

## **AWO Club Success Formula**

Members join and remain in an organization for a reason and will pay dues and contribute time for the betterment of the club providing they are getting value for their time and money. This value can be in several different forms depending on why they joined originally. Value to a member will change over time and the organization needs to understand these changing needs in order to maintain membership.

Four key areas that create value in a non-profit (volunteer) organization

1. Knowledge/training opportunity – expertise within the club shared to others or opportunity to receive valuable training in the form of courses or seminars
2. Common equipment – opportunity to use quality equipment that one doesn't own themselves.
3. Access to quality source of supply for grapes, supplies and equipment.
4. Social, networking and fellowship – members need to enjoy the fellowship of other members. Plan social functions as well as regular meeting.

Clubs need to have regular scheduled meeting so members and plan ahead and schedule these club meetings into their own busy schedules. Keeping meeting nights consistent is important. (ie first Thursday of every month)

Every organization needs to have some form of hierarchy and as such it is suggested that a new club starts with at least a President, Secretary, Treasurer and a program chair.

Role of President – develop agenda and chair meetings.

Provide leadership in terms of initiating activities and setting time frames.

Be central person for club communications. Send out regular communications to each member. Make members feel they are a part of something and are appreciated. Praise in public and criticize in private. Take responsibility for the well being of members. Respond to concerns promptly, track attendance and follow-up non attendance, help members solve problems and CARE for your members if you want to keep them.

Become the leader of your club.

Role of Secretary – maintain and distribute minutes of meetings.

Send out notices of meeting one week in advance. (time, place and general topic)

Role of Treasurer – Set up bank account

Establish annual budget in consultation with the president

Collection of dues from members

Maintain and report financial records of club.

Pay expenses and keep records of all expenses.

Role of Program Chair – establish in consultation with president a program or activity for each meeting.

Schedule and book speakers well in advance and then ensure that Secretary has information for meeting notification. Always book your speaker three or four or more weeks in advance and then reconfirm 1 week in advance. Ensure that they know the date, time, place and that they tell you of any special equipment that may be needed for their program. The success or failure of most programs are in the details.

It is important that there is a constant membership recruitment program in place and that all members are constantly reminded and encouraged to bring out new members. Establish an orientation program for all new members so that they are informed and made to feel welcome. A mentoring system works well with new members. Make sure that they are encouraged to attend meetings and club functions so that they become integrated within the club as soon as possible. Possibly give them a small task for the first three or four functions (ie. pick up a commercial bottle of wine and bring it to meeting – make sure they are reimbursed. Another function could be acting as host location – make sure you

inform them what they need to do as hosts). Follow-up with them if they miss a meeting so that they know they are valued.

Encourage members to compete in competition. Competing can be stressful so make it as easy as possible and as comfortable as possible. Praise successes and offer constructive comments on how to improve. Competition in itself will encourage members to seek information as to how to improve the quality of their wine making. Making quality wine will provide immense satisfaction.

Club dues – every organization will need money to operate and should charge sufficient dues to cover operating and capital expenses. Clubs will pay AWO annual fees on behalf of each member. (\$ ??)

Initially a club may need to acquire some commonly owned equipment usually purchased used from an existing club or individual that is leaving the hobby. There should be some money in the account for miscellaneous expenses throughout the year. ( a control bottle of wine, program expenses etc)

Club dues range from \$50/year to over 200/year.

Bylaws – every club should establish a general set of bylaw under which they will operate. This is just setting up some ground rules for running the club. They need not be long and full of legalese but something that will cover most situations of running a club.

Some areas that need to be looked at under bylaws are - Name of club, purpose of club, club hierarchy, (executive structure), membership expectations, requirements of admission to membership, dues and assessments, meeting frequency, ownership of equipment, procedure for resigning from club, procedure for dissolving the club etc.

Steve McDonald