

***Our Voice is One
of Conviction and Strength,
the Attributes of Leaders.***

CLUB REBUILDING MANUAL



WELCOME

The Club Rebuilding Manual was designed to provide information and resources to rebuild your own club and/or assist others with rebuilding another club in your area.

This manual provides a detailed and organized path for each club member. Its goal is to guide a club through the needed steps for a successful club rebuilding project using things like organization, analysis of the club's present performance and the value of individual member commitment.

This process begins with a review of the current sponsorships and fundraisers and their effectiveness within the community. A club will then evaluate its governance structure, reexamine its club meetings, and analyze any strengths and weaknesses and strengths amongst its programs. The process typically culminates in building a member recruitment plan.

Throughout the rebuilding phase, clubs will also focus on the importance of communication and publicity. This helps keep current members informed about what the club has to offer, while also educating potential members and the general public about what Sertoma means in their community. Developing an established and focused purpose within a community has proven to be very successful and makes it easier to recruit new members.

In the end, keep in mind that the key to any successful project is setting goals and building a workable plan to achieve them. Your main goal here is building your membership and increasing services to the community your club serves.

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DEFINING CLUB PERFORMANCE

What are we doing now? This is the key question in a club's rebuilding program. First, examine what the club is doing. You will be looking for things that have caused the decline in meeting attendance, overall membership and club morale.

Begin with three key areas of a Sertoma club:

1. MISSION ACTIVITIES

Mission activities are the identity of your Sertoma club. Many people in your community may not remember your club's name, but they will remember the programs you support. Too many mission activities can blur the club's focus; too few and members may be left without constructive things to do.

Review the mission activities that your club is currently supporting by asking:

- Are the current mission activities vital to your community?
- Are your members excited and committed to these mission activities?
- Do these mission activities provide your club with publicity opportunities?
- Do these mission activities involve your entire membership?

To answer these questions effectively, you may want to survey your members. If your results reveal a lack of commitment or enthusiasm, make the necessary changes.

2. FUNDRAISERS

The fuel that allows our clubs to support their mission activities is, of course, money. How effective are your current fundraisers? The effectiveness of a fundraiser is not just the amount of money you raise; it is how effectively you raised it. Some fundraisers will generate a lot of money with very little effort, while other fundraisers require a lot of member power over a longer period of time. Believe it or not, sometimes it is beneficial to have a labor-intensive fundraiser, as this provides fellowship among your club members.

Review your club's fundraising projects:

- Do you involve your entire club membership in at least one project?
- Are you getting the maximum return for your efforts?
- Are your fundraisers fun?
- Do your current fundraising projects provide your club publicity opportunities?

Again, ask your members these questions and be prepared to make the necessary adjustments when you tally the results.

3. PUBLICITY

To provide a valuable service to your community without any fanfare is like hitting a homerun without anyone in the stands. Sertomans provide assistance to those in need just because it is the right thing to do. The concern for those less fortunate is the signature of a strong Sertoma club, but never forget that community recognition will make it easier to recruit new members and to raise financial support for your mission activities.

This is why publicity is so important. A simple article in the local newspaper could make a difference in holding a fundraiser or recruiting a new member. An article describing a community project performed by your Sertoma club not only informs your community of the great things you are doing, it also instills pride within the membership.

A key position within any successful Sertoma club is the position of Publicity Chair. This person should make sure that every activity is reported to the local media and shared through social media. Through simple press releases with pictures, current information on your club's website and engaging postings on your club's social media page(s), your community will become more aware of your club's service and improvement efforts.

You can find additional trainings and informational resources in the Public/Media Relations section of the Club Resource page at members.sertoma.org.

Questions to consider:

- What is the club doing today?
- Do you have a Publicity Chair?
- Do you take pictures during club activities?
- Do you know where to send your articles?
- When was the last time your club was mentioned in your local newspaper?
- Have you ever had a newspaper editor, TV anchor or radio personality speak at one of your meetings? If so, did you invite them to join your club?
- Do you send club articles to Sertoma Headquarters for *Sertoman*?

Clubs should also utilize social media to further promote its membership, mission and events to the public. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc., are making it easier than ever before to share information, photos, upcoming fundraisers and more with members and users throughout the world. Many of the sites also provide great opportunities for targeted advertising and holding online fundraisers.

EVALUATING CLUB COMPONENTS

A lack of value is a reason many members leave a club or stop attending meetings. Many clubs tend to let their regular membership meetings get bogged down by the minutiae of club business. The regular club meeting is not the place to discuss the details of a project; rather, it is the time for fellowship and fun, educational programs.

