

Update your records regularly.

Do not trust your memory!

The Venue:

One important issue your club will face is when and where the New Member Night should be held? There are a number of factors that will influence this decision, but first and foremost is the prime consideration.

PRIME CONSIDERATION: You only get one chance to make a good first impression.

Keep this in mind when making all decisions. It is especially important that your club's atmosphere be welcoming and friendly for the New Member Night. If a potential member walks in and immediately gets turned off, you've wasted everybody time.

After the "name game" meeting, the Chairman and his/her assistants should spend some time searching for a good meeting place. Unless the choice of the venue is obvious, the Committee should be given considerable flexibility in making this decision.

Here are a number of things that need to be considered.

1. How healthy is your check book? This will dictate a lot of your decisions. For a membership night error on the side of spending more rather than less money.
2. The best choice is a buffet because it keeps people circulating and allows a larger variety of choices, including vegetarian. The next best choice is a sit-down dinner. Choose something simple and straight-forward that most people will enjoy.
3. At a minimum your guests will expect you to have some type of food and beverages at the event. If your budget does not permit holding a dinner, consider a social hour with hors d'oeuvres, or beer and pizza, followed by the speaker portion of the evening.
4. Read your audience. Is your town blue-collar or high rollers? Beer-pizza works for the first group and wine-cheese for the second. The reverse would probably not be a good choice.
5. If you are really money-limited, think about combining efforts with another club in town. Co-sponsoring with a photography club or the high school sports boosters would not produce a competitive situation. Don't co-sponsor with the Rotary or the Kiwanis.
6. The best location is a private room at a local restaurant. Other workable locations are library or community center meeting rooms. If you have your own meeting hall that's terrific, but make sure it doesn't look like a tool storage shed.
7. Avoid locations that make communication difficult. This means don't choose a bowling alley, a sports-bar or any location where the background noise level is very high.
8. Select a venue where you and your guests can wander around and mingle after you arrive. But remember there may be some guests with physical limitations who will need to easily find a chair after a short period of time.

9. If you have a choice, definitely pick round tables. Eye-to-eye contact between people is very important.
10. If possible you want the event to be catered. This insures your members will be spending their time talking to the guests rather than arranging tables and serving food. If catering is not feasible, a limited number of people should be assigned the food task so the rest can mingle.
11. Time of Day. It is usually easier to get people to attend an evening event, but if your club normally meets at noon it not a good idea to change the time just for the membership meeting. It doesn't make sense recruiting people who can't attend at your normal meeting time. (This may seem obvious, but clubs have made this error.)
12. In this day and age, you cannot allow smoking in the meeting room.

Communications

Several communications are necessary during the membership drive. These communications can be divided into two categories; pre-meeting and post-meeting.

- A. Pre-Meeting: Prior to your New Member Night you will communicate with the prospective members three, and possibly four, times.
1. Introduction Letter: After the “names list” has been completed, your first communications with the prospective members will be a Letter of Introduction. The purpose of this letter is to introduce your club to the prospect and let them know about the New Member Night. There are a couple of sample letters on the CD. Pick the one you like best and modify appropriately for your club. Make sure everything gets proof-read carefully, especially the prospects name & address. This letter should be mailed approximately three (3) week prior to the membership night.

In addition to the letter, you need to send along a copy of your clubs advertising brochure so the guests can begin to appreciate how much you do for your local community and beyond. A sample tri-fold brochure is available on the CD. Modify as needed and print it in color or black & white. If your budget warrants, get the job done by a local printer for the best quality. This brochure can also be found on the Lions website.

2. The Phone Call: Seven to ten days after the letters have been mailed, the prospects should be called. These phone contacts are **absolutely essential**, and should be performed by the Committee to make sure everyone gets contacted. There are two approaches;
 - a. The best choice is to find a location with several outgoing phone lines where you can get everyone together in one place. This not only assures that the prospects are called, but the enthusiasm generated when a prospect agrees to attend the meeting is contagious.
 - b. If you cannot organize a “phone bank,” distribute the name cards to the callers and instruct them about what is required. Emphasize that that these calls **MUST** be made. There is no excuse for failure!

There are two purposes for these calls. First, to answer any questions the prospects might have, and, second, get them to agree to attend the meeting. It goes without saying that a New Member Night without guests is a real bummer, so try to get callers that are good sellers. The better the salesperson, the better the result!

