

How Are Your Ratings?

An Essential Evaluation Tool for Clubs

Why Evaluate Your Club?

Periodically taking a look at your club is a very beneficial exercise. It offers an insight into the state of your club – showing both its strengths and weaknesses. It also allows you to discover little problems and correct them before they become big ones that will need much more time, attention and resources. Plan on conducting an evaluation at least once a year.

Involving Club Members

While having leadership assess the club's status may work very well, it is, nonetheless, an excellent idea to involve members. Enlist the help of several members whose opinions you trust, or better yet, have your entire membership take part in the evaluation process. Club members provide a different perspective than club officers and soliciting varied opinions will give you the best overall view of the club. It is also a great way to show members that their participation and input are valued. Encourage honest, frank feedback. The best way to do this is to conduct your evaluation anonymously. People are more likely to tell you how they really feel if they are allowed to do so in this manner.

How to Conduct an Evaluation

A useful tool for evaluating your club is the publication "How Are Your Ratings?" It provides questions to garner members' opinions on a variety of important club topics, including:

- Club Meetings
- Club Atmosphere
- Club Goals
- Membership Recruitment Activities
- New Member Orientation
- Membership Involvement and Participation
- Membership Retention
- Service Activities
- Fundraising Projects
- Personal Satisfaction and Achievement
- Membership Recognition

- Club Communication
- Public Recognition/Community Support
- Leadership Development

Consider distributing the evaluations during a club meeting and having members complete them on the spot. The advantage to this is that you will likely receive a high response rate. If you hand out the questionnaires and ask people to return them at another time, be sure to follow up with members to ensure a good response rate.

Tallying Responses

When a significant number of responses are received, it is time to begin tabulating the results. As you work, you will see your club's strengths and weaknesses emerge through your members' eyes. Some of their observations may be quite surprising; some may not. It is important for you to keep an open mind to their opinions, even if there is some harsh criticism. Remember – every criticism is an opportunity to make improvements to your club. Note praise for different areas of your club as well. Learn how to take advantage of your club's strengths when making positive improvements to areas that need attention.

Present Results to the Club

Once your results are tabulated, make a list of your club's strengths and weaknesses in priority order. Present these to your club and invite open discussion about these issues. This will reinforce the survey and give you further support for choosing which items to address. It is also a good idea to report results in your club's newsletter and on its Web site.

Create an Action Plan

It may only take some minor adjustments to correct some problems in your club. Others will likely need more time and attention. When developing an action plan for improvements, look at the time and resources needed for each item. Incorporate some "quick fix" items early in your plan so members will see improvements right away. Once your plan is completed, present it to your board of directors for any necessary approvals.

Implement Your Plan

Begin implementing your action plan as soon as possible. Report progress to the club on a regular basis. For any large-scale changes, ask for their input again to make sure that your solutions are working.

Taking the time to conduct a thorough, annual evaluation of your club -- and following through on the results -- will yield many benefits. A strong, efficient club keeps current members satisfied and motivated, is attractive to new members and is able to successfully serve its community.

Order "How Are Your Ratings?" Evaluation Tool

"How Are Your Ratings" contains complete instructions and a questionnaire for conducting a club evaluation. To order "How Are Your Ratings?" (ME-15) contact:
Membership Operations Department at: membersops@lionsclubs.org
FAX Number: 630-571-1691 Phone: 630-571-5466 ext. 322 or 340