

COPs or ACEs
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In his book “Managing People is like Herding Cats”, author and university president Warren Bennis has an interesting chapter on Cops and Aces. COP is an acronym for control, order, and predict. This acronym was developed to describe those organizations that are dominated by command and control to direct their manpower and resources. This type of organization appeared to be successful in the 19th century. However, this management approach does not work in a volunteer organization.

ACE stands for acknowledge, create, and empower. The author maintains that organizations in the future must have an atmosphere where individuals acknowledge shared objectives, have the opportunity to share creative ideas, and are empowered to take action.

These same concepts are applicable to our Lions clubs. Today, too many individuals are controlling their clubs who order things done because they think they can predict the results. Members of the younger generations are not going to join, nor have they joined, this type of organization. We no longer can command and order just because we have always done it this way. To continue to grow and be effective our clubs must embrace a new form of leadership and management. We must acknowledge that change can be good and everyone has something important to contribute to our organization. An atmosphere must be in place so that new creative solutions to problems are encouraged rather than silenced. And finally, we must empower our people with a sense that what they do has significance, meaning, and is needed. Those who have successfully led in the past must become role models and coaches not masters or commanders. We must provide opportunities for new ideas and programs and new leadership to be utilized. We must embrace change, and not fear it. We must take some risks and accept new social realities in our communities, all while reaching out to meet the needs of mankind. Our strength is in leading others through our serving. We must not live in the past, but in the present, with our eyes on the future.

Lions Clubs will attract new members and will grow by being visionary. Vigorous, visionary leaders will inspire their clubs to attempt new and exciting programs, and to seek out new members who will strengthen the club’s capacity and willingness to embark on new avenues of service. Command and control must be replaced with empowerment. If we do not embrace this change, then COPs will be the robbers of growth and effectiveness, and our ACE cards will not be played.