



# CLUB COACH GUIDE

Tips for supporting  
new clubs



# YOUR ROLE

New Kiwanis clubs often begin with good intentions and great enthusiasm. But the continuing success of a club requires effort and attention to detail. Those factors are especially important for new clubs.

A club coach helps members navigate the exciting but delicate early stages of a new club's life. Ultimately, it's a mix of the practical and the inspirational — and several things in between.



## SUPPORT AND COACHING

What do club coaches do? They help clubs develop long-term goals for service and membership — while helping to monitor member engagement and suggesting improvements when necessary. By being consistently present, you will:

- Play a pivotal role in the selection and transition of new officers and directors.
- Help the club conduct a survey to evaluate community needs.
- Help the club's officers and board develop an annual plan and budget.
- Foster a culture of growth, encouraging members to invite people to meetings, events and service projects.
- Provide connection to the Kiwanis family — setting up interclub visits and encouraging members (particularly officers) to participate in division, district and Kiwanis International activities.
- Support the club's community presence — from helping members coordinate the club's first service project and advising them on the club's charter night to reminding them of sponsorship opportunities with Kiwanis youth programs.

You are the club's main supporter. You'll be there to help celebrate successes and recognize member achievements. Most of all, you'll help members become self-sufficient — urging them to talk to each other, share observations and push each other forward.

## A COUPLE MORE THINGS TO REMEMBER

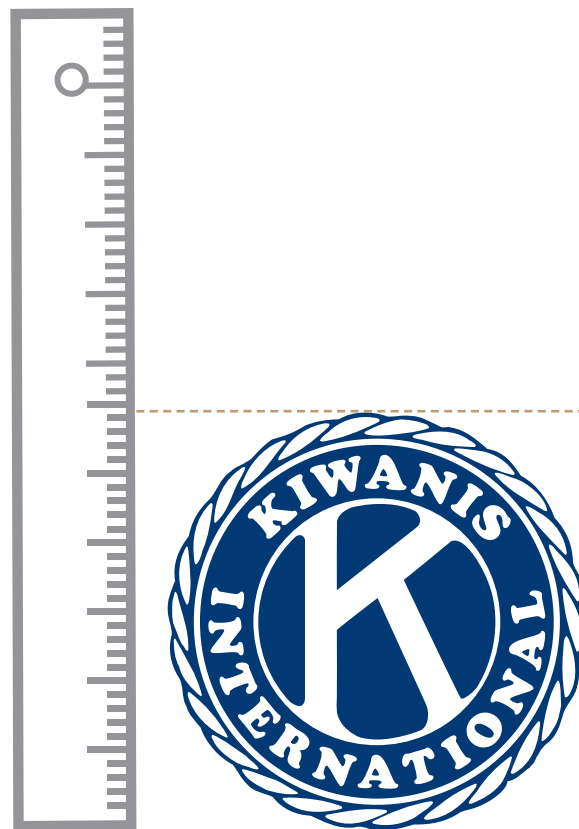
- **Most new clubs falter between years four and five.** A best practice is that two members of the sponsoring club become dual members of a newly chartered club and serve as club coaches for the first two years. In fact, we hope they will stay in touch with club officers and members beyond that time — for at least the first five years.
- **You set an example!** Establish your credibility: Start the Kiwanis year by bringing in at least one new member by November 30. And make a gift to the Kiwanis Children's Fund or your district foundation.



# HOW TO MEASURE CLUB SUCCESS

Before we look at steps and guidelines for helping a new club start — and thrive — let’s establish what it means for a club to succeed. Here are the signs of a healthy club:

- **Membership growth and retention.** For a club under the 15-member chartering minimum, it means reaching charter strength or greater. After that, a culture that encourages invitation and recruitment will help a club retain current members — and consistently add more.
- **Leadership opportunities.** A club’s culture should also welcome aspirations to leadership — and create a self-sustaining pipeline of leaders over the years.
- **Community impact.** Kiwanis-led projects give members hands-on service experience. That leads to new or strengthened partnerships, requests for support from other community organizations and/or recognition by others in the community.
- **Visibility.** When a club’s service succeeds, community leaders and citizens are familiar with Kiwanis — and people ask about joining.
- **Satisfied members.** When members are engaged, they participate widely in service projects, volunteer for committees, and attend meetings and other activities.



# AFTER ORGANIZING THE CLUB

The six months after the club's organizational meeting with its first members are crucial. Your involvement will help them move toward chartering — and help you get to know the members as they get accustomed to each other.

