

Thanks everyone who attended last Thursday's meeting on "Be a Vibrant Club"; the small group discussions resulted in many good ideas on how we can focus on membership to keep Sunrise Rotary moving forward and staying relevant. If you weren't able to attend, a very brief overview of the presentation part of the meeting was:

- Membership in Rotary across North America is down 18% since 1995; Sunrise is mirroring this trend, down 12% since 2010
- We have made some progress in diversity, especially in taking in new female members who now make up 29% of the club. We have much more improvement to make in regards to ethnic diversity- we do not represent a cross-section of the community. What great Rotarians are we missing out on?
- Our membership is aging- 12 years ago the average age was 54; today it is 64. Where will Sunrise Rotary be in 5 years? In 10 years? With an older average age comes less energy and engagement.
- In the last 15 months members have invited 36 guests, or one guest for each two Rotarians per year. There is no substitute in growing membership than Rotarians bringing guests. Every Rotarian is a de facto Membership Committee member.

The challenge was then put to out to the club, which broke into small groups for 30 minutes of brainstorming, "What does Sunrise Rotary have to be for YOU to bring guests so that we can continue to grow the club?"

If you were not at the meeting, we would like your input and ideas- please send your thoughts to Marty Behr and Paul O'Rear, to be included in discussions on implementation.

A summary of the discussion highlights was:

Program/Speakers

The idea that got the most support was establishing a committee to focus on having excellent programs and speakers. This is a strategy the Sonoma Valley club has implemented effectively and is listed by their members as a key to their continual growth. Excellent speakers make it an easy ask for members to bring prospective members. We can market ahead of time to people interested in upcoming topics. A suggestion was made that we set aside funds for cover occasional travel costs needed to attract high quality speakers. Several Rotarians offered to be part of this effort.

Several people mentioned periodically having a program just to talk about our service projects, where members can educate their acquaintances on how much Rotary does in the community and invite them to join the fun and effort.

Meeting Timing/Format

Most people thought it would be a good idea to substitute a service project or social event in lieu of a meeting on an occasional basis; there was about an even split between how often- monthly, quarterly or

???. Mixing it up in this way broadens members' ability to invite acquaintances that might not jump at attending a breakfast meeting but would, say, be very interested in helping on a service project. Projects suggested included Redwood Empire Food Bank, Rebuilding Together, assembling bicycles at Christmas and putting food packages together.

A social activity would enable members to bring friends or colleagues that could get to know Rotarians through fellowship, making it easy to bring them to a subsequent meeting. Social activities mentioned included a movie night, a brewery event, joint dinner with another club and hikes

Other ideas mentioned included not losing touch with having FUN at meetings (which we do a pretty good job at), spending less time on announcements by letting members know of upcoming events by alternative means (table top calendars, website calendar, weekly Clubrunner, etc.), joining with other clubs to get a critical mass for larger service/social/fundraising and restoring the mandatory attendance requirement.

Prospective Member Outreach- What are we about?

Many good points were raised:

- Work on our Club's "Compelling Sales Proposition"
- Set aside one day per month for projects so members can plan ahead
- Focus on reaching out to guests with our Hiking Program, which is unique in our District
- Improved greeting and welcoming of guests- everyone should be a secret greeter
- Use social media to target a younger group
- Partner with other Clubs and/or 20-30 Club for service projects, activities or fundraisers to gain critical mass
- Do more Firesides at people's homes; they are great to bring guests to LEARN about Rotary
- Offer members Rotary "business" cards with meeting time and place

Membership

Many clubs are going to expanded categories of membership so as to reach a broader audience. Not everyone agreed on changing membership types but more people supported the concept than disagreed. Two areas were discussed:

- Offer corporate or organizational memberships where one person is a full member but others from the company may attend, to expose a greater number of people to Rotary
- Offer two-tiered costs of membership so that we can attract younger members with lower dues and/or reach out to spouses of Rotarians at half price, etc.

All in all, it was an exciting morning to be part of the club and talk about where we want to go.