



# CLUB OPENING FIELD GUIDE







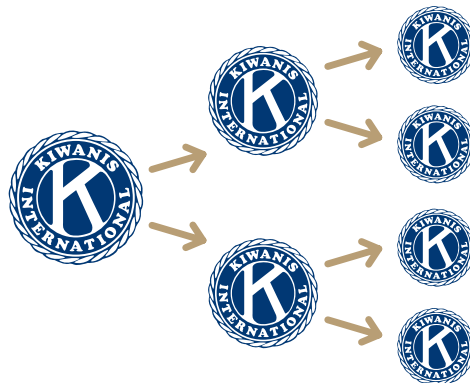
Most Kiwanians understand that more members mean more Kiwanis service. But they sometimes ask, “Why spend time and energy opening new clubs when we could increase membership in existing clubs?”

Both are important. We all want strong and healthy clubs, but we need more clubs — so that more children, families and communities can benefit from Kiwanis service.

This field guide will lead you through the process of opening a new Kiwanis club in just a few short weeks. It doesn’t take a lot of time or a lot of people. What it does take: enthusiastic Kiwanians participating in the process! The ultimate goal is to create a two- or three-day club opening event that concludes with a club opening meeting.

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# LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

## SITE SELECTION

Every club opening event begins with site selection. Ideally a potential site should have:

1. A small to medium-size population area with a strong sense of community.
2. A supportive sponsoring club. (See Building the Team.)
3. A local club opening leader. (See Building the Team.)



## TIMELINE



Once you've selected a site, draw up an initial event timeline. While this is a general guide and is subject to change, it helps the club opener and their team move forward efficiently. Your timeline should be divided into three main categories:

### 1. Pre-event:

- Budgeting and logistics.
- Setting appointments: Plan for 15-20 minutes per appointment for each two-person team.

### 2. The event:

Example: a three-day event begins early Monday morning (with participants arriving Sunday afternoon) and concludes on Wednesday with a club opening meeting.

### 3. Post-event:

- Follow up.
- Review.
- Online resources: [kiwanis.org/clubopening](http://kiwanis.org/clubopening)

## BUDGETING



Budgeting is a relatively straightforward process. Simply make a list of anticipated expenses and current revenue sources. Your district should be setting aside money for new club openings.

Typical budget expenses include:

- Gas or mileage.
- Hotel.
- Meeting room.
- Meal costs during the event.
- Food and beverages served at the club opening meeting.

New members pay prorated dues based on the month the club organized. A predetermined amount should be added to the prorated Kiwanis and district dues to begin the club's administrative fund.

# BUILDING THE TEAM

## CLUB SPONSOR



For each site, secure an enthusiastic sponsoring club. The sponsoring club provides support, advice, leadership and interclub opportunities. Club opening events add an element of excitement to the sponsoring club, creating enthusiasm and injecting energy. When the charter ceremony is held, the sponsoring club should play an important role.

If a club is reluctant to become a sponsor, consider asking two nearby clubs to serve as cosponsoring clubs, with each covering the US\$100 cost for one club member to become a coach for the new club. And remember, sometimes an appeal from the current district governor carries more clout than one from a lieutenant governor or district membership leader.

## CLUB COACHES



When calling on a local club to become a sponsor, recruit club leaders who would be willing to serve as the two club coaches. The coaches will guide and support the new club. You'll want individuals who have Kiwanis experience, work well with others and can mesh with the new club.

Club coaches will be dual members in their current club and in the new club. (A best practice is for each club coach to be a dual member of the new club for a minimum of two years, and for one of them to serve as the charter secretary.) For continuity, it helps if they can also participate in the club opening event.

## CLUB OPENING LEADER



You'll also need a local person to serve as the club opening leader. This can be the district's lieutenant governor or the membership coordinator, but any willing Kiwanian can assume this role.

Work with your Kiwanis leaders: The better your communication and the more involved your leaders, the more successful the new club will be.

