Starting a New Club
Step-by-Step

Types of Optimist Clubs

Traditional Club – A traditional Optimist Club conducts a number of exciting, youth-oriented events and fund raisers each year. The Club meets on a regular basis at a fixed location.

Sports Club – A Sports Club is built with the primary goal to serve youth through athletics.

College Club - A College Club is built around a college or university and is primarily made up of college students interested in service, leadership and professional development.   A special dues and fees structure applies.

Special Needs/Adults with Exceptionalities Club-The membership for this type of Club focuses on the segment of society that has intellectual or developmental disabilities. The membership roster must be comprised of at least 50 percent of the members from this segment of the population. A special dues and fees structure applies

Overseas Clubs – These clubs are much the same as a traditional Club but carry a special dues and fees structure.

Step 1 Needs Assessment - A way to accurately identify and understand the needs within community in order to build a strong Optimist Club.

3 Steps to a Needs Assessment

1. Perform an Analysis
Conduct a demographic profile of your community. Identify what other organizations exist in the area and what they do for the community. Remember, while there may be other service organizations in your area, Optimist Clubs are unique. Talk to leaders in the community.

2. Identify Needs & Opportunities
There will always be an opportunity to help others; the key is identifying them. After you have identified the needs, the next step is to identify relevant problems that a Club can help solve. This creates a purpose and focus for the new Club. It also helps the Club form an identity within the community.

3. Identify Solutions

The service opportunities in this community can be fulfilled by starting an Optimist Club. It's up to you to show the new community how an Optimist Club can solve the community's needs. Work with the residents and show them how they have all the resources to better their community, and how an Optimist Club is the vehicle through which they can make changes.

2 Recruitment - The process of connecting and recruiting with community-minded individuals to an Optimist Club for the purpose of "Bringing out the Best in Kids!"

4 Stages of Recruitment

1. Develop a short elevator speech to answer, "What is an Optimist Club?"

2. Develop a "core group" of key people.

3. Invite them to learn more about Optimist Clubs by hosting an Informational Meeting.

4. After they have adequate knowledge of what the Club is, and what they will do, ask them to join

Link to OI Website video presentation on creating the elevator speech

3 Meetings Three types of Meetings exist during the New Club Development process. Informational, Meet and Greet, Personal Appointments.

A. Meet and Greets: These are meetings usually held over a two-hour period during which prospects come to the meeting location for one on one, 15-20 minute presentations about the new Club project.

B. Personal appointments. Meetings at the prospect's office to talk one on one about the New Club project.

C. Informational Meeting. 30-45 minutes in a group setting to explain the New Club project. Topics covered include'

Dues and Fees   Officers Duties and Responsibilities
Potential Projects   Optimist Creed
New Club Processes and Procedures

4. Follow Up

The ongoing process, led by the District, to ensure that each new Club becomes a strong, viable asset with effective leadership that provides excellent service to the community.

Who is involved in the Follow up process?

Builder of Excellence	Leadership Development Chair
Sponsor Club Officers	New Club Development Chair
Lieutenant Governors	Governor and Governor Elect

You can learn more about the Follow Up Program here.

For more information on building an Optimist Club please contact the New Club Building Department.

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