Make sure the guests understand that the meeting will be a reasonable length, about two (2) hours start to finish. You will also have to remind people about the time and date, the dress code, directions, and any other pertinent information about the meeting, etc.

Getting people to agree to attend a meeting can be tough. Don't expect miracles. If you get 40-50% of the people to agree to attend you've been successful.

For those that don't agree to attend the meeting, keep their names and try again the next time you have a membership night. Don't take anyone name off the list until you get a definitive "no."

3. Second Call. If the sponsor is willing to make a call, have them call the prospect a few days before the meeting and offer to give them a ride. It tough for someone to back out when you are knocking on their door! You may need to call the sponsors to insure that these final calls get made.
4. A Post Card. If the sponsor won't make a call, send a post card as a reminder a few days before the meeting. Include the place, date, time and dress code.

B. Post-Meeting:

Following the New Member Night you need to send everyone a letter, both those who attended as well as those that didn't show up. Sample letters are provided on the CD.

1. An attendee who joined: This is a thank you letter that welcomes the person into your Lions Club and provides additional information about orientation, future meetings, etc. [And CONGRATULATIONS on a successful recruiting effort!]
2. An attendee who didn't join: Not everyone who attends the meeting is going to immediately join. Overall, 40+ percent of the attendees will eventually join your club. For those that don't immediately join, you need to send them a letter thanking them for attending the meeting and letting them know that you intend to stay to keep in contact with them. [And you need to do precisely that.]
3. The No-Shows: These people also should get a letter thanking them for their interest and promising that someone will follow up with them in the future.

Finally, update the spread sheet or the database. Just because someone turned you down the first time doesn't means they won't be interested in joining the Lions at some time in the future. Keep those records current!

And remember that the next step is for someone in your club to be planning the Orientation Meeting, and someone needs to be looking at how to get the new folks immediately involved.

Meeting Preparations:

There are a lot of things that need to be handled before M-DAY. Start working on these items as early as possible. Don't wait until the day before the meeting!

- If the meeting will be at a restaurant, or otherwise catered, you need to discuss certain items with the owner/manager.
 - A buffet is the best choice since it keeps people moving around, and the choice of food is usually wider and better.
 - If you decide on a sit-down meal, pick something simple menu that most people will enjoy, beef, chicken, green beans, whatever. Don't select anything exotic. Allow for the possibility of one or more vegetarian meals.
 - If you are going to have the cocktail hour in the room where dinner will be served, ask the restaurant to put a mini-bar in the room. It will cost you for a bartender, but it avoids the guests wandering off to a different place in the restaurant to get a drink. Besides, you want to buy them their first drink.
 - You can save some time during dinner by asking the restaurant to pre-load the salad, dressing and desert on the table.
 - How is the room going to be setup? The value of round tables has already been mentioned.
 - Are you going to use a head table? Who is going to sit there? (Never assign a prospective member to the head table.) There is a Lions protocol on table arrangements. Ask a District Officer for advice.
 - Do you need a podium? Is a PA system required? Does the restaurant have this?
 - Will any type of slide/overhead project and screen be required?
- It is a good idea to pre-assign your members and guests to certain tables. Obviously this means the tables will have to be numbered. You want to make sure there are both members and guests present at each table. Tables consisting of just guests are a disaster: "These Lions are really unfriendly!"
- Sponsors should sit with their guest so they can explain the proceedings during the evening.
- Prepare name tags prior to the meeting, and put the table numbers on the name tags. Don't make the guests write out their own name tag. Bring along a few blank name tags in case you get some "walk-ins."
- Make sure your members remember to wear their name badges. If they forget, make them wear a hand-written name tag.

