

# Club Service Director

## Participant Workbook

## SECTION 1

### Agenda

MIN	BLOCK	PURPOSE & CONTENT	METHOD
00–03	Open	Welcome. "Club Service is the OS, not a calendar."	Plenary; one word chat: "what does a thriving club feel like?"
03–08	Framing Role	The six accountabilities; Director as Club COO; role boundary.	Short input; participant self audit on six accountabilities (1–5)
08–14	First Principle Frame	Question / Evidence / Limitation / Hidden Assumption / Conclusion.	Walkthrough on Workbook
14–21	Club Service Directorship	Signal / Implication / So-what / Falsifier matrix - what changes if we do this well.	Plenary; pick the most provocative falsifier
21–28	Watch · Learn · Act	Translate the four signals into time phased moves; the Director's standing playbook.	Participants draft one Watch/Learn/Act row for their club
28–35	Objectives	Five outcome objectives, each paired with a falsifier (what would prove this objective failed).	Pick/formulate a local metric and falsifier for your club.
35–44	Strategy	Hurdles & enablers; the Director's routines and conducts.	Breakout: each group adds two hurdles and two enablers
44–50	Resources & District announcements	Rotary Learning Center, My Rotary, D9800 site, District Awards, MDC 16–18 April 2027 (Warrnambool), website enhancements.	Walkthrough; bookmarks; call to action
50–60	Any Other Topics/Comments plus Q&As	Floor opens for participant-proposed topics, comments and questions.	Round robin; chat queue; commitments captured

## SECTION 2

## Framing

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Club Service is the operating system on which every Avenue of Service runs. Invest in the operating system, or the applications running on top of it will eventually crash. The Director of Club Service holds the standing decisions that bias the club toward health: member experience, meeting quality, culture, communications and the felt sense of belonging.

Two beliefs frame the workshop. First: activity is not impact - a club can run a polished calendar of events and still lose members, because the metric of merit is felt belonging and service impact, not event count. Second: a Director's year is a quasi experiment - every move should carry a falsifier, the condition that would prove it did not work, so that the club can stop, learn, and re-plan rather than drift.

## SECTION 3

## Role

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The Director of Club Service is the club's Chief Operating Officer. The role is responsible for the operating conditions of a healthy organisation - meeting quality, member experience, culture, communications, fellowship, attendance, recognition, and is accountable to the Board for the leading indicators of club health that determine success in every other Avenue of Service.

**Six accountabilities**

- Member experience - programs, meetings, fellowship; the felt quality of being in the club.
- Culture & belonging - habits of welcome, recognition, voice, and inclusion across generations and cultures.
- Communications -frequency, formal and informal, attendance follow up, meeting documentation.
- Operations - calendar, venues, speakers, hosting, AV, minutes, attendance, records.
- Engagement instrumentation - measuring contribution, belonging, attendance and acting on the signal.
- Leadership pipeline - facilitating the next layer of committee chairs and successors.

**Role boundary.** The Director supports many other Rotarians but does not do their jobs for them. The Director introduce the system; committees and members operate it.

## SECTION 4

## First Principle Frame

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**Question.** What is the irreducible reason this role exists, and what would prove the role is working?

**Evidence.** Rotary International defines five Avenues of Service; Club Service is the first and operationally upstream of the other four. District 9800 explicitly frames the Director as the club's Chief Operating Officer. PELD 2026 evidence: belonging, shared roles, kind but clear communication (Situation–Behaviour–Impact) and small cycle action (GROW; 30 day commitments) are the active ingredients of club health.

**Limitation.** Most guidance is descriptive (what a Director does) not causal (which actions move which outcomes). Volunteer led data is sparse, self reported and confounded by cohort and geography.

**Hidden assumption.** That activity equals impact. A club can run a polished calendar and still lose members, because the metric of merit is felt belonging and service impact - not event count.

**Conclusion.** Reframe Club Service Directorship from "running the meeting calendar" to "operating the conditions under which members choose to stay, contribute and recruit." Everything else is a downstream tactic.

## SECTION 5

**Club Service Directorship · Signal / Implication / So-what / Falsifier**

Board one pager. What changes if we do this well and what would prove we did not.

