Making Meetings Fun & Inviting — even in a virtual world —

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Chris Martz is the Director of Global Membership & Education at Kiwanis International. In this role, Chris provides direction, support, and assistance in opening new clubs; membership recruitment and retention; and training for volunteer team members as well as education of club and district leaders.

Chris has been employed by Kiwanis International for 11 years in various roles supporting communications, membership, innovation, and collegiate programming.

Chris graduated from Ball State University in 1994 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism and secondary education.

For the past 20 years, Chris has worked in the nonprofit world—generally in the areas of communication and management. Prior to joining Kiwanis, Chris worked for a national fraternity headquarters coordinating communications and member services. His professional career started a high school journalism teacher.

Chris is an 18-year Kiwanis member. He is currently a member of the Kiwanis Club of Meridian Hills in Indianapolis. He has served as club president twice and two terms as lieutenant governor for the Kiwanis Indy Metro Division.

Chris resides in Noblesville, Indiana, and enjoys running. He has completed numerous half marathons and five full marathons.
Resources

• Making Meetings Fun (handout to do with your club)
• Quick and Easy Service Projects
• Virtual Meeting Ideas to Help Your Club Thrive (part 1)
• Virtual Meeting Ideas to Help Your Club Thrive (part 2)
• Virtual Recruitment Ideas to Strengthen Your Membership

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This is a game of Bingo you do not want to win!

These are actual incidents that have happened to guests present at Kiwanis meetings!
Your first impression...

Think about the first Kiwanis club meeting you attended.

• What was the best part of the meeting?
• What concerned you?
• What hooked you?
• Have you ever really listened to what your members say about your Kiwanis club meetings?
• Who’s the person that loves Kiwanis the most in your club? How would they describe your meetings?
• How would the most pessimistic person in your club describe your club meetings?
• Member Satisfaction Survey
There’s a stranger at your club…

Think about the things that happen from gong to adjournment that make no sense to a guest.

If a prospective member were standing outside the door of your meeting room, what would he or she hear? Any laughter?

What’s fun about your meetings?
Rethink your meetings…

• The time. The location. The purpose. The agenda.
• Rethink speakers.
• What about activities?
• Is there social time?
• Are club members recognized/honored in fun ways?
• What’s the guests’ experience during his or her first meeting?
Ways to make your meetings more interactive and engaging….

If your club meets weekly, don’t have a speaker each week. Think about what your club could do with at least one meeting a month:

- If you meet on a Monday or Tuesday, do something exciting when there is a fifth Monday or Tuesday in the month.
- Only meet three times a month and ask each member to interclub with another club in the area at least once a month.
- Cancel a meeting and asked each member to find one hour of service to do instead. How creative would your members get?
Ways to make your meetings more interactive and engaging…. 

In-house service projects (handout) 
• Re-ignite your members’ passion for service 
• Re-energize your club’s mission 

Spirited administrative fundraisers 
• Pound sales and themed auctions 

Give each member a $5 bill at the start of the meeting and tell members to go out and make a difference (that’s all you tell them). Report out during the next meeting. What creative impacts would your members make with only $5?
Kiwanis life in a virtual world

What you are doing now as a club?

What are you learning about your club by meeting virtually?

What is Kiwanis going to look like post-COVID-19?
Virtual meeting ideas and projects

- Define or redefine your purpose.
- Analyze your members and potential members.
- Evaluate your service projects.
- Learn how your members feel about your club.

kiwanis.org/acetools
Virtual meeting ideas

If your club meeting takes place over a meal, take a few minutes for everyone to share their favorite food and the story behind it (it’s a family recipe, it’s sugar-free for diabetics, it’s simple when you don’t have much in your pantry, etc.). After the meeting, start an email chain where everyone shares the recipe with members.

Host a virtual happy hour. Online meetings do not need to be all business. Enjoy a little social time.

Have fun. While meeting virtually, host spirit days such as crazy hat day, Kiwanis wear, Blue shirt day, etc.
Virtual meeting ideas

Invite Service Leadership Programs members, faculty advisors, school principals and superintendents to join in your virtual club meetings. This is a great time to recognize the clubs for their service and honor those graduating members of Circle K or Key Club.

Plan a service project for now or for when the social distancing restrictions are lifted. It’s a good time to plan for the future, because kids will need us more than ever before when we can meet again.

Check out some other virtual platforms (HouseParty; JackBox; etc.) and consider hosting a club game night social event.
Virtual meeting ideas

Invite your past members and guests. As more people are working from home and many activities have been cancelled, this is a great time to bring back some of your past members and re-introduce them to the service your club provides for the community. Also think about previous speakers, community partners, and friends of your Kiwanis club.

Be creative with your virtual meetings and engage your members!

More ideas for virtual meetings included in the resources
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