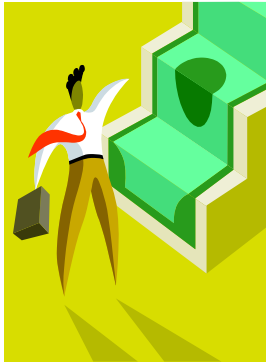




Accepting the Challenge!



"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." - Goethe

The first step along the way to being a great president is to decide that you believe in the Optimist philosophy and in reaching out to others.

Success can be defined as applying effort with a great attitude toward a noble goal. Take the first step and make the commitment toward yours being a good Club.

A good club is known by the community for who they are and what they do – Optimistic volunteers dedicated to “Bringing out the Best in Kids.”

Accepting the Challenge (Part 1 of 8)

[Rewards of Being President](#)

[Role and Function](#)

[Optimism & Enthusiasm](#)

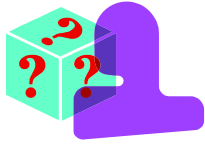
[Getting Started – Things to do](#)

REWARDS OF BEING PRESIDENT

The job of President is a “people job”. Your ability to get the best out of others will result in a fun, thriving club that will attract volunteers who want to help make a better community for children.

Being President is a “growth” opportunity as you face challenges and overcome them with successes. Some days you will grow weary with your efforts and other days you will “soar” to new heights of delight in being able to make a difference in the lives of others.

You will use your strengths and abilities in the best way you know how. You will develop other skills as you need them. With time you will earn the respect of all those you lead and the appreciation from those whom you give opportunity. These are just a few of the “rewards” of being a club president.



ROLE AND FUNCTION

As we discussed, your primary purpose is to help others succeed.

As President you are the “Chief Executive Officer” of your Club. Your Board of Directors makes policy and determines objectives. You carry out the directives of the Board and make things happen. You lead others who do the service to youth and community.

You preside at Club Member meetings where you enjoy fun, food and fellowship. You also preside at your Board meetings where you carry out the business of the Club.

You appoint and oversee the operation of all of your club committees. You will help club leaders to have good meetings, recognize efforts and accomplishments of others, create budgets and monthly financial reports, obtain good publicity, grow your membership, have good communications and other great youth and community service activities.

OPTIMISM AND ENTHUSIASM



Optimism and Enthusiasm are what inspire others. Optimism defines who we are. You are the leading Optimist in your Club!

Choosing Optimism for yourself means not only reading our “Optimist Creed” at the end of each meeting but really “living” its tenets. If you practice each tenet yourself, others will feel better about themselves, they will feel better about you, and they will be more open to volunteering.

Be enthusiastic in all you say and do. Being enthusiastic draws others toward you and inspires them to enjoy what they are doing. Enthusiasm is contagious, pass it around!

It's easy to smile, shake hands with others and call them by name. To show others you appreciate them helps them to appreciate you!

GETTING STARTED – THINGS TO DO



There seems to be so much, where do I start?

Certainly there are a lot of resources and ideas available on our Web-sites. Start with the basics and allow ideas and interests of your volunteer members to move your club forward. You are there to ask people to volunteer, guide their progress and recognize their effort.

Your Club's Organization Meeting (For New Optimist Clubs)

This is done by a Field Representative assigned by Optimist International. This is your first official meeting at which you were elected. You probably received a lot of information and your head may be spinning. Not to worry, all of this information is available on-line at www.optimist.org and in your club materials.

Organize your Club

- Make appointments to each committee. This can be based on the "interests" of each member as stated on the back of their member application. As each person is assigned, review their duties and responsibilities; then let them talk with you about their action plan. Use the one-page committee assignment "modules" at www.optimistleaders.org . Click the "Clubs" icon.
- Create and adopt a Club budget for the year. This can be done with your Secretary-Treasurer and finance chair using the "Budget Worksheet" provided (also online).
- Conduct your first Regular Member Meeting. Be early, welcome members as they arrive, use the pre-printed agenda (simply filling in the information to be announced), explore ways to have fun and to allow members to enjoy each other's company, have good programs and end on time.
- Conduct your first Board of Directors Meeting. This is for conducting club business. Set a monthly time, day and location and use a pre-printed agenda (filling in discussion items). Begin by adopting one youth service project and one fund raiser (with member interest and community need). Ask for reports from each active committee.
- Conduct an "Annual Club Planning Conference". This is a time for the Board to get together to gain a sense of cooperation and plan for the future. This is facilitated by your Lieutenant Governor by using a specially prepared form.



Lead by Example

- Be Optimistic and Enthusiastic as an example for others.
- Invite the first new member to join your club.
- Role up your sleeves and work on one of your club's projects.

Ask, Guide and Recognize

- Personally ask a volunteer to do something
- Support, encourage, guide and cheer them along
- Recognize appropriately and publicly their achievements
- Repeat this process hundreds of times in creative, thoughtful ways

Continue to Learn and Grow as a Leader

- Attend District (state) and International Conferences
- Seek information on-line at www.optimist.org
- Check your mail box at www.optimistmail.org (follow password instructions)
- Continue to develop your people skills to help others succeed

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What do Optimists do? What is our signature brand?

What kind of business are you in? What kind of job do you have?

What club members conduct the business of the club?

Who can help you conduct an "Annual Club Planning Conference"?

"Kids grow up with or without Optimism . . . The Choice is Yours."



The End of part 1: Accepting the Challenge

Go to Part 2: "Resources for Success"
Go to Series "Introduction"

Go to ["Top"](#)

Club President



Resources for Success!



We live in the “information age.” Knowledge is power. Knowledge is only limited by our ability to access and use information.

