

# CLUB COACH GUIDE

Tips for supporting  
existing clubs



# YOUR ROLE

There are many ways for a Kiwanis club to succeed. Each has its own strengths, traditions and community presence. For the same reasons, no two struggling Kiwanis clubs will struggle in the same way or for the same reasons.

Whether it's a newer club that can't quite get off the ground or an established club that once enjoyed growth and excitement, its members must first figure out what's wrong and why. Then they take the necessary steps toward club health.

That's why they need club coaches. Ultimately, you're providing a mix of the practical and the inspirational — and several things in between.



## SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

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. This requires your consistent presence. As club coach, you will:

- Monitor the club scorecard and encourage the club to celebrate success.
- Encourage the club's membership committee to invite new people on an ongoing basis and schedule annual membership drives.
- Recommend participation in division, district and Kiwanis International activities and events.
- Monitor selection and transition of officers and directors, ensuring that incoming leaders partake in Club Leadership Education and prepare incoming officers and directors for the new administrative year.
- Review key habits with the club — focusing on member satisfaction, community impact and continuous planning for club excellence.

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.

## YOU SET AN EXAMPLE

Establish your credibility at the start of the new 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 — then let the club know why you did it.



# HOW TO MEASURE CLUB SUCCESS

Before we look at steps and guidelines for helping a club 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.
- **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.



# WHERE TO START

It all begins with the members themselves. Meet with them. Listen to them. Learn about their concerns and goals. You can gain insights into the club — and its situation — by getting to know the people in it.

Then it's time to assess the situation. At this stage, two of our Achieving Club Excellence (ACE) tools can be helpful:

- If you're connecting with members, use the "Creating the purpose" tool.
- If you're working with leaders, use the "Club scorecard" tool.

All ACE tools are available at [kiwanis.org/acetools](http://kiwanis.org/acetools).

## AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

Once you've completed an assessment and have an idea of the work that lies ahead, it's time to determine the value club coaching might have for the club. Here are some typical scenarios, with possible responses and actions:

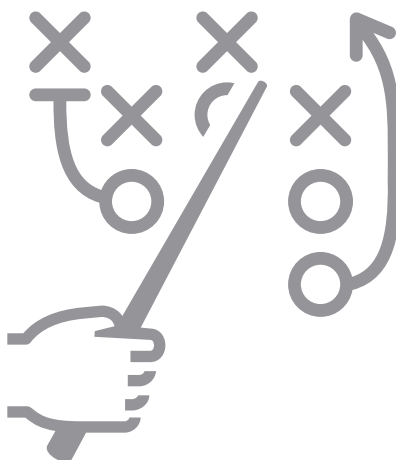
- **Members see the need for change but resist making it.** Consult with the lieutenant governor, your district membership coordinator or others familiar with the club or situation. Based on the assessment, you may opt for another conversation with the club leaders — or to walk away. Success is more common with a club that's receptive to help.
- **The club seems open-minded.** Consult with the lieutenant governor and your district membership coordinator to bring the situation to his or her attention and determine the best approach.
- **Members seem open to change — but not willing to put forth the effort themselves.** Walk away from coaching the club in an official capacity. Change requires commitment and collaboration. Thank club members for their time, and offer your support and availability if they decide to make changes. Work with the lieutenant governor and new-club opener to assess opportunities for opening a new club in the community.
- **The club is determined to close.** Work with the lieutenant governor to walk the club through turning in the club charter and determining whether some members want to remain involved with Kiwanis. Present options such as joining nearby clubs, forming a satellite group within another nearby club or seeking interim membership status until they find another club. Then collaborate with the lieutenant governor and new-club opener to assess opportunities for opening a new club in the community.

