

1. What do you consider to be your Clubs strongest strength?

The strongest strength of the Optimist Club of Barbados, Bridgetown is the quality of persons recruited and invited to join our ranks. There is an established process for vetting prospective members and as long as that process is followed, quality persons are recruited to replace members lost through natural attrition. Over the years members were committed to attending Club meetings, and Fellowship meetings played an important role in Club life. Fellowship meetings allowed members to learn about each other and become friends, and that camaraderie led to greater involvement in club activities and played a role in attendance at District Conferences and International Convention.

The range of age and backgrounds of our members allows for a mix of age and experience, which facilitates the generation of fresh and exciting project ideas that the club is willing to develop and implement.

The club has been at its strongest when we have undertaken large, innovative projects that are impactful to the children and the community and excite and engage most members. These generally are one-off activities with clearly defined goals which can be measured to indicate success.

2. What is your Clubs best program or project? How does this project affect your Club's success?

The club's best projects are generally projects with clearly defined objectives that members can get involved in and immediately see the results of their efforts. Seeing the results of their effort energizes members and leads to higher engagement and involvement. These have included community service projects such as repainting of schools, installation of a play park, building and participating in a float parade, summer camp, building of transitional homes and organizing fundraising projects.

Our longest running projects are the Oratorical Contest and our reading program. However, they do not attract the involvement of a significant number of members. The number of members involved in the reading program does not exceed five. A committee comprising all the clubs in Barbados plans the Oratorical Contest and so two club members are involved in the planning. The attendance at the Contest is also low.

3. How do you manage your financial affairs, what are your most important fund raisers and a brief summary?

The Board is responsible for managing the club's finances with the Treasurer being responsible for maintaining the records. Committees generally submit budgets at the start of the year and this then sets the target for fundraising. All expenditure is approved by the Board. The Fundraising committee is responsible for planning fundraising projects, which must be approved by the Board.

Club dues are agreed by the membership and every effort is made to keep the amount at a level that members can afford. In an effort to meet administrative expenses the club has been able to partner with organizations to earn funds to supplement the administration account. An example of this would be manning the entrances at motor sport events. When we have not had such events, the club has struggled to meet its administrative expenses.

The club stages one major fund raiser each year in addition to a few small ones. The most important fund raising project at this time is our golf tournament. Golfers are invited to play a 2-Man Shot Gun tournament. A discounted rate for the use of a course is negotiated with the owners. Rounds of golf are sold to individuals and organizations. Donations of prizes are sought by members. Members get involved on the day of the tournament by registering golfers, taking photographs, organizing the meal and post-golf activities and being general gophers and cheering on the golfers. Members are able to socialise while conducting the project. The success of the tournament and the fun and fellowship had by members and the golfers involved generates a lot of positive feelings within the club that members are able to feed off.

4. How does your Club retain and activate members? How does your Club recruit new members? Are there formal programs or are these ad hoc occurrences?

The Fellowship committee used to play a role in the retention and involvement of members by calling members, rather than using email as the preferred mode of communication. Milestones and various successes were celebrated in members lives.

The traditional and more successful method of membership recruitment is to invite prospective members to attend club meetings and participate in a project before joining the club, in order to see if the club is a good fit for them.

NOW meetings are held to attract members each year. However, our records show that our most active and long-standing members do NOT join through NOW meetings.

5. How do you market yourself locally?

In the past we have not done a good job with marketing. However, we have recently started marketing ourselves through our website and Facebook pages.

6. Do you have a formal leadership succession plan, leadership training or other Club administration programs?

Yes. The club elects a President 18 months ahead of the beginning of their term. The club pays the airfare of the President-Designate to attend International Convention. The club encourages an incoming

officer, generally the Secretary, to represent the club at the District Convention prior to the start of their term where incoming officer training is offered. Further, incoming officer training is organised in Barbados every September to which all clubs are invited.

7. In your Opinion, Why is your Club successful and how do you maintain that success?

The club is successful because there is a core membership that refuses to allow the club to fail. So while there may be challenges from time to time, the core membership will step in and steady the club and point it back in the right direction.