

CLUB ASSESSMENT

Your Kiwanis club's already making an impact on your community—and the world. But you can do even more. To ensure your club is the very best it can be, take time for a checkup. The Club Excellence Tool engages your own club members in a thorough evaluation of your club's performance. It's simple. It's easy. It's free. And it will help you keep your club healthy, active and strong.



How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to do what really matters most.



—Dr. Stephen R. Covey,
best-selling author and management expert

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Assessing your club on an annual basis is like going for a yearly physical exam with your family physician. She helps monitor your health and suggests interventions for healthier living. She can diagnose minor annoyances before they become major health threats.

Just like an annual checkup, an annual club assessment can also help your club diagnose small issues before they become big. It can help you prioritize your goals for the year, and it can help you see what's going well—and celebrate those successes.

Assessing your club is the first step in providing a positive and meaningful experience to club members, which will translate into greater retention and recruitment. What's the easiest way to conduct an annual club assessment? Use the Club Excellence Tool.

The Club Excellence Tool

This self-evaluation tool is designed to help monitor the health of your Kiwanis club. Based upon the responses of your club members, the club can identify strengths to build on and opportunities for improvement.

This 25-question tool allows members to evaluate their club experience in seven different categories:

1. **Meeting.** Evaluate the atmosphere of the meeting, quality of the program, location, prices, participation and traditions.
2. **Community service.** Is the service significant and does it give high visibility in the community? Does the club sponsor one of the Service Leadership Programs?
3. **Fellowship.** Monitor social activities and communication methods to keep the members connected.
4. **Fundraising.** Is it significant enough to meet the expenses related to club service projects and provide community recognition?
5. **Leadership.** Examine the succession planning, board and committees of the club.
6. **Membership growth and retention.** Does the club's membership increase over time? Does it reflect the diversity in the community?
7. **Strategic planning.** Is a solid strategy driving the activities of the club? Is the plan measurable?

Online or on paper

The club has the option of conducting the assessment online or using printed copies to distribute to the members.

ONLINE SURVEY

When the club secretary sets up the survey dates in the Club Management section of KiwaniisOne.org, a survey code is created. Using this survey ID, every member of the club is invited to go to www.KiwaniisOne.org/ClubExcellenceToolOnline and log in. After completion of the questionnaire, each club member will see the score based on his or her individual responses. The club president and lieutenant governor will be able to see the collective answers from club members—all anonymously entered.

The online version of the Club Excellence Tool will provide the member, as well as the club, with numerous tips and tools for improvement in areas of weakness. For instance, if your club assessment points to fellowship as a category where you can improve, you'll be linked to resources your club can use to build more camaraderie. These might include suggestions for icebreakers and social activities or tips for better communication through your club newsletter or Web site.

Because of the resources linked directly to your evaluation and because scores will be stored for future reference, we highly recommend that your club use the online version of the survey.

PRINTED QUESTIONNAIRES

Should your club decide to use the printed version of the Club Excellence Tool, you can download and print copies directly from www.KiwaniisOne.org. After completion and calculation of the individual score, each member returns the assessment to the Membership Committee, which collects all the questionnaires for tabulating and analyzing the results.

The overall score for your club will be the average of the individual scores from all the members that participated in the assessment.

How do I get my members to participate?

Here are some ideas.

- **Make it fun!** Build a contest around it. Enter every member into a drawing for a gift certificate.
- **Tell them what they need to know:** that it is an investment of only 10 minutes, that it is completely anonymous, that they are the best source of information about the club and that you value their input.
- **Make it easy.** E-mail the exact link to the Club Excellence Tool online to every member, more than once. Better yet, use meeting time to do the assessment. Bring in laptops and have members complete the survey right there, right now.
- **Show them how important it is.** Show that leadership feels the assessment is so worthwhile that they are willing to take meeting time to talk about, willing to invest club money into contest prizes, willing to take a pie to the face if the club reaches a certain participation level.
- **Commit to follow up.** Let them know the assessment is just step one of the process—and the next step you intend to take is to develop a timeline and action plan for improving on those weaknesses.

