

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.

Pilot Club - A Pilot Club is a traditional club that is organized with at least 15 Members. The International Board of Directors approved the Pilot Club Program until September 30, 2012. For more information on the Pilot Club Program, please read the FAQ.

Step

1 Needs Assessment

- A way to accurately identify and understand the needs within a 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. Use a City Profile form to get started.

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.

Questions to Consider:

What are the opportunities for service?

How will an Optimist Club help the community?

What issues are particular to the area?

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!"

Step

2

4 Stages of Recruitment

Elevator Pitch -
A brief sound bite that introduces what an Optimist Club is.

1. Develop a short elevator pitch 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.

Step

3

Meetings - The process of coming together as an assembly for a common purpose during the formation of a Club.

There are two types of meetings in New Club Building: Informational and Organizational. Informational meetings are held to inform prospective Members on the mission, values, and structure of Optimist Clubs and to identify service opportunities within the community. An Organizational meeting is held by an International Field Representative and is conducted when a new Club is ready to Charter.

An Informational Meeting usually consists of the following agenda items:

- Welcome & Introduction
- Overview of Optimist International
 - History
 - Optimist Creed
 - Mission Statement
- Programs and Club Projects
- Community Needs Assessment
- New Club Process and Procedures
 - Elect Charter Officers
 - Establish Club meeting location
 - Establish Club dues
 - Set Organizational Meeting Date

Follow Up forms are located at www.optimist.org

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.

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Who is involved in the Follow up process?

- Builder of Excellence
- Sponsor Club Officers
- Lieutenant Governors
- Governor & Governor-Elect
- New Community Growth Chair
- Leadership Development Chair

For more information on building an Optimist Club, please contact the New Community Growth Department.

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