It has been said that it is not necessary that you know everything about being president, nor that you know everything about what your volunteers should do, only that you know where to find it out.

Resources are not only a powerful ally to you but a benefit to those who serve with you.

[Optimist International](#)

4494 Lindell Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63108
(314) 371-6000
(800) 500-8130
fax: (314) 371-6006

Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Central Time)

[Optimist International Canada](#)

4559, boul. Metropolitan est
St-Leonard, Qc H1R 1Z4
Canada
(514) 593-4401
(800) 363-7151

fax – (514) 721-1104

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Eastern Time)

Resources for Success (Part 2 of 8)

[Web-sites & Email](#)

[Your Lieutenant Governor](#)

[District Committees](#)

[International Officers & Staff](#)

[Conferences & Conventions](#)

[Optimist Magazine & Leadership Hotline](#)

[Recognition and Awards](#)

Web-sites and Email



www.Optimist.org Here is a great resource with a wide variety of information about Optimists and what we do for youth and our communities.

- Members: programs and activities, directories, forms, public service announcements for local media, insurance, fees & dues, tax exempt letter, International convention info,

logos, member applications, Leadership Hotline and a link to Optimist Supplies.

- Visitors: About Optimism, How to join, history, vision, mission and Creed.
- Junior Golf Championships: location/dates, qualifying procedures, course info, policies
- JOOI Youth Clubs: convention info, forms, officers and "Torch" newsletter

www.Optimistleaders.org Club Leaders can access information to help them be more effective.

- Club officer information, club organization, budget & finance, club meetings, reports and a "President-elect planning workbook"
- Club committee appointment guides – outline for every committee
- Skills Development modules and our Personal Growth and Involvement (PGI) program for member development
- Teaching materials for presenters: PowerPoint presentations, faculty guides, handouts and "Certified Trainers"
- Electronic reports and payments: Check your roster, add members, change addresses and pay club dues



You've got mail!

www.Optimistmail.org Here you can find your on-line Optimist mailbox. Check it weekly to stay up-to-date! There is also a feature that allows you to have your mail automatically forwarded to your email address. It is active only during the year which you are club President.

Tip: Consider using the "help/site map" button to quickly access any item on web sites

Got a Link ? Notify webmaster@optimist.org to link your Club's web site

Your Lieutenant Governor



Your Lieutenant Governor is your personal connectedness to Optimist International. If you don't know where to go for an answer this is a good place to start. Your Lieutenant Governor has been a Club President and can identify with what you are doing.

Your Lieutenant Governor can assist you in beginning the club year by facilitating an "Annual Club Planning Conference". This is generally done with your club's Board of Directors and includes a "checklist" of resources you currently have and asks what Board Members want to accomplish in the coming year.

Your Lieutenant Governor is generally aware of the activities of the other clubs around you and hosts "zone meetings" where club officers can share ideas in a supportive environment.

Your Lieutenant Governor is generally the officer to install you and other incoming club officers. He or she may also visit your club several times during the year.

Your Lieutenant Governor's role is to help you succeed. They are to give you advice, support and make you look good in the eyes of your club members.

District Committees

Your District (Headed by a Governor) includes many clubs, several zones (Headed by Lieutenant Governors) comprising an area similar to the size of a State or Province.

A district committee can provide resources and information to your club. It represents an expertise in a particular area such as, "Membership", "Oratorical", "Essay", "Junior Optimist Octagon Clubs", "Building new clubs", "Junior Golf Championships", "Childhood cancer campaigns" and many others. As a club you may call on these people to ask questions or to get information about District-wide competition opportunities for your youth participants. The committee member's names and contact information is generally found in a "district directory" or a "district website."



International Officers and Staff

As previously mentioned, your club's most immediate contact is the local Lieutenant Governor who presides over a group of clubs called a zone. A number of zones comprise a district which is administered by a Governor.

At the International level there are ten Vice Presidents who each support a Region of several districts. Overseeing their support is the President of Optimist International.

There is also a Board of Directors of Optimist International which is responsible for financial supervision, policies, and strategic planning. Names and information for these officers are available at www.optimist.org.

Committees (that primarily provide expertise and support) are available both at the district and international level.

Optimist International employs a professional staff with headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, USA and a Service Centre in Montréal, Québec, Canada. More complete information is also available at www.optimist.org.

You also have access to club supplies at “Shumsky Supply” USA and “Canadian Supply” Canada. See www.optimist.org

Conferences and Conventions

One of the benefits of club affiliation is the opportunity to attend low-cost, informative conferences where you learn how to do your job better from the experts. In addition a great deal of new ideas can be gathered from sharing experiences with other clubs. Ideas are readily available on “youth activities”, “fund raising”, “recruitment programs”, “leadership development”, and “personal development”.

Your District will generally offer four of these meetings per year on a quarterly basis. More information as to their whereabouts can be found in your district directory or district web-site.



Once a year Optimists from all over United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and other Nations get together for a Convention. This is a great experience for fun, entertainment and meeting people from all over Optimist International. Each club also has “delegate votes” to decide major issues of Optimist International. There is a “House of Optimism” that highlights unique products and ideas as well as the latest from our official supply vendors. Many back-to-school workshops are available to learn just about anything you would want to know about being a great Optimist!

This is an extraordinary opportunity for your incoming club president to attend because of the information they get which will directly benefit your Club. Financial support for this individual to attend is appropriate.

Optimist Magazine & Leadership Hotline



“*The Optimist*” magazine” is mailed periodically to every member of Optimist International. It includes human interest stories about people and Optimism. It also has editorials from our International President and annual program information. A wide variety of club activities are also highlighted in the magazine.

