

# Club Extension Best Practices

Although a club extension meets at a different time, all members are Rotarians who belong to one club. ***You are one club that meets at two different times.***

## MEETING TIME

- Most club extensions meet from 5:30 to 6:30 and are often referred to as *After Work* extensions. They allow those who get off work at 5:00 to come to Rotary and still be home for dinner and evening activities. Many extensions that have not followed this specific best practice have struggled to survive.
- Most extensions meet twice a month, for example, 1st & 3rd Tuesday or 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday. This meeting frequency is appealing to many new prospective members.
- A few clubs are exploring the possibility of a Saturday morning extension. Saturday mornings may be a time that works better for some to participate in club-related service.

## CLUB STRUCTURE

- There are two cornerstones of every club and club extension: The *Rotary Four-Way Test* and *Service Above Self*.
- Every Rotary club is different. Let club extension members decide what kind of club they want to be. Host clubs should not try to create a carbon copy of themselves. In fact, having different meeting formats between the host club and extension helps broaden a club's overall appeal to more prospective members.
- Clubs that meet at 5:30 do not usually serve a meal, and beer and wine are often available for purchase. Both differences often appeal to a younger demographic, and it may reduce the cost for them to belong.

## CLUB ADMINISTRATION

- Rotary International recognizes one president per club. That person is responsible for running the board and one of the two club meetings. The leader of the extension is often referred to as the chair and is responsible for planning and running that specific meeting. A club president should not lead both club meeting times. The likelihood of burnout and failure is high. Club presidents with successful extensions often visit their extension to encourage participation in upcoming events or to recognize members, but they allow the extension chair to lead their meeting.
- Most clubs maintain one board with extension representation guaranteed once it is fully established. Having representatives on the board from both meeting times is fair to all concerned.
- Clubs with successful extensions are very intentional in trying to demonstrate to their members and community they are ***one club that meets at two different times***. They do this by holding joint social events, by working together on large service projects and fundraisers, by encouraging members to visit both clubs whenever possible, and by having one club website and sharing social media.

- Most clubs will amend their bylaws to incorporate the extension once it is fully established.
- The decision to start a club extension does not require RI approval because there's no new charter. In earlier days, satellites aspired to eventually charter. Today, many clubs with extensions no longer see an advantage to doing so.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- Having two meeting options is a big advantage for prospective new members. The concept of a single meeting time that works for all is no longer realistic for many. This is especially true among younger professionals.
- Finding a few established club members to champion the extension is critical. Often these members are motivated to help promote and grow extension membership because their own work or family responsibilities have changed.
- Spouses of current members are often the first to join an extension.
- *After Work* clubs are also popular among younger professional couples who frequently attend together. This is also a meeting time that often works best for anyone who cannot meet in the morning or at noon, like teachers, those working in healthcare, and retail business owners.
- For parents of school-aged children, *After Work* extensions are becoming a preferred meeting time. This is especially true of working moms.
- Having an extension can help increase retention among current members when they experience changes in job or family responsibilities. It's also not unusual for some members to attend both meetings.

## **CLUB DUES & COST OF MEALS**

- All club members, regardless of which meeting they attend, should pay the same Rotary International and District 6000 dues. However, when a meal is served at one meeting and not the other, members who normally attend meetings with a meal should be covering the full cost of those meals. Those attending meetings without a meal should not be asked to subsidize the meal costs of others. That's only fair.
- Fears of members switching from host club to extension because of lower costs are unfounded. Members select their preferred meeting time based on establish friendships, work schedule and current family demands.

## **SERVICE PROJECTS & FUNDRAISERS**

- A host club and its extension will often work together on larger service projects and fundraisers, and independently on smaller ones. Encouraging both is important. Working together builds unity and teamwork, while working independently also allows each to develop service projects that appeal to the passions of their specific members.