



Association Representative Program

Sometimes referred to as Lane/Center/League Representative Program, the Association Representative Program is a tremendous way to strengthen the association's relationship with proprietors, increase a bowler's awareness of the association, and enhance the association's image. The Association Representative Program is a program in which volunteers are delegated to physically represent the association in centers within its jurisdiction.

Association representatives serve as the initial point of contact for the center he/she represents. These individuals could be responsible for such tasks as awards presentations, assisting league secretaries with league and award applications, answering general questions about the association, and acting as a liaison between the proprietor and association.

How the representative interacts with center management, league officers, and members can be influential in shaping perceptions of the association. Because of this, great care should be taken in choosing who will serve as a representative in each center. Consider consulting with the proprietor, league officers, and program directors in finding who would be an effective association representative for each center.

Ultimately, the Association Representative Program is based on the premise that customer service to the center, its staff, the leagues, and the members is what the association is all about.

Implementing the Program

The Association Representative Program should be adapted to fit the needs of the association. The following sections outline a few key components of making the program successful. Each is meant to serve as a guide in implementing the program.

1. **Developing A Plan.** The following chart illustrates a sample plan with steps to consider and realistic time frames:

Task Goal	Completion Date
Discuss the need for an Association Representative Program at a board meeting and obtain the commitment of the board in developing a program.	At the initial board meeting.
Establish a committee to develop the program.	At the initial board meeting.
Review current level of service to centers and members (be honest).	First month following the initial board meeting.
Gather input from proprietors, league officers, and members as to what their expectations would be of association representatives.	First month following the initial board meeting.



Task Goal	Completion Date
Using the information gathered, develop a written program, complete with job descriptions and expectations of association representatives, as well as short- and long-term program goals.	Two months following the initial board meeting.
Board is given the opportunity to discuss the program prepared by the committee, and votes to approve/amend. A firm date is set for implementation, and work begins right away to get the program up and running.	Three months following the initial board meeting.

2. **Overseeing the Program.** The association should have an individual responsible to see that all representatives are fulfilling their duties. In choosing a person for managing the program, consider the following qualities:

- The ability to deal with people in a positive way.
- Good communication skills.
- A working knowledge of the rules of the game.
- Knowledge of the products and services the association offers. An association may find managing the representative program is a fitting responsibility for a vice president, as the program;
 - Broadens the amount of experience and knowledge the individual gains relating to running association activities.
 - Helps prepare the individual to accept the greater responsibilities in a position such as president.

3. **Recruitment/Training/Education.** Recruiting, training, and educating a group of volunteers is of the utmost importance if the Association Representative Program is to be successful.

In order to attract new volunteers, the association must first understand that many people are not comfortable committing themselves to a program they feel may take up too much of their time or is unorganized. Rather, individuals are more willing to volunteer for specific programs that have:

- Well-defined expectations.
- Specific time frames.
- Good leadership and guidance.
- A sense of accomplishment.
- Recognition of a job well done.

Associations must actively seek volunteers, they are not going to come to you. In seeking candidates, board members may certainly be considered; however, it is not required that all participants in the Association Representative Program be board members, in fact, this is a great opportunity to involve new people who don't serve on your board.

In seeking volunteers, consider the following:

- Meet with center management and ask them to identify individuals who they believe would make good representatives (it is important that the person chosen has a good relationship with the center management and employees.)



- Talk to the league officers who, year-after-year, show up at the annual meeting.
- Look to older youth members who are ready to step up to adult leagues and might be interested in learning more and being more actively involved.

Once volunteers have been identified, the association must ensure these representatives have the tools and skills necessary to serve. A training program for the representatives is the easiest way to accomplish this.

The intensity of any training program will vary depending on the expectations of the representatives. The training program should:

- Set reasonable expectations.
- Provide the necessary tools and experiences.
- Challenge the individual.
- Provide the opportunity to build knowledge and confidence.
- Reinforce job expectations.

A successful training program will put association representatives in situations that they will likely face in their job duties. Therefore, it should provide instruction on topics such as commonly asked rules questions, the benefits of certifying a league, as well as public speaking. The association may also consider using a "shadow system," in which a new representative shadows a more experienced person for a specified period, getting to witness first hand what the association representative experiences.