The “Leadership Hotline” is mailed periodically to your email box at www.optimistmail.org. It includes leadership information, dates for planning and program ideas.

Recognition and Awards

As President, you can be an advocate for your club and its members by making them eligible to receive recognition and awards for the great things they do. The basic club award is that of “Honor Club” which recognizes a club for doing a good job and leaving the club a little better off at the end of the year (September 30th) than when it began. “Distinguished Club” status comes from doing an extraordinary job of growing your club or bringing Optimism to new communities. See details in the “Recognition Handbook” available online at www.optimist.org

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Who is the primary resource person who you might go to for help?

As President, how will you be able to view your official club roster online?

What are the addresses of our Web-sites?

Where can you get official Optimist Supplies with logos?



The End of part 2: Resources for Success

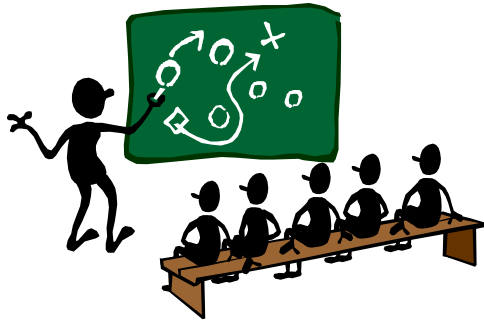
Go to Part 3: “Leading Your Team”

Go to series “Introduction”

[Go to “Top”](#)



Leading Your Team



“Dependent people need others to get what they want. Independent people can get what they want through their own efforts. Interdependent people combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success.” – Stephen Covey

One of the greatest abilities a person can have is to lead others. By leading others toward organizational goals you can increase your effectiveness many times over.

Leading Your Team (Part 3 of 8)

[The Member - Award](#)
[Using Your Strengths](#)
[Gaining Trust](#)
[Lead by Example](#)
[Ask and Recognize](#)

The Member - Award

Volunteers are your greatest asset. If you allow the flexibility for differing strengths and interests to combine into a common purpose, great things will happen. An orchestra leader combines different instruments making different sounds into one coherent piece of music. A quarterback calls the play that causes a variety of players to move in a coordinated way which results in a touchdown.

You too, as President can harness great power of success by combining volunteer's interest and strengths toward making a difference in the lives of young people. This is truly the “game of life” worth playing!

For this reason it is helpful to make time to get to know every member and discover their “passions” for service. The “Member Interest Finder” is a helpful

tool. This is a form that you can pass out to every member for them to fill out and return to you.

This information can give you a good indication of the most appropriate position or committee to which you can assign them. Another committee assignment technique is to post a list of committees at the front of the room and have members each sign their names under one or two committees.

One of the greatest things a member can do in your club is to sponsor a new Optimist Member! By doing this single act they have essentially doubled the amount of service they can provide for the club.

As president the appreciation of a new member sponsor should be one of the greatest recognitions that you could bestow upon a member.

Using Your Strengths



Every leader is different. There are certainly a wide variety of Leadership Styles and Profiles that are effective in leading others.

Just as a business does a situational analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, so too should you know yourself.

What are your strengths?

What abilities would you like to improve?

What qualities could you highlight in others?

As a leader you should be the best of who you already are. Carefully assess your strengths and then choose other abilities which you would like to improve; make a plan to improve them. For other personal qualities that you do not have, find someone else to take the spotlight by having them use their abilities which best compliment yours.

“The greatest personal reward for being a leader is not what you do with it, but what you become by it.”

Gaining Trust

“People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Before you begin the process of building a team and leading others you should gain their trust. A personal relationship is what gives the authority to lead. You undoubtedly have earned some trust already or they would not have elected you to be their president.

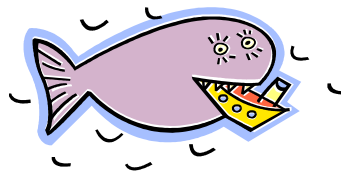
Some of the components of building a trusting relationship include, actively greeting people, calling them by name, smiling and shaking their hand, listening to their ideas, asking about their families and kids, sending them birthday/holiday greetings, showing them respect, appreciating their accomplishments, and genuinely caring about them as people. Think about some other ways that you can gain their “trust” in you.

Lead by Example

Consider a basic “tenant” of leadership, “Never be in the position of asking someone to do something that you have not already done, or are willing to do yourself.”

As a leader of Optimists, you should be the shining example of a positive person with an enthusiastic “can-do” spirit! Optimism begins with you, the leader!

“We must be the change we expect to see in the World.” – Mahatma Ghandi



Ask and Recognize

Training Killer Whales

Have you ever watched the training of “Killer Whales” at a Sea World training camp? How do you suppose they get such magnificent animals to jump out of the water through those hoops?

Well, according to the trainer he first places a rope at the bottom of a pool and if the Whale accidentally swims over it the trainer gives them food in the form of a fish as a reward. The rope is then moved a few inches off the bottom and if the whale happens to swim over it, the trainer gives them another fish as a reward. The rope is again raised, and continually raised until it's to the surface while all the time the trainer rewards positive behavior with a fish. Of course at this point the whale is actually jumping out of the water to obtain the fish/food reward. Soon the rope becomes a hoop and the whale jumps out of the water and through the hoop to the wonder and amazement of audiences. And the trainers still give them the fish/reward.

Of course people are not whales and you would not dare give your volunteers a fish as a reward. This basic concept, however, does apply when leading people. The techniques obviously require a much more sophisticated and creative approach.

“Man does not live by bread alone - from time to time he needs a little buttering up!”