SIGNAL	IMPLICATION	SO-WHAT FOR THE DIRECTOR	FALSIFIER (KILL CRITERION)
Club Service Director = club's COO Operational excellence precedes service impact.	Member experience, meeting quality and culture are leading indicators of retention and giving.	Treat the role as the organisation's operations; not events coordination.	12 month rolling member NPS does not move $\geq +10$ pts despite intervention.
Rotary Action Plan 2024–27: Enhance Participant Engagement is an explicit pillar.	Engagement is a measurable, accountable outcome - not a feeling. Clubs that cannot measure it cannot move it.	Instrument engagement (attendance, contribution count, perceived belonging).	Cannot produce a baseline engagement dashboard within 60 days of start.
PELD 2026 evidence: belonging is built, not wished for; shared roles drive ownership.	A club where 1–2 people carry the load is structurally fragile, regardless of headline activity.	Distribute responsibility; design role cards for every member.	At Q2, > 30% of members hold zero defined role or contribution.
Young professionals trial before they commit; senior members carry continuity.	Single cohort design fails both groups. Inter generational design is the only sustainable model.	Run paired mentoring; co-design club rituals across cohorts.	Year on year retention of members < 40 yrs falls below 70%.

**Bottom line.** Club Service is the operating system on which every Avenue of Service runs. Invest in the OS, or the apps will crash.

## SECTION 6

**Watch · Learn · Act**

Translating the four signals from Section 5 into time phased moves.

SIGNAL	WATCH (THIS MONTH)	LEARN (THIS QUARTER)	ACT (WITHIN 90 DAYS)
1. Director = club's COO	Meeting quality pulse; chair of the day patterns	D9800 Health Check; RLC Club Service modules	Publish Director's standing operating playbook (1 page)
2. Action Plan: Enhance Engagement	Attendance heat map; absentee tail	RI Enhance Engagement materials; member engagement playbook	Belonging pulse instrument live; baseline reported to Board
3. Belonging is built, not wished for	Who is welcomed; who is followed up; who is invisible	PELD 2026 Takeaways; Culture section of toolkit	Member role card grid published; $\geq 90\%$ coverage
4. Inter generational design	Cohort mix in programs; voice share in meetings	Membership toolkit (Revitalise, Recruitment, Retention)	Paired senior / < 40 program co-chairs assigned

## SECTION 7

**Objectives · Year of Service**

Five outcome based objectives. Each is paired with a falsifier - the condition that, if observed, proves the objective failed.

#	OBJECTIVE	LEADING METRIC	FALSIFIER
1	Raise felt belonging across the membership.	Anonymous belonging pulse $\geq$ 4.2/5 by month 9; baseline by month 2.	Pulse score flat or down vs. baseline at month 9.
2	Distribute contribution - every member holds a defined role.	$\geq$ 90% of members have a named role card by Q2.	> 30% of members hold zero defined role at Q2.
3	Lift meeting quality.	Post meeting 30 second pulse $\geq$ 4.0/5 for $\geq$ 75% of meetings.	Pulse below 3.5/5 across two consecutive quarters.
4	Retain young professional members.	12 month retention < 40 yrs $\geq$ 80%.	Retention of < 40 yrs falls below 70%.
5	Build the next leadership layer.	$\geq$ 1 successor identified and shadowing committee chairs by month 9.	Zero named successors at month 9.

## SECTION 8

**Strategy · Hurdles & Enablers**

The Director's job is to remove restraining forces faster than they emerge, and to reinforce driving forces deliberately. Strategy = the standing decisions that bias the system toward health.

<b>DRIVING FORCE (ENABLER)</b>	<b>RESTRAINING FORCE (HURDLE)</b>	<b>DIRECTOR'S STANDING MOVE</b>
Clear, shared purpose	Purpose narrative known to leadership but not felt by members	Open every meeting with one minute on the club's purpose linked to projects, activities, or that night's program
Distributed roles and ownership	President bottleneck & same 1–2 people on every committee	Publish a member role card grid; no chair sits twice without a named successor.
Inter generational design	Programs default to the tastes of the dominant cohort	Co-chair program planning across one senior and one < 40 member each quarter
Clear, kind communication (SBI)	Conflict avoidance; resentment leaking through attendance	Train all committee chairs on Situation–Behaviour–Impact in first month
Small cycle action (GROW; 30 day commitments)	Annual plans that never start; meetings that decide nothing	End every committee meeting with one 30 day commitment with a named owner
Belonging rituals - welcome, recognition, follow up	Members drift after 2–3 missed meetings	Standing 48 hour check-in protocol after 2-3 meetings absence
Instrumentation - pulse, attendance, contribution	No data; impressions substituted for evidence	Monthly two-metric dashboard to the Board: belonging pulse, contribution density

## SECTION 9

## Resources

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**District 9800**

District 9800 home. [rotarydistrict9800.org.au](https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au)

Club Service overview. [rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/club-service](https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/club-service)

District Awards 2025 - nominate clubs and members; recognition logo for use on club materials.  
[rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/club-service/district-awards-2025](https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/club-service/district-awards-2025)

Strategic Planning. [rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/club-service/strategic-planning](https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/club-service/strategic-planning)

Public Image and Communication - brand, signage, social, club PR review and improvement.  
[rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/public-image](https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au/sitepage/public-image)

District Events. [rotarydistrict9800.org.au/events](https://rotarydistrict9800.org.au/events)

**District announcements · please brief your club**

**District Awards.** All clubs are encouraged to nominate members, projects and clubs for the District 9800 Awards. Recognition matters - it makes excellent work visible and reproducible. Nomination details, criteria and the District Recognition Logo are at [the District Awards page](#).

