

Membership Retention!

www.rotary.org – Rotary International

www.rotary6000.org – District 6000

**Retention is not just everyone's responsibility, but *OUR* responsibility.
Otherwise, it's nobody's responsibility.**

Whether a club member is brand new, or has been a Rotarian for many years, it is vitally important to let each member know they are an important part of the club. Today there are numerous other opportunities that are competing for Rotarian's interests, time, and money, so it's up to the local club to help make sure all members feel connected. Do what is necessary to ensure Rotary is a meaningful part of all members' lives. It's important to be proactive in membership retention and not wait until several members submit their resignation before a club addresses the issue of retention. Investing volunteer energy in keeping your current members active and interested is time well spent.

1. **Get -**

- a. New members immediately involved in a club assignment.
- b. Information from Club Secretary of who is absent for any more than 3-4 consecutive meetings. Find out what the problem is and follow up.
- c. Retirees to read books to school children. The kids love it and the Rotarian gets more involved in the community.

2. Hold meaningful fireside chats on a regular basis. Invite the spouse.

3. Insist every new member be assigned a mentor for 6 months to help the new Rotarian become fully immersed in the club.

4. **Have -**

- a. Greeters at the door offering a friendly smile and handshake. A "*we are glad you are here and appreciate you being a member of our club*" goes a long way in goodwill.
- b. Club President periodically stay in email contact with all members. Sending a brief email once a month will keep all members in the loop.
- c. Occasional social functions that include spouse and partners.
- d. Regular programs on Rotary district and international levels. This will help members relate with the bigger picture of Rotary and its impact in the world.
- e. An active membership committee with members who have a passion for Rotary. The committee should meet 6-8 times a year and be one of the most active committees in the club.
- f. Your AG arrange a meeting for all of the nearby membership committee chairs to meet and discuss ideas, successes, areas of concern, solutions, etc.

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- g. Rotary's 4 way test prominently displayed and recite it weekly.
 - h. A good, newsy, reader-friendly newsletter. It should contain a liberal dosage of club members' names. People like to see their names in print.
 - i. Distinct, written goals (revised each year) and let all members be made aware of them.
 - j. A "Rotary Corner" each week or each month in the local newspaper.
 - k. One-on-one interview 2 months after induction:
 - ♦ Why did you join?
 - ♦ How are you feeling about Rotary?
 - ♦ Do you know any prospective members?
 - ♦ What area of Rotary are you interested in?Disseminate interview data to appropriate committee chairs. Follow-up with committee chairs to check if they have taken action to involve new member who indicated an interest in their area.
5. Produce a membership directory annually.
 6. Take several of the newest members and form a "class". Give them a budget and have them form their own committee. The purpose of this short term committee (task force) is to select and implement a local community project i.e. install park bench, paint fire hydrants or litter barrels, weed a flower garden, pick up highway litter, plant a tree, etc. This will help the new members bond with each other, which is even more important than the project results.
 7. When a person drops their club membership, have an informal "exit interview" or questionnaire to learn of the reason. There might be some trends that can be detected and avoided.
 8. Appoint a small "goodwill committee" who will send get-well, sympathy, or congratulatory cards as appropriate.
 9. Publicly recognize Rotarians who have reached career or family milestones. This pat on the back is well deserved and deeply appreciated.
 10. Do Rotary profiles on a regular basis so Rotarians get better acquainted with each other.
 11. Help keep the fun in Rotary by asking members to sit at different tables and participate in Rotary trivia table quizzes.
 12. Adopt the philosophy "we care about you". This could be the main focus of one committee. When people feel genuinely cared for and appreciated, they likely will have better attendance and get more involved.
 13. Keep your club in the media. When the club has high visibility in the community it is more meaningful to be a member of Rotary. Club projects, social events, Paul Harris awards, etc. should have local newspaper and/or radio coverage.

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14. Extend a personal invitation, rather than make a mass broadcast announcement, to members to attend seminars or district conferences. Some are unsure about district events and sit on the sidelines waiting to be asked. It's a wonderful opportunity for them to make new friends and get a broader picture and understanding of Rotary. There are several opportunities each year to do this. Have the club pay part of any required registration fee.
15. Use your Assistant Governor as a resource person. They have received special training and want to form a bond with your club. Don't always wait for them to take the initiative.
16. Arrange for a few club members to visit nearby clubs and reciprocate by hosting others. This should be done at least twice a year. Get acquainted with your nearby clubs!
17. Give club recognition to 10-20-30-40-50+ year members.
18. Recognize those with several months of perfect attendance.
19. Make personal visits to Rotarians who miss 40% or more of the meetings. Let them know they are missed!
20. Offer occasional inexpensive door prizes to add fun to the meetings. A bag of M & Ms, a large candy bar, a car wash coupon, an oil change coupon, fast food gift card, etc. will add fun and excitement to the club meetings.
21. Luncheon meetings sometimes can be a problem for many to attend. Maybe it's time to explore other options i.e. start a new club or once a month meet at an alternative time.
22. Show appreciation for what members do in the club.
23. The speed with which the club acts affects the perceived value by younger members. Having a short board meeting following the regular meeting to take specific action can affect the speed.
24. Twice a year, for larger clubs, break the club into smaller groups for the meeting. No program should be planned, just fellowship.
25. **Keep -**
 - a. In close contact with younger club members to see what trips they trigger. What do they want? Let them try some new ideas.
 - b. Club members apprised of what their Rotary Foundation contributions are helping to accomplish i.e. polio effort, literacy, education, water wells, etc. Make it personal. For example: "For every \$100 our club gives to TRF that means 200 children are vaccinated against polio".
 - c. The fun in Rotary! There is a time for seriousness and a time for fellowship and laughter. Be sure your club has a good balance.

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26. Avoid club membership cliques. When a person feels excluded he/she will quickly lose interest in the club and likely will give Rotary a negative image to others.
27. When there is an extra special program/speaker, remind club members about it 1-2 weeks in advance. That not only may increase attendance but may encourage members to bring a guest.
28. Ask members to give input of what type of programs, community projects, songs, food, meeting format, etc. they like. Remember, the club belongs to all members, not just board members or committee chairs.
29. Encourage each committee to give a brief update of their activity. This should be done quarterly, or certainly twice a year at the minimum.
30. Make sure the entire club knows who the board members and officers are.
31. Recognize board members, officers, and committee chairs. This could be a small gift, a certificate, or just a round of applause.
32. Require members to wear their Rotary pin at all meetings. If not, fine them. When all members wear a pin it strengthens the bonds of the club and a sense of pride is developed.