



LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 105w



"We Serve"

(International Association of Lions Clubs)
Twinned with District 103NIE, France

"We Serve"

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Dear Lion President

VISION OF THE FUTURE - PERCEPTION, VISIBILITY AND PUBLICITY

I enclose a paper, which has been prepared by Lion John Seymour of the Lions Club of Keynsham. Many of you will know Lion John as a Zone Chairman and also as the District Webmaster. However he has written this paper as one individual Lion giving his personal views as to how our organisation needs to adapt to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

When Lion John first sent me a copy of his paper, I was much impressed by the ideas in it and as a result made it an agenda item at the meeting of District Cabinet held earlier this month. It was then agreed that a copy of it should be circulated to all Clubs in our District and it was also recommended that Zone Chairmen should make it an agenda item at future Zone Meetings. A copy has also been sent to the Chairman of the Council of Governors and a letter from Lion John outlining these points will appear in the April/May issue of The Lion.

Please take the time to read this paper and to discuss it with your Club members. I commend it to you.

Yours sincerely and in Lionism,

JOHN CHARLES
District Governor



LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL - MD 105

A paper expressing the personal views of one Lion in the Multiple District.

VISION OF THE FUTURE

PERCEPTION, VISIBILITY and PUBLICITY

‘Accountability is easily given, *taking* responsibility is something quite different’

Make someone accountable in a service organisation such as ours and the personal commitment will be anything from zero to 100%. The nature of the organisation is such that members can walk away from accountability. The management task before the Council is to provide an organisation which thinks change, which operates in this century with new technology and provides support and encouragement for members to *take* responsibility. Responsibility cannot be given.

I have for some time considered the need for Lions in the Multiple District to find the future. We currently don't know what it is, or what it looks like but unless we make a move to find it, the organisation will slowly decline. When it comes to new technology we are currently in reactive mode but Clubs are now awake to the advantages and we need to get into proactive mode in preparation for the future, to be ready and to stay ahead.

There are many examples of organisations that thought today was the future and failed to react to the signs around them and the world moved on leaving them behind. We need to think how the younger generation think and operate how they operate, they are our future, and they have to be our future members. Branch and New Century may well help the way forward in those specific areas, but there needs to be more fundamental changes in the way the organisation operates, how it is managed, how it is perceived, how visible it is and available to the media and general public.

Consider how it could be in the future.

Consideration 1.

Have an advertised National Telephone Number in the 0870 range available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Call it a ‘call centre’, base it in Birmingham, with access to a full Lions Data Base system able to answer any queries from the General Public or Lion Members and send out by return, information requested about any Club or Lions National or International Project. Have access to the Post Code data base for call referencing.

Consideration 2.

Have a full Lions Data Base able to receive live on-screen entries from Club Secretaries, incoming District Governors and MD Officers of annual details and Data Protection consents. With appropriate passwords, the Data Base can be interrogated by any Lion in the MD requiring information and would be the heart of the 'call centre'.

It can be the heart of Lions Clubs International in MD105.

Consideration 3.

With a full Lions Data Base, the MD Directory is no longer required; it can all be available on screen. Archive the existing support information on the Data Base. If a hard copy is required, print the appropriate sections from the screen locally or apply Consideration 4. Some Districts have it on their Websites already. Do we really miss the demise of the International Directory?

Consideration 4.

The MD part of the Directory is already printed on the reverse of 'The Lion' single addressee A4 sheet. Have a supplement in the July copy of The Lion with all 13 Districts printed on double sided A4 sheets with details collated from the Data Base. Quantity 14, A4 sheets should do it, no special MD Directory print runs, no extra mailings.

Consideration 5.

Send out blanket mail shots on text phones, the youngsters read text messages. The maximum number of text characters is 160, if the Lord's Prayer can be texted in 160 characters, we should be able to make a good message impact.

Consideration 6.

Actively promote good corporate media identity and publicity at all levels of Lions within the Multiple District and District teams. The average Club Member when browsing the weight of numbers in the MD and District teams would be forgiven for thinking that Publicity was well catered for. In reality, all areas of perception, visibility and publicity are pushed down to the individual Clubs. There is no thrust to obtain good, regular corporate media identity and publicity at a National level. Clubs seek out local media coverage of their latest event but the MD team provide very little quality leadership by advertising Lions Clubs International in support of Clubs. In 30 years of Lionism I have never seen a Lions logo in the National press.

Consideration 7.

Conventions. Why do we call conventions, District Convention or MD Convention? The words are meaningless. Convention is a gathering of people of a like mind, a gathering of Lions from a geographical area. It is certainly not a gathering of District Officers or MD Officers which the present words imply and alienate the Club Lion.

As Lions we all sit in rows watching other Lions behind a desk barrier, just like being at the cinema. Whichever side of the barrier you are, we are all Lions so remove it, have the Convention Chairman and dignitaries sit in the middle with the groups of tables and chairs around the venue floor, make convention more Lion friendly.

Consideration 8.

Live 2003, be proud to be a Lion, address ourselves in the Lion Any Name format and archive this historic process of titles such as PDG Any Name or similar. It has no place when trying to achieve a corporate media identity.

Consideration 9.

Browse and contribute to the online Lions Messageboard, it is where Club Lions debate topics and where proactive processes can originate. When did you last visit the Messageboard?

The pessimists would say some of this is ‘off the wall stuff’ and immediately level financial restraints, the optimists will look upon it as the start of many opportunities. The future has no boundaries and should not contain all the baggage of present processes. I have only listed 9 Considerations of many and I wouldn’t have a clue how to bring some of them about but unless we start to employ management tools that make things happen, our logo of the future may comprise just one Lion looking at the past, the forward looking Lion just evaporating before our eyes.

Fear of the unknown is a natural phenomenon and is understandable. My experience with the Clubs in District 105W would suggest that the fear is not as great as is thought. We should capitalise on this and kick start the system and drive forward. The MD and District Team levels are being pushed to take up the challenge, currently it is painfully slow.

The other side of the coin, when attempting to open up on these subjects with Lions from other parts of the organisation, inside and outside the MD team, is one of no response to disbelief that there just might be another way which signals an unwillingness to find the future.

It must now rest with Council to decide whether to acknowledge the push for change coming from Clubs and extend the Lion boundaries into unknown territory and be ready by preparing for the future today. A future that appeals to the younger generation where the mobile phone, the web, e-addresses, the Messageboard, the media and call centres are all part of everyday living whether we like it or not, we don’t have a choice.

The alternative is to buy another slide rule and wait for the demise, dramatic may be, but a possibility.

Oh, accountability, forget it, it doesn’t have a place in a voluntary organisation, it’s *taking* responsibility that will make things happen for the Lions Clubs of MD105.

Reactive organisations die, proactive organisations survive. Which do you want to belong to?

Lion John Seymour, webmaster 105w
Original ‘Vision of the Future’ paper dated 1st January 2002
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