

Large Club's would Candidly Like the DGEs to Know...

Get to Know Us: Come to the club a minimum of six club meetings/events, where you are not “asking” anything of the club. Read their newsletters. Get to know their members, leaders, and culture.

Get to Know the Executive Director: (if they have one). Make it a point to talk with the large club incoming president as well as the Executive Director (ED) - they are really partners. There is a spectrum of ED's ranging from not-for-profit professional to “retired Rotarians.” Professionally trained EDs tend to be open and supportive, while other EDs may have “turf protection”. Know the difference.

Communicating with a Large Club: Copy the ED on whatever is sent to the president or president elect - especially if you need action. Large clubs do not function like the smaller ones. In large clubs, correspondence is normally routed to the ED, who forwards the information to the right individual.

Large Club Finances: Large clubs tend to finalize their budgets earlier than other clubs. If you have any interest in financial support from a large club, you must talk with them at least six months before the start of the year. Make sure to copy the ED on the request. If you are asking for funding, provide a clear accounting of where District money is spent and why. Give full disclosure! Inform the clubs when, and how much funding is available and disclose the process for the distribution of money. This is what is required of large clubs from government auditors, etc., and they expect the same of others.

Speaking at Large Clubs: Because of their size, large clubs can and do get top speakers. They run their programs with a minute-by-minute schedule, and they carefully consider all items that are presented at the club. Governors are not selected because of their public speaking skills. Therefore, unless the club knows you, and your speaking skills, your ability to speak may be judged by your predecessors. A powerful message can be delivered in 10 minutes—just because you are not the main speaker at a large club does not mean that you are not valued or heard. Be “prepared” when you come to speak to our membership on the DG yearly visit. Know your audience and give a presentation that is tailored to their interest, not a “canned” speech.

Include Large Clubs in the District: Include large club leadership in District events. Look for the value Large Clubs bring and their experience. They can offer ideas and solutions to smaller clubs. When you recognize the clubs in the Districts, do you fairly evaluate large clubs? They rarely can win on a per capita basis. Do you recognize total giving?

Events: If you want large clubs to participate in your events, include large club members in the planning of the events. We often have professionals in the club that can lead out in informational seminars. At these events, provide information that is relevant regardless of club size. Include large club members in the planning of your events.

Training: Consider offering specialized training to the incoming large club PEs. Find out what topics they are interesting in learning about. Use the PEs of clubs of 300+ members to offer ideas and advice to clubs of 150 to 300 members. Clubs of 300+ tend to get trained at the annual Large Club Conference, and they can share some of that information with the smaller club leadership.

Consistency: District and other club's “staff” changes every year. Not so for the large club. It is difficult for club leadership to keep track of who is who. Payments go to multiple addresses, causing confusion and accounting time to track. Using one address, having a District Executive Director even on a part time basis, would provide consistency and continuity.

Respect Large Clubs: Don't be critical. Praise the members for what they are doing within the community, rather than chastising them for what they have not done in the District. Don't be disgruntled with the club for not contributing to a District project. Most large clubs will have their own standing projects and fundraisers. Don't chastise the club for not inviting the District Foundation or Membership chairs to speak at a meeting. Sometimes, by working through the committee chairs in a large club, you will get further. Recognize that large clubs are Rotary clubs, but they go about doing things differently that virtually all of the other clubs in the District.