

Three Steps to Developing Leaders in Your Club

This article has been adapted from an article by Stephen Fairley called [Developing Leaders: 3 Steps to Developing Leaders in Your Organization](#). (Learn more about Stephen at the end of this article.)

Phase I: Plan for Leadership Development

The first part of planning a leadership program is to examine what you currently have in place and/or what you would like to have in place.

- A. In order to gauge your efforts, answer the following five questions:
 - 1) Does your club have any organized plan for developing your members?
 - 2) If not, what are the benefits your club would receive from having an effective leadership development program?
 - 3) What are the estimated costs in terminated memberships, lower productivity and low morale of remaining members to not having a plan now?
 - 4) What would a successful leadership development program look like for your club?
 - 5) How much time and energy (and maybe money) are you willing to invest to develop one?
- B. The next planning step is to identify characteristics of members who are already successful leaders in your club.
 - 1) Think about the members who are or have been most successful in your club and ask:
 - What kind of training experiences have they had (inside & outside of Soroptimist)?
 - What kind of educational background do they have?
 - How many years of Soroptimist experience do they have?
 - How do they fit in with your club culture?
 - How would you describe their personality style?
 - What best motivates them?
 - 2) Based on the answers to the above questions, prepare a simple list of the characteristics you want to see in your future club leaders.
 - 3) Now, determine the actions your club needs to take to help your members develop these characteristics. These actions will become the basic elements of your leadership development program.
 - 4) Identify what “success” will look like, i.e., members attending leadership training classes (internal and external), more than one candidate running for each board position, a defined process for members to follow to develop the skills and knowledge to become club/organizational leaders, an increase in membership due to the leadership development opportunities your club provides, etc.

Phase 2: Practice Leadership Development

Next it's time to begin implementing the program. Start small, with one or two members. There are many different ways to begin a program, but nearly all successful ones have at least two clear parts: 1) specific leadership training and 2) coaching/mentoring.

- 1) Specific leadership training can include elements of:

- Organizational and club knowledge
- Effective communication skills
- Conflict resolution skills
- Team building
- Relating to different personality styles
- Time management
- Delegation skills
- Goal setting
- Critical coaching skills

Did you know that the [GWR Leader's Resource Guide](#) has information you can use in nearly all of the above areas? Set up a training schedule – maybe a monthly lunch meeting or how about an evening conference call? Tackle one topic each month.

- 2) The second part is coaching or mentoring. Top professional and Olympic athletes recognize the importance of a personal coach to help them reach peak performance. A mentor or coach can provide the one-on-one attention needed to help a member get to the next level quickly. An effective mentor or coach can help decrease learning curves so your members will be ready to take on leadership roles sooner.

There are lots of resources on the Internet you can use to assist you in developing and documenting your club mentoring program. Check out [How to Develop a Mentoring Plan](#) from wikiHow.com.

Phase 3: Promote Leadership Development

Once you have refined your program by working with a couple of club leaders it's time to start promoting the program.

- 1) Use your leadership program to draw in new members who are looking for opportunities to develop as leaders. The fact that you have a leadership development plan will be a great selling point to potential members who are seeking self-development as well as an opportunity to give back to their community.
- 2) Start highlighting the successful characteristics of your current club members and draw attention to those that are doing well. Make an effort to show every member how they can succeed and become a leader.

Summary

- A. Leadership training is absolutely critical to the continued success of your club.
- B. Leadership development is an ongoing process, not an event.
- C. If your club wants to increase membership and membership satisfaction, a club leadership development program is a must.

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