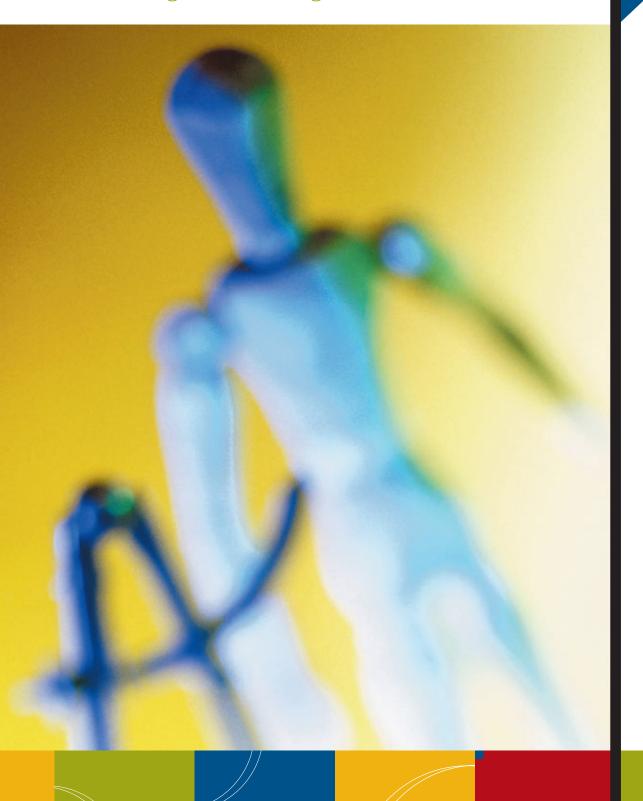
101 strategies for recruiting and retaining members





> Foreword

With the commitment to bring together the successful strategies of Rotarians throughout District 9780, we have here the opportunity to share with others throughout the world the successes of Rotarians in recruitment and retention.

I commend the publication of the '101 Strategies for recruiting and retaining members' as it focuses each Rotarian in the zone of importance. For us to grow and continue to make a difference to our world, we need many more people like you and me. We need to be relevant to all generations within our society today — wander through and select the strategies most suited to our young business and community leaders and to Baby Boomers or Seniors.

Congratulations to all involved in this excellent initiative.

Jennifer Coburn

Regional Rotary International Membership Coordinator – Zone 8A, 2005 to 2008

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> Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many Rotarians from clubs around District 9780 who have shared with us their successful strategies for recruiting and retaining members. Most of the ideas in this booklet have come directly from them, and they indicate the depth of knowledge and experience that exists within our District. Other strategies in the booklet have been drawn from Rotary International's Membership Materials.

District 9780 greatly appreciates the assistance provided by the Central Highlands Area Consultative Committee (vicCHACC), without whom the booklet, including this electronic version, would not have been produced.

We would also like to thank Leigh and Elise Whetter of Celtink Creative and the team at Sovereign Press, for generously supporting the production of this booklet.

We hope this booklet will be a resource for all Rotarians. We encourage you to read and discuss these strategies within your club. Adopt any which you feel may help you recruit and retain members more effectively, then share your success stories with other Rotarians.

Jessie Harman and Jenny Smith

Co-Chairs: District 9780 Membership Committee

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(01) Club Membership Plan

Recruiting new members is one of the most important things you can do for the future of your club. Develop a formal recruitment plan, set recruitment goals, develop strategies and then follow through. Communicate the plan to members and provide regular progress reports.

(02) Recruitment Process

Make sure your members know the membership selection criteria and the process for recruiting new members. Produce a flier for members which spells out these procedures clearly and simply. Keep the flier updated and accessible.

(03) Club Membership Committee

Establish a formal membership committee within your club. Target enthusiastic, wellconnected club members to join that committee and give them the backing of the club to achieve its membership goals.

(04) Reward Programs

Recognise and reward members who propose new members to the club. Reward systems can be quite simple, like placing a red dot on sponsoring members' name badges, to more sophisticated reward and recognition programs. Make rewards timely and meaningful.

(05) Variety

Use a variety of methods to recruit new volunteers. Because individuals are different, and have different motivations and interests, you will need to have a variety of recruitment methods on hand.

(06) Each One Reach One

Make it a personal honour that each member proposes at least one new member to the club. All Rotarians are responsible for identifying and inviting prospective members; indeed the future of Rotary depends on it.