Instead, club business should be left to committee and board meetings. Running club business through the proper committees empowers your members. It also provides a great checks and balances to the work of your Board.

CLUB MEETINGS

Weekly and bi-weekly meetings are the most common for Sertoma clubs. They often revolve around a guest speaker and/or program. The more interesting the speaker, the better likelihood your members will show up and be engaged.

On the other hand, declining attendance often means poor quality of a club's meetings program. That is why the Programs Chair is such a key player to the success of your club.

Tips for evaluating your meetings:

- Did you have a program?
- Was your program interesting to members?
- Did your program start and end on time?
- Did you inform your members at least two weeks prior who and what the program was?
- Did you properly introduce your guest speaker?
- Did you ask your guest speaker to join your club (if appropriate)?

Meeting Location

The place your club chooses to meet is one of the most important decisions to make. The location should provide privacy for your meeting, as well as convenience and easy accessibility for your members. The quality of the meal, if served, is also very important. The ideal location will encompass all these things with a separate meeting room, expedient service, good food at a fair price and seating conducive for the meeting.

Keep in mind that the location you select might not be the least expensive place to meet. Never underestimate the value of "prestige" that a location can give your club. A potential member can take the location your club meets as an indication of your status in the community.

A few simple questions about the current location in which your club now meets:

- Are you able to have your meeting without outside interference?
- Is the location convenient for your members?
- How would you rate the quality of the food served?

- Does your current location add to the prestige of your club?
- Does your membership like the location?

Virtual Meetings

The rise of online meeting software and programs has provided a new opportunity for Sertoma clubs to host virtual meetings. This can be a great alternative in times where health concerns, weather and other factors prevent members from meeting in person. Sertoma offers Zoom access to our clubs (sign up using the form in the Club Resources section of the Sertoma Member Center), but there are numerous other services available through platforms like Facebook, Google or Microsoft Teams. Many clubs even opt to hold hybrid meetings where some are there in person, while others access the meetings from wherever they are.

Note, if you choose to hold virtual meetings, consider making the recorded video available to members who were not able to attend live. This video can be shared on a private Facebook group, through your club's next e-newsletter or on a members-only portion of your website.

MEMBERSHIP

The make-up of your membership defines the personality of your club. The ideal situation would be a membership that emulates the community where the club is located.

One of the biggest mistakes in service clubs is not emphasizing continual membership recruitment. As soon as your club ignores recruiting new members, it will start to die. Most clubs have a core group of members that seem to always bring in new members. Keep them motivated to do so and recognize their efforts.

Pro Tip: The Mentor Award is designed to recognize these motivated and enthusiastic Sertomans. Find out more about this program in the Club Resources section of members.sertoma.org.

Things to consider:

- Does your club reflect your community?
- Who is your Membership Chair?
- When was the last new member orientation?
- Who is your core group of "member-getters"?
- When was the last GEM or Mentor Award presented at you club?

CLUB BULLETIN

One of the most important, and simplest, things you can do to keep your members informed and engaged is to publish your club bulletin regularly. The club bulletin is perhaps the most effective way to communicate your club's news and plans to the membership. The key to a successful club bulletin is consistency. Humans are creatures of habit. If your club's members become accustomed to receiving their club bulletin every Wednesday, they will come to depend on it for club news, upcoming programs and meeting information.

No two club bulletins are alike. Each bulletin editor has a unique personality. To help keep your club bulletin interesting, tap into regional newsletters and information from National Headquarters. If you are not receiving those now, reach out to make sure your name is on the distribution list.

Guidelines for a successful club bulletin:

- Be consistent and publish monthly at minimum
- Be informative. Recap the program at your last club meeting and promote the next one.
- Don't be afraid to occasionally change up the format of your club bulletin.
- Be sure that all your members are receiving the club newsletter.
- Recognize as many members as possible in each issue.
- Acknowledge member and club successes.
- Inform your members of Sertoma news at the National and Regional levels.
- Keep your membership up-to-date on all the various committee and upcoming event news.

ATTENDANCE

If members are not missed when they don't attend, is there any incentive to come back? By agreeing on an attendance policy for your club, and most importantly following up with those who miss a meeting, you are telling your members that you really want them to be an active participant in the club. A lack of follow-up is telling the absent member that you aren't paying attention or that you don't care.

However, a very simple attendance program will make it easier to engage with those members who are beginning to drift away.

- Do you track your club attendance each meeting?
- If members miss a meeting, do you let them know you missed them?
- Do you recognize those members that have 100% attendance?
- Does your club have an attendance policy?
- Do you have incentives for high attendance?

