

New Member Orientation Team Guide

Derived primarily from the LCI "Orientation Guide," # ME13 EN 5/02

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This "New Member Orientation Team Guide" is designed for use with a "New Member Orientation Team Brochure" to be given to each new Lion as they go through training sessions. The Lions Clubs International topics referred to in these documents are in the LCI "Orientation Guide" (which can be downloaded from the www.lionsclubs.org website) or can be obtained from the "Welcome" manual from a New Member Kit.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

The Importance of New Member Orientation

The importance of a proper, thorough new member orientation cannot be emphasized enough. Imagine belonging to an organization and having only a vague idea of its goals, the responsibilities of membership, its programs, history or traditions. Would you feel like you belonged? Would you be motivated and committed to help the organization reach its goals? Of course not! You'd likely be wondering why you joined the organization at all.

The information provided during orientation provides a foundation for members. It helps them understand how the club functions, what their role will be and also gives them the big picture of the association. When new members are properly informed, they are more likely to feel comfortable with the club and become actively involved in club activities right away. A properly instructed member is also one who is most likely to remain in Lions through the years.

Consider inviting your seasoned members to attend a new member orientation as a refresher. It can help renew their enthusiasm.

What Makes an Orientation Effective?

Successful orientations do more than simply impart information; they also inspire and motivate new members to be the best Lions they can be. While there are different methods for conducting an orientation, there are several elements common to all effective orientations:

- **Conduct the orientation promptly.** Whether you have one new member or five, ideally, a new member orientation should take place within one month of the member's induction.
- **Present a manageable amount of information.** You don't want to overwhelm your new members by giving them too much information to process. Highlight key information verbally during the presentation, and refer members to the proper person or source to gather additional details.
- **Limit the length of each session.** Whether you decide to hold the orientation in a few sessions or just one, be respectful of your new member's time and ability to absorb a great deal of information by limiting sessions to no longer than 2 hours.
- **Keep the pace lively and interesting.** Break up session segments with question and answer periods. Plan a few short breaks during each session. If using visual aids, intersperse them throughout the session(s).
- **Allow plenty of time for questions and answers.** Be sure to build time into your orientation session(s) for questions and answers. Try to intersperse Q & A periods throughout the session(s) in order to give people an opportunity to address their questions while the subject is fresh.
- **Give participants a new member packet.** Assembling a comprehensive packet of essential materials for new members is a very important step to take. There are a few alternatives for putting together a useful collection of materials for new members. If you routinely order a New Member Kit from the Club Supplies Department at International Headquarters, NM - 10, it comes with a Welcome Book. This publication provides excellent general information about the history, organization and programs of Lions Clubs International. Supplement the Welcome Book with the following:
 - A copy of THE LION Magazine
 - A recent issue of your club's newsletter
 - A club directory
 - Your club's brochure or fact sheet
 - District fact sheet, if available.

When your materials are gathered assemble them in some uniform fashion, whether it is a binder, folder or large envelope.

- **Direct new members to sources for additional information.** During each portion of the orientation, tell new members where they can turn for more information or to answer additional questions, such as his or her sponsor, your club directory, the Lions Clubs International Web site (www.lionsclubs.org), etc. Creating a contact sheet with reference information for attendees is very helpful.
- **Use visuals if possible.** The use of visuals, such as a video, PowerPoint (or another PC-driven presentation), overheads, etc. adds an additional interesting element to the presentation and will help keep participants engaged in the session. The Club Supplies Catalog has a list of videos about the association that are available for purchase.

Vary the presenters if possible. Divide the presentation among qualified individuals. Varying the presenters is beneficial to both the participants and the speakers. This is true if your club holds a multi-session orientation.

Different Orientation Styles

There are several ways you can conduct an effective new member orientation. Choose a method that best suits your club. The most important factor isn't the method you choose for presenting the information, but rather making sure that you are presenting thorough, consistent information to each new member that joins your club.