(07) Classification Survey

Look at the diversity of your community's professional and business interests. Is this diversity reflected in your club's membership? If not, find the gaps and target particular individuals to broaden your club's classification base

(08) Membership Survey

Ask members to complete RI's membership survey, nominating neighbours, work colleagues, service providers and others who would make quality members. The survey is located in RI's Membership Development Resource Guide available on the RI website.

(09) Committee Membership Challenge

Add the elements of competition and fun to recruitment. Charge each club committee with the task of recruiting at least two new members. Have a prize for the committee which recruits the most new members. Keep the club updated with results in your weekly bulletin.

(10) Friendly Competition

Divide the club into teams (say, 6-10 members per team). Challenge each team to find at least one new member over a defined period (e.g. three months). Award points for every candidate proposed, and more points if the candidate is inducted. The team with the most points wins!

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(11) Presidential Request

Have your President ask three members to each introduce one new member. When one of these members does so, have the President ask one more member to do the same. This way there will always be three members looking out for new members.

(12) Replace Yourself

Inevitably, some members will leave. Encourage departing members to replace themselves; to find a prospective member with a similar classification who would make a quality member.

(13) Membership Pledge

After a membership drive ask all new members to pledge to recruit at least one new member in their first year. Follow up with new members and remind them of their promise. Publicly recognise their efforts when they succeed.

{14} Prospective Members' Forum

Invite selected individuals to a special membership forum. Communicate the benefits of joining Rotary so that people know what they can gain from membership. Provide time for questions and answers. Involve all club members to highlight the networking benefits of Rotary. Make sure you follow up with prospective members after the forum.

(15) Rotary Information Meeting

Make one or two regular meetings per year special 'Rotary Information Meetings'. Send professionally produced invitations to a selected group of prospective members and include reply-paid envelopes to encourage RSVP. Take special care in planning the meeting and follow up with guests after the event.

(16) Co-ordinated Membership Drive

Involve other Rotary Clubs in your area in a concerted membership campaign. Share the costs and the benefits of combined recruitment activity.

for recruiting and retaining member



(17) Refer Prospective Members On

If your club's meeting time and day doesn't suit a prospective member, refer that person to a club which may better suit their needs.

Let that club's President know you have made the referral, suggesting that they repay the favour on a future occasion.

(18) Prospective Members' List

Keep an up-to-date list of prospective members within the club and use it to guide recruitment efforts. Record the reasons individuals give for choosing not to join. If the reason is about timing (e.g. too busy now), ask the person again at a later date.

(19) Bring A Guest 'BRAG' Meeting

Secure a high profile speaker for one of your meetings and invite business and community members to join your club for that event.

Have plenty of Rotary information available and make sure guests know who to contact if they want to find out more.

(20) Bring A Friend Service Activity

Rather than inviting guests to a regular meeting consider inviting them to participate in a club service activity: a working bee, sausage sizzle or similar. This gives prospective members a different view of Rotary and enables them to see first hand its contribution to the community.

(21) Prospective Members Kit

Develop a prospective members' kit, with information about your club, its members, successful service activities and the like.

Make it easy to read and visually appealing.

Make sure the kit includes a 'call to action', something the reader can do to find out more about Rotary membership.

(22) Position Description

Prepare a position description for prospective members, spelling out the duties and responsibilities, and the rewards and benefits of Rotary membership. Be realistic and highlight the benefits of fellowship as well as service. Make the position description widely available.

(23) Member Testimonials

Ask club members to prepare written testimonials highlighting how they have benefited from Rotary membership. Include these testimonials in prospective members' kits, club publicity and wherever personal insights from members may be useful.

(24) Rotary Business Cards

Print business cards featuring the Rotary logo and your club's meeting day, time and location. Include a space for members to include their name and contact number.

Members can then give these cards to guests and prospective members.

(25) 'Be My Guest' **Business Cards**

Adding the words 'Be My Guest' to the Rotary business cards means that the card can serve as an invitation for the person to attend a meeting of your club at the club's expense.

(26) Rotary International Resources

Rotary International has a huge range of resources for clubs wanting to develop their membership. Find the Membership Development Guide, PowerPoint presentations and other resources at RI's website: www.rotary.org

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(27) Target Your Recruitment Efforts

Think about the types of individuals who are most likely to join your Rotary Club. Survey your own members. Why did they join? The more you can target your recruitment effort towards those most likely to join, the more successful you will be.

(28) Rotary Alumni

Keep an up-to-date list of Rotary Alumni; individuals who have participated in Rotary activities (RYLA, GSE, Ambassadorial Scholars, Youth Exchange) sponsored by your club. This list should be an excellent source of potential members.