# DIAGNOSING THE POSSIBILITIES

The most effective change comes from people who first see the benefit in changing — and demonstrate a willingness to work toward it. For a club like that, it's time to diagnose the club's needs. Once again, our ACE tools are ready for you:

- **Club scorecard.** In the beginning, it can help club leaders (and yourself) understand the situation. But it's useful for tracking progress throughout the process. Ultimately, it's a way to start conversations with club leaders about where and how to improve.
- **Creating the purpose.** Use it to start conversations about what inspires members to continue serving the community as Kiwanians. It will also help a club define its purpose in the community for members, donors, partners and potential members.
- **Measuring member satisfaction.** You can assess the club experience in four areas: club management/administration, membership strength, community service impact and member experience. You'll also show club leaders how to use member feedback to improve the club.
- **Developing community partnerships.** Use it to help with exploring ways to increase the club's partnerships and sponsorships.
- **Rediscovering your community.** Gather information about community needs and how the club can help address them. You'll assess a club's current service activities and reveal potential opportunities for new partnerships, sponsorships and service projects.
- **Analyzing your impact.** Help improve the impact a club makes in the community by assessing the success of a club's service and fundraising activities.
- **Club excellence plan.** Use it in conjunction with the club scorecard. It will help guide the club through the planning process for fulfilling its purpose in the community, with action steps, responsibilities, timelines and more.
- **Hosting a membership drive.** Provide step-by-step guidance and strategies to increase membership, generate ideas about potential members and create a culture of ongoing inviting.
- **Celebrating success.** Inspire ideas about when and how to recognize members, as well as new approaches for showing appreciation.

All these tools are great — but they might seem daunting to club members all at once. Many club boards have found it helpful to add one of the ACE tools to their agenda every month.



# CLUB OPERATIONS

As the club moves from measurement and assessment to diagnosis and beyond, the club leaders' work will continue. And you will continue to assist them. Several areas must be monitored during the club's ongoing operations. Each one requires best practices that help determine the club's course through the months and years that follow.

## 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 "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. It's a handy location for tips, ideas and forms — from the fillable Kiwanis membership application form to popular drives specific to days and seasons during the year.

It's a resource they can use at any time, all year long, at [kiwanis.org/membership](http://kiwanis.org/membership).

## 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.



## ACCOUNTABILITY

As the club continues, much of its success will depend on accountability among its leaders. 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 ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

In the life of any Kiwanis club, some things are foreseeable and some aren't. A solid structure and best practices can help members move confidently forward. Here are a few questions to keep in mind — and to keep in members' minds — as the club continues.

- Do club leaders regularly attend Club Leadership Education?
- Does the club have a strategic plan and update it annually?
- How about a succession plan?
- Does the club have committees that meet on a regular basis?
- Does the club sponsor at least one of Kiwanis International's Service Leadership Programs?
- Does the club take advantage of Kiwanis International partnerships?
- Does the club have a signature service project?



## DISSOLVING A KIWANIS CLUB

It's not the preferred ending to the process, of course. But sometimes the dissolution of a club is the logical and necessary conclusion.

It may even be best for some members who wish to join another club. The club board should meet and vote to bring this before the entire membership. In fact, members of the dissolving club should be encouraged to join another club within six months — to avoid paying additional processing fees.

Here are the steps to dissolving a club:

1. Written notification shall be sent to all club members no less than two weeks prior to the meeting.
2. The decision must be approved by three-fourths (3/4) of the members present at the meeting.
3. If approved, the club is required to satisfy all debts owed to Kiwanis International, the district and any they may owe in general.
4. The club should close any bank accounts and distribute any remaining funds and/or assets to the charities for which the funds were raised, or to the Kiwanis Children's Fund.
5. If the club is incorporated, it must dissolve the corporation with the state, province or country in which it resides; a copy of the dissolution accepted by the governmental agency should be sent to Kiwanis International.
6. Once the district board approves the dissolution, a letter should be sent to Kiwanis International stating that the club has closed. The letter should include the effective date, number of members at the meeting and number in favor of the dissolution. A copy should also be sent to the district office and lieutenant governor. Arrangements should be made for the lieutenant governor to retrieve the club's gong/gavel, any banners and pins, and return them to the district office.

## THANKS AGAIN FOR BEING A CLUB COACH

As you can see, 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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