- Make sure the flag, banner, bell & gavel and any other Lions “stuff” you have gets to the meeting early and is properly setup. Make the room look real “Lionish.”
- Prepare agendas and place them on the tables at each place setting. Also put copies of New Member Packages on the tables (see CD).
- Customizing the New Member Packet with your club information and putting the whole thing together can be a time-consuming activity (see Reference Section labeled “New Member Booklet”). This is a great job a newer member of your club. The research activity alone will make them more knowledgeable. You’ll need one packet for every expected guest plus a few extras. Please note that the sections are labeled “A” through “G,” and that is the recommended order of constructing the booklet. Use an inexpensive report cover available at any stationary store or drugstore. Don’t go wild and Xerox a hundred copies, however, because some of this information changes every year.
- Tell your members what time they should arrive. You want some of your members in attendance before the first guest appears, and this is especially true for the sponsors. This also allows your members to pay for their meals before the guests arrive, thus avoiding some confusion.
- If you have photos and/or scrap books of past club activities bring them along. They make great “show & tell” material. Members can also use them as ice-breaking props as they chat with the guests: “Here, let me show you what we did last year.....”
- Who is going to speak at the meeting, what are they going to talk about and how long are they going to talk? You cannot afford any filibusters. If you want a project chairman to speak for 5 minutes about his/her activity, tell them what the time limit is and that you fully intend to enforce the limit. Ditto for the District Officer. If somebody doesn’t agree to play by your rules, find another speaker!
- You, or someone, will need to have Membership Applications in your pocket. The form is ME-6B. Call the LCI Membership Department at (630) 571-5466 ext.340. They will be happy to send you as many as you want free. (No, these are not available on the web.)
- While you’re at it, you might want to browse through the Lion International web site and see what else might be available. The materials we’ve included with this report are normally sufficient for your membership night, but there are all kinds of other interesting Lions booklets and materials that are available usually for free. Start at www.lionsclubs.org and have fun. Form ME-4, “We Serve,” is especially good.

M-DAY, New Member Night:

All the thinking and planning and inviting are done. It's time to pull the new fish into the boat!

You will find a sample agenda for the meeting on the CD. Feel free to alter this agenda as needed, but try to fit the whole meeting into a 2-hour time window, and absolutely never longer than 2.5 hours. We'll follow the provided agenda for the discussion below.

1. Begin the evening with a social hour. This provides an excellent opportunity for informal fellowship and networking. When the guests arrive, somebody must be at the door to meet them. The greeter should shake the guest's hand and find his/her name tag. Pick a glad-hander with a friendly smile for this job. Remember the first rule about having only one chance to make a good first impression. Shepherd the guest toward the rest of the crowd and get ready for the next person.

When the guest joins the throng another member or two should seek them out and start a conversation. Under no circumstance can you allow somebody to stand around alone. That's the kiss of death!

Sponsors should be on the outlook for their guests. When the greeting period is over, ask everybody to find their table and sit down.

2. Preliminaries: At this point the President should introduce himself/herself. Like all Lions meeting, have a member lead the Pledge and ask another to give the Invocation. Ask everyone to sit down and go around the room with self-introductions. Do this quick, but if the guests want to say a few words about themselves allow them to do so.
3. Dinner: Everybody knows how to eat, so get it on! Remember, there is no smoking in the meeting room. As dinner is winding down let everybody know the meeting will begin soon so they can make a potty stop if it is needed.
4. (Optional) Guest Speaker: *Some clubs like to use a guest speaker who can address a general purpose topic in an interesting way. On a personal basis the authors are, at best, "iffy" on the value of guest speakers. If you do decide to use one make sure they abide by the time limits (maybe 20 minutes) and definitely avoid telling any off-colored jokes or discussing politics. Don't invite mayors, councilpersons of other politicians.*
5. Club Presentations: Experience has shown that the primary thing most guests want to know is "what are the Lions doing for the local community?" **Along with the atmosphere being friendly, this will probably determine whether or not a guest decides to join your club.**

Start with a club leader who can speak with authority and enthusiasm about the contributions your club has made to the city, and the satisfaction your members feel while helping those in need. Five (5-10) minutes should suffice for this talk.

After each talk, ask the prospective members if they have any questions.

Next, have two (2) of your members explain their projects. Select one fund raising and one community service project. Have the project chairman explain why the club is running the

project and what you hope to accomplished. Pick the activities that have the biggest impact. It is ok to brag a little here. **We Serve** and we should be proud of that fact. Let people know it!