(29) Guest Speakers

Previous guest speakers represent an excellent pool of potential members. Maintain a list of past guest speakers along with their contact details, and extend a personal invitation to those who would make quality members.

(30) Past Members

It may be worthwhile spending time to find out if former members would like to re-join the club. For some ex-members circumstances change - their reasons for leaving the club (e.g. work commitments) are no longer valid and they are keen to rejoin.

(31) Partners

Partners of Rotarians are often called on to support Rotary in direct and indirect ways. Why not encourage them to join (either your club or another) so they can reap the benefits of membership as well. Hold a partners' night to recognise their contribution.

{32} Retirees

Retirees can make wonderful Rotarians. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the club and often have extensive networks developed over a life time of work.

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Don't be fooled by the misconception that young people are not interested in, or involved in volunteering. In Australia the biggest growth area in volunteering is people aged 18-24. Think about ways that your club can target young people.

(34) People In The News

Scour the local papers and business journals for news of business and professional people moving into the area or into new positions. Extend a personal invitation to these individuals to attend a club meeting.

(35) Welcome New Business

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Send a letter of congratulations and welcome to proprietors of new businesses in your area. Let them know about Rotary and give them a contact point if they would like to learn more about the organisation.

(36) Welcome New Residents

Send a letter of welcome to new residents in the town. Let them know about your Rotary Club, and the activities you are involved in. Invite them to attend one of your meetings.

(37) Recruit For Diversity

A diverse membership is more representative of our modern communities. Target prospective members with different cultural, religious and educational backgrounds and with different abilities, ages and gender to increase your club's diversity.

(38) Make Guests Welcome

When you bring guests into your club, make them feel welcome and appreciated. Make sure they are greeted on arrival, introduce them around, and sit them alongside Rotarians who will be welcoming. Thank them publicly for coming. Following up with an 'it was great to see you' letter from the President or Membership Director is a good idea.

(39) See Their Perspective

Make sure you understand enough about the prospective member to be able to identify the benefits from their perspective. Put yourself in their shoes - what's in it for them? People will join Rotary because they want to, not because you want them to.

(40) Networking Benefits

Don't underestimate the networking benefits of membership when you are trying to attract new members. For many people, making contacts, enjoying fellowship and having fun are the most important benefits of Rotary membership.

(41) Follow Up

Nominate one person who is responsible for following up each invitation issued to prospective members. A well timed and courteous follow-up contact may provide an opportunity to answer important questions and reinforce the benefits of membership.

(42) Don't Overdo The Ask

Generally prospective members want the key details: How much time? What costs? What benefits? What do they have to do? Rather than giving a lengthy discourse on the joys of service and volunteering, ask prospective members what they want to know, and stick to that.

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(43) Share Your Successes

Share your recruitment successes with other clubs in your Group, your District and across the world. The strength of Rotary lies in its network, so work for the common good of all Rotarians.

(44) Make It Personal

Inevitably, some people will decline the invitation to join your club. Follow up every refusal with a letter thanking the person for considering the invitation, and encouraging them to contact the club at some future point if their circumstances change.

(45) Proritise Publicity

People are more likely to join a Rotary Club which has a public profile. Make publicity an integral part of the operations of your club. Appoint a Publicity Director or publicity committee. Come up with creative ways to get and keep your club in the public eye.

(46) Promote Rotary Service Activities

Regularly promote your club's service activities. Have a sandwich board which you can display when you work in public places, use the 'Community Events' section of your local newspaper and/or local radio station if you have one. Develop a public profile.

(47) 'What's Rotary?' Forum

Hold a public forum to discuss Rotary and its work in the community. Advertise the forum on community notice boards and in the 'Community Events' section in your local newspaper and/or radio station if you have one. Think about a suitable 'hook' to interest people in attending.

(48) Use Your Club Website

Develop a club website and use it to promote the benefits of Rotary membership. Include a 'contact us for more information' link which goes directly to the club Secretary, President or Membership Director.



(49) Club Brochure

Prepare a simple brochure which highlights your club, its activities and the benefits of membership. Find a business prepared to sponsor the cost of publication, and distribute the brochure widely. Make sure the brochure is attractive and presents your club in the best possible light.

(50) Create A Club CD Or Video

Create a club CD or video which highlights the work of your club and the benefits of Rotary membership. Find a business prepared to sponsor the production in return for advertising. Alternatively see if your local TAFE College or University has students seeking suitable projects for their media/communications courses.