Ask and Recognize

The basic concept illustrated in the “Whale” story is to ask and recognize. With the whale the asking part was difficult and depended on accidental behavior to initiate the process. With people, asking is easy.

So, as a President, use this principle. Ask, then give them a prize, “Great job, Henry, here’s a prize.” Be generous, but consistent. A little job deserves a little prize, a big job, big prize!

Ask yourself, “What are some “little jobs” you could ask of a new or inactive member?”

(Possible answers include: Lead the Pledge, Give the toast, be the greeter at the door, be a “mystery greeter,” draw a ticket in your raffle, etc.)

How might you recognize a “little job”?

(Possible answers include: A handshake, a smile, pat-on-the-back, mention their name in front of the club, name in newsletter/e-letter)

Now for an “intermediate job:” What is a very simple thing to do that is so great that it doubles a person’s capability to serve others?

(Answer: Sponsor a new Optimist member! Alternate answer: show up for a service project)

Yes, and of course, significant excitement and appreciation for this act should come directly from you, the president.

Now, let's talk about a "big job". What are some of the big jobs you could ask someone to do?

(Possible answers: Set up the room, be a Sergeant at Arms, Organize a fundraiser, serve on a committee, serve as a committee chair)

What is a "big reward" for doing a big job?

(Possible answers: Public accolades, Name in newspaper, Certificates of recognition, plaques, personal 'thank you' notes, awards, gifts, etc.)

"Ask someone personally; recognize people publicly."

Be wary of asking for volunteers with a show of hands, or passing around a sign-up sheet – it gives a hint of being impersonal.



Remember that "Recognition is the Pay of a Volunteer."

Many books on leadership and management deal with the methods and abilities you might use to enhance your effectiveness as a leader. Read books, listen to tapes.

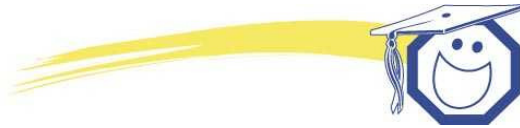


The End of part3: Leading Your Team

Go to Part 4: "Club Administration"
Go to series "Introduction"

[Go to "Top"](#)

Club President



Club Administration



“You don't have to be great to get started, but you have to get started to be great.” – Les Brown

“Waste neither time nor money, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality, nothing will do, and with them everything” – Benjamin Franklin

As Club President you are the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of your club responsible for its ongoing operations. Volunteers are your business and service to kids is your product. Prepare for success!

CLUB ADMINISTRATION (Part 4 of 8)

[President, Board, Secretary-Treasurer, Vice President, Committees](#)

[Bylaws, Policies & Protocol](#)

[Dues & Invoices](#)

[Budget & Finance](#)

[Appointing Committees](#)

[Fund Raising](#)

[Reports & Insurance](#)

Your Club should be Incorporated as a not for profit organization under act 501(c)(4) for U.S. Clubs. Your Secretary Treasurer should have these papers. You may contact Optimist International Administration 1-800-500-8130, extension 202 if you cannot find your documents.

President, Board, Secretary-Treasurer, Vice President, Committees

Members of the club only decide issues of electing who they want to run their club, what their dues should be and when they should meet. Club Meetings are for the purpose of having fun, food and fellowship.

Boards of Directors conduct the business of the club. They oversee the finances with the use of budgets, they set policies and they approve potential projects and fundraisers.

Club Committees plan and conduct the projects and programs of the Club. They report to the Board on a regular basis of their progress.

The President is the chief executive officer charged with carrying out the operations of the club. They manage the efforts of volunteers. They ask for help and recognize effort and accomplishment.

The Secretary-Treasurer (appointed) collects dues, publishes monthly financial reports, and records the minutes of meetings.

The Vice Presidents (usually two) preside at meetings if the president is unavailable. In many clubs an External Vice President will oversee the outreach committees (youth service, fund raising, public relations) and the Internal Vice President will oversee operational committees (membership, finance, programs).

Detailed information on all of these positions is available at www.optimistleaders.org under "Club" information.

Bylaws, Policies & Protocol



Bylaws define the form and the function of your Optimist Club. They represent the "rules" of operation. They are very valuable when dealing with challenging situations. Ideally your Secretary-Treasurer should provide a copy to every Board member.

Take time to read through it. Certainly you do not need to know everything it says but it would be helpful if you knew enough to find what you are looking for when a situation arises.

Policies govern appropriate conduct and actions of the club. They are established and administered by the Board of Directors. Common policies include:

- Restrictions pertaining to alcohol consumption
- Authorized signatures for bank accounts
- Fund Raising guidelines
- Donations to other organizations
- Club supplies
- Petty cash funds
- Fellowship and hospitality
- Political neutrality issues

Protocol represents an institutionally proper way to show respect. Protocol shows respect for Optimist Officers. Protocol suggests proper regard for community and Country.

Details on the above information can be found at www.optimistleaders.org

Dues and Invoices



Member dues are usually collected to sustain the operations of your Optimist Club. Alternative financing for club operations (in place of charging dues) is possible as they follow National laws. A new member will pay a one-time membership fee when joining.

Your club pays dues to Optimist International and a lesser amount to the District Administration. See www.optimist.org (click on Members, then Administration, then Dues & Fees) for the amount owed. Members are added and deleted from your official roster using a "**Club Roster Adjustment**" form along with a small (\$15) registration fee to add. Your roster can be changed and viewed under "Reports and Payments" at www.optimistleaders.org (it is password protected).

Tiered Dues for International Countries allow Nations with a lower economic status to pay a reduced fee schedule.

