

“Club within a Club” Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a “Club within a Club”?

A. A “Club within a Club” is a group of at least 15 new Optimist Members that are added to your Club in order to expand service to your community. They are still Members of your Optimist Club, but they function somewhere outside the scope of your Club’s traditional membership base and activities.

Q. What are some examples?

A. Examples include:

- A morning or afternoon Club that adds 15 new Members by adding an evening meeting to accommodate community Members unable to meet during the day.
- A Club with an older membership base that brings in a group of young professionals or college students to bolster membership, help with existing projects, and bring new ideas and excitement.
- A Club that recruits a group of teachers or other school personnel to work directly with the school.
- A group of Members that focuses solely on one project all year like a major town fair or childhood cancer. Think of them like an expanded committee.

The whole point of a “Club within a Club” is to get Optimist Club’s to think “outside the box” in their membership recruitment and activities. There are unlimited possibilities.

Q. How do I form one?

A. Look for any opportunities within your community. Think of a special project that needs to be accomplished. Are there other volunteer groups working in your area that might benefit from a partnership with your Optimist Club?

Consider your Club’s current membership. Are there any groups in your community that you are failing to attract? Younger people? Teachers? Men? Women? The most successful Optimist Clubs have diverse memberships reflecting a cross-section of all ages, genders, professions, and backgrounds existing in their communities. Why are these groups not joining your Club? What could you do to change that? A common example is an Optimist Club that fails to attract younger Members or working people because they meet in the morning or afternoon.

Q. What is the cost?

A. There is no Charter fee. Clubs will be billed for the Members of the “Club within a Club” in the same manner in which they are billed for other Members. A regular, adult Member still pays the \$15.00 processing fee and full International and District dues. If they are Friends of Optimist, college Members, \$30 under 30, etc., they will be billed accordingly. Any class of Optimist Member may be included in a “Club within a Club”. They will be included in your dues billing along with your other Members.

Q. Does the “Club within a Club” have its own officers?

A. They may have *informal* officers to help conduct their meetings and business. The main Club's officers and Board of Directors are still the legally responsible party.

Q. Can they open their own bank account?

A. Maybe. The "Club within a Club" does not have their own unique governmental filing information, which is required for nonprofits to open a bank account in most countries. You would need to ask your bank about the process of opening another account using the same governmental filing information.

Groups that wish to have their own officers and/or bank account may be better off as a new, independent Optimist Club. See below for more information.

Q. How does this differ from new Club building?

A. A "Club within a Club" is not fully autonomous to operate how it chooses. The main Club's Board of Directors is still legally responsible for the new group's activities and finances. This is great for groups that do not wish to worry about Club administration, officer elections, governmental filings, etc.

Many groups wish to be autonomous. If a group wants to have their own legally responsible officers, bank accounts, etc., they should probably be formed as a new Club. If you are unsure if a group should be a new Club or a "Club within a Club", please call the Membership Department at 800-500-8130 ext. 226.

Q. My Club just had a successful membership recruitment drive and added 15 Members? Do we get credit for a Club within a Club?

A. While this is a great accomplishment, it is not a "Club within a Club" unless these 15 Members are doing something differently than your Club's traditional activities.

Q. If the "Club within a Club" eventually decides it should become its own Optimist Club, will they be able to?

A. Yes.

Q. If they do break off to form their own Club, will the original Club be hurt for awards purposes?

A. No

Q. Once we have identified and recruited our 15 Members, how do we notify Optimist International?

A. All 15 Members must be added on the same day. You may add the Members yourself online at www.optimistleaders.org. After that, notify Optimist International that you have done so at the contact information at the bottom of this page. Please email jim.boyd@optimist.org or call 800-500-8130 ext. 226 or 227 with any other questions.