Reporting the findings

Present the findings to the board of directors and membership committee for review and discussion. Begin to discuss the possible strategies for club improvement. Give the members a summary with relevant results and solicit their input for club goals.

Be sure to highlight strengths of the club so everyone can celebrate the good things that are already happening in the organization. Remember that you are working to retain your good members so be sure that they know their work, input and ideas are making a positive difference.

Inform the members of the leaders' goals and plans to address the weaker areas.

Using the feedback

The findings and feedback from the Club Excellence Tool can and should be used to complete the next step in the evaluation process, *Planning Your Club's Success*. Now that you know where there is room for improvement, your club can find tools and resources pertinent to each area of improvement within the online evaluation or by calling the Kiwanis Help Line at 800-549-2647 ext. 411.

If you find that your club has a lot of issues to address, try working on just one or two changes at a time. Decide which are the most pressing issues, the ones that are causing members to question their involvement, and work to improve your score in those categories.

On the other hand, if you find that your strengths far outweigh your weakness, celebrate and congratulate yourselves. And share your successes with your district officers. By sharing what you are doing right, you may be able to help other clubs that are looking to improve in these areas.

Why make it an *annual* assessment?

What members value changes over time and so must the club. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an assessment on a yearly basis. Doing the assessment once provides a snapshot of the club at one particular point in time. Conducting it annually allows you to track how your club has evolved and the growth that resulted.

One strategy is to assess the club before the new club president takes office, so that he or she knows to include certain club improvements in the yearly goals.

Staying in touch

Besides hearing from your club members during the annual club assessment, try “taking a pulse” regularly throughout the year. Here are some suggestions.

- **Informal conversation.** Spend time during a meeting to talk about what is and what is not working. In the months between administering the annual club assessment, check in with the members to see what needs are and are not being met. This can be done in small discussion groups of four to five people. It can be done at a club officer retreat. The point is to invest the time to take a pulse of your membership on a regular basis.
- **Exit interviews.** Many clubs use exit interviews to discover candid reasons why the member is leaving the club. Sometimes the reasons are personal and there is nothing club leaders can do to change their minds. Other times you can get a sense of emerging trends that should be discussed and addressed. Suggested questions for an exit interview are listed at the end of this chapter.
- **Observers.** Ask a potential member to visit the club and share his/her observations and reactions to the meeting. This “mystery shopper” can provide a thoughtful assessment from a new perspective—and may even end up joining! You can also invite a member from another club to attend your meeting as a guest and provide feedback on his experience and recommendations for improvement.
- **Missing members.** If you notice that a member is not participating in the club’s activities, find out why, before the member disconnects from the club and ends up leaving. Contact the member one on one and discover through an informal conversation if there is anything in the club experience that he or she is not happy about, and do something to fix it.

Exit interview

Please check as many reasons as needed to describe your experience with the club and your departure. We value your input to help us improve the club.

Personal

- Business transfer or change
- Business workload prevented participation
- Time with family was more important
- Health problems
- Other: _____

Club Meetings

- Meeting time was inconvenient
- Meeting place was inconvenient
- Meetings were not a valuable use of my time
- Not enough fun and fellowship
- Attendance was low at meetings
- Other: _____

Club Organization

- Not enough service projects
- Weak leadership
- Projects did not include all members
- I did not feel a part of the club
- I did not receive a full understanding of Kiwanis
- I did not feel proud of my membership
- Other: _____

Committee Functioning

- Committees functioned poorly
- Little interest in specific committee assignments
- Committee meetings were not efficient
- Other: _____

Finances

- Expensive:
- Dues
 - Meals
 - Fines
 - Check-writing community service
 - Not enough money for the club to properly function
 - Fundraising proceeds were not used appropriately
 - Other: _____