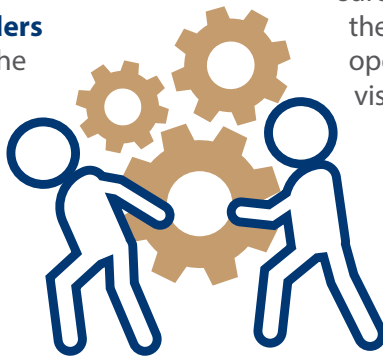
During the club opening event, you'll meet with people who either work or live in the community and want to see it develop and prosper. In addition to local businesses, you'll include area schools. Many communities have existing Key Clubs that need the support of a sponsoring Kiwanis club.

# PREPARING FOR THE EVENT

## LOGISTICS

Like any high-quality event, the club opening event will require you to put several pieces in place before it starts. From personnel to location and more, here are some elements to consider:

- **Minimize driving time between appointments.** If Kiwanians from out of town will be assisting with your event, book a hotel as close to the new club community as possible.
- **Recruit area Kiwanians as drivers.** While calling on local clubs about sponsorship, recruit from their members to serve as drivers for the club opening event. Ideally, you would get three to six local drivers for every site, so they can take a team of two openers to appointments. Members of Golden K clubs can be a good resource, since much of the process is during the workday.
- **Persuade CKI and Key Club leaders to participate.** When you share the sites with local Key Club and CKI leaders, ask them to help with the club opening event — even if only for a day or a half-day. They're a living showcase for our Service Leadership Programs!
- **Locate meeting places for the club opening teams.** You'll need space for midday lunch meetings and an organizational meeting. Search for a private meeting room that holds 25-30 people. Seek a spot owned by someone you would like to recruit.
- **Order collateral materials.** Contact Kiwanis International for a club opening kit full of pertinent collateral materials for each site. (See page 9.)
- **Design and print promotional flyers.** Make sure to include the date, time and place of the first informational meeting. The club opening team can distribute them as they visit prospective members.



## CLUB OPENING TOOL

The Kiwanis International club opening tool, found on Kiwanis Connect, is an important asset to guide you through the club opening process.

Access the tool by logging into Kiwanis Connect at the home club level. Click on Membership on the left-hand side and then the club opening tool on the right. If you are beginning a new club opening exercise, click on Add New Kiwanis Club. Fill out the initial information form and click continue. (This information can be edited later if details change.)

This will prompt you to order a club opening kit full of important information. (The kits include 75 membership brochures with applications — if you're having a larger event with multiple sites, you may

need to contact Member Services to order a sufficient number.)

Under Form Your Team, it is important to note that you can (and should) have multiple club openers. If you have six Kiwanians actively recruiting members in the field during your event, for example, all six should be entered as club openers.

As new Kiwanians fill out and sign applications during the event, you can enter them in the Prospects Identified section and indicate whether they have paid their membership fee.

Email [membership@kiwanis.org](mailto:membership@kiwanis.org) for an in-depth guide on the use of this club opening tool.

## PRE-EVENT PROMOTION

A new Kiwanis club is exciting for a community, so let people know about your club opening event. From social media to word of mouth, take advantage of resources, get the word out and generate interest among potential members.

- **Involve your district's public relations coordinator.** The PR coordinator may be able to send news releases or fact sheets to local governmental and educational newsletters. Some districts have even purchased inexpensive Facebook ads to generate interest in the club opening event.
- **Share through social media.** Facebook is a popular platform with an extensive reach. You may also choose to launch X (formerly known as Twitter) or Instagram pages. And post photos with your message. For example, images of new charter members after they join can create a sense of momentum.
- **Get key endorsements and referrals.** Stay in touch with the community leaders you contacted when scheduling appointments (see next section). Ask if they will put in a good word with the community and/or encourage people they know to join. Request testimonials as well as ideas about how a Kiwanis club can serve kids in their community and help with city/town events. And invite them to join! If they decline, ask them to designate a deputy to join.





# MAKING APPOINTMENTS

Appointments form the crux of every club opening event. The likelihood of reaching and meeting with a decision-maker is greatly increased by making an appointment.

Begin by creating a list of prospects. Reach out to service-oriented residents — especially Kiwanis members in the area — who can help you find prospects and open clubs. Engage the district's executive director and/or secretary by requesting information on clubs in the area around your site. Learn when and where the clubs meet and get an email address for club secretaries.

