



MD6 Long-Term Plan for
Membership Growth

Recruit, Engage & Retain

*If we keep doing
what we've been doing,
We will keep getting
less and less.*

COMMUNICATE YOUR VALUE.

It's time to stop saying "That's how we've always done it" and start doing things differently. If our membership is going to grow, if our members are going to stay, if our communities are going to understand the value we deliver, it's not up to **THEM**...it's up to **US!** We own our voice and we own our history. It's incumbent upon us, as leaders in Lions, to make sure that every one of our constituencies, from the Board of Directors to the members, from elected officials to the public at large all knows what we **STAND FOR**. Who do "we serve" every day? Why do "we serve" them? Why should we be behind you? If you can't explain your mission to me in simple words that even "Jay the Plumber" can understand, then you're going to keep quoting the lines above. Until we can focus 80% of our communications efforts on making sure people understand the real value of membership...the real value of Lionism...we will continue to struggle with a whole host of problems. Spend the majority of time telling everyone you can at every opportunity about the benefits your Lions Club brings to **EVERYONE**...not just the members...and watch how the conversations you have around the community and in your Lions meetings change.

Do you know your numbers.

Take the number of members you **DROPPED** last year and **DIVIDE** that number by the **AVERAGE NUMBER OF NEW MEMBERS** you bring in each month. What did you come up with? Write that number down! Now, immediately behind that number, I want you to write the word **MONTHS**. That's right...whatever number you just wrote down is the number of **MONTHS** your membership development team will work each year just to get back to even.

Did your number scare you? Are you (or is your team) on that proverbial hamster wheel for more than half the year just trying to keep up with the losses? Well, you're not alone!

Know what you're looking for: When someone asks you on the street if you've seen their dog, the first question you always ask is "What does he look like?" It's tough to find something if you don't know what you're looking for. So, do you know what a **LONG-TERM** member looks like? If you're not sure, I want you to try one of these exercises to figure it out. First, pull up a listing of your members and filter it for only those members who have been active 3 years or longer. If it's a large enough list, maybe you look at 5 year members. Are there similarities between them? Are they in a few particular industries or size ranges? What stands out about them? Draw a line below the last member, and analyze everyone above it in the same way as we did before. One of these exercises will help you better recognize who you should be targeting when you consider you have a limited amount of time (resources) with which to "prospect".

How to use the power of storytelling to grow.

Make a list of all the **WONDERFUL** things you're Lions Club has done in the past 12 months.

Now for the scary part! Ask your members what **THEY** remember. Ask your community... As an Lions, we're fantastic at getting things done, seeing projects to completion, raising funds and helping our communities. Unfortunately, we rarely take credit for the work we do. We're not very good at telling our stories.

Stories excite us. Great storytellers know how to use words and images to capture us and engage us at a very emotional level. We become so wrapped up in the story, we sometimes lose track of time and just sit wide-eyed as we listen to the tale unfold. How powerful would it be to have the ability to get our members wrapped up into our stories? Nobody is going to do it for us...we have to champion this effort ourselves. Here are a few tips that will make **YOU** a better storyteller for your organization:

- Define the **ACTION** you want your audience to take after reading your story (join the organization, donate time or money, contact their elected officials, etc)
- Identify an **EMOTION** that will lead the audience to take the desired action (unfortunately, negative emotions are usually the most effective...fear of losing out on an opportunity, frustration with the current situation or the proposed change you're hoping to defeat, and so on)
- Tell your story from the **WHY** vantage point (forget who, what, where, when and how for a moment and focus on why they should feel the emotion and why they should take action to fix the problem).

As Lions, it is up to us to make sure we take better advantage of the opportunities we have to communicate to our constituents effectively via emails, newsletters, videos, social media posts and whatever else we have at our disposal.

6 Critical Strategies for Recruiting, Engaging & Retaining Younger Members.

If our Lions Clubs are going to continue to be the “major impact” in our communities, if they are going to continue to deliver valuable benefits to of their membership, and if they are going to continue to play a vital role in “making the difference” in our cities and towns, we are going to have to face the ugly truth: the Millennials are coming! Gen Y employees are some of the most aggressive self-promoters out there. When I hear people call them “egotistical” and complain that they suffer from a “sense of entitlement”, what they’re really saying is “These kids want it all and they want it **NOW!**” **OK**...it’s **YOUR** job to **GIVE IT** to them. That’s what we do for **ALL** of our members, isn’t it? We find out what the need and we deliver!

Now, I could go into a long dissertation on the trends and the demographics and the specifics of who these young people are and what makes them tick, but I’d rather just leave you with six **CRITICAL** needs and the strategies you can utilize to address them in order to recruit, engage and retain younger members towards a sustainable, long-term future for your Club. Let’s dig in!