THE CLUB'S IDENTITY

Now that you have evaluated your club, let's establish goals that provide your club with a clear rebuilding plan before you start making any membership changes.

DEFINING CLUB PURPOSE

Your club is identified by whom or what it supports and/or sponsors through its mission activities. Having too many programs can blur the club's identity and dilute its effectiveness. Instead, the club should work to define its primary purpose in the community. One way to achieve this is to establish a small subcommittee tasked with the responsibility of polling the membership and making a recommendation to the board based on the results.

Once your club has identified its primary mission activity, begin concentrating all your efforts in that direction. This focused purpose acts as a road map, which often instills renewed enthusiasm, pride and excitement in a membership. Members are determined to make the program successful and are eager to volunteer accordingly. The best programs will utilize the involvement and talents of all its members – from planning and designing to executing the plan and auditing the results.

The club's mission activity is a significant part of its identity, particularly during this rebuilding period. You must educate your members and the general public about the cause, as well as educate your mission partners about your club. This can be achieved by:

- Asking representatives involved with your club's purpose to speak at your meetings on a regular basis.
- Inviting your mission partner to be a club member.
- Launching a strong publicity campaign in your area.
- If the benefactor of your efforts is suitably located, hang a plaque or a sign identifying your club's involvement.

The club will also need to raise funds to support its mission activities. Successful fundraising efforts aim to benefit sponsorees, garner media attention, build community support and engage the membership. A few tips include:

- Begin with small fundraisers that provide minimal risk and high success probability. Once the program is established, fundraisers should grow accordingly.

- Promote your events to the media. Invite them to attend ahead of time and provide them with post-event information, including the amount raised, who benefitted and photos.
- Thank everyone who supported the fundraiser, including volunteers.

PROMOTING CLUB ACHIEVEMENTS

As your club gets more involved with its purpose and related fundraising activities, be sure to document all the events. You may choose to do this on social media, via club e-newsletters and publications, and in your club's scrapbook. The goal is to celebrate your successes and promote your mission for everyone to see.

Press releases, covering every activity in which your club is involved, help position your club as successful and focused. Not every press release will be published, but the articles that do get printed tell the community what Sertoma is all about.

Never exclude outside volunteers from your activities. Can you think of a better time to recruit new club members? Involving local businesses and prominent citizens in your fundraising and mission activities can be especially beneficial. These organizations and volunteers have the same commitment you do -- they just aren't lucky enough to be members yet!

For example, let's say your club has chosen fantasy baseball as its mission activity. To get the word out about your fundraising efforts, the Fundraising and Mission Activities Committees should contact local sporting goods stores and ask permission to place brochures on their counters. They might also reach out to area schools to request that they publish your message in their newspapers. This scenario engages local businesses, community partners and member volunteers, while providing an advertising opportunity that goes far beyond your meeting time and location.

RETHINKING MEMBERSHIP

The most effective way to increase membership is through word of mouth. If the club has built a focused mission and held successful fundraisers and events, your members will be excited to invite their family, friends, coworkers and other acquaintances to become Sertomans.

The Membership Committee must lead a club's recruitment and retention efforts. As your club becomes more involved in its mission, there are more opportunities for membership involvement. In fact, some of the most effective membership recruitment efforts occur in conjunction with fundraising projects in particular.

A few tips for success:

- Coordinate efforts between the Members and Fundraising Committees.
- Identify people in your community with potential interest in your mission activities.
- The more your club emulates its community, the healthier it will be.
- Utilize trainings, tools and resources from the Sertoma Member Center.

BUILDING A PLAN

ESTABLISHING OBJECTIVES AND DEADLINES

Here comes the nitty-gritty of rebuilding your club. This is the time we put the plan to paper, get members' buy-in on the program, and organize the committees that will get the work done.

The first step is to get 100% of your membership to rally behind the idea of rebuilding your club. Without a strong commitment by members, the rebuilding process will become very difficult.

The second step is to find the club's sponsorship and/or mission. Designate a Sponsorship Committee and chairperson to lead these efforts. Make sure to give them a reasonable deadline and follow up with them.

The third step involves strengthening the commitment of the club's elected officers. Even if you have just a handful of members, their roles as elected officers are no less important than the same officers in a large club. It is important that the club reviews and possibly even redefines each officer's responsibilities and tasks.

The fourth step means looking at everything that the club does. This includes meetings, communications, recordkeeping and recognition. You can find additional information on all of these topics in the Club Resources section of the Sertoma Member Center at members.sertoma.org.