Also request a list of Kiwanis Service Leadership Program (SLP) clubs in the area. The potential for sponsorship and mentoring can help make a compelling case for a new Kiwanis club. Knowing about unsponsored SLP clubs can give you an especially powerful advantage.

Ideally, the team should make phone calls and set up appointments with potential members about three

weeks before the club opening event. A good rule of thumb: Schedule at least 20 appointments per day before the club opening event.

Most events take place Monday through Wednesday, with a welcome meeting held on Sunday. When making appointments, schedule as many as possible on Monday morning or afternoon. This is particularly important if you don't succeed in making at least 20 appointments. Positive appointments held on the first day may end up yielding referral appointments on the second or third day.

Sometimes the gatekeepers of civic and business leaders ask for written information to share with their bosses. Develop consistent language that team members agree on and use. If you are communicating via email, include details on the organizational meeting so assistants and gatekeepers can put it on their bosses' calendars.



## CALL SCRIPT

**YOU:** Hi, my name is <<NAME>> from the Kiwanis Club of <<CITY>>. We're calling community leaders to get a sense of what kinds of problems are affecting kids in the community. What do you think the biggest area of need is?

*Engage the person in talking about what he/she likes to do, especially in helping other people.*

**YOU:** Our Kiwanis club is working to meet those needs we talked about. Kiwanis International was founded more than 100 years ago. It is a volunteer-based organization that helps kids. We have a team of two from your area who want to stop by sometime on <<DATE>> and introduce themselves to you.

A meet-and-greet takes about 10-15 minutes. Of course, we're always looking

for new members and new ideas. I have 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. open. Which time works for you?

**THEM:** Why?

**YOU:** We want to get your input on community needs. Our members are leaders who want to keep the town strong and safe. Doesn't take long. And like I said, we're always wanting fresh ideas. So how's 2 on <<DATE>> sound?

**THEM:** Sure.

**YOU:** Okay! I look forward to seeing you at <<TIME>> a.m./p.m. on <<DAY>> at <<LOCATION>>. Thank you again! And have a great day! Here's my name and contact information, if you need to reach me. <<PHONE NUMBER>>. Is this number the best one to reach you at?

## HOW TO PROCEED IF THEY'RE UNAVAILABLE

### OPTION 1

**YOU:** Thank you. Do you know when a better time to call would be?

**THEM:** Yes, call back at <<TIME>>.

**YOU:** In the meantime, I would like to send <<CONTACT NAME>> an email to let him/her know the purpose of my call. Would that be okay? If so, what is the email address?

**THEM:** <<EMAIL>>

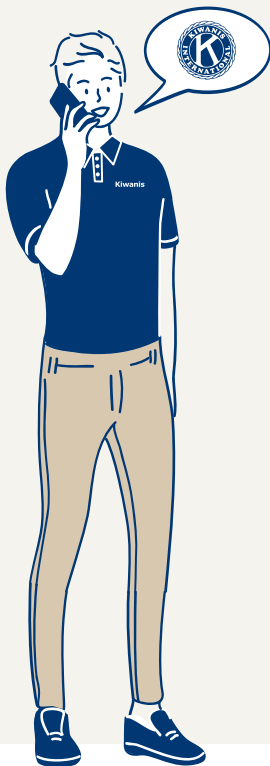
**YOU:** Thank you very much.

### OPTION 2

**YOU:** Thanks. Is his/her assistant there, or another person that I could speak with?



## WHAT TO SAY IF THEY DON'T HAVE TIME



### OPTION 1

**YOU:** I understand how valuable your time is. You don't have a lot of time to give. Do you have just a few minutes to help us understand the needs of the community and to let us share about Kiwanis? It won't take long.

### OPTION 2

**YOU:** I understand how valuable your time is. Our goal is to ensure that this new club will be able to help with serving the needs of the community. In your position, you often come across others in your workplace that can really help with this effort. Do you have just a few minutes to chat? It won't take long.