1. **Get them IN:** In order to benefit from the knowledge that these young up and comers are...well...up and coming, we have to get them involved in our Clubs. It’s important to identify the leaders of tomorrow and get them on your side. The absolute easiest way to do this is to ask your existing membership who already employ some very strong, young people, and get them to point out the best of the best to you. Let your members know that you’re on their side in providing the kind of personal and professional development opportunities these Gen Y’ers want... Trust me when I tell you that these young people will appreciate the ego boost of being supported by their employers, and they will be eager to see how you can help them get ahead.
2. **Get them a MENTOR:** Mentorship programs help younger professionals accelerate the “experience curve” by introducing them to the current leaders in the community. Whatever you do, don’t waste the chance to make it a two-way learning opportunity. Pair up a member who needs to learn how to engage the younger generation in his own business with a Gen Y professional looking to make higher-level contacts and you’ve got a win-win scenario that will have the Chamber seen as the valuable partner who made it all happen.
3. **Get them some EXPERIENCE:** Leadership programs exist in just about every mid-sized to large community out there. Partner with an existing program in your home town or create your own, but teach young people what it means to be a community leader and how they can get involved in supporting the development of the city they call home, and they’ll engage!
4. **Get them INVOLVED:** You’ve identified them, spent some significant time helping them meet the movers and shakers in town and gotten them some valuable leadership training. Now it’s time to put them to work! Find a chair position for them in your Lions Clubs. Remember, they want it all, and they want it **NOW**...but so do you! You need them on your committees and you need them in your boardroom to help shape the future of your Lions Clubs. Don’t just **TALK** about diversity. Take action and get these young leaders involved early. Some may not believe that they’ve quite earned their stripes yet, but they have the tools to learn so much more quickly

than we did coming up **PLUS** you've been putting time and energy into building them into the leaders you need them to be. Put them on the field and let them take some swings!

5. **Get them PLUGGED IN:** These young people have the drive and determination to succeed, an innate ability to work towards a common cause and they have time to make big things happen. They would be **FABULOUS** cheerleaders for Lionism that "created" them, and then could become wonderful champions to run a successful campaign, and you reap the benefits yet again.
6. **Get them OUT:** Most of these programs have age restrictions on them, with participants "aging out" at 40 years or so. Don't go to all the trouble of identifying them, training them, preparing them and building them into the model Lions you asked them to become, only to watch them fade away from the Club because you didn't have an "exit strategy" in place to move them from "young member" status to "long-term member" status. Not every young person is going to aspire to Club President or community involvement. We don't run these programs expecting every graduate to become District Governors...we run them to produce leaders. Help them transition into "full membership" and you'll never have to worry about retention...you'll have done enough on the **ENGAGEMENT** front early in their careers that they'll understand the real value proposition your Lions Club brings to the table

Effective Marketing Materials for Your Lions Club in 4 Simple Steps.

Does your Membership Campaign document or web site look like this?

Member Info & Benefits

What are some of the benefits of Chamber Membership?

Promotion and Exposure:

- Advertising & Sponsorship Opportunities
- Anniversaries, Award & Recognition
- Brochure display at the Chamber's Office
- Membership Directory
- Business Direct Emails
- Chamber Web Site with online Membership Directory
- Leadership Roodford
- Member Referrals
- Membership Certificate
- Monthly VOICE newsletter
- Seminars and Civic Forums

Networking Events:

- Business After Hours
- Chamber 101 with Speed Networking
- Good Morning Roodford!

Annual Events:

- Annual Membership Meeting
- Celebration of Leadership
- Economic Forecast Luncheon
- Golf Tournament
- Higher Education Outlook Luncheon
- Manufacturers Expo
- Mayor's Business Luncheon

You can enhance your Chamber Membership with th

- Chairman's Club
- Website Enhancement Package

Committees and Councils:

- Advantage Clubs
- Ambassadors Club
- Business Education Council
- Business Women's Council
- Manufacturers Council
- Minority Business Council

Publications and Databases:

- Membership Database
- Membership Directory & Relocation Guide
- Business Mailing Labels
- Roodford Community Profiles
- Roodford Data Packet
- Roodford Regional Map
- Roodford Relocation Guide

Advocacy:

- Government Affairs Council
- Governmental Affairs Weekly
- Washington D.C. Advocacy Trip

Affinity Programs:

- PowerShare - Friends & Family

Let's look at the **FOUR SIMPLE STEPS** to instantly improve the quality and effectiveness of their marketing efforts.

1. List **EVERY** benefit your Lions Club offers to its members.
2. Bullets are great, but show me **NUMBERS!** I want to see the impact of the work you're doing. Tell me how many dollars of impact your efforts have made. Tell me how many eye screenings you do every year and how many referrals. Tell me how many children in scholarship money you've awarded.
3. Identify how many people (or what percentage of your community) have been directly or indirectly affected by each listed item. Not just how many **MEMBERS.**
4. Reorder your list to put those items that affect the largest number of people in the community (Eye Glasses, Food Bank, Clothing, etc)

Once that's done, your materials will be **FAR** more effective. Why? It's how we function as humans. How many listings do you click on when you do a Google search? If you're like 95% of us, the most you'll click on is three before determining you've searched for the wrong terms and you'll start again. The same is true for your prospect in reading your materials. If only 8%-12% of our members will ever attend our Club meetings why would we put those things at the top of the list of our benefits? We immediately risk losing 90% of those who even begin to read them. Start with the things that have the greatest chance of interesting your prospect and end with those that have the smallest