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prepare a list with names and phone numbers of each “buddy” team. “Buddies” are responsible for ensuring that their assigned teammate attends the meeting.

• Produce a Desk Calendar: Print and distribute a desk calendar for the fiscal year that reminds members and their spouses about the club’s scheduled meetings. Add your events to your club web site and in every week’s bulletin.

• Take a Roll Call: Ask the club secretary or attendance committee chairperson to verbally take a roll call at each meeting. The attendance chair can then call those absent, saying that they were missed while encouraging them to attend the next meeting, and to inform them of any upcoming committee or board meeting so that they could arrange a make-up.

• Create a Point System: Begin by dividing the entire club into groups with an equal amount of people in each group. The groups choose a leader who ensures that at every meeting the whole group attend. One point is given for each member in attendance at each meeting. At the end of the year the group with the most points is announced. The leader of that group gets a certificate issued by the club president and the winning group gets a prize paid for by the members of the losing groups (such as a club party or celebration).

• Plan Meetings Well: Improving your actual meetings are the most effective and immediate way to improve the perception of the club from a member standpoint. Check out our ten tips for Planning Effective club meetings under our Membership Development column.

• Develop a Chain of Command: Proper leadership is essential for the club’s success and contributes to every member’s development. Each club should ensure that a definite chain of command exists and that problems arising at a lower level are handled at that level. This increases the leadership abilities of the members involved and will, in turn, develop them into better leaders.

• Create a Harmonious Atmosphere: Club presidents should encourage respect among members, maintain a harmonious atmosphere, allow fresh ideas to be tried, and let members present their ideas even if contrary to tradition.

• Solve Problems Promptly: If a problem arises, the club president should meets with the parties involved to discuss it and reach an amicable solution. It is important not to let problems brew.

• Encourage Communication: Club officers should hold informal coffee or dinner sessions where any member, committee, or group can come and discuss problems, make suggestions or get advice.

• Keep Activities Fresh: Encourage members to attend other clubs’ meetings, thereby creating bonds of friendship and cooperation among neighboring clubs, while exchanging ideas on fund-raising projects and service activities. Periodically try something new!

• Take Action Early and Often: The best time to retain members is BEFORE they show signs of losing interest. It is much easier to keep someone happy and satisfied than it is to make him/her happy once they’ve become disgruntled. Make sure members know that the club leadership cares about them and their satisfaction as members.

See the next edition of the ESK for Ten Tips for Planning Effective Meetings