



## 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 event. A membership event is an opportunity to showcase your club to your community, and focus 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 exposure and membership strength this year.

### Step 1: Prepare

#### Two months before: Choose 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 event. (Costs could include postage, printing programs and food and beverages.)

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 in the community
- **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 [order online](#).
- Develop a brochure or handout describing your club's activities. Use our templates or branding guidelines, available at [www.kiwanis.org/clubbrochure](http://www.kiwanis.org/clubbrochure).
- Purchase envelopes, stamps and pens for sending your invitations. We've created a customizable invitation that can be downloaded from [www.kiwanis.org/allin](http://www.kiwanis.org/allin) and mailed or emailed to guests.

### 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. You can also think about other places like community gardens or restaurants that would allow your club to showcase what you do and project the image you want your guests to leave with.
- **Pick a theme.** Think of something catchy and exciting. This year's is easy: Focus on Kiwanis' 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and all your club will do to serve your community to welcome a new century of service.
- **Plan your agenda.** Consider the following agenda as you prepare your own.
  1. **Welcome (5 minutes):** Make introductions and give an overview of the event. Ask members and guests to state their name and profession if appropriate.
  2. **Introduce your club and Kiwanis (20 minutes):** Ask a dynamic speaker in your club to share about your club, its cause and the scope of the community it serves. You may also choose to play a video that will help your guests understand the impact that Kiwanis has on the lives of those who serve and are served through Kiwanis, such as the mini-documentary "[A portrait of Kiwanis](#)".

### Showcase your club

Think outside the box. Tell your club's story with a showcase exhibition. Here are a few ideas:

**Photos.** Select 10 to 15 photos (depending on the size of the location and the crowd you are expecting). Include service projects, fundraisers and fellowship moments. Enlarge the photos for more impact, and consider adding captions or descriptions to go with the photos. Choose action photos instead of static "grip and grin" shots.

**Key items.** Display items that tell the story of your club. For example, include a T-shirt from a recent walk-a-thon, an invitation to a fundraiser or a certificate from the mayor expressing thanks for your club's contribution.

**PowerPoint.** Prepare a PowerPoint presentation of your club's best photos that could loop before the event or during a social time.

**There's no limit.** The items in your club showcase exhibition will tell your club's story in a unique way. They will serve as conversation starters, so make sure club members are ready to share Kiwanis stories.

3. **Share your club's impact (5 minutes):** Ask a dynamic speaker in your club to talk about your club's impact in the community. You may wish to ask members of your own club to explain what Kiwanis means to them in one word, as the members in the video do.
4. **Club plans (3 minutes):** Ask the club president to talk about your club's upcoming projects and goals.
5. **New-member perspective (3 minutes):** Ask a new member to give his or her perspective about the club.
6. **Selling the Kiwanis experience (5 minutes):** Leave the final word to your club's best salesperson, someone who can make a case that leaves guests happy to fill out an application and join the club. You may wish to say something like:

*"Today, we are inviting you to be part of Kiwanis. You've heard our members—Kiwanis means [repeat the words stated earlier]. You've heard the difference we are making in this community. We want you to be part of this. All you need to do is fill in and the application at your table. Our members are available to answer any questions you may have."*

7. **Social time.** Allow members and guests to mingle, ask and answer questions and follow up with guests who complete a membership application.

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 provide 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 or email a nice invitation or postcard to each prospect, including details about your club's membership event.

### One or two weeks before: Extend personal invitations

After the letters have been sent out, 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.
- **Welcome!** Position sociable and outgoing greeters at the door to thank everyone for coming and collect their contact information.
- **Print name tags.** Aid conversation with name tags that include guests' organization name. Distinguish their name tags from those of members to help them discern who can answer questions.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Train members how to share the Kiwanis message and address concerns or questions.
- **Be prepared.** 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.

### Step 3: Follow up

#### One week later: Touch base

Within a week, touch base with every guest by phone, email or a [personalized card](#) to thank them for attending. Do the same for everyone who said they'd come but didn't, inviting them to the next event. 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](http://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 event
- 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.