

Open House Guide 2014



What is an open house and why should I have one?

An open house is a chance for potential members to see what Circle K is all about. It has more bells and whistles than a regular meeting and is also more welcoming to new members. Someone who is interested in service may not be interested in going to "Circle K's First Meeting of the Year" but they should be more interested in going to "Circle K's Fall Open House".

Table of Contents
1 – First steps to planning
2 - Promotion
3 – Open house activities
4 – Sample open house
5 – DOs and DON'Ts

First steps for planning an open house:

- Figure out when to hold it. If your school has welcome activities for freshmen, make sure you're not holding it at a time that conflicts with another big event. This could be at the same day and time your regular meetings will be, but doesn't have to be. Some clubs have their open house right away, during the week students arrive on campus, while others wait to have a regular meeting first to plan the open house.
- Book a room if possible. It's good to reserve a room for two hours just to be on the safe side even if you don't anticipate your event going that long.
- Get your board and members involved in the planning and promotion of your event. What made them realize that Circle K was an organization for them? Listen to their answers and consider implementing similar things in your open house.

Open House Guide 2014



Promotion ideas

- Set up a booth at your school's activity fair. You should have a poster or board with some information about your club, some papers to hand out to people, and some paper or a laptop to collect people's email addresses. It's also great to have something free that will attract people's attention. An economical option is having lollipops with labels on them that have the open house date on them. Whoever will be at the booth should work on their 30-second elevator speech beforehand so they can be prepared to explain what Circle K is.

Pro tip: display the Circle K logo prominently to attract former Key Clubbers.

- Make a Facebook event. Invite your school friends and encourage your current members to do the same. Put the URL on fliers, too.
- Go chalking. Email club members to set it up, pick up some chalk from the dollar store, and hit campus. Put the club name, the Circle K logo, the open house date, and maybe a slogan, like "live to serve, love to serve", "service, fellowship, leadership" or a fun one like "we do service, not slushies". Even if what your chalking is tenuously connected at best to Circle K, you'll be sure to attract attention while you're doing the chalking and can recruit that way too!
- Post some fliers around campus. A good place to start is in the dorms.
- You can get some FREE literature (like brochures) to pass out at tables or your open house from <https://store.kiwanis.org/CKI/Category/Meeting-Items.htm>

More promotion ideas and tips can be found in the upcoming recruitment newsletter!

Open House Guide 2014



So what exactly should happen at an open house?

It's up to you! Some clubs run their open house just like a meeting; they just give it a different name. However, think of what Circle K is about and how you want to convey that to potential members. Some helpful components include:

-A discussion of *what Circle K is*, both at your school and more broadly. A template PowerPoint presentation will be coming your way soon with information about Circle K at the district and international levels; a few slides will be left blank for you to fill in your club information like cool projects and typical meeting times. Some good things to emphasize are the international aspect (we're the world's largest student-run college service organization!) and district events (this year's Fall Rally is October 24-25 in Columbus). After you're done, ask what questions people have.

-A *service project*. Circle K's motto is "live to serve, love to serve", so it's great to include service in the open house and in an occasional meeting later. You can get some fleece to make blankets or simply make cards for residents of nursing homes or members of the military.

-*Fellowship*. This can be as structured or as unstructured as you want, from icebreakers and introductions to some down time for chatting while everyone's eating ice cream.

-Mention of *upcoming projects*. This should include at least one service project coming up in the next week or two so potential members can see what Circle K is all about, as well as big service projects that are further off on the horizon.

-*Food*. This is optional but typically very helpful. Even if you can't afford pizza or some "real" food, something as simple as chips or ice cream can be a big draw for students who are on the edge of leaving their dorm for an event. Your sponsoring Kiwanis club would probably be more than happy to give the club \$20 to pay for food if you asked them.

An example open house: Ohio State

-Chairs and tables were set up in a square to facilitate discussion and there were snacks! When people came in, there was a greeter who said hello and gave them an event calendar, agenda, and nametag. (These were set up ahead of time with 3 different colors, and the person handing them out alternated what color they gave out.)

-While people were eating, the club president gave a brief rundown and explained the activities/setup. Attendees were split into three groups by nametag color, each headed by a club officer. There were three stations and each group was at each station for thirty minutes.



1. An icebreaker activity. They did "I'm a Buckeye and You're a Buckeye Too" which you can adapt with your school's mascot. Group members form a circle with one person in the middle. They say "My name is (insert name) and I'm a Buckeye and you're a Buckeye too if..." and say something about them like "you like to play volleyball" or "you love dogs". If a statement is true for someone in the circle, they must switch spots with someone else in the circle. The last person without a spot is the new middle person. This helped people learn some new names as well as see that they have things in common with others there.

2. A "what is Circle K?" presentation. You can have a small game (like Jenga) there in case the presentation ends early, or just talk amongst the group.

3. A service project. OSU's club got fleece and brought scissors, and the project was cutting and tying them to make baby blankets for Project Linus. This was nice because it allowed people there to talk in a low-key atmosphere without being awkward.

Open House Guide 2014



Some DOs and DON'Ts

DO spread club officers and returning members out at the open house so they can talk to potential members. If you went to a meeting for a club you were interested in joining and no one talked to you, would you want to join? The more people talk to a potential member, the better.

DO have a service project coming up in the next week that people can sign up for. If it's off-campus, have rides arranged with a pick-up location.

DON'T talk about a bunch of expensive things at the open house. Once at the first meeting after an activity fair, with a bunch of new members, the president brought up district convention (when the cost was around \$150) and a summer volunteer trip (which cost \$1,500). This will scare potential members away because they'll think Circle K is just a bunch of expensive projects.

DO be enthusiastic! This will attract people who are also enthusiastic about service.

(Note: The jury is out on whether or not you should mention dues at your open house, so that's up to you. Some clubs wait until the second or third meeting because they're worried about scaring people away, but some are upfront. These clubs mention all the opportunities available to dues-paying members and then mention dues. If you haven't set a dues amount by your open house, you can give last year's number as an estimate.)

If you have any questions, please email me at MeganDHurley@gmail.com.

Yours in service,

Megan Hurley

Public Relations/Membership Development and Education Chair