

Leadersheet

Leadership Transition

Your year as an officer is ending 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?

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

When Do You Start?

- Begin early in the year to identify emerging leaders.
- Encourage these leaders: help in developing skills, delegating responsibility to them, showing the personal benefits of leadership, clarifying job responsibilities, letting them know that transition will be orderly and thorough
- When 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 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:

- Written reports containing traditions, ideas, completed projects, continuing projects, 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 clarifications
- Status reports on ongoing projects, and evaluations of previous projects and programs
- Previous minutes and reports
- Contact lists with addresses and phone numbers