

CKI Board Retreats: Tips for planning

Board planning sessions vary widely. Some clubs take a whole weekend and include “bonding” time; others simply want to get down to it and plan. Here are some key points to consider:

Define the purpose of the session.

- Are you planning goals for the year?
- One semester or quarter?

Give direction to participants about homework they are supposed to do.

- If your approach is to brainstorm a theme and goals, then you don’t necessarily want anyone to have researched individual service projects.
- If you are trying to plan out your fall term in detail, then individuals need to come prepared with their respective areas, such as potential fundraisers, service projects, socials, Kiwanis Family activities and the like, including costs.
- Tell everyone to bring his/her personal calendar so you can make plans and commitments.

Have food and drinks

- Hunger and thirst become unspoken barriers, and food and drink are often icebreakers for conversation.

Make sure everyone knows everyone else.

- Take a little “getting to know you” time if need be. Use a game, but be careful that the game is appropriate. For example, a game that requires English as a first language may be problematic for some; games that require significant disclosure of intimate personal information may become uncomfortable.

Make a group commitment to concentrate on the task.

- If it’s only a few hours, everyone should stay off emails, cell phones and texting for the duration.
- If it’s all day or multiple days, have regular breaks for people to take care of other business, and stay off of other business during work sessions.

Plan an appropriate location

- The middle of a noisy Student Union or restaurant is not a productive place to have a conversation. Find somewhere to meet that’s quiet, and has enough tables and chairs for everyone to work together.
- If you use someone’s apartment, make sure that the roommates are going to be away or otherwise engaged, not conducting their own activities where you are trying to meet. (Of course, don’t forget to recruit those roommates as members at some point!)

Divide and conquer

- Divide work into subgroups of two or three people, and then have the groups report back. If there are more than three, you will waste time or lose engagement.

Things to bring for reference

- Last year's MRFs
- Last year's goals
- Last year's awards applications
- CKI manuals on Membership Development and officer responsibilities
- List of key dates/events for your division, the CNH District, your sponsoring Kiwanis club(s) and your academic institution.

Plan social breaks

- If you are going to spend a whole day or weekend, be sure to include some game time or other social activity.

Have someone take notes

- Usually the club secretary will take notes. After breaks, make sure to summarize where you left off.
- When the event is over, promptly send out the results and "to-do's."
- Make sure the to-do's are assigned to particular people.

Invite help

- Consider inviting your Lt. Governor and your advisors as resources.

Focus on the positive

- Try not to dwell on what went wrong last year. Start by making a list of what went well, and where you would like to be by next spring.

Follow through

- Make sure to look at your goals progress regularly throughout the year, such as once a month.