



# **N**ew **O**ptimists **W**anted

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*A program designed to capture the interest of prospective Members*



# Membership Growth Program

“NOW” is a program designed to capture the interest of qualified, prospective Optimist Club Members. It is a program exclusively for Clubs committed to achieving a net gain of 10 during the administrative year. The central feature is a dinner (or a series of dinners) at which the goals and activities of the Club are explained and prospects, previously qualified for membership, are invited to join.

A “NOW” program is designed to last approximately four weeks, not including the planning and follow-up. The program can be repeated as often as needed. The “NOW” meeting must be at a time when prospects will not be rushed.

The integrity of the membership process must not be jeopardized in the interest of short-term membership goals. It is necessary that every new Member receive the full program of enrollment, education, induction and orientation.

As the “NOW” program is prepared and conducted, it is essential that the personal touch be maintained. No matter how well planned and conducted, no program can be effective unless it includes personal contact with potential Members.

## Key Elements in the “NOW” Program

- Selection of prospects by Club Members
- Qualifications of prospects by Membership Committee and Board
- Letter sent to each qualified prospect inviting him/her to the “NOW” dinner
- Personal invitations to prospects by table hosts



- “NOW” dinner
- Speech on Optimist International and Club
- Invitation to join Club
- Completion of membership invitation and collection of fees and dues
- Follow-up prospects who did not join at dinner meeting
- Preparation for next dinner if required to reach goal

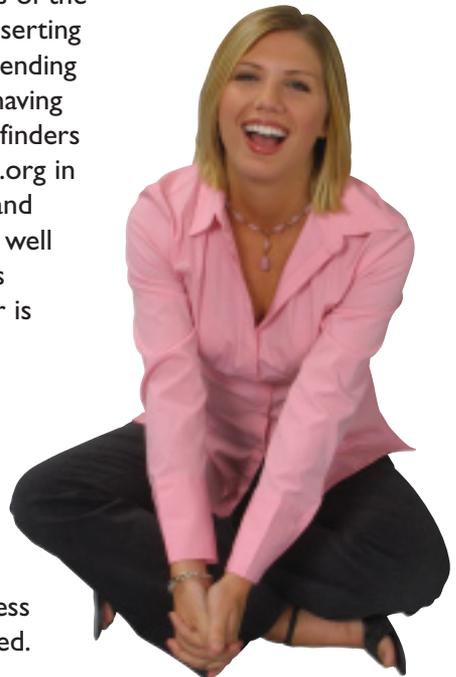
## **“NOW” Dinner**

Conduct the dinner as planned. After the presentations and the recruitment speech, provide an opportunity to complete Member invitations. If applicable, collect dues and fees. Most Clubs collect the full Membership fee and a prorated portion of the dues, based upon the balance of the dues period. If, for some reason, a check will not be written at the time, the Committee should arrange for personal follow-up.

Follow-up with any prospects who did not join and then begin planning the next dinner.

Involve Members added through the “NOW” program; each should participate in all elements of the membership process. This includes inserting biographical sketches in the bulletin, sending welcome letters from the President, having Members complete member interest finders (which can be found at [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org) in the Forms and Publications section), and conducting an induction ceremony as well as other elements of orientation. It is especially vital that each new Member is quickly involved in activities.

The Club Secretary-Treasurer should complete the Club Roster Adjustment along with the new Member-processing fee for submission to the Optimist International Office. The program cannot be completed successfully unless the new Members are officially enrolled.



# Information they might want to know:

## Our Club

Our Club was organized in \_\_\_\_\_.  
The \_\_\_\_\_ Optimist Club was our sponsor. Our Charter membership consisted of \_\_\_\_\_ Members. Of those Charter Members, \_\_\_\_\_ are still active in the Club. We now have \_\_\_\_\_ Members.



## Club Meetings

To make our Club meetings enjoyable and appealing, business is conducted at Committee and Board meetings open to all Members. Club meetings feature good fellowship and interesting programs. Our meetings are every \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. Meetings last \_\_\_\_\_. Regular Club meetings are held at \_\_\_\_\_.

## Club Bylaws

Our Club is governed by our own bylaws, which comply with the Bylaws of Optimist International. Briefly, membership represents a cross-section of men and women who reside or have interests in our city.

The responsibility of the Board is delineated in Article VII. The Board is responsible for the matters that do not require a vote of the membership. The bylaws require a vote of the Membership on: 1) elections; 2) amendments to the bylaws; and 3) fundraising methods.

