

Social Connection: Bridging the Gap

Social: “marked by or passed in pleasant companionship with friends or associates” (From Merriam-Webster)

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What is a Club Social?

A club social is an event that isn't necessarily focused on service or leadership, but is more focused on club communication, doing a unified event or getting to know other members better. Club socials are a great way for members to meet others through a group activity. Not only are you encouraging members to communicate with each other, but a club social can create a lasting memory and help develop friendships that strengthen the "community" aspect of a club.

What's the point of a club social when members can communicate during service events?

While service events are the core of Circle K clubs, socials are good ways to focus more on club unity than on service hours. Socials allow Circle K Clubs to expand from just an extracurricular event to a true family of people who like to do **many** different things together. Plus, club socials are great ways to encourage CKI members to bring their friends.

When should I have one? How big are socials?

Have club socials all the time! Members **love** being appreciated, and club socials are a great way to thank them for all their hard work by having a bit of fun!

Generally, club socials are very effective in the beginning of the year, as a way to recruit new members. However, club socials are also perfect in the winter seasons (when it may be more difficult to find service events) and at the end of the school year (as a sort of "thank you" retreat).

Different types of club socials

Different club socials can encompass as few as 5-6 people and can be as large as 100 (or more)! Because there are many different types of club socials, it's important to determine which socials can be most beneficial to you.

Below, I have broken down the overall umbrella of club socials to different categories:

Small Indoor Socials

- Small, indoor socials have the added benefit of being relatively inexpensive and personal.
- These are especially good for leadership/e-board retreats for your club.
- Examples: Cooking together, laser tag

Large Indoor Socials

- Large, indoor socials can encompass up to, and sometimes over, 100 people, so they're great if you have a very big club.
- These socials require a lot of planning, publicizing and may cost some money (if you're seeking a large venue)
- Examples: Dance / Ball, Stay-Awake-A-Thon

Large Indoor Socials with Physical Activities

- o These socials tend to require some money (because of equipment or something), but also include a group physical activity
- o Examples: Laser Tag, Mini-Golf, Bowling

Small Outside Socials

- Small outdoor socials usually don't require money, and work really well depending on the season.
- Often time, outside socials require physical activity, but this may not be the case in every situation.

Spring / Fall

- o Examples: Picnic, baseball

Winter

- o Examples: Snow Ball Fight, Sledding

Large Outside Socials

- Large outdoor events almost always include some sort of physical activity, but are great because members often have to work together in some sport-like activity.

Spring / Fall

- o Examples: Barbeque, Spirit Day (Relay Races, etc)

Winter

- o Examples: Ice Skating, Snow Ball War

Organizing a Social

Regardless of the size of the event, all socials require some amount of planning, organizing, and publicizing. This is especially true for larger socials or socials that require any money of money, simply because there are more people to organize things for. Below are the core "steps" to organizing a social.

Deciding What to do

- Figuring out what social do is clearly an important part in actually doing the social! Taking things like weather, money, size and intended purpose are important in actually deciding what kind of social you will be organizing. For example, it would be very difficult to organize a snow ball fight for April if there's no snow. Similarly, hosting a 300 person event for a club of 20 or 30 might cause problems in the long run.

Delegating Tasks & Setting Goals

- This is a crucial step in the organizing process, since work should be distributed between all the organizers. If one person were to take charge of everything, s/he might not be able to get everything done in time.
- During this time, the organizing group should also iron out the details of what the social should be like, **when the social should be, where the social should be**, and overall goals of the social. Are you trying to recruit members, or is the purpose to create some e-board bonding moments?

Fundraising / Finding Sponsors

- Securing money for your fundraiser is the next step in organizing a truly successful event. Expensive socials may be a lot of fun, but the bill won't be if you can't pay up!
- Figuring out the total cost of the social, and where the money is coming from is **crucial** in this step. Are you having club members pay? Will you fundraise for the money? Are you getting a school grant?
- Some venues are willing to provide a discount because you are a community service organization, or a college club, so always check out all your options

Notes

Organizing a Social (cont.)

Publicizing

- In order for people to come to your social, they have to **know about the social**. Announcing socials during club meetings are a great step, but make sure that members are continually reminded! Having a facebook event, using posters and sending email reminders are a great way to keep your members clued in.
- Publicizing is especially crucial if you are trying to recruit members to your club using the social. Publicizing outside of the club will definitely help you get more members to the social.

The Event

- All of this planning would be for nothing if you didn't have the actual event yourself!
- During the event, you should be making sure everything runs smoothly, staying to your organized schedule and making sure that there are more than enough organizers to make sure everything stays on time. For example, if you have a raffle or drawing, make sure it starts the time you say it will. People are depending on **you** to keep to the schedule, and you don't want to disappoint!

Reviewing

- The last step to any event is evaluating its success, seeing if you made your goal(s) and making note of things to remember for future socials. What parts of the social were big hits? Where did you have room to improve?