This is the time when you will:

- Arrange for club officer training.
- Conduct an orientation for new members.
- Help organize a committee structure.

In addition to helping the new officers understand their responsibilities and complete necessary reports, you may also need to guide them through incorporation, tax information and the opening of bank accounts. Of course, you will attend all of the new club meetings, and advise as needed.



## IMPORTANT ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For the club coach, there are several especially important things to keep in mind during these first six months. Momentum is key, so be prompt:

- **Send the Leadership Guide to the club president and secretary.** On the day after the new club's organizational meeting, send a PDF copy of the guide — along with several links to online resources. (Note: charter members are entered into our member database only when the roster, paperwork and monies have all been submitted. Until then, they do not have access to online training.)
- **Emphasize the importance of follow-up.** If the new club was formed partly through a club-opening event, have the charter members (or a select team of charter members) review the prospect information soon afterward. (Information cards are recommended as a handout for prospects to fill out.) Make a list of people to communicate with. Also advise writing a short, handwritten note to everyone — including nonmembers — who helped with the event.
- **Stay in touch with charter members and applicants.** Keep the club at the forefront of everyone's minds: Share the status of recruitment efforts, basic information about Kiwanis and your district, and any service projects that are being prepared. Also communicate promptly with anyone who pledged to pay their one-time new member fee.
- **Help the club opener with paperwork.** Certain documents and payments must be submitted for the new club to become official. Offer to assist with any or all of the following:
  - The New Club Information sheet.
  - The charter roster.
  - The club bylaws and policies.
  - Chartering fees.

- **Set up interclub visits.** Ask the division’s lieutenant governor for help with a schedule that allows members to visit other clubs — and welcomes other clubs to attend the new club’s meetings. Help club leaders see how other clubs operate and give them access to experienced members’ insights and advice.
- **Advise the club president to solicit nominations early.** During one of the new club’s first meetings, the club president should ask for nominations to two key bodies: the club charter celebration committee and the membership committee. Both are important to generating early momentum in club membership. Once selected, those members will need your help with defining timelines, charter-member definitions, charter-celebration ideas and more.
- **Meet at least once a month with the club’s officers and board.** At least one of the club coaches should attend each of these meetings, which can be conducted before or after a regular club meeting — or on a separate date that is convenient for the majority. At the six-month mark, the club should complete a review of the membership roster and measure member engagement. At the end of the first year, a comprehensive membership satisfaction survey should be conducted.
- **Work closely with your division’s lieutenant governor, the sponsoring club president and the newly elected charter club president.** Keep them informed and engaged. In fact, make it a source of pride for them. Ask these three leaders for a pledge to check in with the club’s leaders at least twice a year for the first five years. Remind them that many new clubs falter at about the four-year mark — and their own involvement is a key factor in clearing that hurdle.



# THE CHARTER ... AND AFTER

This is the new club's big moment. In fact, it's a celebration. And like any effective event, it requires a lot of work before the date and behind the scenes. For instance, the club opener will receive several items for the charter ceremony when all required paperwork and payments have been submitted to Kiwanis International. *(For details, see [kiwanis.org/clubopening](http://kiwanis.org/clubopening).)*

Once the celebration is over, the ongoing test begins. Here are some ways in which you will be a key resource for the chartered club and its leaders.

## FINANCE

Help the club and its treasurer by emphasizing the importance of:

- A finance committee and an annual review of the club's financial records.
- Club Leadership Education training for the treasurer.
- Asking the board and then the entire club to approve the budget.
- Maintaining nonprofit status.
- Protecting against loss of funds.
- Understanding 501(c)4 versus 501 (c)3 (for U.S. clubs only).
- Separating service and administrative accounts.
- Filing taxes by February 15 by submitting Form 990 (for U.S. clubs only).
- Encouraging club contributions to Kiwanis foundations.
- The dues structure (club, district and international) for renewing members and new members.
- Tracking the club's financial status with the Kiwanis International Office.
- Keeping a list of scholarship and donation amounts.



## MEMBERSHIP

Clubs that thrive are the ones that consistently bring in new members while retaining the ones they have. Emphasize the importance of establishing a culture of membership growth. Such a culture includes everything from recruitment as an expectation of membership to fun meetings, frequent reminders about club accomplishments and consistent communications with members you haven't seen in a while.

You can even suggest some proven ideas:

- A challenge for club members to bring at least one visitor to a club meeting every month.
- A "stretch" goal for adding more charter members prior to their charter.
- A "membership pair" that splits the duties to maximize efficiency and accountability: One co-chair to focus on member recruitment, orientation and onboarding while the other addresses member engagement and retention.
- A membership-oriented drive or event for early to mid-November.

