

**A Handbook for the  
District Candidate  
Qualifications  
Committee**



Selecting  
capable,  
willing  
District  
Officers



# **The Optimist Creed**

## **Promise Yourself**

- To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
- To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
- To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
- To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
- To think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best.
- To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
- To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
- To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
- To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
- To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

## **Vision/Mission Statement**

By providing hope and positive vision Optimists bring out the best in kids.



## Overview

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*The selection of capable and willing District officers each year is the most important step a District takes toward assuring continued growth and progress. Competent leadership at the District level is vital not only for the District, but for Optimist International as a whole.*

*The ultimate choice, of course, is made by the Clubs, since the Governor-Elect and Lieutenant Governors are elected by vote of Club representatives at District meetings. The purpose of the District Candidate Qualifications Committee is to insure the Clubs select from the best possible candidates for each office.*

*This publication provides information on nomination and election procedures as required by the International Bylaws, as well as guidelines for the selection of candidates.*

## The Committee

It is recommended the District Candidate Qualifications Committee be composed of the Governor-Elect, the two most immediate and available Past Governors and two members appointed for one year terms by the Governor.

Its responsibilities are to solicit candidates for each office, consider the Qualifications of each candidate and act as a Nominating Committee at the time of the elections.

Many knowledgeable Optimists believe there is a large number of men and women who show leadership ability at the Club level but who, for one reason or another, never seek to become involved at the District level. It is hoped that the District Candidate Qualifications Committee will accept the role of "talent scout" and seek out good potential leaders. The Committee should counsel with and encourage such persons to District office.

## Office To Be Filled

The offices of Governor-Elect and Lieutenant Governor (optional) are the only District offices filled each year by vote of Club representatives at District meetings, and it is with candidates for these offices that the Committee is concerned. The office of Governor is filled by automatic elevation of the Governor-Elect, and the Secretary-Treasurer office is an appointed position.

## Elections and Voting

If the District has Lieutenant Governors they are elected at Zone meetings to be conducted at or shortly before the District meeting held in the third quarter - at which time each Club President, or other official Club representative in attendance, shall cast the votes to which his/her Club is entitled.

The method and means of voting at convention shall be established by the District Board of Directors. Convention rules shall be adopted by a majority vote during the first business session of each convention; but may be suspended, rescinded or amended after their adoption by a two-thirds vote. A quorum of any District convention shall consist of a majority of the accredited delegates. All voting shall be based on total number of votes cast by accredited delegates and, unless otherwise stated, any matter requiring a vote shall be approved by a majority of votes cast by accredited delegates.

The Governor-Elect shall be elected at the annual or a special duly called convention by a majority vote of the votes cast of the accredited delegates present and voting at the time of the election. The Governor-Elect shall not serve in any other elective office in the same year he is Governor-Elect (Optimist International Bylaws, Article VII, Section 6C).

## Qualifications

The Bylaws state that no one shall be eligible for election or hold a District office unless he/she is:

1. duly enrolled on the International roster as a member of a Club in good standing in Optimist International.
2. Governor-Elect nominees shall not serve in any other elective office in the same year as Governor-Elect.
3. has held or is currently holding the office of President of an Optimist Club to be eligible for nomination or election to the office of Lieutenant Governor.



## Choosing Lieutenant Governors (Optional)

Since Lieutenant Governors are elected at Zone meetings convened at or shortly before the third quarter District meeting, the Committee's work must be done well in advance. It is recommended the Committee seek and receive the names and Qualifications of prospective candidates from the Clubs within each Zone prior to April 1. The Committee shall nominate qualified candidates for the office of Lieutenant Governor for each Zone in the District. In the event a candidate cannot be obtained from within the Zone, the Committee shall consider candidates outside the Zone.

As elections approach, and the Committee determines the practical impossibility of fulfilling its required tasks, consideration should be given to rezoning within the District, such that fewer Zones, strategically realigned, can be led by an interested and qualified Lieutenant Governor.

The names of candidates to be nominated by the Committee should be made public prior to the date of election. At the third quarter meeting, the Committee must nominate at least one candidate for each Zone.