6. District Officer: The Lions operate worldwide, and we need to say something about that. A DO is the perfect person to do this. You want someone who is enthusiastic and can really “sell” the concept of Lionism. Allow about 10 minutes.
 - a. Ask the DO to spend 5 minutes on “Melvin started it, Helen challenged us, we’re the biggest service organization in the world, and we do a lot of good.”
 - b. For the second 5 minutes the DO can pick a far reaching project and expound on it. SightFirst is a good choice. Disaster relief also works well.
7. The Donation: You’ve told the prospects what you do, now prove it! Call forward the representative of some group and give them a donation. “Mr. Taylor is the president of the local Food Pantry, and we’re very pleased this evening to be able to make a \$2,500 donation to this worthy cause. The cameras flash to record the moment for posterity, and the guests are duly impressed.
8. The Sales Pitch: Any salesman will tell you that in order to sell anything you must ask the customer to place an order. So the wrap-up of the meeting is asking the guests to join.
 - a. Tell the attendees that you are looking for good members so the club can accomplish more, and you would very much like them to join your club.
 - b. You need to tell the prospects what we expect of them; attend meetings, participating in club activities and pay dues. Tell them what the dues are per year. If the club can afford it, also tell the prospects that in good faith the club will pay the \$25 LCI initiation fee. This is a small investment for a future Lion.
 - c. Ask if anyone has any questions.
 - d. Pull out the applications and the pens.
9. Give the Benediction, thanks everyone for attending and adjourn the meeting. Some of the guests will want to hand around for a while and talk. That’s always a good sign. If they immediately bolt for the door, that’s not a good sign.

Epilog - Facts, Myths and Other Information:

What's next? Now that you have successfully recruited some new members for your club, the work is over, right? Not hardly!

1. As a starter, the day after the New Member Night you need to sit down and make some notes. What went well, what needs to be improved, and what should be added or deleted.
2. Update the note cards, spread sheet or data base on the prospects. Who joined, who didn't and any other information about the prospects that should be recorded for the future.
3. Next, go to the communications section and review the follow-up letters you need to send. Don't put this off
4. Re-read the "History" section of this document, and take note of the two cautions at the end. To reiterate:
 - a. You can't run a membership drive once and achieve enduring success. Preferably you should repeat the effort every year, but at the absolute minimum every other year. Remember that the target rate is a minimum of 7% per year, FOREVER.
 - b. Getting people to join is only half the battle. If you don't properly induct and educate and get them involved, they will just melt away like snow in the sunshine.
 - c. In addition, somebody in your club needs to start going through the Healthy Club Initiative and applying the material on Orientation, Retention and the other relevant topics. This is important for the new members, but probably even more important for your experienced members.

When is the Best Time to Run a New Member Night? The Ohio Plan will work at any time of the year, but there are two times that seems to be particularly effective.

March (or early spring): Because people are looking for reasons to get out of the house, most of the heavy snows are over, and the grass has not yet started growing.

September (early fall): Because vacations are over, the kids are back in school, the leaves haven't yet fallen, and the big holidays have not cranked up.

The worse time is between November 15 and December 31.

Additional Things that can help your Membership Grow (from a LCI document):

1. Never underestimate the power of public relations. Be sure to publicize your club's activities. Positive media coverage builds community support and interest in your club.
2. Always have your club's brochures available at public events
3. Allow members to bring a friend or prospect to help out at one of your club's events to get a first hand look at your group.

4. Show your pride. Build the impression of your club as a vital part of the community. March in community parades and participate in community events where possible.
5. Ask community welcome organizations to include information about your club in their packets. Local real estate agents may also provide this service.
6. Have buttons or T-shirts made for each active member that says “Ask me about Lions” to elicit questions from community members.
7. Have your club’s meeting time and location, along with a contact name and number for membership inquiries, placed in the community calendar section of the local newspaper.
8. Look at your partners for new members. Does your club work with the school system, eye health professionals or other community businesses? People that have worked with your club first-hand are excellent prospects.

There are a number of factors that influence how effectively a Lions club, or any other organization, can expand their membership. A number of myths have also grown up concerning this activity. The comments below are generalities based on years of experience, and exceptions certainly do exist. But overall these comments provide some guidance about what could, or should, be expected.

1. We’re going to call 20 people, and 10 of them are going to join our club. That’s probably not realistic. Here’s a more reasonable expectation, and a statistic to remember: “50 to 4.” If you send letters to 50 people, about 40% will be interested in Lionism and when you call them they will agree to come to the meeting (that’s 20 individuals). Of these 20 people, 40%, or about 8, will actually attend the meeting. Of the 8 who attend, 40-50%, 3 or 4, will actually join. Don’t be discouraged. You now have 4 more members than you did yesterday, and next year you can repeat the same process.

50 calls should produce about 4 members.