Make sure club leaders know about the membership resources available through Kiwanis International. They have access to important forms, including the fillable Kiwanis membership application form. They'll also find tips and ideas — such as popular drives that clubs conduct on specific days and seasons.

Membership resources are available at any time, all year long, at [kiwanis.org/membership](http://kiwanis.org/membership).





## ACCOUNTABILITY

As the club continues, much of its success will depend on the work of club leaders. You can help them get off to a good start by emphasizing accountability. It's not a matter of guidelines for punishment. It's about building a sense of responsibility to the club — and to each other.

Your role is to encourage club leaders to be present and visible in club operations and discussions. You can start with some essential actions:

- Clearly identify roles and duties — who's doing what and who reports to whom.
- Make sure each strategic priority has only one person driving it.
- Watch for confusion related to competing priorities — and address it quickly if it arises.
- Encourage open communication and information-sharing.
- Design pathways to help people interact.
- Encourage open discussion regarding impediments — with criticisms aimed at ideas, not people.
- Emphasize that a budget is a set of boundaries, not a “license to spend.”

The best outcome is a club that runs smoothly, with leaders who communicate clearly and remain accountable. But for some clubs, you'll need to conduct **“the accountability conversation.”**

When it happens, remember that the conversation is theirs. You're the guide. Take responsibility for the basic elements of the discussion:

- The framework (set the stage with specifics about 2 to 3 essential needs).
- Performance (outline behavioral concerns and share examples).
- Impact (share potential implications, both positive and detrimental).
- Personal accountability (ask “what” and “how” questions to prompt possible solutions).
- Next steps (seek agreement on paths forward).

## [the accountability conversation]



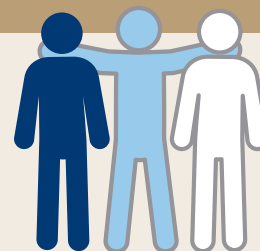
## OTHER IDEAS AND RESOURCES

As a Kiwanis member, you know that the life of a club will present members with challenges and opportunities alike. Some are foreseeable, some aren't. Help charter officers be as prepared as possible by offering helpful tips and resources:

- Become familiar with the Kiwanis International and district web sites.
- Set up an electronic newsletter template and verify the names and emails of all charter members (including any transfers and Key Club or CKI alumni who did not pay a new-member add fee).
- Set up the club's social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.).
- Work with the club board to solicit potential service project ideas from all members.
- Complete the online club coaching course.
- Work with the club treasurer to make sure they establish an EIN and proper bank account (making sure they track administrative and service accounts separately), and are aware of the need for an annual audit.
- Meet with individual club members a couple of times each month to learn about their passions, strengths, networking connections and more.
- Schedule a meeting day and time for the club president to meet with the division's lieutenant governor, who can help the president work with the board to establish a strategic plan.
- Work with their division's lieutenant governor to set up a schedule for other clubs in the division to attend the new club's meetings on a round-robin basis, so they have veteran



Kiwanians regularly sharing insights and observations, support and encouragement.



- Attend one of the sponsoring club's meetings to thank their members.
- Observe the sponsoring club's board meetings for ideas.
- Participate in all division council meetings.
- Register to attend the district convention and the Kiwanis International convention — with a reminder that one club member receives free registration for the Kiwanis International convention.
- Select the new club-opening gift they were offered (free first year BUG or Terrific Kids program).
- Establish a date and time for the club's charter celebration and recruit a chair or co-chairs to handle logistics.
- Review the spreadsheet of potential businesses and civic organizations they targeted with the club-opening team, so the membership committee can begin following up.
- Review Kiwanis International's Youth Protection Guidelines — and be aware that all adults who work directly with youth under the age of 18 must have a recent, clear background check.
- Check out the Kiwanis Store for meeting items, customizable apparel and much more — including a Kiwanis-branded podium/lectern sign and step-and-repeat banner.
- Schedule monthly social outings during the first six months (or more) to help members get to know each other.

**THANKS AGAIN!** You have a crucial role in the health of the clubs you serve — and in the international organization. We're here for you if you have questions or ideas. Just contact your district membership coordinator and/or your Kiwanis International area director.





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3636 Woodview Trace • Indianapolis, IN 46268 USA

U.S. and Canada: 1-800-KIWANIS, ext. 411 • Worldwide: +1-317-875-8755 • [kiwanis.org](http://kiwanis.org)