## Choosing the Governor-Elect

As with prospective candidates for Lieutenant Governor, the Committee may use the District Bulletin to solicit prospective candidates for the office of Governor-Elect. In this case District Policy should be followed. It is recommended the Committee seek and receive names and Qualifications prior to July 1, and place in nomination the names of all qualified candidates for the office at the District Convention. Of course, the Committee should consider prospective candidates on its own motion. If at all possible, the Committee should make an effort to decide upon a "best qualified candidate", and should publish that information as a part of their report.

## Seeking Candidates

In inviting Clubs to submit names of potential candidates the Committee should emphasize the need for background information in order to properly evaluate each person whose name is submitted. The following specific data should be requested in the notice which is published in the District Bulletin:

- Name and address
- Office for which this person is being recommended
- Zone number, if recommended for Lieutenant Governor
- Date enrolled as an Optimist
- Club name
- Club offices held and dates
- Business or profession
- Educational background
- Trade or professional affiliations
- Marital status
- Children (names and ages)
- Can this person devote the required time to the job?
- Is this person willing to serve if elected?

To insure itself of sufficient time for evaluation and consideration, the Committee should issue its call for names and encourage responses well in advance.

## Evaluating Qualifications

Once names of potential candidates and supporting information are in, the most important work of the Committee begins: evaluation of those suggested and selection of the best qualified person as the nominee for each office.

There is no secret formula which will automatically reveal the best choices. Leadership ability is often hidden beneath the surface, and success at the Club level is not an infallible indicator of the potential for greater achievement. In most cases, the Committee will be required to make a subjective judgment.

To aid in the process, the Committee might compare the potential candidates as to the following qualities:

- Intelligence
- Organization abilities
- Personality
- Articulation
- Public appearance
- Poise
- Public speaking ability
- Occupational success
- Experience as an Optimist
- Current District and Club involvement
- General reputation within the community
- Willingness to serve if elected
- Ability to devote sufficient time to the office
- Financial ability to accept responsibilities of the office
- Earned respect from fellow members

This is not an all-inclusive list, of course. There are many other qualities which a good leader must possess, and some of those listed should be given greater weight than others. But a candidate whom the Committee would not rank above average as to most of the points on this list probably does not deserve serious consideration as a nominee.

It is the Committee's responsibility to seek candidates who will lead in a positive and productive fashion. The characteristics and qualities of proven leaders should be used as guidelines in the selection process.

### **More Points To Consider**

- Make certain a potential candidate has been consulted and has agreed to serve if elected before consideration as a nominee is given. Don't just take the word of the person or Club making the recommendation. A member of the Committee should observe the potential candidate making a presentation to a District, Zone or Club meeting.
- Make an effort to find out something about the potential candidate in the event this person is not well-known to members of the Committee. The opinions of past or present District leaders may be solicited.
- Consider the importance of the office. Don't look on it simply as a reward for a job well done at a lower level. Make sure the candidate to be nominated by the Committee is the best qualified person available.
- Don't overlook possible candidates who are not recommended. Remember the Committee may consider prospects on its own motion.

- Make sure a potential candidate is aware of the duties and responsibilities of the office before settling on that person as a nominee. In particular, be certain the nominee for Governor-Elect is willing to undergo the leadership training and preparation that will be expected prior to becoming Governor.
- Above all else, the Committee should be primarily concerned with the nomination of the **best qualified** person who is available to serve in office.



## **The Essential Qualifications of a Leader**

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*Leaders at any level of Optimism must be measured by their personal qualities. Those qualities should also be measured against the following so selection may be made from among those with maximum Qualifications for the position:*

### **Character**

Character is leadership with an unimpeachable moral background to give community stature and prestige with a reputation beyond reproach. Requisites include good appearance and a friendly manner. A leader with character will serve as an effective representative and spokesperson for Optimist International at all times.

### **Leadership**

The qualities of leadership must include a basic ability to lead others along approved paths, to promote harmony and cooperation, and to expect and accept criticism and opposition in good grace. The leader must realize a leadership position does not miraculously endow one with the qualities of leadership - these must be acquired, cultivated and proven.