2. Most of our members are over 60, so we’re going to recruit some people in their 30s. This is not a realistic idea. First off, there is a major communication issue. Think not? OK, as an example, how many of your sexagenarians are wearing an I-pod around their neck? Do they even know what an I-pod is?¹ Most of the people in their 20s and 30s do. Your club didn’t get old overnight, and it isn’t going to become young next week. Instead of trying to recruit a bunch of 30-40 year olds, start with some people in the 50+ age group. You’ll communicate on the same level and the odds of them being comfortable with your club are much greater. In a couple of years these people will be able to recruit people in their early 40s, and this process can repeat at lower ages as time passes.

There are a couple of exceptions where youth movements can appear seemingly out of nowhere and take over a Lions club.

¹ It’s a small electronic device you wear around your neck that can download music files so you can carry your favorite 1,000 hip-hop tunes or the complete symphonies of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms wherever you go. And if you had to read this footnote, you proved the point!

- a. If your club has a few members with children/grandchildren who get interested in Lionism, a youth movement might ensue and the club can be totally turned around in a few years.
- b. Another way a youth movement can begin is if a Lions club has a strong Leo's club that begins to matriculate into the Lions. This method would be slower than the first, but it is no less effective.

If either of these situations begins to happen, "experienced" members are well advised to stay alert to avoid being trampled by the young Turks, or, more appropriately, the new pride of Lions racing for their next meal. Claw marks heal slowly!

3. We're going to go out and recruit some really good new members, "no deadwood for us!" That's a noble idea, and it certainly helps to target people who have been active in youth sports, the school board, a church, etc. But there are no guarantees. Every Lions club can site situations where they recruited someone who looked really great, and they turned out to be a bust as a Lion. Likewise, there have been many people who joined the Lions and were virtually invisible for several years. Suddenly they got excited and 10 years later became the District Governor. One absolute truism is that the more people you sign up the better the odds of finding some really good Lions. If you recruit one person each year who eventually turns out to be terrific Lion, you're well ahead of the game.
4. Any Lions club can grow. Maybe so, but it is definitely much tougher for really small clubs to grow significantly. Clubs that fall to a very low number of members, like single digits, are often very difficult to save. Holding an M-night where five members and four guests appear does not produce good results. Preferably you want about twice as many members as there are guests. If a club has 20 or more members it's an excellent candidate for expansion. From 10 to 20 members is a tougher struggle, but possible. Under 10 members is very problematic.
5. You can always merge two or more small clubs. Sometimes the answer is yes, but not always. The key is whether the clubs share a central focal point. For example, if two small clubs are serving the same city or school system, then there is a common focus and a merger will often work. But if the clubs are serving different cities with their own populations and elected officials, and maybe even a different school system, it's much more difficult. This doesn't mean you shouldn't try to merge two very diverse clubs, but you need to be aware of the potential issues.

Contents of the CD:

<u>Folder Name</u>	<u>File Name</u>	<u>File Type</u>
C:\Lions-MembershipPackage\	1pagehandout.doc talkingpoints.doc	MS Word (single handout) MSWord (Information sheet)
\AbbreviatedReport	AbbreviatedReport.doc	MS Word (Simple discussion)
\ChairmanManual	OhioPlan-ChairmanManual	MS Word (Extended discussion)
\Presentation	OhioPlan.ppt OhioPlan.pdf Ohioplanslides.doc	PowerPoint Presentation “ (pdf format) MSWord, Overheads
\ReferenceSection		
\1-Timeline	TimeLine.doc	MS Word (Time Schedule)
\2-ProspectName	Referral.doc RecruitingWheel.doc	MS Word (Potential member list) “ “
\3-AdvertisingBooklet	Trifold.doc	MS Word (club PR booklet)
\4-Communications	IntroductionLetter-1.doc IntroductionLetter-2.doc ThankYou1-Joined.doc ThankYou2-Attended.doc	MS Word (Letter of Intro.) MS Word “ MS Word (New Member)) MS Word (Thanks, attended)
\5-MeetingAgenda	MeetingAgenda.doc	MS Word (Suggested agenda)
\6-NewMemberBooklet	NewMemberBooklet.doc	MS Word (7 pages, rework for your club and District)
\7-MembershipApplications	Application-InsideB&W.jpg Application-OutsideB&W.jpg ME6B NewMemberApp-color.pdf	Picture (Appl., black/white) “ “ PDF file (std. color appl.)
\8-Logos&Misc	Various color & B&W lions logos	Pictures