LEVERAGING LOCAL EVENTS TO GROW ROTARY

A MEMBERSHIP AND MARKETING GUIDE
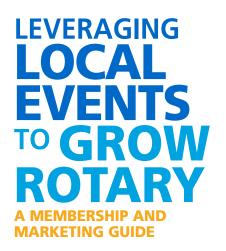
Rotary

LEVERAGING
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EVENTS
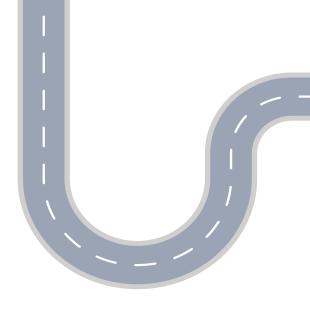# TO GROW
ROTARY
A MEMBERSHIP AND MARKETING GUIDE

Is the Rotary International Convention or another large event coming to your hometown? Conventions and conferences, whether they are associated with Rotary or not, can be a great opportunity to raise awareness about Rotary and attract new members.

In past years, visits to Rotary.org have increased by more than 500% in the week leading up to the Rotary Convention. This guide offers membership and marketing strategies that can help you make the most of large public events in your community and prepare clubs for interest that may arise when people learn more about Rotary.
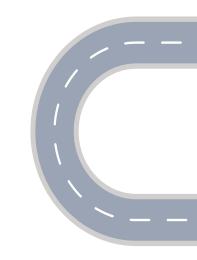
Be sure to plan ahead: Starting months or even years in advance can help ensure that you'll be successful in enhancing Rotary's public image and expanding our reach.

To navigate the journey of preparing your clubs, follow the four steps outlined below. You'll find more information about each step later in this guide.

PLAN

Determine how much time you'll need to develop and implement a plan based on the tips in this guide. Take into account the size of the event and the state of membership in your district.

Rotary

1 ENGAGE A STRONG LEADERSHIP TEAM

Your district will need an effective team to manage this effort. Key leaders will include:

- The governor, governor-elect, and governor-nominee
- The district membership chair and committee
- The district public image chair and committee

2 GET CLUBS READY

Because big events can dramatically raise awareness of your club and Rotary, it's important that when prospective members visit, the clubs in your district are ready for them. Club as well as district leaders will be part of this effort.

Before starting this process, talk to your club and district leaders and get their support. Your success depends on their willingness to participate.

3 PLAN YOUR PROMOTION

Act strategically to raise awareness about Rotary in your area. Develop a plan to promote the benefits of membership and the activities that clubs in your area are involved in.

4 LEARN ABOUT PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Promoting Rotary in your area will pique people's curiosity. When they express interest, contact them promptly and get to know them. Ask what their main service interests are, such as promoting literacy, protecting the environment, or building peace. Invite them to learn more about how Rotary works with communities to address these issues.

EVENT

Rotary

ENGAGE A STRONG LEADERSHIP TEAM

Taking advantage of a large event to grow Rotary in your area will require strong leadership, planning, and hard work. When the district governor, governor-elect, and governor-nominee work together on an approach, you'll have a better chance of success. Make sure your district has effective membership and public image chairs with strong teams to support them. You may even want to establish a special committee to implement your plan.

The membership and public image chairs, along with their committees, should:

- Understand the opportunity that the event presents and their role in the plan
- Be committed to growing Rotary and implementing the plan
- Have proven expertise, such as success increasing membership or promoting Rotary
- Be connected to the community and have strong relationships with clubs and members
- Have time to make this a priority and to respond to communications
- Be ready and willing to work as part of a team

UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE

These resource will help district leaders prepare:

- Membership chairs and their committees can learn about the responsibilities of the district membership committee, complete the District Membership Committee Intermediate learning plan, and find membership resources.
- Public image chairs and their committees can complete the District Public Image Committee Intermediate learning plan, visit the Brand Center, and find public relations resources.

ENGAGE

Making sure that the district membership and public image committees agree on the approach and support the effort will be critical to your success.

MAKE IT OFFICIAL

Be sure to add your district leaders in My Rotary to ensure they receive important information about their roles.

