

**LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL  
MULTIPLE DISTRICT**



**CLUB PRESIDENT'S PACK  
2008**

## CLUB PRESIDENTS

What makes a successful Club President? I am sure you have seen some or all of these qualities in successful presidents:

1. Confidence to lead
2. Concise
3. Humour
4. Authority
5. A Good Listener

Listening is very important - how often do we say "That isn't what I meant at all!"

So do listen - carefully.

I will try to pick out those points which most people ask me about, or I think are important.

These are:

- Planning your year ahead - pages 3 and 4
- Team problems - pages 5 and 6
- Constitutions - page 7
- Public Speaking - pages 8 and 9
- Chairing Meetings - pages 10 to 12

Until four years ago, there was a very good Club President's Manual issued to every Club President. Because we voted against subscription increases, that was one of the things to go. Now you have a Club Manual for all Club Officers, which I am not very impressed with. I believe so much of the old manual to be important that I have scanned it in, and it is at the back of your pack.

## Planning Your Year Ahead

If you have not been Club Secretary or Treasurer, get hold of the old Club Secretary's and Club Treasurer's manuals and read those.

A few years ago there were leaflets issued for all club officers - try and get hold of copies, your Club Secretary is the most likely source.

Why, should you be interested in these other posts?

Well as President you should know the responsibilities of all your officers - you may have done some of the jobs yourself - but it is always useful to refresh yourself on what you should have been doing rather than what you did!

Finally, don't forget the Club Toolkit - this was issued in 2000 to every club in the District, and someone in your Club has got it.

Just as important a source of information is this year's President - arrange a social evening and invite them and their partner around for a meal - you can then talk about what makes the club tick - X's foibles, what gets Y into top gear and what winds up Z.

If there is any strain between yourself and any other members, now is the time to clear it up.

And now, if you are not an organised person, is the time to get organised. If this year's president is not particularly well organised, go back to a president who was, and quietly pick their brains on what files to keep and how to chase up members etc.

## **Working Out a Detailed Plan**

Ask yourself this question -

What is the most important thing I want to happen to my fellow Lions?

Secondly, what do you want to get out of your year as President?

You now have the basis for a plan - discuss it with Lion friends that you respect and know will keep it to themselves.

There will be some club projects committed for your year from the previous year. Make sure your plan incorporates them and does not produce any duplication of ideas or efforts.

You now need to make a list of all tasks required to fulfil your plan, who will do them and when.

Finally, consult with the Treasurer how much money will have to be budgeted.

I have put pages 2 and 8 from the Club President's Manual in your packs at this point, so please use those.

## **Team Problems**

Lucky the Club President who goes through a year without any problems occurring in their team!

The first line is usually to deal with the problem as informally and supportively as possible. So, involve experienced club Lions, who are diplomatic, well-respected and constructive in their approach. See if they can analyse and solve the problem on your behalf.

If this does not work, arrange to meet the Lion in their home environment, and discuss the problem frankly. If the problem is a dispute between two Lions, meet in your home environment. In all cases, your priority is to distil the problem down to its basic point - there will be a lot of side issues, which you need to ignore at this stage. Once you have identified the basic point causing the problem, concentrate on solving this, and do not be sidetracked!

If this still has not worked, you are dealing with a serious problem which could affect the well-being and future of the club. I suggest you then call a special club meeting. You will have to decide if you want the Lions involved at that meeting, or to come in after some discussion, or not to be there at all. This will obviously depend on the details of the problem in question. Prepare an agenda, and again ensure the meeting stays on the basic point of the problem. At the end of the day, you are going to upset somebody - your position though is clear - you must consider the welfare and future of the Club and Lions Clubs International before the individual members interests. It may mean one or more members leaving the Club.

So let us take a couple of examples, and discuss how we would solve them:

The first problem:

You are a relatively new Lion and the Club President. There is a Lion in the Club who has been a Lion for over 20 years and is a very forceful personality. Their attitude has had a negative effect in recruiting and keeping new members. This person is not good at listening, doesn't like change and unfortunately, several of the other older Lions either support his views or are too timid to disagree with him.

This is not an easy problem to solve, but unfortunately is too common in reality.

As President, how would you tackle this - by the way there will not be just one answer!

Second Problem:

Your club has been putting on the same major fund-raising event each year for the last 15 years. Each year it gets more and more difficult to get enough members to support it (in fact it has fallen back on the same 8 for the last 5 years), yet each year the whole club votes to keep it for the following year. The amount raised, in your opinion, is not worth the many, many hours it takes to put on, and is declining slightly each year. Also the stalwart 8 are becoming demoralised and disillusioned, and you are in danger of losing some of them.

What steps as President are you going to take to deal with this?

## **Constitutions**

As President you should be totally familiar with your Club's Constitution. Some brief points:

1. If you haven't adopted the standard Club Constitution from Oakbrook, you are making work for your club each year. Your Club Constitution is subordinate to the International Constitution (any other Constitution of a higher level, such as Multiple District), and the Standard Club Constitution shall apply where the point is not covered in your Club's Constitution. My strong advice is that you adopt the Standard Club Constitution. There is a procedure to follow which will depend on what your Club Constitution says on amending it.
2. In the Zone Chairman's Handbook (on the District website), is a Questionnaire on the International Constitution and one on the Standard Club Constitution. The answers are also there, amended for the July 2007 version.
3. You can download the latest version of both Constitutions from the International website.

## **Public Speaking**

### **Basics**

How long should a speech be?