Collegiate Members also pay dues at a lower rate based on the fact that they are full time college students. Your club Secretary-Treasurer has to verify enrollment on a quarterly basis.

How to read your dues invoice:

Your club secretary-treasurer will receive a quarterly statement that will include dues owed to Optimist International. The amounts are based on the official number of members you have on your roster.

Dues for your Junior Optimist, Octagon or Alpha Club are billed annually separate from the adult dues.

Always use your 5-digit club number with all communications.

Budget & Finance

Before the beginning of the year a club should adopt a budget. This is an estimate and guideline of projected income and expenses. A “**model club budget and worksheet**” is available under “club budget & finance” at www.optimistleaders.org It should help you create a budget.

At the beginning of the year the Board of Directors adopts this “budget” and it is used throughout the year as a spending guide. Good stewardship suggests you spend within the budget. However, sometimes situations dictate the Board should approve more appropriate expenditures or change the budget.

The role of the club **finance chair** is to assist with creating the budget and provide an ongoing opinion as to the appropriateness of income and expenditures.

Although very rare, embezzlement does occur. Surprisingly some of the nicest people can fall to the temptation. Not only should the finance chair be on the look-out, but every member should adhere to common accounting procedures. For example, two signatures should be required for check withdrawals. It is prudent fiscal policy not to have a married couple as the two signatories.

Good accounting requires all financial transactions to be recorded and monthly report summaries be given to the Board of Directors and Finance Chair. Samples of these forms are also available with the online budget information.

U.S. Optimist Clubs are exempt from paying income tax under their **501(c)(4) non-profit corporate status**.

Clubs having annual gross income of over \$25,000 should file an IRS **990 Form** before February 15th. All Clubs with gross income under \$25,000 must file a Form 990-E by February 15th. This must be filed online at irs.gov.

Appointing Committees



The president appoints committees to plan and do the work of Optimist Clubs. Appointments are made based on the member's interests and abilities. “Member Interest Finders” are a good way to learn about your members. Really talking with them is another good way to find their interests.

When a person is asked to serve on a committee, go over job description, duties and expectations. That way the person is not just accepting a position but understands what they are saying “yes” to.

For each club committee there is a one-page “Committee Module” available on www.optimistleaders.org which can help when making appointments. Once they understand expectations, invite them to participate in suggesting action plans to get the job done. This is an effective way to transfer ownership for more effective performance.

Two club reports are due to Optimist International during the year. They are:

- **“Officer Elect Report”** due May 20th for Club elections which are conducted in April.
- **“Annual Activities Report”** is due at the end of the Optimist year and sent by September 30th.
- For U.S. clubs **“IRS 990”** is due February 15th for Clubs with gross incomes over \$25,000

From time to time you may receive other requests for information.

Insurance: Optimist International provides general legal liability insurance for property damage and bodily injury to all clubs and their members acting for the club. Copies of the Certificate of Insurance are available at www.optimist.org Keep in mind that this is NOT medical insurance for participants.

For more information go to www.optimist.org or email your request to insurance@optimist.org or phone the Insurance administrator at 1-800-503-9227.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Under what U.S. laws is your Optimist Club Incorporated?

Which club body conducts the business of the club?

How does your secretary-treasurer make changes to your club's roster?

What type of Insurance does every Optimist Club Member have?



The End of part 4: Club Administration

Go to next Part 5: “Fun Club Meetings”
Go to series “Introduction”

[Go to “Top”](#)



Success through Growth



The greatest challenge you will have in your club is to grow your Club by attracting new members. New members enhance who you are as a club and how effectively you serve youth. Growth makes you more successful!

As the "Chief Executive Officer" of your Club it is your challenge to make your Club successful!

Success through growth (Part 6 of 8)

- [Success equals Service](#)
- [Member Sponsor Recognition](#)
- [Club Growth Strategies](#)
- [Building New Clubs](#)
- [Personal Growth & Involvement](#)
- [Public Relations](#)
- [Newsletters & Emails](#)

Success equals Service

Our mission as Optimists is to serve youth and our communities. The more service we provide, the more successful we become. Only volunteers can provide that service, so it follows that growth in members equates with growth in service.

Not only do new members increase service but they also provide new ideas, expanded resources, enhanced visibility in the community and they bring future leaders.

It has been said that each new member provides an average of increased service to 35 more young people. This is based on an approximation from the "Annual Activities Reports" that clubs send in at the end of each year. Certainly the impact on a young person's life is immeasurable. Service is also

somewhat subjective, that is why we look toward members as a measure of our success. Growth equals Service which equals Success!

The President's primary job is to nurture the Club's volunteers. Your accomplishments come only through your members, your volunteers.

Member Sponsor Recognition



Volunteers are your greatest asset.

One of the greatest things a member can do in your club is to sponsor a new Optimist Member! By doing this single act they have essentially doubled the amount of service they can provide for the club.

As president this should be one of the greatest recognitions that you could bestow upon that member. It would be nice to present a personal gift to someone who sponsors a new member into your Club to show your genuine appreciation. You might add a bit of fun to the recognition by offering the new member sponsor a "president's fine exemption card" to make him/her exempt from fining for the next three months.

Club Growth Strategies

Attracting and making a member feel appreciated can be achieved in a variety of ways. Ways in which you "cultivate" your members can become effective strategies for growth.

Recruitment

The foundation of getting new members is simply to ASK! You can encourage members to ask others to join by conducting periodic fun recruitment games and incentives.

Certainly every member should be equipped with the basic tool for recruitment - a "new member application". They should be encouraged to wear their lapel pin and know the initiation fee your Club charges. Certainly some you ask will say no, but some will say "yes"! Simply ask, ask, ask!

