

# Leadership Transition

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 as ready as they can be to continue to provide your organization with strong leadership?

A THOROUGH LEADERSHIP TRANSITION HAS SEVERAL BENEFITS:

1. The most obvious is that it provides for a transfer of significant organizational knowledge. Your group will not have to re-invent the wheel each year!
2. It helps to minimize the confusion that occurs with the “Changing of the Guard.” While new officers try to figure out what is going on, precious time can be lost to the organization. This time lag effects the whole membership, who may not understand what all the confusion is about, and it definitely lessens the group’s ability to accomplish tasks or goals.
3. The process of a formal transition can give the outgoing leaders a sense of having completed their jobs, a sense of closure.
4. Leadership transition ensures that the valuable contributions of the experienced leaders will be utilized.
5. Finally, the shared information and knowledge helps the new leadership have more confidence, experience, and skills to be more effective in their roles.

WHEN DO YOU START? EARLY !!

Begin early in the year to identify emerging leaders in your organization.

Encourage these potential leaders by developing personal contact, helping them develop skills, delegating responsibilities to them, sharing with them the benefits of leadership, clarifying job responsibilities, letting them know that transition will be orderly and thorough, and modeling an effective leadership style.

When new officers have been elected, orient them together as a group with all of the outgoing officers. This allows the new ones an opportunity to understand each other’s roles and to start building their team. In some cases, individual officers may also need to meet with their predecessor for detailed information.

Transfer knowledge, information and materials necessary for the new leadership to be successful. MORE specifically, what do you need to transfer? Think back to your own first weeks; what did you wish someone had told you?

1. PERSONAL EXPERTISE, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:

Effective leadership qualities and skills

Share problems and helpful ideas, procedures, and recommendations

Write and share reports containing traditions, ideas or completed projects, continuing projects and concerns or ideas never carried out

Go through personal and organizational files together

Acquaint new officers with physical environment, supplies and equipment

Introduce related personnel (advisors, contacts, etc.)

2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE ORGANIZATION’S STRUCTURE, GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS (through complete and organized files):

Constitution and by-laws

Job descriptions/role clarifications

Organizational goals and objectives (including those from previous years)

Status reports on ongoing projects

Evaluations of previous projects and programs

Previous minutes and reports

Resources/contact list

Financial books and records

Mailing lists