Rotary

GET CLUBS READY

Talk to the clubs in your district about how the upcoming event can increase awareness of Rotary in their community, and help them prepare so that visitors to their clubs have a positive experience.

Encourage club leaders to make their meetings fun, inclusive, and appealing to guests. Some clubs may already have practices in place to ensure that visitors feel welcome, such as introducing them or assigning someone to answer questions and talk to them afterward. In the chart below, you'll find more ways to help clubs engage members and guests.

AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR	PUBLIC IMAGE CHAIR
Review membership trends using reports in My Rotary such as the Club Membership Profile, Member Viability and Growth, and 5-Year History of Membership Start Figures. Use these to identify which clubs need support, which are thriving, and which are representative of their community. Decide which clubs may need extra support.	Review every club's website and social media pages. Use the Web Presence Assessment to ensure that they're using consistent messaging, providing content that's interesting for audiences outside Rotary, and adhering to our brand guidelines. Identify which clubs need help updating their digital presence.
Make the most of your membership leads. Take the Online Membership Leads course and refer to the Grow Your District Using Membership Leads guide to develop a process to manage them. Use the suggested scripts in the Prospective Member Outreach Template (For Districts) when you contact people. Ensure that your club membership chairs are managing their leads and assist them when needed.	Learn about the resources in the Brand Center and recommend them to clubs. Your district may have a public image webpage with resources, which you can also share with clubs.

Meet with club leaders to discuss their challenges, successes, and opportunities. Recognize the clubs that are exceeding expectations.

GET CLUBS READY

AT THE CLUB LEVEL

PRESIDENT	MEMBERSHIP CHAIR	PUBLIC IMAGE CHAIR
Appoint club membership and public image chairs and report the club chair roles to Rotary	Use the Club Planning Assistant for support in addressing your club's greatest challenges and the Club Membership Committee Checklist to build a strong committee. Find more information in the Club Membership Committee Basics learning plan.	Take the courses in the Club Public Image Committee Basics learning plan to explore how to tell Rotary's story and promote your club's projects and activities. Find more resources in the Brand Center.
Take the Is Your Club Healthy? course to learn how to improve your club's service and social activities, public image, operations, and overall member experience.	Use the Member Satisfaction Survey to learn what people think about your club. Act on the results and consider implementing ideas from your members. You can use the Action Plan template in this guide to document your strategy. Using the worksheet in the Finding New Club Members guide, review membership trends and local demographics to identify who's missing from your club. Then, based on the strategies in the Diversify Your Club course, decide how you'll build relationships with prospective members.	Use the Club Public Image Chair Checklist, the Your Logos at a Glance guide, and the Public Image learning plan to evaluate your online presence. Make changes if necessary to present dynamic and compelling content that reflects your club. Ensuring that your club uses Rotary's logos correctly and consistently also strengthens our brand recognition.
Take the Creating an Inclusive Club Culture course to see what changes may be needed in your club.	Follow up with the membership leads assigned to your club. The Grow Your Club Using Membership Leads guide, along with a documented, agreed-upon process to manage and approach candidates, can help. Use the guidance in the Prospective Member Outreach Template (For Clubs) when you contact people.	Create a club brochure using the customizable template in the Brand Center. Watch the How to Make a Rotary Club Logo video to learn more.

Take the Leading Change course to learn how to assess people's readiness for change, how to plan for change, and how to respond to resistance.

Use the Strategic Planning Guide to document your plans and keep your club accountable.

Rotary

PLAN YOUR PROMOTION

3

A strong public image campaign reinforces that Rotary is a respected organization that brings people together to tackle the most persistent problems in our communities while building professional and leadership skills through meaningful connections. A Rotary Convention or other large event can draw attention to Rotary and the work you do in your area. With a coordinated promotion plan, you can choose the messages you want to highlight about the impact that local clubs are making, the benefits of membership, and the opportunities that Rotary can provide. The district public image committee should lead this effort. Use the tips and ideas below to help reach your target audience.

AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL:
DEVELOP A PUBLIC IMAGE CAMPAIGN

A public image campaign is a promotion plan designed to deliver a particular message to specific audiences. Once the campaign is developed, you'll need to enlist the club public image committees to help implement it. As you develop your campaign, consider these questions:

1. What do we want to achieve and how can we do it?

Whether you want to increase awareness of Rotary and your clubs or attract prospective members to Rotary, it's important to identify an overall goal with specific, measurable objectives. Document this goal and revisit it periodically to gauge your progress. Use data to refine or redirect your strategy. Use the Action Plan in this guide to document your ideas.

2. Who is our intended audience?

Think about who is most likely to be interested in your Rotary or Rotaract clubs and why. What groups are missing from clubs in your area? Consider factors like people's age, gender, interests, location, and profession. Think about how your club experience would appeal to your target audience.

3. Where do people in these groups get information?

Consider how you'll reach your intended audience. Are they more likely to read certain publications? Are they active on social media? Based on the answers to questions like these, you can plan whether to focus your efforts on social media, websites, blog posts, print communications, or radio and television.

PLAN

Work together to make sure clubs are ready for visitors before starting your promotion. This ensures that people will have the best possible experience.

MAKE IT OFFICIAL

You have many free and low-cost ways to promote your club, but allocating some funds to your efforts will help expand your reach and make your promotion more effective.

PLAN YOUR PROMOTION

4. What resources do we have, and what do we need?

Assess your existing resources, connections, and expertise to help determine what you can make use of and what you may need assistance with. For example, your district leadership team may include someone who's good at promoting events on social media, but may need someone who is skilled at creating the content.

5. What do we want our audience to know, think, feel, and do?

We want our audience to *know*:

- Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million people in more than 46,000 clubs who use their diverse perspectives and collective leadership and expertise to address tough problems.
- Rotary members promote peace, fight disease, provide clean water and sanitation, save mothers and children, support education, grow local economies, and protect the environment.
- While doing this, Rotary members develop valuable skills and build lifelong friendships.

We want our audience to *think*: "Wow, I didn't realize that Rotary is a global organization with an extensive network that is making this kind of impact in my community and around the world."

We want our audience to *feel* inspired, curious to learn more, and motivated to contact us. Someone who wants to make a difference in their community but doesn't know where to start may now want to learn more about what Rotary offers. They may hope that, through Rotary, they can connect with a large network of people in a way that benefits them personally and professionally and also benefits their community.

We want our audience to *act* on their interest and inspiration. For example, we want them to go to our websites and social media pages to learn more about Rotary, and to then take the next step by using the Join page or by contacting a local club.

6. How will you know if you're making progress?

As you're developing your promotion plan, think about how it will help you achieve your overall goal as well as the individual objectives you set for this effort. Determine how you can measure your progress and at what points you'll do that. Then you can confirm whether you're on track or need to make changes. For example, you could measure web traffic using Google Analytics and compare the results to the previous year's traffic. You could also measure the number of membership leads you received compared with the previous year.

An important part of your plan will be working with clubs to update their public-facing webpages and social media pages. Remember that being consistent in our messaging and images — through public relations, events, advertising, and online communications — builds awareness and understanding of how our members take action to create positive change in themselves, and in communities around the world. This strengthens Rotary's brand.

PLAN YOUR PROMOTION

AT THE CLUB AND DISTRICT LEVELS: LAUNCHING YOUR CAMPAIGN

PROMOTION METHOD	RESOURCES	EXAMPLE
WEBSITES Your website may be the first place that people who are interested in Rotary learn about your club.	Learn how to maximize your club and district websites with these guidelines. Share them with clubs and encourage them to implement the tips.	Clubs and districts should update their websites before the campaign is launched so that people will find Rotary-branded sites with the information they're seeking.
SOCIAL MEDIA Social media is one of the most effective ways to connect with large audiences. Learn how to use social media to achieve your goals and discover which platforms work best for your club.	Share Rotary International's social media posts or use them as a model for your own posts. Encourage your club public image chairs to do the same.	You can plan social media posts to promote club or district events, projects, or a larger Rotary initiative that uses a shared, relevant hashtag.
EVENTS Holding smaller local events well before the large conference or Rotary Convention is an ideal way to promote your club in the community. Based on the type of event, decide what groups of prospective members you plan to focus on.	Use these tips to organize events that inspire people to want to get involved in Rotary.	If the larger event your campaign is tied to focuses on women's health, for example, you can promote an event sponsored by a club or district that features a speaker knowledgeable about that topic. You could then connect with and invite members of women's organizations when you promote the event.
PROSPECTIVE MEMBER EVENT Depending on the size of your district, host one or more district-wide events for prospective members to showcase the impact of Rotary in your area.	Create club brochures and distribute them to visitors and at events. Use the customizable template in the Brand Center. See these best practices for hosting a prospective member event.	You might focus a prospective member event on addressing questions about Rotary that members of the community have asked.