### OPTION 3

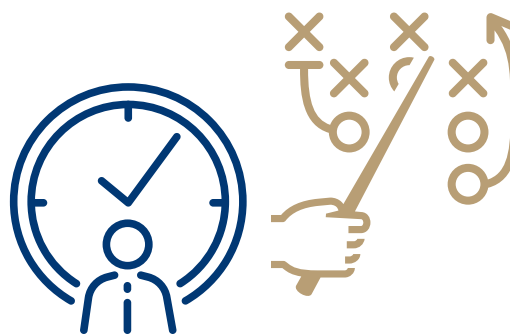
**YOU:** Well, I really appreciate your time today. Can you refer me to an organization or community member who you think may be interested in serving the youth and children of the community? Depending on the business, you may want to cite information regarding the typical service commitment.



## APPOINTMENT MAPPING

Once you have made your appointments, divide them by time and location and assign them to your teams. You will likely not have names assigned to your teams at this point, but you will know how many teams will be going into the field.

If three appointments are scheduled for 9 a.m. Monday, split your group into three teams. You want to minimize time spent driving.



## APPOINTMENT MATERIALS

Your club opening kits from Kiwanis International will contain the following documents:

- **Join Us brochures (75 included):**

Leave prospective members with a summary of some key reasons to join. The piece highlights our impact, our Service Leadership Programs and some of the reasons that others enjoy being part of a Kiwanis club. It includes a membership application.

- **Inserts.**

- **Service Leadership Programs (75 included):**  
Use these for reference to help highlight the impact of K-Kids, Builders Club, Key Club, Key Leader, Circle K International and Aktion Club.

- **Accomplish (75 included):**  
Use these behind-the-scenes training inserts to arm your recruiters with answers to frequently asked questions as they sell the benefits of Kiwanis to community, civic and business leaders.

- **Corporate membership (25 included):**  
Use this as a reference if you approach anyone whose company or organization may sponsor their membership.

- **Checklist for club coaching:**

Tips of what to cover when training members of the club coaching team.

- **Contact cards:**

Fifty cards to track meetings with prospective members.

- **Organization meeting resources:**

Name tags, pens, sign-in sheets, invoices, new-club information sheet, standard form for club bylaws, a guide to the official organizational meeting and instructions for obtaining your club's Employee Identification Number (EIN).

- **Three Kiwanis tote bags.**

**In addition to these materials, bring business cards for each team member.**



## ORGANIZING YOUR TEAMS



Organize your teams to cover either specific areas of the business community or specific business groups. For example, Team A may call on banks and insurance companies while Team B calls on churches, schools and municipal offices.

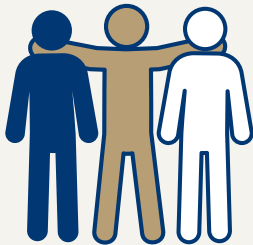
If experienced new-club officers are taking part in your event, at least one should be included on each team. They can mentor the less experienced team members. Each team should designate a leader. This role generally goes to the more experienced opener.

## EVENT SCHEDULE



Club opening events generally take place over two or three days. Consider meeting for a pre-event planning session Sunday evening, when you can learn about the community being visited and highlight the scheduled appointments.

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS



The meeting begins before you enter the building. Wear a name badge if you have one and have your materials readily available. If you are meeting with business and community leaders, dress appropriately.

Remember, you are building relationships. We want people to join our global family and support us with their time and money. They will be much more likely to do this if we develop a personal connection.

We do this by being observant, listening and trying to connect with them through their interests.

If you notice sports memorabilia, family photos, achievement awards or other personal touches in their office, start a conversation about them. Then you can move

into talking about Kiwanis and explaining how the new club and Kiwanis Service Leadership Programs will benefit their community.

You want the prospective member to do most of the talking. Ask prospects which local charities of choice they favor. You also may suggest that Kiwanis offers them the opportunity to delve deeper into understanding their community. The club offers opportunities to plug-and-play and get involved in meaningful service right away. Kiwanis clubs allow members to mentor children and youth, and leave a legacy by nurturing future generations of leaders. You don't need to ask people to join Kiwanis — you need to showcase the opportunities.

