



Hosting a membership drive

Objective: To increase the club's capacity to serve its community

Purpose: To gain step-by-step guidance and strategies to increase membership

Goals: To create a culture of ongoing inviting

Audience: Membership committee, with club members' participation where designated

When your members love their club, they'll want to share that experience and invite others to be part of it.

One organized way of inviting members is holding a membership drive. A membership drive focuses the club's efforts on inviting potential members to an event planned just for them. These three simple steps will help your club increase its membership this year.

Step 1: Prepare

Two months before: Build your team

Surround yourself with people who are committed to making the club bigger and better. Then seek approval from your club's board of directors to conduct and fund a membership drive. (Some of the costs associated with a membership drive include postage, printing programs and meals.)

Appoint individuals to take on these tasks:

- **Project lead:** Coordinates the entire program, orients the team members to their responsibilities and monitors their progress
- **Attendance:** Develops the prospect list, arranges for printing and mailing of the invitations and ensures the attendance of members and guests.
- **Venue:** Establishes the meeting time, place and physical setup, including name tags and applications, and identifies greeters.
- **Program:** Arranges speakers and sets the agenda
- **Public relations:** Writes press releases and promotes the event to surrounding businesses
- **Follow up:** Touches base with everyone invited after the event to answer questions and assess their interest in joining

Team members:

Project lead: _____

Venue: _____

Attendance: _____

Program: _____

Follow up: _____

Public relations: _____

Greeter: _____

Greeter: _____

Two months before: Create handouts and purchase supplies

How many materials do you need? Let's answer that question with another question: How many guests would you like to have? If you distribute at least 50 invitations, you may get as many as 15 to 20 guests attending your meeting.

- Order copies of the **Join the club** brochure from the Kiwanis Family Store. This free resource includes a membership application. Contact the store at +1-317-875-8755 ext. 411 or <https://store.kiwanis.org/product/1367>.
- Develop a brochure or handout describing your club's activities.
- Purchase what you need to send invitations:
 - Invitations and envelopes or postcards
 - Stamps
 - Pens

Six weeks before: Plan your event

- **Pick a date and time.** Try to avoid competing with other high traffic community events or placing it too close to other club activities. Your club's normal meeting day and time is ideal.
- **Pick a venue.** Your normal meeting place should serve you well unless it's too small to accommodate the expected influx of people.
- **Pick a theme.** Think of something catchy and exciting.
- **Plan your meeting agenda.** Here's a sample.
 1. **Modified call to order (3 minutes):** You might want to forgo some of the usual traditions used to open the meeting if they might make guests confused or uncomfortable. If you choose to keep any of them, like the pledge or a song, explain what you're doing and why.
 2. **Meal (20 minutes):** Plan to pay for the meals of any guests.
 3. **Welcome (5 minutes):** Make introductions and give an overview of the evening. Ask members and guests to state their name and profession.
 4. **Club achievements (5 minutes):** Ask a dynamic speaker in your club to talk about your club's Impact in the community.
 5. **Club plans (3 minutes):** Ask the club president to talk about your club's upcoming projects and goals.
 6. **New member perspective (3 minutes):** Ask a new member to give his or her perspective about the club.
 7. **Club meeting program (20 minutes):** Invite a guest speaker who can inspire your audience to want to join your club to share in the membership experience and engage the local community. A representative of a group that recently benefited from the club's generosity or service would be ideal.
 8. **Selling the Kiwanis experience (5 minutes):** Leave the final word to your club's best salesperson, someone who can make a case that leaves the guests happy to fill out an application and join the club.

Event information:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Step 2: Invite

A month before: Develop a prospect list

To get ideas for who to invite, check out the chamber of commerce list of businesses or conduct a roster analysis. However, the people most likely to join are those your members know well, such as:

- Friends
- Co-workers
- Clients
- Neighbors
- Family members
- Business professionals
- Other community leaders
- Church members

You'll need each prospect's full name, address, email address and phone number. Consider offering a prize to the member who can bring in contact information for the most prospects. A good rule of thumb is to aim for at least 50 names—generally only a third of those you invite will attend, and not every person who attends will join.

Three weeks before: Mail out the invitation

Mail a nice invitation or postcard to each prospect, including details about your club's special guest day.

One or two weeks before: Extend personal invitations

After the letters have been mailed, divide up the list of invitees so that members can follow up with each person to extend a personal invitation (referencing their referral) and answer any questions. Keep record of any follow-up communications. Ask the member who made the referral to make reminder phone calls to each attendee a day or two before the event.

On the big day

- **Focus on hospitality.** The purpose of the meeting is to inspire guests to join with you in your quest to improve the world one child and one community at a time.
- Position greeters at the door to welcome everyone.
- Print name tags to aid conversation.
- Use place cards to guide the attendees to a seat between two Kiwanis members, and train those members about how to share the Kiwanis message and address concerns or questions.
- Set each guest's place with an ink pen, a **Join the club** brochure with application, and a club brochure.
- **Keep it positive.** Leave club business for another meeting, and remind members of the importance of first impressions.
- Run a video or PowerPoint presentation of your club in action on a loop

Step 3: Follow up

One week later: Touch base

Within a week, touch base with every guest by phone, email or a personalized postcard. Do the same for everyone who said they'd come but didn't, inviting them to the next meeting. Don't forget: the best person to invite a new member is a new member.

One month later: Welcome new members

- **Plan a new-member orientation:** New-member orientation helps new members understand what a great organization and club they're committing to. Download the one-hour program from www.kiwanis.org/theformula and personalize it to reflect the club's activities.
- **Install the new members.** Focus the meeting on the new members' installation with a sincere welcome to your club and an emphasis on getting to know the new members. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience—why not treat it that way.
- **Assign mentors.** A mentor is often a stabilizing force, who serves as a familiar face and can encourage the new member to learn about the club, meet others and get involved with projects. Find a member—maybe the sponsoring member—who will take a special interest in helping the new member stay connected, especially in the first few months.

Don't forget: Plan your next event

Now that you have refined the process, you can start planning the next membership event.

- Establish a timeframe for your next drive
- Add to your ongoing prospect list the names of those who said, "Maybe later" or who were out of town.
- Consider making your Service Leadership Program club(s) – or the need to establish one – the focus of your meeting. Include parents, teachers, and school administration in your list of prospects.

For a host of membership resources, visit <http://www.kiwanis.org/theformula>. If you still have questions, call 1-800-KIWANIS and ask for your district's regional development strategist.