Notes

Timeline of Organization

Still confused about what to do and when to do it? Here's are two examples of a timeline, one for a relatively small event (5-15 people) and one for a larger event (40-60 people). Remember, these schedules are not **set in stone**, so you can play around with them as you see fit. These are more **guidelines** as to the time it takes to planning different socials.

Small Social

2-1 month(s) prior:

- Decide on what to do, when to do it and where to do it (event type, location, time)
- Organize a list of "tasks" and "goals" to complete
- Create a list of people who you are inviting (is it just the e-board? Or is it the e-board and the members? Are Kiwanians coming?)

3 weeks prior:

- Check the venue/location, book everything
- Make sure financials are set. How are you getting the money?
- Send invitations! You want to make sure that people have plenty of time to RSVP

1 week prior:

- Send reminders about the event
- Finalize your details (make sure your reservation is still there)
- Get whatever materials you need

2-1 day(s) prior:

- Re-review your schedule/plan of events
- Send a "final reminder" to everyone who is attending
- Make sure you have everything you need

Large Social

8-6 months prior:

- Determine what kind of social you will be organizing, taking weather into account
 - o Figure out who will be handling which parts of the planning
- Finding specific people to concentrate on only finances or only publicizing will really help you organize the event.
- Create a small list of goals to keep you guys on track.

6-5 months prior:

- Determine a time and a venue (the larger the event, the earlier it should be done)
 - o Book the venue. I cannot stress how important it is to do this early
- Designate one person to deal with fundraising/finances and make that person responsible for finding the money for venues and materials and such

3 months prior:

- Start advertising! Large events require large attendance, so start telling your Kiwanis clubs about it and make it aware that a "big event" is coming up!

2 months prior:

- Recheck your reservation, check your finances (make sure you have the money)
 - o Start selling "tickets" around here if you're charging admission
- Start advertising outside of your club if this is what you're interested in doing

2 weeks prior:

- MORE ADVERTISING!!! This is your last "big push" for attendance
- Finalize your details, make sure you know exactly what is happening when
- Get all the materials you need.

3-1 day before:

- Send a final "friendly reminder"
- Recheck your reservation
- Have a final "organizer's meeting" to go over exactly what the schedule will look like, anticipated attendance

Your Turn!

Now that you know the in's and out's of organizing your own superb social, let's practice with a couple scenarios! Create a **timeline** of things you will be doing to organize the social, a **budget** for all your finances, a **schedule** of things to do at your event and determine some **goals** that you have for this social.

Scenario One

You're a new club in a relatively urban area. You have a lot of students at your university, but most of them are commuters who live at home. To "get your club going," you want to organize a large social so that EVERYONE on campus knows what kind of club you are, and how much fun you like to have!

Your club's e-board has decided that they want the social to be during late September, so a little after everyone comes back to class, but right before all the new freshmen get eaten up by the other clubs. Organize an event that will be successful in both bringing interest to your club and making a name on your campus!

Scenario Two

You're members of a retiring executive board and you want to make sure the new e-board is excited to work together for the upcoming service year. As a way of "inducting" them into their new positions, someone has suggested a "leadership" retreat of sorts that will combine the new and old e-board together. You hope this will allow the new board to bond outside of their official duties and hope that this can be a great start to a great year.

Organize a social that can be relatively inexpensive and can encompass team building activities while still being a blast for both the incoming and retiring board members!

Scenario Three

You're part of a club that has been really struggling with making the required amount of members you need (let's say your campus needs 25 club to be "officially recognized"). This is probably because there's a lot of competing service clubs on your campus. As a way of trying to get new members in the middle of the year, you want to organize a mid-sized social that will bring new members but will also pump up your current members who may be slacking in attendance.

One big hope that you have is to get your members to bring their friends to the social, but you also don't have the immense budget of larger clubs, so you don't want an event that goes over your head financially. Organize a social that can breathe new life to your club without swallowing your wallet whole!

Scenario Four

Your club really wants to get some K-Family hours in before the end of the year, and so you want to organize a social within your area for the Kiwanis family branches that are around. You hope this will encourage more communication between K-Family branches and, hopefully, will get the ball rolling for other great socials and service events.

Your sponsoring Kiwanis club is very keen on the idea and is willing to help you financially in organizing a social that can bring your local K-Family together. You already know that there are interested Kiwanis Clubs, Circle K Clubs, Key Clubs and at least one Builder's Club that will be attending. Organize a social that can bring all these age groups together in a K-Family bonding moment!

Scenario Five

You're an average sized club in a rural area (think cows and cornfields) that wants to thank their club for all the hard work they've been doing over the service year. Someone has suggested a sort of "thank you" social for your members as a way of ending the year with a final "hurrah," and you think this is a great idea, so you have decided to spearhead this social.

Organize an event that's a lot of fun and serves as a big thank you to the dedicated and loyal members of your club, all of whom have been working **super hard** to make your club a success over the academic year.

Midway through the planning process, there may or may not be things that will "come up" that can either help or hinder your planning process.

Your Turn! – Breakdown

What will your social be?

When is your social?

How much money are you allocating to the social?

What is your estimated attendance?

Goals?

Financial Plans?

General Timeline:

Event Schedule?