

Attitudes, Behaviors, Perceptions = Loss of Lions

Our Multiple District is on the verge of reducing the number of districts we have from 4 to 2, as the direct result of the loss of membership over the last ten to twenty years. Our membership in the Multiple District has declined from 4,569 to 3816 just in the last six years. This year alone we are negative 42!

At first we would think that the loss of members is due to the deaths of our senior members and that would be partially true. But then when we look at the fact that we have taken in far more members than we have lost to death, we have to begin to look at where the real problem lies. Maybe the real problem lies within our Clubs and within the attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of some members. Maybe the main problem is we don't want to change and as a result the new members we ASK to join us are not allowed to suggest new ideas and when told "we've never done it that way before" are expected to sit back and do things the same old way, they become discouraged and resign. Maybe the main reason we are slowly but surely dying is that WE refuse to change or to look for new ways of doing what we need to do. Like "Just Asking" someone to join our club.

I believe, based on my 20+ years as a Lion, there are many reasons we are not keeping the members that we are inducting into Lionism. Many of those reasons are due to the attitudes of many of our members. Some of the reasons are due to behavior of the club or lack of SERVICE like behavior. How many people do you know that are willing to give their hard earned money to an organization that holds a fundraiser a couple times a year and then does nothing else but get together once or twice a month to eat and discuss what is going to be done with the funds they acquired from the other members of the community?

I believe there are two main reasons we are having problems finding new members and then keeping members in Lions: 1) Our main focus has become Fundraising versus Service Work and 2) we do not see ourselves as Lions every day. We only see ourselves as Lions on meeting days or days we are involved in a fundraiser. As a result we fail to see the daily opportunities we encounter when we meet another person "with a heart like you" and forget to ASK them if they would be interested in becoming a Lion.

Bottom line is if we intend to survive and grow, we will have to CHANGE our attitudes and behaviors when relating to our current and newly inducted Lions. Let me share two thoughts with you that I have heard through the years:

1. "If we always do what we have always done, we will always get what we have always gotten!"
2. I saw this on a sign in front of a church a while ago and it said: "Attitudes are contagious! Is yours worth catching?"

In closing, I encourage you all to think about what is going on with your club. Is it growing? Is it stagnant? Is it Service Minded? Are you encouraging your members to step up to the Leadership positions or have you had the same President and other Board members for the last several years? How are you letting the community know and see what you are doing to help improve your community? What new service projects might you start to benefit your local community and attract new members? What is your club doing to ensure that your Charity Account has sufficient funds to



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support OUR mission to help those in need of vision assistance? Are your Club Leaders involved in District and Multiple District activities to ensure bringing new ideas to your club or are you content to just spin your wheels with the same old same old?

Please remember our Motto is “We Serve” and please remember what Helen Keller said many years ago (which applies more and more over the recent years with our decline in membership): “Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much”! Let’s see how much we can do to “Strengthen the Pride” in the months and years ahead!

I’ll close with one last question that I heard at the State Convention this past weekend (which by the way was perhaps the BEST State Convention we have had in the 20 years that I have been a Lion and sorry if you missed it): “When you walk into your Lions Club Den, do you hear “Meows” or do you hear “Roars”?”

Yours In Lionism,
DG Lion Rick