The membership fee is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
Annual dues are \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year per Member.

## Service Activities

Because of the wide variation of projects, focus on the Club's major projects and their purposes for the youth and community.

## Sample Recruitment Speech

In order to serve youth and community effectively, a Club must have able, dedicated Members. We seek women and men of good character with a keen interest in serving the community. This is why you are here. We believe you are that kind of person. We need you to share our mission. We need the new ideas and talent you bring to the Club. It is not often that one

has the opportunity to meaningfully affect the lives of others. Through Optimist Club membership, you will have this opportunity. With you, we can become a better Club. With you, we can provide greater service.

Your table host will be glad to answer any questions you may still have about our Club. They will also distribute applications for your use. We hope that you will complete the application tonight so that we can add you to our Membership. You will not be sorry that you made this commitment to the betterment of our community and the welfare of its children.

## Agenda **"NOW"** Dinner

- \_\_\_\_\_ Time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call to order
- \_\_\_\_\_ Invocation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meal service
- \_\_\_\_\_ Welcome and purpose of meeting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction of head table
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction of prospective Members
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recruitment speeches
- \_\_\_\_\_ Q & A
- \_\_\_\_\_ Collect applications and fees
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fellowship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Creed/Adjourn





**OPTIMIST**  
INTERNATIONAL

(Use Club Letterhead)

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(DATE)

(NAME OF POTENTIAL MEMBER)

(STREET ADDRESS)

(TOWN, STATE ZIP CODE)

Dear (POTENTIAL MEMBER):

The \_\_\_\_\_ Optimist Club has been serving our community for more than \_\_\_\_\_ years and we are holding a special dinner to offer potential Members an opportunity to learn more about Optimist International and our Club. For instance, we are one of more than 3,400 Optimist Clubs throughout the world but our focus is on the (NAME OF TOWN) area (OR area served by the \_\_\_\_\_ School System). Optimists have the motto "Friend of Youth" and each Club decides what projects to hold to accomplish the mission of "Bringing Out the Best in Kids." Did you know that each year our Club endeavors to continue programs that help our youth and community members and to add or change projects depending on the community's needs? – In fact, our Club conducts more than \_\_\_(##) projects annually! These projects are selected and conducted by our Members.

We take pride in the quality of our Membership and seek community-service minded residents who want to "give back" to the community and have an interest in helping our youth develop into caring, responsible adults. One of our Members (OR NAME OF MEMBER) has recommended you as a person of integrity and with an interest in the community. Based on this recommendation, we invite you to attend the dinner as our guest so we can share information on the Club's activities and goals. The dinner will be held at (TIME, DAY, DATE) at (LOCATION).

In order to plan accordingly for the evening, we ask that you RSVP to (MEMBER ACCEPTING RSVPS AND PHONE NUMBER) by (DATE). We truly hope that you accept this opportunity to learn more about our activities and how you can make a difference by joining a Club devoted to our community.

Yours in Optimism,

(PRESIDENT OR MEMBERSHIP CHAIR OR NOW MEETING COMMITTEE CHAIR)  
(CLUB NAME)

# THE FUTURE IS

# NOW



The new economic resource for today's leaders is **Social Capital**

**Social Capital** is the collective value of people who know each other and what they'll do for each other. It's human networks that make things happen, not computer networks. And leaders of their Optimist Club are right there in the middle of those human networks. Optimist International offers countless opportunities to make a difference:

- Opportunities to provide hope and create a sense of meaning in our lives.
- Opportunities to build a sense of community and increase understanding among diverse people.
- Opportunities to turn information into knowledge and improve the collective standard of living.
- Opportunities to weave the innocence and wisdom of different generations.
- Opportunities to find a better balance in our always 24/7/365.

Joiners become more tolerant, less cynical, and more empathetic to the needs of their community.

The first step to any Member-Get-A-Member program is to define what your **PURPOSE** is.

You need to know as a Member and as a Club:

**Who are you?**  
**What do you do?**

**After you can answer the first two questions then. . .**

- Make sure your Club is a good fit for the potential Member.
- What value do you bring to the potential Member? Visa versa.

**And then. . .**

- Make sure you ask the potential Member to join your Club.

In a recent study the number one response post 9/11 was  
"What legacy will I be leaving?"

Optimist International has been dealing with this question for over 80 years. . .  
we invest in our future Social Capital. . .our children.



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