Installation & Orientation

You only have one chance to make a first impression. You can leave a lasting emotional tie to your new member by installing him with respect, appreciation and pride.

After Board approval the Club secretary-treasurer will add him/her to the roster by submitting a "Club Roster Adjustment" form.

Making a member feel welcome includes a good education as to what the club does and how it works.

Participation

Members can become an invested member by participating in club activities. Keys to fostering participation are: a) developing a calendar of club activities for the year, b) placing every member on a committee and c) recognizing the contributions of member's participation.

Maintenance

Take care of your members by nurturing them. Certainly some losses are unavoidable (death, transfer, etc.) but most can be saved. Never delete a member without making a personal visit to express your sincerity in their affiliation and understanding if they must leave.

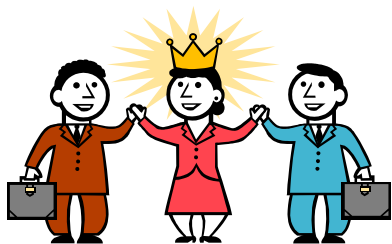
Members "at risk" can be identified by slipping behind in dues. Contact these people immediately and incorporate them into your club activities in small but meaningful ways.

Attendance

Good meetings based on good food, fun and fellowship can attract members in large numbers. In addition use incentives for attendance, an active fellowship committee and good follow-up on absentees.

Building New Clubs

You would not be an Optimist if someone had not taken the time to create your Club. Someone said that to be a good Optimist means helping kids in your community but being a "great" Optimist means bringing Optimism to a new Community! As the "founder" of a new Optimist Club you can make a difference in a huge way, leaving a legacy to thousands of future beneficiaries of the "Optimist experience."



Recognition of "Distinguished" is bestowed on the Club that obtains "Honor" status and brings Optimism to another community. The Distinguished President's Watch is a highly coveted memento for this accomplishment. "Builder of Excellence" is the highest award any individual can earn – to be the key builder forming a new club.

Begin by requesting a "New Club Building Kit" from Optimist International Headquarters newclub@optimist.org or 1-800-500-8130. To form a new club sign up 25 members and pay an affiliation fee of \$425+ \$1 for each additional member. You will receive plenty of help to assist in the organization process.

Personal Growth and Involvement (P.G.I.)

This is a program to develop "Optimism as a Philosophy of Life" by developing personal skills while advancing through ten levels of involvement, personal growth and achievement.

How PGI works: To begin your journey through PGI, download your passport from www.optimistleaders.org or request a Passport from your District Director of Personal Growth, your Governor or Optimist International.

Use your passport to record the completion of requirements for each level. All Activities at each level must be attested to by your Club Director of Personal Growth, Secretary-Treasurer or President in the passport for Levels I through VII and by your Lieutenant Governor or Governor for Levels VIII through X.

Each level of PGI contains the following elements: Attendance, Activity, Growth, Knowledge of Organization, Self Development and Communication.

The Award: Round colored pin backings (which fit behind your member pin) representing the Level attained (Levels I through VII) will be distributed upon completion of each Level. Pin backings are presented to the Club (at a District meeting) and to the individual at a club meeting.

Ten Levels of PGI Recognition:
A colored pin backing can be worn behind your member pin.
Level I Bronze, Level II Green, Level III Burgundy, Level IV Blue, Level V Black, Level VI Purple, Level VII Gold, Level X International President's Lapel Pin

Skills Development Modules: Along your PGI journey you will have the opportunity to take workshops from the District or Optimist International on a number of topics. These are generally two hour workshops and include such topics as: Public Speaking, Effective Time Management, Creative Problem Solving, Choosing Optimism as a Philosophy of Life, Parliamentary Procedures, Orientation to Optimism for New Members, Team Building, Leadership Styles and Profiles, Mentoring and Managing Change.

For additional information or passports or "Skills Development Modules" see www.optimistleaders.org or call Optimist International Leadership Development Department, 800-500-8130 or 314-371-6000 extension 242.

Public Relations

Community awareness of who you are and what you are doing as Optimists can not only enhance your image but attract the interest of prospective members.

Use our "Public Service Announcement" audio tapes on CD or download from www.optimist.org . Personally deliver them to someone you know at your local radio station. Each station is required by law to play P.S.A.'s. Use them, spread the word, and grow.

Another good strategy is to hold a club "media appreciation" day at one of your first general meetings. Invite a local news celebrity and honor them for reporting the "positive" aspect of community news. This honor will endear them to your cause and future publicity.

More information is also available on "public relations".

Newsletters and Emails



Emails are replacing hard copy newsletters as the internal communication method of choice. They are inexpensive and low maintenance. Hardcopies may be sent for special effect.

The ideal Email newsletter should include:

- Announcements of coming events
- Recognize many people for their contributions
- Announce next week's program to peek interest and attendance

Keep it short, positive, and informative. Maybe a "joke of the week" at the end. Don't tell them everything. Entice them to come to the next meeting.

Good communication gives everyone "ownership" in your Club!



The End of part 6: Success through Growth

Go to Part 7 "Bringing out the Best in Kids"
Go to "Introduction"

[Go to "Top"](#)



Bringing out the Best in Kids

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” *Franklin D. Roosevelt*



Our mission is in “Bringing out the Best in Kids.” That’s what Optimists do best. Through our programs and activities we provide the experience with support for young people to grow and develop Optimism. Optimism builds character, self-confidence and the ability to become contributing members of our communities.

Our “product” is youth service. As an administrator the Club President empowers others to provide service to kids. As such the president should not only set the example through participation but as President and C.E.O. provides the support, encouragement, delegation, coaching and recognition so that others can more effectively serve youth.