## **Service-Oriented**

Being service-oriented is an essential quality in anyone charged with leadership in Optimist International, which, after all, is a service organization. Such a leader must have a deep seated, natural concern for others, the community, state, province and nation. This leader must care about people.

## **Decision Making Skills**

Culture and maturity to conduct the office in the proper manner, guide in the exercise of good judgment, and being objective in all decision-making are the signs of an intelligent leader. The ability to assume the proper position with other community leaders and to participate at their level is an essential quality.

## **Interest**

Genuine, active interest in the success and objectives of the organization, proven by a record of past participation, will encourage others to cooperate in the conduct of a successful, productive administration.

## **Integrity**

Honesty, sincerity and dependability make the leader upon whom members may rely with confidence at all times. Members should never have reason or occasion to distrust their leaders. The leader must be fair and straightforward at all times.

## **Inspiration**

The successful leader must be able to spark an idea, inspire enthusiasm and communicate inspiration to others to translate ideas and plans into successful group action with maximum participation.

## **Speaking Ability**

This is the ability to preside at meetings in a forceful, effective manner with the presence required to maintain control at all times. The voice and vocabulary to present ideas in clear, concise terms for and on behalf of the organization are essential.

## **Initiative**

Aggressive ambition to improve the status quo and a positive approach to progress that will infect others to accomplish their assigned tasks. Initiative to combat lethargy and stagnation is an essential quality.

## **Administration**

This is the ability to conduct Zone and District affairs, administer policies and strive toward objectives, to make decisions and to exercise authority with members, not over them. It's a knack for a simple, successful organization and follow-through to achieve the maximum potential efficiency. It means planning ahead.

## **Delegation Of Authority**

Delegating authority to others means the leader is not relieved of responsibility. One who delegates authority must demonstrate confidence in those to whom authority is delegated and be prepared to reward and recognize those who have contributed, however small that contribution may be.

## **Invention**

The inventive mind is one with vision, creativity and imagination to provide the spice to awaken what might be a dull, uneventful administration. It is the ability to provide new twists and ideas to interest and inspire members and create a spirit of "going places and doing things."

## **Salesmanship**

Salesmanship is the ability to present and sell ideas and plans in a manner conducive to the interests and participation of others. Salesmanship may well be the elixir that gives life to an administration and even to programs that involve public support or participation.

## **Tact**

The skill to say the right thing at the right time without offending is the gift of great leaders, though it may require the patience of Job. Through tact, lethargy and disinterest may be turned into interest and activity. Through tact, one may prevent embarrassment, discredit and discouragement and gain objectives without belittling one's opponents. The tactful leader has the support of every member.

## **Experience**

A successful leader must have a record of successful leadership at other levels, knowledge of Optimism, effective Committee service, attendance, and general participation, indicating an ability to further the interests and objectives of the Zone or District.





# Evaluation Form

To Aid The Candidate Qualifications Committee

Name of candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Title being considered for: \_\_\_\_\_

Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Zone: \_\_\_\_\_

President: \_\_\_\_\_(year) Honor  Yes  No

Distinguished  Yes  No

Lt. Gov.: \_\_\_\_\_(year) Distinguished  Yes  No

Outstanding  Yes  No

	Excellent	Good	Fair
Character	_____	_____	_____
Leadership	_____	_____	_____
Service-Oriented	_____	_____	_____
Decision Making Skills	_____	_____	_____
Interest	_____	_____	_____
Integrity	_____	_____	_____
Inspiration	_____	_____	_____
Speaking Ability	_____	_____	_____
Initiative	_____	_____	_____
Administration	_____	_____	_____
Delegation Of Authority	_____	_____	_____
Invention	_____	_____	_____
Salesmanship	_____	_____	_____
Tact	_____	_____	_____
Experience	_____	_____	_____
<b>TOTAL*</b>	_____	_____	_____

After checking the qualifications, give 3 points for excellent, 2 for good and 1 for fair.  
Then total the points awarded to determine the score of each prospective candidate.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OVER**

CLUB POSITIONS HELD (INCLUDE YEAR(S)):

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DISTRICT POSITIONS HELD (INCLUDE YEAR(S)):

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/AWARDS:

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