(51) Advertise In Local **Business Publications**

It pays to advertise. Attracting new members is a valid operating expense of your club, so allocate a small proportion of your budget to promotion. Choose your advertising medium carefully; local business publications (e.g. Chamber of Commerce Newsletter) may be the best way to reach your target market.

(52) Community Newspapers And Radio

Local community-based newspapers and radio stations sometimes offer free advertising space to local community groups. Take advantage of these opportunities to get the good name of Rotary, and the activities of your club, out into the public domain.

(53) Distribute Rotary Materials

Ask members to display recent back copies of 'Rotary Down Under' and 'Rotary World' in reception areas at their workplaces. Place a sticker on the front cover of these magazines so that readers know who to contact for more information about their local Rotary club.

(54) Rotary Displays

Prepare a promotional display which can be used to promote your club in public places, e.g. shop front windows, libraries, shopping malls. Make sure the display is visually attractive, and includes information for those who want to learn more about Rotary.

(55) Don't Just Sell Raffle Tickets

If your club members are in public places selling raffle tickets, encourage them to talk to purchasers about Rotary and your club's activities whenever they can. Many people will be surprised to hear about the great work that Rotary does.

(56) Award Programs

Sponsor award programs which promote the name of Rotary and bring prize recipients and their supporters into your club. 'Student of the Month', Apprentice of the Month, 'Employee of the Month', 'Citizen of the Month' are just some award schemes to consider.

(57) 'Welcome New Residents' Function

Join with other organisations in your town to host one or two 'Welcome New Residents' functions each year. Congratulate new residents on their choice of location and let them know about all the services and benefits associated with living in your town.

(58) Sponsor A New Interact And/Or Rotaract Club

The future of Rotary depends on the younger members of our community. Help them to appreciate the benefits of service at an early age, and build future Rotarians at the same time. Start an Interact or Rotaract club in your area.

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(59) Friends Of Rotary

Not everyone can make the full membership commitment, yet they still want to help in some way. Start a "Friends of Rotary' group for these people. Encourage them to become full members of Rotary as their circumstances change.

(60) Big Decisions

For some clubs, membership development may depend on making big decisions about some very fundamental factors. Consider meeting day, meeting time, meeting structure and cost - do you need to make some changes for the long term sustainability of your club? Involve all club members in these big decisions.

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(61) Recruit Carefully

Recruiting carefully in the first place is an important step in retaining members. Target prospective members who are genuinely interesting in joining your club and and willing to accept the rewards and responsibilities of Rotary membership.

(62) Sincere, Realistic Expectations

Be careful to set sincere and realistic expectations up-front about the time, effort and financial commitment expected from members. Members will be more satisfied when their expectations closely match their perceptions of what is actually required.

(63) Inductions

Make inductions a special event for everyone.

Take the time and effort to have everything ready for the new member (name badges, framed certificates etc.) and use the event to reinforce to everyone the responsibilities and the rewards of Rotary membership.

(64) New Member Orientation Program

A significant proportion of new members who resign do so in their early years of membership. Develop a formal new member orientation program for the first 12 months which enables the member to understand the workings of the club, the organisation, and his or her contribution.

(65) New Member Welcome Pack

Provide new members with a welcome pack which includes important information about the club, its structure and other useful items (e.g. Rotary shirt). However, don't overload the new member, keep information brief and to the point.

(66) Early Involvement

Involve new members early. Identify jobs within your club which can be given to new members. Put new members onto active committees wherever possible. Get them involved from day one.

(67) Stepping Stone Approach

Build members' involvement on a gradual basis. Start by giving new members specific tasks that enable them to be involved in a limited way, then, as they gain confidence, give them opportunities to 'grow' into more responsible positions in the club.

(68) Fireside Meetings

Hold informal 'fireside' meetings once or twice a year. Invite new Rotarians, their sponsors and selected club personnel to come together for a casual evening at the home of a Rotarian. Use the occasion for socialising, and discussing the workings of Rotary.

Retention Strategies

(69) Mentors

Identify mentors in your club to support new members in their first year of membership. Clearly define the role you want these mentors to play and provide them with some basic mentor training. Appoint one mentor for each new club member.

(70) Help Them Get Acquainted

Provide opportunities for new members to get acquainted with other members in the club. Thoughtful seating arrangements, special social functions, 'who am I?' talks by members are just some ways that clubs can make this happen.

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(71) Regular Contact Program

Follow up with new members on a regular basis throughout their first year. Ask if their expectations are being met, or if they need anything to improve their Rotary experience. Effective follow-up provides value feedback and an opportunity to improve service to the member and the club.