## THE CLOSE



Once your prospect has heard your story and shown interest, it is time to “close the deal.” This is the stage at which you tell the prospect that Kiwanis needs their support through membership. Explain that Kiwanis is a dues-based organization. Hand the prospect an application to read, complete and sign. Remain quiet. Most people find it difficult to complete a form and answer questions at the same time.

When the application is completed and signed, ask for payment. If they don’t have a checkbook or cash,

and you don’t have the ability to accept an online payment, they can bring their dues to the club opening meeting — but it is always better to get the money while you are in the prospect’s office. Even a small monetary contribution demonstrates commitment.

Ask for referrals. There is nothing better than calling on someone who has been referred to us by other leaders in the community.

## HANDLING OBJECTIONS

Many of the people you meet will think favorably of Kiwanis and embrace our goals but be hesitant to commit time and money to a new endeavor. Countering objections is key to recruiting new members. The following are possible objections you may hear — with responses you can use to counter them.

**THEM:** I'm way too busy to take on something new.



**YOU:** Balancing all of our commitments can be very challenging. Fortunately, when your priorities include helping children through Kiwanis, we make it easy and fun. Many Kiwanis clubs meet only once or twice a month. It's not about the meeting. It's about helping children in your community and around the world.

We've also found that people who are busy are often the best leaders, because they have the ability to multi-task, organize efforts and get things done.

Also, every member is not expected to participate in every activity. A Terrific Kids or Bringing Up Grades presentation, for example, might only involve a single Kiwanian. A club must organize with at least 15 members, but as your club grows you'll have even more people to help with everything you want to accomplish.

**THEM:** I already belong to another service club.

**YOU:** Great! We're talking to the right person. You already know how important service clubs are and what they mean to the community. Many Kiwanis clubs regularly partner with other service clubs in the community for service projects and other events. As a new Kiwanis member, you'll be an ideal person to help form a mutually beneficial partnership with your existing club.

**THEM:** I'm not that fond of kids.

**YOU:** While children and young people are a major focus of Kiwanis, they are not the only focus. We have clubs that serve a particular need or sector, including reaching out to seniors, increasing literacy, responding to natural disasters, helping those in shelters or without housing and so much more.

The most important focus for a new club is to identify the needs of your community and plan to address them.

**THEM:** Leave it with me. I think that someone else here might be interested.



**YOU:** That's great to know. Kiwanis offers a corporate membership. If your business joins as a corporate member, it demonstrates that leadership and staff believe in growing your community and improving the lives of young people. If you can't commit to attending meetings yourself, another professional in your company can be the representative.

Many of our corporate members find that others in their organization are interested in volunteering for Kiwanis service projects. This not only helps your club, but it also builds stronger bonds among your staff members.



# THE FINAL STEPS

## ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The organizational meeting represents the conclusion of a successful event. It is gratifying to feel the energy of new Kiwanians for the first time. Think of this as a celebration with a meeting component.

Hold your meeting in a facility that is convenient for your new Kiwanis club members and allows them to mix with veteran Kiwanians. Provide refreshments to set a celebratory tone.

To be considered an organizational meeting, a majority of the new charter members must be in attendance to approve the initial club bylaws. This requirement also helps with the club's long-term success.

You'll need three team members to handle the following roles:

### GREETER



Serves as the event host, making sure that new Kiwanis members feel welcome and appreciated. This person also should create and oversee a sign-in sheet and give attendees name tags.

### RECORD-KEEPER



Completes and submits the one-page, new-club information sheet and the club bylaws.

### LEADER



An enthusiastic, upbeat member of your team who formally welcomes attendees as the meeting begins and leads them through the organizational process. This includes four segments:

#### 1 Welcome

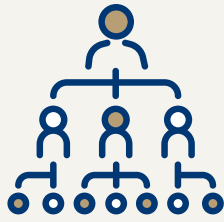
If the governor or lieutenant governor is present, ask them to open the meeting with an official greeting. If other Kiwanis leaders would like to speak, make sure they keep each message brief.

#### 2 Club organization

Our one-page information sheet for new clubs must be completed at the meeting's conclusion and emailed to [newclubs@kiwanis.org](mailto:newclubs@kiwanis.org). As the new members complete this sheet and write the club bylaws, provide them with best practices as guidance. Assure them that they can make changes as necessary in the future.