Leaders

Sponsor Led Orientation: According to a recent online survey, many clubs rely on sponsors to orient new members. The potential problem with having sponsors orient new members is that there is no consistency in what information is presented and sponsors have varying levels of experience training others. This issue can be alleviated by having sponsors use checklists during the orientation to ensure that all the material is covered. Before asking sponsors to orient members, make sure that they are comfortable training others.

Designated Trainer: One person is designated the orientation leader for all new members. This method ensures that members are receiving consistent information from a qualified trainer. However, this may be too much of a burden for one member. An alternative is to have a small team that rotates orientation duties. Having a single person lead an orientation works best if your club chooses to orient members one by one as they are inducted. For multi-session orientations, using a trainer team is a better choice.

Trainer Team: This approach is excellent for a multi-session orientation for more than one person. Assemble a team of people to handle different portions of the orientation; example, your club's membership chairman, the public relations/public information chairman and your club secretary or president. If possible, a representative from the district would be a helpful addition.

ORIENTATION SESSION SUMMARY (Estimated 2 Hours for a full session)

This guide is designed to accompany the "New Member Orientation Brochure," (NMOB).

Conducting an orientation in one two-hour session necessitates the trainer(s) imparting only the most basic, critical information. Focus on those items that will be most helpful to the new member in becoming the best Lion he or she can be.

Introduction to the International Association (10 minutes)

Reference page 1 in NMOB, along with materials in the LCI "Orientation Guide" (which can be downloaded from the www.lionsclubs.org website) or from the "Welcome" manual from a New Member Kit.

Why this Important: The rich history and service tradition of Lions clubs provides a foundation for members. It helps instill pride and gives them a broad view of the organization that they are joining.

- Brief Review of International Association History.
The "At a Glance" timeline is a good reference. Focus on the impact of Melvin Jones and Helen Keller on the association, and the importance of Lions clubs worldwide reach.
- Objects and Ethics.
- Current Statistics. Also check The Lions Clubs International Web site (www.lionsclubs.org) for the most recent statistics in the FAQ section.
- Questions and Answers

General Video About Association (10 minutes) optional

The International Association (20 minutes)

Why this is important: Your club is an integral part of the association, for without the dedication and hard work of Lions clubs worldwide, there would be no Lions Clubs International. Explain the support available from the International Headquarters, and emphasize how the structure unites clubs worldwide in working toward a common goal.

- Review the association's official motto, mission statement, logo, colors, etc.
- Review the structure of the organization, discuss the responsibilities of the board of directors and review the role of the International Convention.
- Discuss the International Headquarters.
- Review International Projects and Programs.
- Share resources and contacts for the International Headquarters.
- Questions and Answers

Your District, and Multiple-District (20 minutes) (Ref. pages 2 and 3 in NMOB)

Why this is important: Your district provides support for your club. Emphasize this relationship and how your club participates in district activities.

- Present a history of the Lions in your district, multiple-district and country. You can obtain additional information from the district governor or zone chairmen.
- Present information about district and multiple-district projects and how your club participates.
- Review the structure of the district and multiple-district and responsibilities of the district and multiple-district officers. Talk about district and multiple-district conventions. Encourage attendance.
- Share resources and contacts for your district and multiple-district.
- Questions and Answers

Break (10 minutes)

All About Your Club (45 minutes) (Ref. pages 4-6 in NMOB)

Why this is important: This information is the nuts and bolts of membership. Make sure new members understand all the particular requirements of your club.

- Provide a brief history of the club - this information is most effectively conveyed by charter members, past club officers, or knowledgeable and enthusiastic members.
- Discuss the major projects of the club and their sources of funding. Provide a briefing on the club's current activities and fundraising projects (use visuals when available).
- Explain the organizational structure of the club, the duties of officers, directors and committees.
- Explain membership categories, attendance and dues policies.
- Talk about what it means to be a Lion and the benefits of membership.
- Share resources and contacts for your club.
- Questions and Answers