**Multi District Conference 2027.** All clubs and members across District 9800 are encouraged to attend the Multi District Conference, 16–18 April 2027 in Warrnambool, Victoria - hosted jointly by Districts 9780, 9510 and 9800. Three days by the sea to reflect, connect and think differently about the future of Rotary. Appoint your Club's Ontario Conference Chair. Details, programme and registration at [rotaryimpactsummit.org](https://rotaryimpactsummit.org).

**Website enhancements.** Clubs are asked to refresh their websites this year: confirm the District-compliant logo and current year's message, update the events calendar, review the bulletin and the social-image set, and check accessibility and mobile rendering. The District Public Image team can assist you with the review your club's PR assets and assist with improvements - see [Public Image and Communication](#). Clubs considering a ClubRunner refresh can start a free 30 day trial at [site.clubrunner.ca/Form/clubrunner-club-version](https://site.clubrunner.ca/Form/clubrunner-club-version).

**Rotary International**

Rotary Learning Center - courses on Club Service, leadership, membership, communications (My Rotary login required). [learn.rotary.org](https://learn.rotary.org)

Rotary Action Plan 2024–27 - Increase impact, Expand reach, Enhance engagement, Increase adaptability.  
[my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/action-plan](https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/action-plan)

Club Committee resources. [my.rotary.org/en/club-committee](https://my.rotary.org/en/club-committee)

My Rotary home. [my.rotary.org](https://my.rotary.org)

P.S.

### Survey Q&As - Top 10 Questions

1. If Rotary's fundamental value proposition of combining fellowship, personal development, and community service through weekly meetings of local professionals was designed for the social and economic conditions of 1905, what evidence demonstrates this model remains optimal for 2025, and what would we design differently if starting from first principles today?
2. Does Rotary's federated governance structure which was designed to preserve club autonomy and democratic participation systematically prevent the coordinated strategic transformation required to address existential challenges, and if so, is the organisation structurally capable of saving itself?
3. Has Rotary's annual leadership rotation model which replaces club presidents, district governors, and most board positions every 12 months created an institutional incapacity for strategic continuity, organisational learning, and sustained transformation that no individual leader's talent can overcome?
4. Why does Rotary lack systematic mechanisms to sense emerging community needs, competitive threats, and strategic opportunities, and has this sensing deficit caused leadership to repeatedly misdiagnose problems and implement solutions that address symptoms rather than root causes?
5. Has Rotary's cultural veneration of tradition and resistance to change, attachment to historical practices, and discomfort with deviation from established norms, become the primary barrier to adaptation, overpowering evidence, logic, and survival instinct?
6. Is Rotary's current donor engagement model which relies heavily on member giving, annual appeals, and relationship based major gifts systematically misaligned with contemporary philanthropic behaviour, and has the organisation failed to adapt because it lacks the analytical capability to understand donor decision making as strategic interaction?
7. Does Rotary's club level autonomy which allows clubs to prioritise fellowship, local projects, or individual interests over coordinated humanitarian impact systematically fragment effort, prevent scale, and undermine the collective action that mission achievement requires?
8. Has Rotary's volunteer only leadership model, which excludes professional management expertise from strategic decision making, created a capability gap that prevents the organisation from matching the strategic sophistication of professional competitors, and is this gap widening as the philanthropic sector professionalises?
9. Why has Rotary failed to develop systematic mechanisms for learning from project outcomes, disseminating best practices, and terminating ineffective approaches; and has this learning deficit caused the organisation to repeat failures, ignore successes, and accumulate dysfunction rather than wisdom over 120 years?
10. If the root causes of Rotary's challenges are structural (governance), cultural (change resistance), and capability based (sensing, learning, adaptation deficits) rather than programmatic (membership processes, fundraising tactics, project design), why has leadership consistently invested in programmatic interventions while avoiding structural, cultural, and capability reforms, and what would it take to finally address root causes rather than symptoms?

Any and all comments and queries welcomed.

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