

Leadership Transition

I. Your year as an officer is coming to an end and new officers are being selected. How do you leave your position gracefully? How do you ensure that the new officers are ready to continue to provide your organization with strong leadership?

II. A thorough leadership transition plan has several benefits:

Provides for transfer of significant organizational knowledge.

Minimizes the confusion of leadership changeover.

Gives outgoing leaders a sense of closure.

Utilizes the valuable contributions of experienced leaders, usually the most neglected members in your group.

Helps incoming leadership absorb the special expertise of the outgoing leadership.

Increases the knowledge and confidence of the new leadership.

Minimizes the loss of momentum and accomplishments for the group.

III. When Do You Start? Early!

Begin early in the year to identify emerging leaders.

Encourage these potential leaders through personal contact; help in developing skills, delegating responsibility to them, sharing with them the personal benefits of leadership, clarifying job responsibilities, letting them know that transition will be orderly and thorough, and last, modeling an open, encouraging leadership style.

When new officers have been elected, orient them together as a group with all of the outgoing officers. This process provides the new leaders with an opportunity to understand each other's roles and to start building their leadership team.

Be sure to transfer the knowledge and information necessary for them to function well. An organization history and flow-chart might be helpful. Take time to organize any files or notebooks so they may quickly access information.

What Do You Need To Transfer?

Think back to your first weeks. What could you have used to do your job better? Some suggestions are:

Effective leadership qualities and skills.

Problems and helpful ideas, procedures and recommendations.

Written reports:

Containing traditions, ideas or completed projects; continuing projects and concerns; or ideas never carried out.

Personal and organizational files.

Acquaintance with physical environment, supplies, equipment and any office procedures.

Introduction to personnel (advisors, administrators, contacts, etc.).

A complete record of the organization's structure, goals and accomplishments (through complete and organized files):

Constitution and by-laws

Organizational goals and objectives for previous year(s)

Job descriptions/role clarification's

Status reports on ongoing projects

Evaluations of previous projects and programs

Previous minutes and reports

Resources/contacts lists with addresses and phone numbers

Financial books

Mailing lists

Be a good, conscientious leader by providing your successor with these things.