

CLUB ORGANIZATION

A clearly defined administrative organization is essential for efficiency and helps establish practical lines of authority and responsibility.

The [model organization chart](#) (see *Optimist Club Model Organization*) is based upon the experience of thousands of Optimist Clubs. Most Clubs can use the chart as is. The President should complete it and distribute it to every Club member.

The TOP 10 Reasons to Use the Model Organization

1. It can be adapted to a particular Club's needs without changing the basic concept.
2. It can be easily adapted to fit any Club size.
3. It provides an efficient chain of communication.
4. It provides sufficient back up to insure all Club functions.
5. It allows for the involvement of every Club member.
6. It is complete. All necessary Club activities are represented.
7. It releases the President for Board administrative functions.
8. It utilizes the talent and ability of all officers and Directors.
9. It provides opportunities for training future Club leaders.
10. It has been proven to be effective by thousands of Clubs over the years.

ADAPTING IT TO YOUR CLUB

Small Clubs

(approximately 30 or fewer members)

- Each Vice President is liaison between a group of Committees and the Board.
- Each elected Director should be assigned to one Committee.
- In the small Club, the Past President and the six elected Directors may each be Chair of a Committee.
- If necessary, a Club member may serve on more than one Committee.

Medium Size Clubs

(approximately 30 to 75 members)

- In a Club this size, the Director should not be a Committee Chair.
- Be sure every person has a Committee assignment before assigning a member to more than one standing Committee.

Large Clubs

(approximately 75 or more members)

- The same as for the medium Club except the functions of most Committees may be divided between two or more Committees.
- Example: Membership responsibilities may be split into a Recruitment Committee and an Education Committee.
- Clubs with a large number of Committees can improve the efficiency of the organization by assigning the elected Directors as liaison between two or three Committees and a Vice President.

Duties of Officers and Directors

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall consist of:

the President

the President-Elect

the Vice Presidents

the Secretary-Treasurer

six elected Directors (each of whom shall have the right to vote)

The Board of Directors....

- determines policies
- makes long-term and short-term plans
- elects and deletes members
- supervises Club activities
- provides for annual review of Club books
- fills vacant offices between elections
- determines causes for and initiates plans to correct excessive member loss and low attendance

President (elected)

- Coordinates and encourages the implementation of Club programs and policies.
- Presides at Club and Board meetings.
- Represents the Club to the community and various levels of Optimist International.
- Makes necessary appointments.
- Serves on the District Board of Directors.
- Works with the Club's Director of Personal Growth to encourage personal/professional member growth.

President-Elect

- Serves on the Board of Directors.
- Presides over meetings and acts in the capacity of the President when he/she is absent.
- Succeeds to the office of President automatically on the first day of the succeeding year.

Vice Presidents

(Two elected; not numbered, not Committee Chairs)

- Serve as liaison between the Board of Directors and a group of committees.
- Preside at Club and Board meetings in the President's absence.
- Serve on the Board of Directors.
- Perform duties ordinarily incumbent upon Vice Presidents.
- Perform duties assigned by the President.

Secretary-Treasurer

(One office. Appointed by the President, approved by the Board. Some Clubs may wish to split the duties between two people-one serving as Secretary, the other as Treasurer.)

- Maintains minutes of Club and Board meetings.
- Receives and disburse all Club funds.
- Keeps financial records.
- Handles Club correspondence.
- Prepares and files Club reports.
- Maintains membership, awards and attendance records.

(See the Club Secretary-Treasurer Answer Book for details.)

Duties of Appointees

Sergeant-At-Arms

(Appointed by the President.)

- Helps maintain order.
- Collects fines (if Club elects to fine members).

Chaplain

(Optional. Appointed by the President.)

- Offers guidance that a community-serving organization should have.
- Arranges for prayers and invocations.
- Is a friend and pastor to all Members.

Parliamentarian

(Optional. Appointed by the President.)

- Advises on matters of parliamentary procedure.

(See Roberts' Rules of Order.)

Club Foundation Representative

(Appointed by the President.)

- Provides information on the Optimist International Foundations.
- Encourages Foundation contributions.
- Heads a Club fundraiser for the benefit of the Foundation (at least one-half of proceeds to OIF.)
- Sends contributions directly to the Optimist International Foundations Office or District Foundation Representative.
- Makes memorial or tribute gifts to honor Members.
- Asks Members about dollar matching programs at their companies.
- Asks business owners and decision makers for business gifts.
- Promotes bequests/wills naming the Optimist International Foundation.
- Requests any necessary information from the Foundation office.

