

Zone Chairperson Workshop Training

Facilitating Cross-Level Communication



*Participant
Manual*



Session Background

Facilitating communication is an important, but often overlooked responsibility of zone chairpersons. In this session, participants will learn about the concept of cross-level communication, discuss methods of facilitating communication and the challenges that can occur, and develop individual plans to use as they begin their terms in this important position.

Session Objective

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the importance of cross-level communication for club and district success
- Identify methods for facilitating communication between clubs, the zone, and the district
- Identify challenges in facilitating communication
- Develop individual cross-level communication plans

Cross-Level Communication:

A streamlined exchange of information and ideas among district, zone, and club leadership with the ultimate purpose of achieving goals and enabling club and district success.



Case Study: Cross-Level Communication in Action

August 1

As a new zone chairperson, David is energized by the opportunity to attend the first district cabinet meeting of the year. The district governor begins the meeting by explaining his goals for the year. He wants to ensure clubs in the district are healthy and are continuing to recruit and retain new members by providing meaningful service and increasing community visibility. He also encourages cabinet members to familiarize themselves with Lions Clubs International resources and programs and to promote them to clubs whenever possible.

The district governor also wants to promote unity by conducting a district-wide service day. He would like each club to plant one or more trees in their community on October 15, and asks the zone chairpersons to communicate this to their clubs and follow up to ensure 100% participation.

August 12

David sends his first zone newsletter via email to the club presidents and club secretaries in his zone. He knows that three people do not use email, so David mails paper copies to those individuals as well. In the newsletter, David notes the date, location, and time of the first zone meeting at the end of August, and provides highlights of the district cabinet meeting, including information about the upcoming district-wide tree planting on October 15.

August 30

There is excellent attendance at the first zone meeting of the year. David had arranged for a local arborist to attend the meeting and answer questions about planting trees. David also reviews basic project planning techniques to ensure clubs have the tools to conduct a successful project.

David then conducts a presentation about a Lions Clubs International strategic planning tool that focuses on club improvement: the Club Quality Initiative. After describing the purpose and highlights of the Club Quality Initiative and the options for implementation (single working session, meeting series or half-day workshop), one club's president and secretary express interest in participating in the program.

September 16

The club president who had expressed interest in the Club Quality Initiative phones David to let him know that she and her club have decided to take part in a half-day workshop, but would like more guidance on how to set up the workshop. David emails their district governor and carbon copies her on the email so that she can get the information that she needs from them.

September 19-30

David makes a phone call to each club president in his zone to ask about the club's progress on the district-wide tree-planting project. One club president admits that he's having difficulty organizing the project and asks for David's advice in getting started.

October 15

Every club in David's zone participates in the district-wide tree-planting project – the only zone in the district to have 100% participation. The district governor features David's zone in his next district newsletter.

Methods for Facilitating Communication

Telephone	Never underestimate the power of a telephone call. When speaking with another person, a telephone call provides the opportunity to discuss personal or confidential issues without interruption. This method can also be used to speak with a group of people using conference call technology.
Email	Email is an efficient (and free) way to communicate with individuals or groups. Though not as personal as a telephone call or face-to-face meeting, email can be an excellent way to disseminate information, send reminders of important dates or events, or to follow-up with an individual or group.
Mail	Regular postal mail is an option for those who do not use email to communicate, or when something cannot be sent as an email attachment. Be aware of the time and cost involved when sending postal mail, and plan accordingly.
Cabinet meetings	Attending district cabinet meetings is the best way to learn about district-wide initiatives, programs, and goals. Information learned at these meetings should be conveyed to club leadership.
Zone meetings	Zone meetings are an excellent forum for dialogue between the zone chairperson and the clubs, and among the clubs themselves. These meetings facilitate information and idea sharing and the opportunity for collaborative problem solving.
Club visits	You are required to visit each club in the zone at least once during your term as zone chairperson. This is an excellent opportunity to observe the club in action, talk to officers and members, promote Lions Clubs International programs and district goals, and offer your support if needed.
Zone newsletter	A zone newsletter provides an opportunity to highlight club news, convey important information, recognize club achievement, etc. This newsletter can also be sent to the district governor as a way informing him/her what is happening at the zone level.
District newsletter	Provide instructions for the clubs in your zone on submitting club news to the district's newsletter, or submit zone news to the newsletter yourself.
Submitting reports	Submitting club visit and zone meeting reports are simple but important ways of making the district governor and other key district leaders aware of any issues that might require further attention.

Beyond Email: Using Technology to Facilitate Communication

Club websites, e-Clubhouse, e-Districthouse	<p>Some clubs may already have their own websites, but e-Clubhouse offers a predesigned website template that incorporates the Lions Clubs International brand and has fill-in-the-blank fields. This makes it easy for clubs to build and maintain a website for members and those interested in learning more about the club. E-Districthouse offers the same functionality for districts, and can be an excellent tool to facilitate communication about news, updates, and events across all levels of the district.</p> <p><i>Example: Regularly visit club websites or e-Clubhouses to learn about the service projects and fundraisers your clubs are conducting. Encourage those without a website to take advantage of the e-Clubhouse template.</i></p>
Social media	<p>‘Social media’ refers to any web-based or mobile technologies that turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Facebook and Twitter are examples of popular social media sites that facilitate the sharing of information, ideas, news, and media (photos, videos, links, etc.).</p> <p><i>Example: Create a Facebook page for the zone and use it to post reminders for club officers, zone news, district information, pictures of projects, etc.</i></p>
Blog	<p>Short for the term ‘weblog’, a blog can serve several functions, but are most often used as an online journal to share information, ideas, and media (photos, videos, links, etc.).</p> <p><i>Example: Use a blog as a ‘virtual’ zone newsletter and keep it updated with zone news, important information, a calendar of events, etc.</i></p>
Webinars	<p>Webinars are virtual trainings that are conducted online with a group of participants and instructors. Participants use the Internet to connect with each other and the instructors and engage in a live learning event without leaving their homes or workplaces.</p> <p><i>Example: Facilitate a webinar with the GLT district coordinator and club officers promoting Lions Clubs International leadership development programs.</i></p>

Challenges to Cross-Level Communication

Directions:

- Individually complete the ‘Current or Potential Challenges’ column based on the information gathered during the workshop pre-assignment and your knowledge of your area
- When all group members have completed this column, share individual challenges with one another
- Brainstorm solutions to help overcome the identified challenges in the ‘Potential Solutions’ column

Current or Potential Challenges	Potential Solutions

Planning for Cross-Level Communication

As you develop your plan, consider:

- Information gathered from the workshop pre-assignment regarding communication in your area
- Communication needs/preferences of the Lions with whom you will be communicating
- Methods of facilitating communication
- Challenges/solutions to cross-level communication

What? <i>What method will you use to facilitate communication?</i>	How? <i>How will you use that method to communicate?</i>	When? <i>When, or with what frequency, will you use it?</i>	Who? <i>Between whom is communication occurring?</i>
Zone newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will be sent via email or mail to club presidents/secretaries, copy sent to district governor - Will include an important dates calendar, zone news, recognition, project updates 	A new edition of the newsletter will be sent every 2-3 months	Zone to clubs; zone to district

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Resources for Additional Learning:

Lions Learning Center course: *Effective Listening*