

## **Vocational Service Ideas Bank**

**By Tony Sheard**

### **Introduction**

This ideas Bank was created following a series of Workshops that I facilitated at the 2010 District Assembly to help members' understanding and provide a resource for improving the profile of this avenue of service.

One of the main issues highlighted at the workshop was that many members struggle with the concept of vocational service and have difficulty in defining it. During the session we reviewed the approach to this avenue of service and brainstormed what works well in the clubs so we could share ideas. Arising from this lack of general understanding I set myself the challenge of providing members with a useful repository of information and a one-stop shop for all things vocational.

Rotary International provides the following resource material and is available directly from the RI website:

- The Vocational Service in Action Brochure provides an excellent overview
- You can also sign up for a regular email newsletter on vocational service topics at [rotary.org/newsletter](http://rotary.org/newsletter) or read the Rotary Service blog at [rotaryserviceblog.org](http://rotaryserviceblog.org)

The remaining part of the document contains a list of ideas, culled from the Assembly brainstorming, sessions I attended at the International Convention in Montreal in June 2010 and my interactions with Rotarians throughout the District since I became the Vocational Chair. I was particularly impressed by the Vocational Service Toolkit produced by District 5230, which I came across at the Convention and I have used many of their ideas using the concept of 'adopt, adapt and improve'.

The list, containing over 50 activities is not intended to be a prescription of what you should do, but more a bank of ideas that you can dip into from time to time and stimulate your thinking. You can then develop a program to meet the community need in your locality. For ease of reference the ideas are grouped under the following headings originally identified by District 5230 i.e. club, workplace, youth, community, and the aged. The list was produced before the introduction of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue of Service i.e. Youth and some of the ideas now may be better placed under that Avenue however I left them in the document and will let the reader/club determine where they best fit in your own club.

This document is very much work in progress and it is intended that it will evolve over time. If you have any ideas on improvements/changes please contact me by email: [tony.sheard@gmail.com](mailto:tony.sheard@gmail.com)

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April 2018

## Vocational Service Ideas Bank

### 1) Awareness in your Club

- **Promote vocational awareness to every member of your club through:**
  - Rotary information segments (A Rotary Minute)
  - Your Club Bulletin/newsletter/website
  - Your club programs
- **4 Way Test.** Display the 4 Way test in the club meeting room, Recite it at the beginning or end of your meeting.
- **Job/Classification.** Get members of you club to give a talk about their career. Remember some of the younger members will not have heard some of the more senior members so ask some of the senior members to repeat/update their talk
- **Ethics** Hold a debate on the validity of the Way Test in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...For example is it out of date?
- **Diversity** Rotary membership is founded on invitation and on choosing a representative of each business, profession and institution in the community known as the 'classification principle' It is intended that the club comprises a cross section of the local community. During your recruiting drives ensure your club truly reflects the community in which you live.
- **Business Cards in a Basket.** Present a basket of business cards from each member of your club to new members, or a list so as to encourage members to do business with each other. Promote the list on your website and the cards could be rotated so that a different card appears at the top of the list each week.
- **Fellowships** Encourage your members to participate in Rotary Fellowship programs so they may utilise their vocational talents in support of a specific Rotary undertaking.
- **Rotary Action Groups** Encourage members to join RAGs and support service projects around the world.
- **Rotary Volunteer** encourage volunteers to put your skills to work to work on a service project
- **Friendship Exchange** encourage participation in vocationally based district friendship exchanges
- **'Rotary means Business.** Allow opportunities within meetings for Rotarians to promote their business activities or talk about new and

emerging trades in their fields of expertise. Consider charging them a nominal fee for the privilege to go towards fund raising efforts. Produce a 'Yellow Pages of Rotarian's businesses interests for your Club Directory, Newsletter or website.

- **Member Advice Forum.** At a regular club meeting consider inviting a Rotarian to discuss his/her vocational problems, ask for comments and feedback and exchange ideas to help.
- **Site Visits.** Hold a club meeting at a local business followed by a tour.
- **Old Re-useable Ideas** taken from the origins of Rotary. Hold exhibits merchandise at the back of you meeting room to promote the products and services of an individual Rotarian's business.
- **Declaration.** Encourage your members to adopt the Declaration for Rotarians in Business and Professions and display it in their work place. This is now know as the Rotary Code of Conduct
- **Club Program** – Ensure that the Club includes a number of Vocational activities throughout the year and particularly remember January is the Rotary Theme for Vocational Service.
- **Wealth of Talent**...remember you have a wealth of talent in your club.....use it or loose it!