(72) Make-Ups At Other Clubs

Make a point of accompanying each new member to a meeting of another Rotary club in your area (where appropriate). This reinforces the importance of attendance; it takes away some of the fear associated with doing make-ups and increases the networks of new members.

(73) Pay Individual Attention

Get to know your members as individuals and try to understand what motivates each of them to be a Rotarian. Use this information in assigning work so that both Rotary goals and personal goals are met.

(74) Recognise, Recognise, Recognise

Recognise the achievements of club members, both formally and informally. Present certificates, have special celebrations, make phone calls, write notes, say 'thank you' every chance you get.

(75) Make It Fun

Members stay when Rotary is fun, when they feel valued and when they look forward to attending meetings. Evaluate the 'entertainment' aspect of your weekly programs. Do everything you can to make sure Rotary is an enjoyable experience for your members.

(76) Promote The Club

Make sure the community at large recognises the valuable contribution made by members of your club. Publicise club milestones, community service activities, indeed anything of interest. Source advertisers to sponsor a Rotary supplement in your local paper, prepare news releases for local media. Use community notice boards.



Value your members' time by conducting well-organised meetings and keeping strictly to time. Well organised meetings are more effective meetings.

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(78) Complaints And Grievances

Establish a system for club members who have complaints or grievances and communicate this system to members. Encourage members to voice their complaints, and deal with them quickly and proactively. Much better that members air their concerns than leave feeling dissatisfied.

(79) Member Satisfaction Survey

Conduct a member satisfaction survey on an annual basis. Assess members' satisfaction with the meetings, the service activities and the fellowship activities of the club. Solicit ideas from members for improving their Rotary experience. Design your own survey or use the survey contained in the RI Membership Development Resource Guide.

(80) Understand Member Motivations

Volunteering must be a two way relationship with benefits for both parties. Ask each member why he or she joined your club? Use the answers to strengthen your retention programs. Individuals' motivations change, so ask on a regular basis.

(81) Meet And Greet

Roster one or two members to provide hospitality at each meeting. These individuals can greet each member and guest as they arrive and set a welcoming tone for the meeting.

(82) Meeting Seating

Find creative ways to encourage members to sit with, and get to know, different people within your club. Randomly allocate seating ahead of a meeting, change table arrangements, move to another venue for a meeting; anything to avoid seating arrangements which never change.

(83) Revitalise Your Speakers' Program

For many Rotarians, the speakers' program is an important avenue for professional development and one of the key membership benefits. Take care to secure informative speakers who appeal to a wide range of interests. Advertise speakers in advance if you can.

(84) Regular Communication

Communicate regularly with all your members. Use your weekly printed bulletin, an emailed bulletin, create a club website with a 'members only' section; do what ever you can to keep members up to date and informed.

Retention Strategies

Consider a buddy system to increase attendance and club involvement. 'Buddy-up' members into small groups (2 – 4) to support each other, to follow up each other's non-attendance and to encourage participation in club activities and events.

Give almoners in your club the specific task of following up with members who do not attend meetings. Through this process Almoners can identify and action any concerns the absent member may have and advise members about how and where to make-up.

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(87) Encourage Input Into Planning

Actively involve members in your club's planning processes. Schedule special meetings, e.g. 'speaker-free' days, when club members can discuss strategic and operational issues associated with the club.

Encourage member input, value it and act on it.

(88) Educate Members

Educate club members to be knowledgeable about Rotary. A positive program of continuing education can help a club's overall retention rate.

(89) Conventions, Conferences And Assemblies

Encourage club members to attend Rotary
Conventions, District Conferences and
Assemblies. These events highlight the impact
of Rotary and the strength of its network.
Appoint an 'On to Conference' person in your
club to galvanise members to attend.
Make attendance fun.

(90) Experience The Internationality

Encourage members to experience the internationality of Rotary by hosting a Youth Exchange Student or a Group Study Exchange participant for a meal or other activity.

Encourage members to volunteer for one of Rotary's Overseas Projects.

(91) Evaluate Your Service Programs

Evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of your service programs. Are they appropriate for your local community? Do they align with the skills and interests of members? Do they have impact? If not, strengthen existing programs and/or develop new ones.

(92) Fellowship Activities

Conduct enough fellowship activities to make sure your members are connected to each other and to the club. Offer a range of fellowship activities to appeal to diverse interests and include family where possible.

for recruiting and retaining members dies

(93) Active Committees rage all committees within the club to

Encourage all committees within the club to be active and recognise their achievements when they occur. Find ways to support club committees which are not achieving their objectives and not keeping their members actively engaged.

