

Ready for Renewal? Ideas to Rebuild Club Momentum

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Concrete Steps to Rebuild Momentum

Here are concrete, actionable steps Clubs can take to help rebuild momentum.

1. Structural Relief: The “Micro-Volunteering” Shift

The biggest bottleneck in a Club is usually a lack of members willing to take on massive, year-long executive roles.

- **Co-President/Co-Chair Models:** Encourage your Club to move away from single-person leadership roles. Splitting the President or Program Chair role into co-positions cuts both the workload and the emotional burden in half.
- **Task-Based Committees, Not Standing Committees:** Instead of asking someone to commit to a permanent, year-long position, break the work into short-term projects — for example, “help organize just the October speaker event” or “manage the website updates for two months.”
- **Executive “Dieting”:** Review your Club’s constitution to see which positions can be temporarily collapsed or combined. As part of reinvigorating your Club, governance should be streamlined so energy can go into programming instead.

2. Program Evolution: Beyond the Traditional Meeting

If monthly business meetings feel long and dry, attendance drops. The focus should shift toward gatherings that are more dynamic and accessible.

- **The “Interest Group” Gateway:** Members often join a Club not for the general business meeting, but for a specific interest group — a book club, an advocacy circle, a walking group. Promote these smaller, low-stakes groups as the primary entry point for new, busier members.
- **Hybrid and Accessible Formats:** In-person connection matters, but alternating with virtual meetings during harsh winter months, or shifting to a casual weekend-morning coffee format, can reach people who can’t commit to formal evening meetings.
- **High-Impact, Singular Advocacy:** Rather than tackling five different policy areas, rally behind one visible, local issue that resonates deeply with the community —

such as a local Intimate Partner Violence declaration or a specific community health initiative. A single, tangible win builds real pride and visibility.

3. Targeted Recruitment & Community Visibility

To attract a new generation of members, your Club needs to go where those potential members already are.

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Co-host an event with a local library, a university women’s alumni group, or a community health centre — it puts the CFUW name in front of a warm, civically minded audience instantly.
- **Experiential Learning Ties:** Tap into post-secondary networks by creating short-term project roles or micro-internships for students. It brings in fresh energy and a younger perspective on digital advocacy, and gives students valuable résumé experience.
- **The “Bring a Friend” Open House:** Replace a standard business meeting with a structured, celebratory social event designed for guests — one that focuses entirely on community impact and social connection rather than administrative updates.

THE CORE PHILOSOPHY

Reinvigoration isn’t about a Club doing more. It’s about permission to do less, but with greater focus on what brings members joy and a sense of purpose.

Reinvigorating Through Interest Groups

An analysis of Ontario Council Clubs’ submissions to the National Survey on Interest Groups (Fall 2025) found that interest groups are essential to CFUW’s identity and success. Clubs may need a strategic mix of groups that create “buzz” for recruitment and “stickiness” for retention — focusing on high-energy trends, modernized classics, and purpose-driven advocacy to attract new energy and re-engage current members.

1. High-Energy & “Buzz” Groups (Recruitment)

These groups signal that the Club is active and modern — essential for attracting a younger or more diverse membership.

- **Pickleball & Outdoor Fitness:** Trading traditional sports for trending ones like Pickleball or Outdoor Fitness/Urban Poling creates immediate visibility in the community.
- **Active Adventure:** High-impact activities like Dragon Boating, Downhill Skiing, or Paddling/Kayaking help break the “sedentary” stereotype of traditional social clubs.
- **Modern Media:** Moving beyond traditional books to a Netflix Movie Group, Foreign Films, or a Rebel Book Club appeals to members looking for contemporary cultural discussion.

2. Intellectual & Lifestyle Growth (Retention)

Reinvigoration also means offering “value-add” groups that give members skills they wouldn’t easily get elsewhere.

- **Finance & Tech Literacy:** Groups like an Investment Group/Investments Plus or a Tech Club/Tech Talk provide practical, high-value knowledge that keeps members feeling empowered and current.
- **Personal Wellness:** Mindfulness and Meditation, Yoga (including Chair Yoga), or Psychology and Spirituality speak to today’s focus on mental health.
- **Creative Workshops:** Moving from passive “appreciation” to active “creation” with a Writers’ Workshop, Photography Club, or Memoir Writing.

3. Impact-Based Social Action (Mission)

A Club feels alive when it has a clear purpose. Reinvigoration often means leaning back into CFUW’s advocacy roots.

- **Targeted Social Issues:** Moving from general advocacy to specific, urgent causes, such as Environmental/Climate Change Action or University Women Helping Afghan Women.
- **Direct Community Outreach:** Programs with a tangible local benefit — like the School for Young Moms or Community Outreach — build shared pride and a sense of accomplishment among members.

4. “The Glue” (Consistency)

New groups bring excitement, but reinvigoration fails if members don't form deep bonds. The "social pillars" that ensure frequent contact still matter.

- **The Bridge & Games Network:** With nearly every Ontario Council Club running multiple Bridge or Mah Jong groups, these remain the most effective way to make sure members see each other weekly.
- **Frequent Culinary Socials:** Simple, high-frequency groups like a Lunch Bunch or Coffee and Conversation provide the consistent, informal "third space" that keeps a Club feeling like a community.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

To reinvigorate, a Club should launch one "Buzz" group (like Pickleball) and one "Impact" group (like Climate Action) at the same time — showing both a modern lifestyle and a meaningful purpose.