Rotary

PLAN YOUR PROMOTION

AT THE CLUB AND DISTRICT LEVELS: LAUNCHING YOUR CAMPAIGN

PROMOTION METHOD	RESOURCES	EXAMPLE
SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS You can use speaking engagements to help people better understand Rotary and how we work with communities. Develop and practice your presentation so you can effectively communicate your message.	Take these courses created for Rotary by Toastmasters International to build your public speaking skills: • Develop a speech • Deliver a speech • Inspirational speech	If you have members who are exceptional presenters, find opportunities for them to speak at events where they can give an inspiring speech about Rotary to nonmembers. If there is a speaker's bureau in your district, start there.
PARTNERSHIPS Clubs can amplify their effect by working with other local organizations. Show your club's affiliation with a partner by using Rotary's customizable logo templates.	Learn about Rotary's alliance with Toastmasters. Find logos in the Brand Center.	If your area has a Toastmasters club or another organization whose values align with Rotary's, you can expand your reach by inviting its members to participate in a service activity or social event.
ADVERTISING Advertising reaches people who may not know who we are or what we do. Use print and digital ads, as well as audio and video, to promote your club members as people of action.	Find ad resources in the Brand Center that you can use in your advertisements. Distribute the prospective member flyer at events where your club has a presence.	Your plan may include targeted advertising such as billboards, radio ads, or paid social media posts.
MERCHANDISE Wearing and using merchandise purchased from Rotary's licensed vendors strengthens our brand. Work with our vendors to customize Rotary-branded merchandise.	Buy Rotary-branded clothing and materials from a licensed vendor in your area. Download, print, and hand out the What's Rotary? wallet card to people who might be interested in joining.	Your campaign could include supplying members with wallet cards to give people who ask about Rotary.

Regardless of whether someone joins Rotary, it's important that we create a positive experience for them. Even if a person doesn't join a club, they might still participate in a club's service activities or refer other people to Rotary.

LEARN ABOUT PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

When your promotional activities increase interest in Rotary, clubs may receive more inquiries, have more visitors at their meetings, or get more questions from acquaintances about Rotary. The district membership chair may find that membership leads increase. When you contact prospective members to get to know them better, you can create a positive experience for them and increase the chances that they'll find what they're looking for in Rotary.

Cultivating genuine connections with prospective members takes time, good communication, and planning.

DISTRICT AND CLUB MEMBERSHIP CHAIRS SHOULD:

1. Establish procedures.

Decide on a clear process for who will contact and verify membership leads in order to avoid duplicating efforts or overlooking anyone.

2. Monitor your membership leads.

Use the membership leads guide for districts and membership leads guide for clubs to help you manage online leads effectively.

3. Contact people promptly.

Follow up with anyone else who has expressed interest. Ask them about themselves to understand how best to connect them to Rotary. Refer to the suggested scripts in the Prospective Member Outreach templates for clubs and templates for districts.

WWW

MORE RESOURCES

For more resources on membership and marketing strategies, visit **rotary.org/membership** and **brandcenter.rotary.org**.

ACTION PLAN

Use this template to create a plan to implement the steps in this guide. Ensure that your goal is SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based. Then identify the individual objectives that will allow you to achieve the larger goal. Finally, break down your objectives into specific actions. Revisit the plan periodically to monitor your progress and make adjustments if necessary.

GOAL:			
OBJECTIVES:			
ACTION NEEDED	**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE**	**BY WHEN**	**RESOURCES**