Club Director of Personal Growth

(Appointed by the President.)

- Promotes the Personal Growth and Involvement (PGI) program.
- Encourages members to utilize the Skills Development Modules.

Club Services Coordinator

(Appointed by the President.)

- Assists Club President in promoting attendance at District and Zone meetings.
- Coordinates new member inductions, orientation and involvement into the Club in a timely and memorable fashion.
- Tracks Club's progress toward Honor Club.
- Liaison to District Club Services Chair and Committee.
- Assists New Club Builders of Excellence in helping oversee and run New Club Follow Up and Follow Through program.
- Manages farewell procedures with Members leaving the Club.
- Should be a Past President and, if available, a Past Lieutenant Governor or even a Governor.

Club Committees

In Optimist Clubs there are two types of Committees: **Standing** and **Special**. Each has a definite type of responsibility, and both are essential for Club success.

Standing Committees exist for a fiscal year.

Special Committees exist for the life of a project.

Example: The Finance Committee (a **Standing Committee**) researches and recommends fundraising projects. The President appoints a **Special Committee** from the Club membership to plan and conduct an approved project. The same arrangement applies to other areas including the Club's program of service to youth and community.

The responsibilities of a Committee are:

- To organize and direct the talent and energies of Optimists into meaningful activities.
- To report to the Board of Directors and, in turn, the Board is responsible to the membership through the annual election of officers.
- To submit recommendations for approval to the Board or, in certain instances, to the Club membership.

Committee Size

Ideally, each Member should serve on a **Standing Committee** and at least one **Special (project) Committee** each year. However, appointments should not be made merely for the sake of an assignment. Ultimately the size of any Committee should be determined by the Club's size and the requirements of the assigned activity. Effectiveness declines sharply with more than seven members. When a large number of Members is required, the Committee's responsibility should be divided among sub Committees. When necessary, Members may be appointed to more than one Committee. However, a Member should not Chair more than one Committee.

Committee Selection

Qualifications for both **Standing** and **Special Committee** members are enthusiasm, ability, experience, leadership and interest in the assigned activity.

Attitude, enthusiasm and dedication = 90%

Ability = 10%

When making Committee appointments, most Club Presidents consult the Chair and sometimes the Board of Directors or a former Committee Chair. However, appointments are the President's responsibility.

Questions to ask to help in Committee selection

1. Does the Committee require special knowledge or talent?
2. What is the Member's record on previous Committees?
3. Is the Member a potential Chair, or a follower? Committees need both.
4. Will the Member make time to serve on the Committee?
5. Can the Member work with people, both on the Committee and with the public?
6. Will appointments create a group that will work together harmoniously?
7. Has the Member shown interest in the Committee's activity rather than being appointed because of his/her vocational relationship to the activity?
8. Will appointments further the plan for involving all Club Members in Committee activity?

New Members should complete the *Member Interest Finder* as soon as possible. Before a new fiscal year, Members may complete an Interest Finder to indicate their preferences for the new year, and the President should attempt to respect those preferences. The *Member Interest Finder* can be found under "Forms & Publications" at www.optimist.org.

Preparation for Committees

Before a Committee meets, the President or appropriate Vice President should counsel with the Committee:

1. Provide necessary materials issued by Optimist International and instruct the Chair to ask for any additional counsel desired.
2. Be sure the Committee's objective is understood.
3. Request the Chair strive to train a successor.
4. Be certain the Committee understands that its basic function is to translate ideas and plans into action.
5. Set a schedule for reports and accomplishments.

Committee Finances

When an activity requires financing, the Board of Directors should allocate the approved funds from the budget. If costs are not determined when an activity is assigned, the Committee should prepare an estimate for Board approval. Every Committee must keep within the budget.

Committee Action

Action and accomplishment are the purposes of every Committee.

The Chair must, through tact and enthusiasm, ensure Committee action. Discussion must result in decisions, and decisions must result in action. Committee efforts have a single purpose—completion of the assigned program.

Standing Committees

The functions of the recommended **Standing Committees** are listed with suggested Committee size. The chief resources for each are in italics, and can be found under “Forms & Publications” at www.optimist.org.

