

LEADERSHIP BUILDING

When the Olympic torch passes successfully from one runner to **another, it's because the first** runner knows who will carry the torch next. Both runners know the route to follow and how far to run, so they pace themselves. The same is true for a successful passing of the leadership torch for your club. Current leaders know who will be taking the torch, and the incoming leaders will carry the same fire and the same goal: to lead and serve.



Walk the walk...and leave a good trail.



LEADERSHIP BUILDING

Without the guidance of well trained and motivated officers, clubs would be unfocused and without direction. That's why it's important to the ongoing success of your club to develop your club's leadership pipeline. Establishing a leadership pipeline ensures that the club's vision, plans, organizational structure, relationships and most importantly knowledge are carried on with minimal disruption.

Here's how to establish your club's pipeline:

- Start by getting the right people in the right jobs.
- Develop leadership at all levels.
- Give new leaders opportunities to learn and hone leadership skills.
- Allow leaders to practice skills prior to assuming new roles.

A good succession plan gives outgoing officers a sense of closure. As one term draws to a close, newly elected officers are prepared to assume leadership positions. In order to save these new leaders from wasting time and energy reinventing what has already been done, a succession plan creates a smooth transition. The wise use of the transition period between officer terms allows for a free-exchange of ideas on what worked, what didn't work and how to address the challenges ahead.

The quote on the previous page was inspired by a motivational poster.

Ready to develop a leadership pipeline in your club or district? Consider these best practices.

1. **Look for leadership potential even among new members.** Remember, the next new member of your club could one day become president of Kiwanis International.

Case in point: Case Van Kleef



At the celebration of Kiwanis International's 50th anniversary in January of 1965, Case Van Kleef was the caterer. Asked to join by then-club president Reg Merridew, Van Kleef became a member of the Detroit No. 1 Club that year. Thirty years later, Case Van Kleef was elected 2004–2005 Kiwanis International president. There was no way of knowing that this potential new member would someday guide the organization as the top elected officer, but isn't that true of all new members? Maybe there is a Case Van Kleef in your club.

- Recruit new members who are “doers.” Encourage them to give input for club activities and empower them to take action.
 - Give new members responsibilities on committees or for club projects.
 - Monitor accomplishments of your club's committees and look for those who took an active role in the success. Consider members who have successfully led a committee for future roles on the board of directors and as club officers.
2. **Define leadership roles and expectations.** Leaders perform best and are more willing to commit when they know the expectations and responsibilities of the position.
 - Create job descriptions for all leadership positions. Try to include an accurate assessment of the time commitment to the position.
 - Establish a club culture (habits, traditions, customs) that sets expectations for and from club leaders. That way, going in, leaders will know they'll be supported with training and education, recognized for their achievements and expected to work hard toward success.
 - Develop a strategic plan for your club to help establish consistency.

3. Educate and equip leaders with tools.

- Provide orientation and training to leaders to prepare them for their positions.
- Develop resources, such as training materials and guidebooks, to support new leaders.
- Instruct leaders on how to participate in online training offered through the Kiwanis Web site.

Kiwanis training resources

At www.KiwanisOne.org, you'll find many Kiwanis-specific resources for your leaders.

Click on the Training button to find **Club Leadership Education** online or the current schedule of webinars. **Webinars**, whether live or archived, include topics developed for leaders at every level, such as club liability insurance, working with youth and tips for your club's membership committee chairman.

Under Club Leader Tools, you'll find the **Leadership guide**, a guidebook for lieutenant governors, club presidents, secretaries and treasurers that includes job descriptions, timelines and sample forms. Download the chapter that fits your role or the entire guide.

- Promote mentoring relationships. Once a member shows an interest in a certain leadership role, give him or her ample opportunity to spend time with the member currently filling that role. Future leaders learn much of what needs to be done from the best practices of past leadership.
- Let them learn by doing. Encourage interested leaders to take on short-term assignments with committees, developing their skills and interests as future leaders.

4. **Develop a succession plan.**

- Identify emerging leaders in the club.
- Encourage them to develop skills by delegating responsibilities.
- Support them when they express interest in running for an office.
- Welcome your successor as part of the leadership team and help him or her gradually assume the new role.
- Look for opportunities to mentor your successor.
- Use the club board of directors as training ground for future leaders.



Great leaders set up their successors for even greater successes.

— *Jim Collins, Good to Great*



5. **Recognize members and clubs for achievement.** Knowing that contributions of leaders are respected and appreciated can help motivate future leaders to step up.

- Thank volunteers in a timely and appropriate manner. Add value to the membership experience and reward involvement.
- Give potential leaders an incentive to accept leadership roles in the future. Publicly thank those who worked behind the scenes to put an event together.
- Budget to cover the travel expenses involved in attending Kiwanis district and international conferences and conventions. For many, this experience is valuable and appreciated.
- Honor an outgoing leader with Life Member status or a Hixson Fellow.

Need ideas for how to recognize your leaders and volunteers? Check out the Member recognition chapter of the Membership Development Manual at www.KiwanisOne.org.

Seven qualities of a great leader

1. **Skilled listener**

A great leader asks the right questions, then carefully mines the responses to unearth the nuggets needed to inspire greatness in others. This is especially critical with a generation that's accustomed to being heard.

2. **Problem solver**

Kiwanis leaders are faced with a wide range of challenges. They'll need to figure out what steps should be taken and what resources (people, time and community assistance) should be used to solve the problem.

3. **Passionate advocate**

A leader who has a deep commitment to the Kiwanis mission is highly attractive to volunteers. When a leader burns with a passion for the cause, people can't help but be drawn to the warmth of that fire.

4. **Visionary**

People with a drive and a vision can inspire and motivate an entire organization to follow them to the future. They are able to see what others cannot yet see and then describe it in a compelling way.

5. **Change agent**

A great leader strikes a balance, providing the stability an organization needs to operate while serving as a catalyst for transformational change.

6. **Master communicators**

Leaders cultivate conversations, storytelling and compelling dialogue to maintain the interest of all the stakeholders.

7. **Action oriented**

Members who demonstrate leadership talents and skill sets should be encouraged to take on new responsibilities, giving them the opportunity to take initiative and to lead projects, events or committees

Why invest in developing a leadership pipeline?

You've already invested so much of yourself in your club, establishing club traditions, creating procedures and growing relationships. Developing a leadership pipeline helps keep the club following that path and assures that the torch is being passed to strong, well-prepared people. The legacy left by past leadership will keep burning bright.