Apart from the very few gifted orators, it is interesting that those Lions who like to talk a lot, argue that 10 to 20 minutes is fine. They don't accept the fact that after 3 minutes, the listener's concentration starts to reduce and after 5 minutes, only 25% of what the speaker says is retained, if you are lucky! So, too often, the only reason for talking after that first 5 minutes is so they can enjoy the sound of their own voices.

If you use a computer, an A4 sheet double-spaced with a large font, say 14 point, gives you about 1 minute of speaking. If you handwrite it first, a wide-ruled A4 sheet filled is about the same as above when typed.

### **How to Prepare a Speech?**

There are many ways of preparing a speech and you need to find the way that suits you. Some find it best to get everything out of their mind, down onto paper, regardless of order, grammar, etc. If they use a computer, they can then edit with cut and paste, without spending a lot of time rewriting.

- You need a punchy start, so that your audience are in no doubt about your subject
- You need a descriptive middle - if you want humour, make sure it is relevant
- You need a definite conclusion, recalling your main point, and leaving your audience with a clear message - - hopefully the message you intended.

### **What form should it take?**

- You can put the speech onto A4 paper double-spaced in large print
- You can put the speech on cards
- You can put key points on cards
- Or you can speak from memory, ad-libbing the words but keeping to your plan BUT don't learn your speech off by heart and try to recite it - it does not work!

## How do you deliver your speech?

Let us look at the physical preparation first:

- 3 pints or half a bottle of wine is not the ideal physical preparation - You may feel good, but the result will be disaster. So your ration is one drink before you speak!
- The butterflies in your stomach are a good sign - don't suppress them. With adrenalin running, you're more likely to get some feeling into what you say, some conviction, some passion!
- When you stand up to speak, get your weight spread evenly on your feet, about 12 to 18 inches (30 to 50 cms) apart
- Press your feet firmly into the ground with your weight over the whole foot.
- Take three long slow deep breaths and away you go.

## The actual delivery

Don't worry about reading from your script - you will have read it many times already so will have practised when to pause - at these points, look at your audience.

Where do you look?

The middle of your audience, if you are nervous; but as you gain confidence, look directly at people throughout the audience.

Allow time for clapping, and laughs. Don't be in a hurry - you have all the time in the world.

## CHAIRING A MEETING - TO THE SIX 'P' FORMULA

1. Plan
2. Preparation
3. Practice
4. Perpetuate
5. Participate
6. Progress

### 1. THE PLAN

#### a. What are your objectives for the meeting?

- To achieve effective communication
- To encourage and motivate action(s)
- To create and maintain friendly relationships amongst Lion members
- To create a platform to generate opportunities to evaluate Club, Zone and individual Lions issues/topics, etc

#### b. The Agenda Format

- The meeting agenda needs to be structured to create time for democratic debate & involvement by all Lion members
- The agenda should allow for progress to be seen, decisions to be realised, actions to be identified & fellowship to be experienced
- The Club Presidents/Secretaries should understand the requirement to keep their reports - clear, logical, relevant and precise
- The agenda should be designed to ensure all potential speakers have an opportunity to do so
- The agenda should be designed to allow you the opportunity to slot information, questions or requests into the meeting at the appropriate time
- The agenda content should ensure meeting starts and ends at the agreed time
- Plan an adequate time-slot into the agenda for guest speakers to cover their subject without time constraints being imposed

## 2. THE PREPARATION (Fail to Prepare - Prepare to Fail!)

- Communication of the place, date, time and type of next meeting (business/dinner/social) to all Lions /guests
- Proprietor/manager of meeting place is aware you will be holding your meeting on a given date(s)
- Ensure Lion Tamer is briefed on required Lions' regalia; Presidents bell/gavel to be displayed at the meeting
- If dinner or social meeting, catering requirements are in place and members realise the costs involved
- Coffee/sandwiches/biscuits ordered for business meeting
- Prior knowledge of items/topics/business that will be raised at the meeting (for inclusion into meeting agenda)
- Arrange for any equipment required for the meeting i.e. OHP, SCREEN, FLIPCHART, etc
- Build any received correspondence/information into your prepared Zone Chairperson's Report
- PREPARE THE WHOLE MEETING
- PREPARE THE MEETING AIDS
- PREPARE THE TIMING

## 3. MEETING PRACTICE

- Rehearse your meeting
- Identify possible problem areas and prepare potential rectifying solutions
- Fluent use of presentation aids
- Identify answers to any possible meeting content or objections

## 4. PERPETUATION

- Inform the members of any specific meeting objectives
- Take each agenda item and generate - Participation, Motivation, Friendliness, Control and Summary - towards the agreement of the participants to necessary actions.
- When each action has been agreed give encouragement. Spell out clearly what the action is that has been agreed, and what feedback, by whom, is required. Move on quickly to the next item

- At the close of the meeting, encourage participation of members by quickly summarising agreed actions

## **5. PARTICIPATION**

- Use membership participation towards what you want to achieve
- Never leave questions unanswered or not dealt with
- Ensure minutes of meeting are taken
- Encourage everyone to write down his or her own agreed actions
- Keep full control of the meeting at all times
- Use questions e.g. open, closed, direct, and indirect, etc
- Summarise regularly to ensure everyone understands issues/topics being discussed
- Always end topics on a high note
- Endeavour to include all Lions through the meeting

## **6. PROGRESS**

- Keep the meeting "moving forward"
- Maintain positive and unbiased Chairpersonship style throughout the meeting
- Keep to your planned meeting time schedule
- End the meeting on time