If fulfilling this mission becomes your focus, your impact and the success of your club will be multiplied many times over!

Bringing out the Best in Kids (Part 7 of 8)

[Empowering Kids through Optimism](#)
[Junior Optimist Octagon International \(J.O.O.I.\)](#)
[Youth and Community Service Activities](#)
[Community Project Awards](#)

Empowering Kids through Optimism

We embrace our “Optimist Creed” because we see the power it has to enhance and enrich our lives with a “can do” spirit of self-actualization. As Optimists we empower kids with the same spirit of Optimism which can enhance and enrich their lives as well.

We do this by providing programs and activities in which kids can learn new skills and develop personal confidence within an environment of inter-personal support. We are not the teachers but we provide the “community experience” for service learning and applied self-development.

Junior Optimist Octagon International (JOOI)



Youth Clubs are one of the most powerful ways to serve kids by creating an on-going relationship which shares the ideals of who we are and what we stand for as Optimists!

Our JOOI program is a group of Optimist Clubs for youth. As Optimists these youth embrace the same philosophy and service outreach as do adult clubs. JOOI clubs provide an ongoing opportunity to mentor in small group situations with young people. Certainly joint community projects along side young people can enhance the “Optimist Experience” and bring wider appreciation and community attention.

JOOI clubs have suggested age guidelines:

- Alpha Clubs for ages 6-9 years
- Junior Optimist Clubs for ages 10-13 years
- Octagon Clubs for ages 14-18 years

You can begin your own Alpha, Junior Optimist or Octagon Club by:

- Finding an advisor who enjoys working with kids
- Signing up kids (25 minimum recommended)
- Elect officers – President & Secretary/Treasurer
- Then send in a report to youthclubs@optimist.org
 - Officer Information Report (List of officers, advisor and sponsor with address/phone/email)
 - List of youth members (Membership Roster)
 - Pay \$50 enrollment fee plus \$60 pro-rated registration fee plus \$8 pro-rated membership fee per member

More information about JOOI youth clubs is on-line at www.optimist.org click “Youth Club” tab.

Youth and Community Service Activities

The strength of affiliation with our International Organization is that every club member has access to planning guides, promotional material and information that assist in conducting projects and activities.

In addition, International affiliation qualifies contestants for Scholarship programs and participation at our annual International Convention.

Consider the following Optimist International programs for your club:

I. Youth Service Activities

Childhood Cancer Campaign (CCC)



The Optimist International Childhood Cancer Campaign (CCC) has recognized the need to support young people with cancer. Our mission is to be the leading force to rid the world of childhood cancer. Optimists are taking on cancer with many different service projects – providing support to children with cancer, providing support to cancer patients' families and care partners; providing support to healthcare providers and providing support for childhood cancer research. Optimist volunteers see childhood cancer as the ultimate test, and the organization has both the manpower and the will to defeat this devastating disease.

<http://www.optimist.org/default.cfm?content=members/oicccmain.htm>

Optimist International Junior Golf Championships (OIJGC)



Gather up the clubs, the tees, the golf balls, and the young people of your community for one of the most exciting sporting events in the world—the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships. Every year, more than 5,000 boys and girls compete in Optimist qualifying tournaments. The best of these golfers advance to the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships which are held at the PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Youngsters in your community have the opportunity to play in this prestigious event and meet other young athletes from all over the world. The Optimist International Junior Golf Championships provides cultural learning opportunities, competition, a week of golf, and best of all, lots of fun!

http://www.optimist.org/default.cfm?content=JrGOLF/oijgc_tournament_main_page.htm

Scholarship Contests

a. Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH)



This contest is designed to offer young people who are deaf or hard of hearing the chance to present their thoughts on a topic in a public forum. This experience helps to develop the skills and confidence to present in sign language or orally to a large audience. The program provides a valuable opportunity to compete for a \$1500 college scholarship.

http://www.optimist.org/Publications/CCDHH_IPPG031.pdf

b. Essay Contest



This contest gives young people the chance to write about their own opinions regarding the world in which they live. Students can use their personal experiences, the experience of their country or a more historical perspective. The selected topic is meant to give young people the room to develop their own views around one central idea. Participants have the chance to win college scholarships of \$650 at the District level and up to \$5000 at the International level.

http://www.optimist.org/Publications/Essay_PPG04.pdf

c. Oratorical Contest



Since its start in 1928, the Oratorical contest has become the longest-running program sponsored by Optimist International. This contest is designed to inspire today's young people to motivate and inform others through public speaking. Young people are given the opportunity to compete for a college scholarship of up to \$1500 at the District level and express their views on a pre-assigned topic.

http://www.optimist.org/Publications/Oratorical_IPPG04.pdf

II. Community Service Activities:

Respect For Law Week/ Day of Non-Violence



As the title suggests, the program inspires respect for the law among young people. In conjunction with the Respect For Law program, Clubs can take part in the annual Optimist Day of Non-Violence. This special day occurs on Saturday during Respect For Law Week to encourage peace and harmony within communities all over the world. Clubs can conduct an Optimist Day of Non-Violence Rally, which brings families together in communities to pledge against local violence.

<http://www.optimist.org/default.cfm?content=members/mbrcdpa7.htm>

Tri-Star Sports Skills Contest



Tri-Star enables Clubs to run one or several successful sports skills contests efficiently. Tri-Star Sports Skills Contests are designed for youth ages 8-13 and test three skills in baseball, basketball, football, soccer or hockey. Each contest offers opportunities to promote self-confidence and physical fitness.