## 2) Awareness in the workplace

- **Vocational Excellence Service Award.** Develop and present a Community Award program for Vocational Excellence ( top performance etc)
- **Is it fair to all concerned?** Arrange a discussion of current commercial or business practices.
- **Bring a Business Person.** Arrange a occasions or days for members to bring a non-rotarian guest
- **Bring a Competitor.** Encourage Rotarian's to bring their workplace competitors to the meeting in an effort to develop better understanding.
- **Host a seminar for Small Business** using Rotarian's and their network of contacts as guest speakers.
- **Courtesy Contest or Exemplary Service Award.** For example Develop and present an award to select the most courteous Police Officer, obliging shop assistant, great waiter/ress etc

### 3) Awareness in Youth

- **Essay Competitions.** Invite students of local schools to submit essay on a selected topic. E.g. Is the 4 Way Test out of date?. What does conservation mean to you?
- **Public speaking Competitions.** Develop and promote a competition, act as mentors to the students and promote friendly debates between schools or local interest groups.
- **Leadership Awards. (RYLA)** Originated in Australia RYLA is an excellent training avenue for young rising executives and you leaders. You may wish to select and sponsor suitable nominees.
- **Generally Support Youth activities in the community**
- **Talks to Youths.** Arrange talks to youth groups or schools on ethics and the 4 Way Test. A discussion based program developed by District 5440 and is available for \$20 US plus postage and packing @ [www.russellhampton.com](http://www.russellhampton.com) . It contains a short DVD and various resource material on ethics and the use of the 4 way test.
- **Apprenticeship Award Programs.** Local Training Institutions are usually receptive to the granting of awards to the most deserving student. The institute will typically shortlist the candidates for final selection by Rotary.
- **School Award Programs,** similar to the apprentice program outlined above.
- **Career Seminars** Rotarians visit schools to tell of career opportunities. This could be carried out in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce/Enterprise Centre.
- **Job Experience** . Rotarians can visit and answer questions about specific careers. E.g. a doctor talking about careers in the medical field and a builder talking about careers in the construction industry.
- **'Living Today' Program** Rotarians can talk at local High Schools on such topics as How to buy a car, How to manage your budget, how to open a bank account and manage your savings.
- **Job Shadowing/work experience programs** Assist local High Schools to provide work experience opportunities.
- **Scholarships.** Provision of scholarships to assist disadvantaged students.
- **Mock Job Interviews.** Arrange in conjunction with the local High School job to provide interview techniques, resume writing training followed by a mock interview session.

- **Mentoring Programs.** For example enrol Rotarians as mentors on the Ontario Government 'Summer Company' program.
- **4 Way Test Awards** for student achievements in meeting the ideals expressed in the 4 Way Test.
- **Peer Support.** Support the formulation and operation of peer support in your local High School.'
- **Adventures in Citizenship.** Sponsor a student to attend a citizenship program. e.g. Adventure in Citizenship program held in Ottawa Canada each year.
- **Leadership Programs** Sponsor a student to attend a leadership seminar e.g. 'Tomorrows Leadership'
- **Literacy Awards.** Sponsor Awards at local schools or hold essay competitions.
- **Youth Activity Camps.** Provide scholarships for youths in your area to attend.

#### 4) Awareness in the Community

- **Promote Rotary's commitment to high ethical standards**
  - Post the 4 way Test on prominent billboards in your community
  - Display the 4 Way Test and Declaration of Rotarian's in Businesses and professions in your office or place of work
  - 'Walk the talk' by ensuring that your actions in the workplace, community and family demonstrate a personal commitment to business ethic and personal ethics.
- **Guest Vocational Speakers.** Invite local leaders to speak to your club e.g Mayor, Town/City Manager, Parks and Recreation Manager, Fire Chief, Police Chief, Post Office Manger, Public Library Head etc
- **Local Ceremonies.** Arrange attendance by Rotary members at local ceremonies/presentations.
- **Support for underprivileged communities.** Seek support for volunteer Rotarians to work in their trade or profession assisting communities in need.
- **Craft or Trade Show.** Organise a display to showcase local business interests.
- **Do It Once, Do it Well.** Promote this concept through a Rotary sponsored campaign.

## 5) Awareness for the Aged

Rotary has a long tradition in addressing the needs of the elderly. The problems facing seniors, from mental health, physical infirmity, loneliness to the financial strain of living on a fixed income are well known issues and Rotary can help in a variety of ways:

- **Probus Club** – Help form a Probus Club for retired business and professional people in the area
- **Retirement Seminars** Hold a seminar for the benefit of those approaching retirement, including advice on investments, health, travel etc
- **Elderly or Disabled** . Create community awareness of any special needs and look at ways to address the identified issues.
- **Recreation for the Elderly.** Provide opportunities to enjoy aerobic exercise, swimming, recreation.
- **Vocational Training.** Involve retired people in training young people in skills and attitudes.

## 6) Needs Study

To properly assess the vocational needs in your locality, it is useful to carry out a survey of Civic Leaders, School Principals, Charity Organisations, Local and Regional Government Agencies etc on the needs in your community. This could be by individual one on one interview or by holding a facilitated group workshop. The findings can then be used not only by Rotary but by the community at large to address the needs identified.

## 7) Vocational Service Month – January (formerly October)

January is the Rotary Theme Month for Vocational Service. Use it to promote your club activities or kick start a new initiative.

**8) More Information:** Sign up to receive the Rotary Service Newsletter. Subscribe at [rotary.org/newsletters](http://rotary.org/newsletters)

## 9) Future development

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