(94) Attendance Challenges

Put in place a process to support members who do not meet minimum attendance levels.

Make sure these members receive a phone call from an Almoner, a 'missing you' note, a copy of the club's bulletin with a personal note and/or a call from the President or Membership Director.

(95) Family Of Rotary

Appoint a member or committee responsible for contacting members and partners who are not well or who may be going through difficult times. Communicate this information to the Club President.

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(96) Compulsory Make-Up Meeting

Consider having a compulsory make-up meeting where every club member goes to the meeting of another club. This reinforces the importance of attendance, demystifies the make-up process for some members and is a great way for Rotarians to get to know members in other clubs.

(97) Recognise Different Abilities

Different people are able to handle different amounts and types of work. Recognise different abilities and tolerance levels in distributing work to members. Don't let a small handful of members take on all the work. Find creative ways to get everyone involved.

(98) Avoid Volunteer Burnout

Burn out occurs for lots of reasons: there is too much work to be done; there are too few rewards; too few people are involved; there is too little fun. Avoid burnout by setting realistic objectives, involving as many members as possible, providing praise for work well done and building in time for fun.

(99) Conduct Exit Interviews

Where possible, gather accurate information about why individual members are leaving your club. Look for common themes, particularly in areas where you have some control. Develop an appropriate plan of action and implement it.

(100) Facilitate A Transfer

It is better to lose a member to another
Rotary club, than to lose him or her entirely. If
a person is no longer able to be part of your
club (for whatever reason) offer to support
him or her to transfer to another
club if appropriate.

Retention Strategies

(101) Be Receptive

Be receptive to new ideas and ways of doing things, particularly when those suggestions come from members. Whilst you do not have to implement everything which is suggested, you do have a responsibility to listen and show appreciation.



Retention Strategies

> Rotary Clubs of District 9780

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| {37} | Recruit For Diversity | 6 | {96} | Compulsory Make-Up Meeting |
| {38} | Make Guests Welcome | 6 | {97} | Recognise Different Abilities |
| {39} | See Their Perspective | 6 | { 98} | Avoid Volunteer Burnout |
| {40} | Networking Benefits | 6 | [99] | Conduct Exit Interviews |
| {41} | Follow Up | 7 | {100} | Facilitate A Transfer |
| {42} | Don't Overdo The Ask | 7 | {101} | Be Receptive |
| {43} | Share Your Successes | 7 | | |
| {44} | Make It Personal | 7 | | |
| {45} | Proritise Publicity | 7 | | |
| {46} | Promote Rotary Service Activities | 7 | | |
| {47} | 'What's Rotary?' Forum | 7 | | |
| {48} | Use Your Club Website | 7 | | |
| {49} | Club Brochure | 8 | | |
| {50} | Create A Club CD Or Video | 8 | | |
| {51} | Advertise In Local | | | |
| | Business Publications | 8 | | |
| {52} | Community Newspapers | | | |
| | And Radio | 8 | | |
| {53} | Distribute Rotary Materials | 8 | | |
| {54} | Rotary Displays | 8 | | |
| {55} | Don't Just Sell Raffle Tickets | 8 | | |
| {56} | Award Programs | 8 | | |
| {57 } | 'Welcome New Residents' Function | 9 | | |
| {58 } | Sponsor A New Interact | | | |

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ACCs - The Australian Government's Regional Development Network

> A Message from vicCHACC

vicCHACC is proud to support Rotary District 9780 through development of this important tool that seeks to assist in gaining and retaining members.

vicCHACC is part of the Australian Government's key regional development network of Area Consultative Committees operating throughout rural and regional Australia.

The work of vicCHACC includes facilitating funding to economic and community development projects. This funding delivers benefits for communities well into the future through resulting higher levels of economic activity and improved social amenity.

vicCHACC works in close consultation with community groups in developing these funded projects. Through dedicated community service and leadership, groups such as Rotary 'give back' and strengthen communities, not only at a local and regional level, but also through the good works of Rotary. That is why vicCHACC has supported this project.

> vicCHACC invites you to find out more about partnerships that empower communities to build capacity by visiting its website - www.chacc.com.au or www.acc.gov.au

> > **David Clark**

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vicCHACC Chair 2008

And/Or Rotaract Club

Friends Of Rotary **Big Decisions**

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101 strategies for recruiting and retaining members