<http://www.optimist.org/default.cfm?content=members/mbrcdpa9.htm>

Youth Appreciation Week



Since 1957, Optimist Clubs have recognized youth for their talents in the arts, athletics, academics and for contributions to the community. Youth Appreciation Week provides the perfect opportunity for your Club to recognize youth and involve them in Optimist activities.

<http://www.optimist.org/default.cfm?content=members/mbrcdp>

[a10.htm](#)

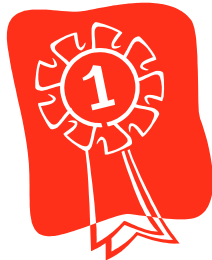
Youth Safety Program



Keeping children safe in their recreational activities has been an important part of Optimist programs for many years. The Optimist International Youth Safety Program encompasses all of the activities originally included in the Safety on Wheels Program and also includes a program on Internet Safety. Other components include bike riding, skateboarding, in-line skating, riding the school bus and traveling in automobiles.

<http://www.optimist.org/default.cfm?content=members/mbrcdpa11.htm>

Community Service Awards (C.P.A.)



Many clubs conduct original and unique youth and community service projects and fund raisers. Whether your project is new or an International project done in a grand manner, you are invited to share your Club's activity with other Optimists by entry into the "Community Service Awards (C.P.A.) program. This "project story" is a great way to pass on your project to the next year's chair.

The top entries will be recognized in "The Optimist" magazine and on our on-line Resource Library. A summary of the best overall winner and the Future of Optimism winner will also be included.

Share what you do best with the World of Optimists!



The End of part 7: Bringing out the Best in Kids

Go to Part 8: "Leaving your Legacy"
Go to "Introduction"

[Go to "Top"](#)



Leaving your Legacy



"Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations." - George Bernard Shaw

What gives meaning to your life? What is your passion? What do you really care about? What are your values?

It is said that your life is defined not so much by what you get out of life, but what you give to others. It is defined by what you leave behind for future generations. As an Optimist Club President you have the opportunity to leave something significant. You have the opportunity to make a difference, not only in the lives of young people, but in the lives of your members. You will have one year to do it and the rest of your life to remember it. Make your Legacy worth Leaving.

Leaving your Legacy (Part 8 of 8)

[Purpose and Goals](#)
[Chart your Progress](#)
[Making a Difference](#)

Purpose and Goals

Since you were chosen to lead your Club as it's President, your members have given you their confidence to lead them forward. You were elected to an Organization dedicated to "Bringing out the Best in Kids. Your "charge" is to help your Club succeed in this endeavor.

"Bringing out the Best in Kids" is our Organizational Goal. You and your Club may have specific goals to achieve this end.

In addition to your Club goals, you may have personal goals. Since your purpose is making others successful, your goals should compliment other people's goals. For example individuals may have goals to conduct specific projects. Since your goal is to help them succeed, your goals should blend that goal into yours.

"As a leader you should always start with where people are before you try to take them to where you want them to go." -- Jim Rohn

Helping others gives your life meaning and is a powerful legacy to leave.

"You can have everything in life you want if you'll just help enough other people to get what they want!" -- Zig Ziglar

Please answer the following questions:

What are your Club's Goals?

Complete a new service project?

Raise \$_____ funds for the kids in your community?

Add _____ new members to your roster?

Form a new JOOI youth club?

Other?



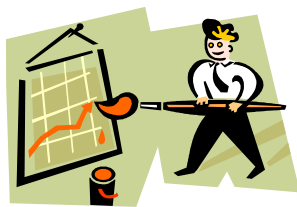
What are your Personal Goals?

- Become an "Honor" Club (President Name and Banner Patch)
- Become a "Distinguished" Club (President's watch)
- Other?

How will your Optimist Club be better after your Presidency?

**"A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline."
Harvey Mackay**

Chart your Progress



As the President and C.E.O. of your Club your job is to help others be successful. A chart is a good way to keep track of all of the individual and Club goals and your progress toward completing them. Keep in mind that each goal has a given priority and that since members are volunteering, not every intention will necessarily be completed. Your job is to recognize positive action, but not embarrass underachievers publicly. Respect everyone - put the performers on a pedestal.

A simple chart might include a list of volunteers and what they intend to do. Then put the dates at which each step in the process must take place. The

basic concept of leadership is to ASK someone to do something, coach and cheer-lead their progress, then RECOGNIZE their achievement.

Your Club as a whole can measure your impact by a graph of membership growth. As we discussed, more members equate with more service outreach. Increasing members is a sign of a well-run Club with service oriented volunteers who are having fun and are being appreciated by their leaders.

Making a Difference

“Leaving your Legacy” means making a positive difference in the lives of hundreds of young people. It also means making a difference in the lives of your volunteer members – making them all they can be.

What is left behind when you leave office? Have young people benefited by your activities? Have they embraced the spirit of Optimism held by your members? Have your members done something that they wouldn't have done without your leadership? Have they completed a project or attracted new members to make your Club stronger? Have you left people feeling up-beat and positive about “Bringing out the Best in Kids”?

Any Club President who starts out to serve others cannot help but personally grow themselves. When you dedicate yourself to such a cause, you acquire powers and forces that make you a better person as well.

“Deep within man dwell those slumbering powers. Powers that would astonish him; that he never dreamed of possessing; Forces that would revolutionize his life if aroused and put into action.”

Orisen Swett Marden

“Success is neither magical nor mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying basic fundamentals.” -- Jim Rohn



The End of part 8: Leaving your Legacy



Congratulations! You have completed all parts of this series, “How to be a Great Club President”. Be a Great President! Leave your Legacy to your Optimist Club! [Go to “Top”](#)

Go to “Introduction”