1. **Club Meetings:** The key to good meeting attendance is a strong agenda that includes interesting programs. Be sure to have at least 25% of your programs related to your main sponsorship. With rebuilding in full swing, you will also want to be sure that everyone knows when and where the meetings are held.
2. **Communications:** This is especially critical during the rebuilding phase. The strongest line of communication to your club's membership is your bulletin. It should be published regularly and on time. The bulletin should include meeting program recaps, a calendar of events, fundraising updates and important committee and board reports. Make sure to mention as many members as possible and to include regional and national leadership on your mailing list. Don't forget to also share updates and photos on social media.
3. **Recordkeeping:** It is very important to document your achievements and membership involvement. Set the habit of completing the quarterly and annual reporting forms that need to be sent to Sertoma Headquarters on time. Remember, if you are proud of what you are doing, share your achievements with the rest of Sertoma. Your experiences could help another club rebuild.

4. **Member and Club Recognition:** Another reason for keeping accurate records is the recognition of those who put in the time and effort necessary to rebuild the club. We do this through the various Sertoma awards. An Awards Committee can be tasked with tracking all member and club activities, identifying those individuals who've earned recognition through their efforts, and submitting the club's achievements for national recognition.

The fifth step is where some of the hardest work begins – recruiting members. Now that you have your internal structure established and your members are motivated to market the club, you are ready to add new life to your membership!

Recruiting new members needs to be fun and enticing to your existing members. For instance, contests are a great way to get the troops moving. However, keep in mind that new members want to be asked to join because you want them there, not for an award or contest prize. A good tip is to include the newly recruited member and the sponsoring member in the contest. This way, they become a part of the contest and not just a stepping-stone.

A few other simple suggestions for getting new members:

- Poll your existing membership to find out which bank is used by the majority of the members. Once the bank is identified, assign two members to visit the bank and solicit a bank employee to join the club.
- Review the local newspaper. Look for new businesses that are opening. Have a small group of members visit the new business to welcome them to the community and invite them to attend an upcoming club meeting.
- Identify the support you need for fundraising efforts. If you need hardware for building improvements, recruit a hardware store manager as a new member. If you have trouble getting your news releases published in the paper, recruit a newspaper employee as a new member. Get the idea?

The extra effort by an existing member to recruit new members must never go unnoticed by the club. Clubs should find ways to recognize members for these efforts, whether it is with an award, a feature in the club's bulletin or at a meeting. Many clubs even choose to invite the Regional Director or another national leader to make the awards presentation that much more meaningful.

REVIEWING THE PLAN

The saying, "Plan your work and work your plan," cannot be truer than when rebuilding a Sertoma club. By this time, you have your plan developed and in operation. It's critical to review the plan and monitor the results continually. In fact, a formal plan and progress update should be a part of each board meeting during the rebuilding process. If you see that an area is not working, communicate your concern and offer assistance. Modify the plan as needed to keep the momentum going.

The use of timelines indicating membership growth, dollars raised for your club's sponsorship and member hours worked on each fundraising project will excite your members and keep them engaged. Club officers should lead by example by talking positively about the club and recognizing the members who are bringing in the new members.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

We have the ball rolling and the excitement is building every week. New members are being inducted, orientated and put to work. The club is on the upswing. The most critical issue now is maintaining momentum and enthusiasm in the club.

As we've said, systematic recognition of members is crucial, and this can be a great time to really focus on it. Sertoma provides an excellent awards program to help keep members motivated and excited about our great organization.

As a club leader, it is also your responsibility to identify future leaders within your club. This task will help ensure continuation of the club's growth and prosperity for years to come.

CONCLUSION

This manual does not have all the answers, only ideas for you to utilize in the rebuilding of your club. Every club is unique. That is the strength of Sertoma. Our organization recognizes the need for clubs to fit the community that they serve. This can also make it more difficult to assist as no two clubs are alike.

After reading this manual, we hope that you will discuss the ideas and information presented with your fellow club leaders. Begin developing a plan to rebuild your club. Remember, before you start recruiting new members, you must have something to market to them. Get your club organized. Ensure your officers are committed to the cause. Be sure that your guests will leave your meeting impressed and wanting to join. Make it prestigious and meaningful to be a Sertoman in your community.

Sertoma is one of the finest organizations in our country. We provide assistance to those who are in need, we believe in our national heritage, and we believe in our youth. What organization could be greater? None! Believe it. Live it. Promote it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Sertoma Member Center is a very valuable tool packed with information, templates and trainings designed to make your club successful. For more information visit members.sertoma.org.