To complete both the Kiwanis International New Club Opening Form and the club bylaws, members must agree and vote on these items in the following order:

1. What is the new club's name?
2. How often will it meet?
3. Where will it meet?
4. What day will it meet?
5. What time of day will it meet?



### 3 Club officers

Only two officer positions must be designated at the organizational meeting: the president and the secretary. The new club members might not know enough about each other to select a president. If so, the club opening team should have a discussion and suggest a member likely to succeed as president. It's often beneficial for one of the club coaches to serve as the charter secretary, with a new member serving as assistant secretary.



### 4 Club bylaws

Guide club members through the process of creating club bylaws by asking them the following questions:

#### **Do you want to select a vice president?**

Initially, it's often best that the new club does not designate a vice president unless someone expresses a strong desire for the role.

#### **Would you like your secretary to be elected by the club or appointed by the club president?**

Most new clubs prefer to elect their secretaries.

#### **How many years would you like your president and secretary to serve?**

Generally, individuals serve one year in these roles, beginning with the next Kiwanis year. This means that the first officers could end up serving more than one year depending on when the organizational meeting occurs.

#### **After the new-member period expires, how much will members pay for annual club dues?**

It's often best to start small, around US\$160/member, as long as this amount covers Kiwanis International, district and club dues.

#### **Kiwanis International requires each club to file an annual financial review. Will this be done by a club committee (not including board members) or by an outside accountant?**

Many clubs form a committee of members to handle this requirement.

#### **When club members vote on an issue, will you allow absentee ballots?**

Most clubs do not.

#### **How late must a member be in paying dues before they are considered not in good standing?**

Generally, three months works well for new clubs.

## AFTER THE EVENT

Opening a new Kiwanis club doesn't end with the event; it begins with it. New Kiwanis clubs require nurturing. That's why the two club coaches join the club and serve as active, participating members. Encourage each new member to invite family, friends and colleagues to a club meeting and ask them to join. The more club members, the healthier the club.

### 1 Review

A formal review should include discussions of what worked and what didn't. A review that identifies both strengths and weaknesses sets the new club up for future success.

### 2 Expenses

Reconcile event expenses and complete all paperwork as soon as possible to ensure volunteers won't suffer unnecessary financial hardships.

### 3 Bylaws, roster and payment

Kiwanis International requests that completed club bylaws, the new-club roster and new-club dues be submitted within 30 days of the club opening meeting.

### Other things to think about:

- Lieutenant governor and/or club coaches should work with the new club officers to set interim membership growth goals for pre-charter celebration, six months out and year-end.
- Lieutenant governor should set a schedule for new club officers to visit other clubs in the division that are in geographical proximity, and organize interclub meetings for those other clubs to visit the new one during the first six months.
- Follow up on prospective members on the sourcing list that the club opening team was unable to visit, as well as those secured through a Facebook campaign.
- Lieutenant governor and/or club coaches should set up club leadership education training for the new club officers.
- The new club should host at least one monthly club board meeting a quarter virtually so other district leaders (district membership coordinator, district secretary, governor, governor-elect, vice governor) can stay in touch and offer insights.

## CELEBRATION

Introduce the new club to neighboring Kiwanis clubs through a charter celebration. This event also serves as a way for the new club to start building a financial base.

Many clubs choose to make this a formal evening event with dinner included, but it doesn't have to be. Do what works best for the new club. The event is often scheduled three or four months after the club

begins regular meetings to give members ample planning time.

Sell tickets to club members and other clubs in the division. The evening often includes a silent auction, bucket raffle or similar event to serve as an initial fundraiser. Additionally, attending clubs often bring financial gifts to help boost the new club's service account.

## IN CONCLUSION

Incorporating tips from this field guide will make a new-club opening event a team-building, motivating exercise that is both rewarding and fun. And remember: Once a site is chosen, the entire process can take place in a few short weeks.

As with all things Kiwanis, support is always available. Kiwanis International has designated club opening specialists, and the roster of experienced new club openers is constantly growing. Together, we can expand the reach of Kiwanis to serve new communities in need and help even more children, one new Kiwanis club at a time.