Community Service

(Three to seven Members including the Chair)

- Determines needs in the community.
- Plans and supervises community service projects; a **Special Committee** conducts each project.

(Resources: International Programs Planning Guide)

Finance

(Three to four Members including the Chair)

- Plans and supervises the budget.
- Researches and plans fundraising projects; a **Special Committee** conducts each project.

(Resources: Model Club Budget; fundraising section of the International Programs Planning Guide)

Membership

(Three to seven Members including the Chair)

- Plans and executes a year-round program to constantly acquire new Members.
- Conducts a strong program of Member education, involvement and retention.

(Resources: NOW kit; New Member Invitation pamphlet)

New Club Building

(Three Members including the Chair)

- Plans and conducts all activities involved in the sponsorship of a new Club in order to ensure the future of Optimist service.

(Resources: New Club Building Handbook)

Program

(Three to seven Members including the Chair)

- Researches and develops plans that will provide interesting, effective programs for each Club meeting.
- Schedules programs for each meeting.

Public Relations

(Three or more Members including the Chair, Bulletin Editor and Publicity Coordinator)

- Edits and publishes the Club bulletin at least monthly.
- Promotes news media coverage of Club activities.
- Maintains active liaison with elected officials, government agencies, community organizations and other civic/service organizations.
- Compiles a Club scrapbook.

(Resources: Public Relations Training Guide; Bulletin Editor's Guide; Radio Public Service Announcements)

JOOI Clubs

(Three to four Members including the Chair)

- Act as the liaison between the sponsoring Optimist Club and the JOOI Club.
- Assists JOOI Club with completion of all forms (including rosters and election reports) and applications for awards.
- Helps plan joint activities between the JOOI Club and sponsoring Optimist Club.
- Remains in frequent communications with the JOOI Club.
- Assists with the collection and payment of International dues.
- Orders supplies and materials for the JOOI Club.
- Helps organize a Club delegation to attend the JOOI District and International Conventions.
- Encourages and supports the JOOI Club in all its activities.

Special Committees

Clubs regularly require the services of **Special (project) Committees**.

- They may handle assignments unrelated to any Committee.
- They may be subcommittees working within the purview of **Standing Committees** and might be chaired by a Member of the **Standing Committee**.

Example: The group conducting the Optimist Youth Safety Program is a subcommittee of the Community Service Committee and may be chaired by a Member of that Committee.

- They may investigate and plan until the time of a project, then arrange for the subcommittees and additional help from the Club membership.
- Most **Special Committees** are appointed for short-term activities.
- A Special Committee's membership generally changes after a year even if the particular project continues for a longer period of time.

Committee Procedures

Before the Meeting

1. Find the right place to meet. It should be centrally located and conducive to deliberation.
2. Decide upon a convenient meeting time.
3. Send meeting announcement and agenda one week in advance. A well-planned agenda will help ensure a productive meeting.

At the Meeting

1. Start the meeting on time.
2. Define the Committee's objectives. Every Member must know the long-term objective of the assigned activity and the goals for the specific meeting.
3. Encourage every Member to contribute.
4. Maintain a positive approach. Examine each suggestion with respect.
5. Do not rush. It takes time to consider all worthwhile alternatives.
6. Select the solution most nearly acceptable to all.
7. Set a schedule for accomplishing the project.
8. Make a reasonable division of responsibilities. The conduct of a project will likely require more staffing than the planning. Subcommittees and, on occasion, the entire Club may be involved in a project.
9. Adjourn the meeting on time.

After the Meeting

1. Report progress to the Board in writing. Copies of the report for Committee Members will assure continuity.
2. Keep in touch. Use the Club bulletin to inform Club Members. When applicable, inform the community through the local news media.

Concluding Committee Activity

Compile Committee records. At the conclusion of a project or the Committee's term of office, collect and organize all materials for use by future Committees.

Committee Reports

Monthly written reports contribute greatly to the effectiveness of the Committee and the Club. Reports inform the Board of Committee progress and seek approval of specific requests.

The Chair should read the report and present copies to the President and Secretary-Treasurer, and also make a brief report to further discussion.

Committee reports should state accomplishments and plans rather than details or discussion.

If finances are involved, include reports on expenditures.

Submit a more detailed report on a completed activity or responsibility.