

Woodsworth's Social Audit Objective #5 DRAFT

Participation

To provide opportunities for participation, to encourage maximum involvement, and to acknowledge the contributions of members.

FINDINGS

Participation in Co-op events

The attendance at various activities is encouraging.

71% [66%] came to the last clean up.

55% [51 %] attend the socials after the GMM's.

A wide variety of other social activities, including bingo, block events, brunches, etc. are also well supported.

Frequency of events

89% [85%] feel that there are enough social events offered. 76% feel that new members are also given plenty of choices to become part of our community.

General Meetings

85% (72%) feel that four to six GM's a year are appropriate.

48%, the largest group, selected rotating weekday evenings as the best time.

Attendance

49% attend almost all GM's; only 4% say they never attend.

[Average attendance in 89 was 40%]

NOTE: Get last year's average

The groups significantly below the average attendance were 25 - 44 years old (34%); not surprisingly, those over age 75 make up the bulk of 'never attend.'

Reasons for non attendance

evening classes (29%), poor health (33%), home care commitments (14%), trouble with English (8%), shift work (80%), too busy (18%), work/school outside Metro (19%), don't like meetings (8%), can't get to the location (3 ? %), there is no penalty (1%), problems such as hearing (3%), don't like conflict (9%), other reasons (42%).

Opinions on meetings

Well over 80% of you feel that your voice counts (82%) [63%], that the meetings are well structured and chaired (92%), that by the time you vote, you feel informed (92%), that you have had a chance to speak (83%), and that you understand the rules of order (94%) [81%].

Fewer members (68%) feel they can explain their point of view, and only 60% (51%) feel comfortable speaking.

Varying degrees of discomfort in these areas were expressed by people over 55, stay at home parents, people earning under \$25,000, the unemployed, part time employees, residents of 6 - 10 years, and high school graduates.

Members are more inclined to attend meetings which are well organized and chaired, which are at a convenient time, and when there is a clear understanding of the topic's importance.

Communicating with members

Forums

Attendance at a variety of forums on things like security, budget, membership issues, and staffing have been fairly well attended. These should be encouraged.

The Weekly

77% always read it; 22% sometimes

IMPLICATIONS

Organized events are well supported

Some groups feel uncomfortable at meetings

Our methods for communicating seem to be working, BUT see other objectives on lack of communication between committees and Board.

As noted, seniors' attendance at GM's is a problem. Proxy votes are not the answer as they are not allowed under the Co-op Act.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

That the allowance for baby sitting be increased and a list of baby sitters be maintained and published.

That we study the paper on participation that was circulated a few months ago.

That the co-op study the restructuring of our meetings so a wider variety of input is encouraged and so that youth are more encouraged.

That we develop a buddy system so that new members get involved sooner

In order to ensure that new members are more familiar with the co-op movement and what it means to live in a co-op, information sessions for potential members should include an introduction to the co-op movement, about co-ops in general, co-op principles and co-ops around the neighbourhood and the world.

That we consider ways to improve older or less mobile members' ability to participate in co-op meetings and decision-making.

The co-op should look at improving integration of new members, such as new member orientation sessions. Orientation sessions should be held periodically prior to the budget meeting and the AGM and should include reading an agenda, rules of order, election procedures and participating in meetings. In order to catch up, these meetings should be open to all members.