

**District 6440 Membership Summit**  
**“BEST PRACTICES”**



**Facilitated by PDG Mike Yesner**  
**And Membership Sector Chairs**  
**Notes assembled by Jane Hodgkinson**

## **Membership Tips and Suggestions from the Clubs**

After a PowerPoint and video, the District 6440 Membership Committee opened the session to suggestions from the clubs for the membership tips that clubs felt were the most helpful. Here they are for your use.

### **A. Helpful ideas before proposed members Join Clubs or Prescreening Items**

1. Explain the cost to join in both time and money
2. Explain what the club isn't (religious, not a direct lead to more business or business referrals although that may come over time, etc.)
3. Invite them to lunch and practice the elevator speech (see elevator speeches later).
4. If they can't join now, how can they help or stay involved
5. Have your club discuss different dues structures in advance for potential members who might be caretakers and unable to attend frequently.
6. Engage new members in prequalification discussions
7. Discuss your club's mentorship program or services with your members so you know what you can offer a new member.

### **B. Determine Interest of Potential New Members**

1. Explain differences between a chamber role and rotary, service and friendship aspects of rotary vs. business contacts and networking for the chamber.
2. Determine what the potential member's interests are such as service locally, food pantry, literacy, peace, protecting environment, etc.
3. Remind your fellow club members that the two reasons people join are fellowship and service.
4. Discuss shared membership with a potential member if it seems more appropriate for him. Make sure your club has discussed and decided on shared membership goals, fees, and responsibilities.

### **C. Recruitment**

1. Chamber, village employees, hospital administrators,
2. Other members of the club's friends

3. Newly retired
4. Friends of Rotary who already help club with projects
5. Teachers who work with exchange students, interact students, or who derive benefits from rotary. If they cannot make a day meeting, refer them to night or early morning club.
6. Tell potential members they can make a “difference”.
7. Club sponsored cocktail party with invited guests
8. After inviting to lunch, or events, maintain contact with person.

**D. How Can You Help Them Stay in the Club?**

1. We know that roughly 1/3 of our new members do not stay in Rotary. Here are solutions offered by the clubs.
2. Put new members on the board so that they can see what the business of the club is and get involved right away. (Lombard)
3. Evanston Lighthouse has a red badge program for new members. The red badge tells other members he/she is new and promotes others helping the person and introducing them to others. Club encourages them to do make-ups at other clubs, attend board meetings, meet with members, etc.
4. Northbrook meets with new members, conducts induction and classification talk soon, and assign them to committees.
5. Conduct Fireside chats (SW sector will be running a fireside for all its clubs during winter months). Relate the history of rotary or have rotary speakers discuss rotary functions. This helps educate newer members.
6. Mentorship was discussed but it does not appear that any one club has fully developed a mentorship plan. (See mentorship ideas)
7. Survey new members (and all members) to see if club is meeting their needs.
8. Encourage new members to invite friends to a meeting. They know people you don't, and are proud of the organization they just joined.
9. Membership committee checks in with new members at meetings.
10. Call new or existing members when they are absent.
11. Request speaker ideas from members to gain their interest or help in getting new programs.

## **E. Mentorship**

1. Board meetings, speakers, and service projects all present ways to mentor new members. (Libertyville)
2. Northbrook identifies which members are good mentors but there is no formalized job description for mentorship.
3. Try to get new members engaged and aware of history of rotary and how rotary functions.
4. One club asks past president to chair mentoring efforts.
5. What are good mentor qualifications or characteristics (engaged, longer term member, involved with the club activities, past president).
6. Evanston Lighthouse has newly inducted members visit RI headquarters and learn Rotary history.
7. What is the difference between a sponsor and a mentor? One answer was that sponsor knows new member, mentor keeps them in club.
8. Wheaton has the secretary review attendance to help keep contact with those not attending.

## **F. Club Surveys**

1. Club surveys help keep your members involved with the club and gives club leadership ideas to have members engaged.
2. Surveys can be done of club and community members
  - a. Member surveys can survey programs, quality of speakers, service projects, fundraising events, and beneficiaries of funds raised, location, time, and cost of meetings.
  - b. Surveys can also gauge new members' opinions.
  - c. Survey Monkey is one tool that can be used.
  - d. Community surveys can be conducted to determine awareness of Rotary, and community needs.
  - e. Village newsletters and surveys at community festivals can be used.

## **G. Shared Membership**

1. Shared membership can serve up to 5 people (1 Rotarian and 4 friends of rotary). The club defines the number.
2. First person is considered the Rotarian and others are friends of Rotary.
3. District Dues for two people are paid for shared membership.
4. Offers a membership to governmental units, such as schools, park districts, cities; hospitals; or other large organizations where multiple people can be involved in Rotary but no one has to be there all the time, ie a school superintendent, principal, and a school trustee.
5. What are challenges with shared membership? Keeping these members engaged in the club since their attendance maybe less frequent. By-laws of club must be amended. Older members in club may not totally understand this membership category.
6. What are advantages to this type membership? Brings potential more manpower to the club with more people (friends of rotary) available for projects. May bring a new business classification to the club. A large employer may have younger employees to help bring younger person ideas and skills to club. May be an advantage with other service clubs when recruiting members because of the flexibility it offers.

## **H. Common Sense Good Practices for Recruiting Members**

1. Introduce potential/new members to everyone in club, every week until they know others.
2. Have potential members sit at tables with other engaged members who will include them in conversation.
3. In your introductions, explain what others do for a living, or where there might be shared interests. For example, "John, this is Sam Smith. Sam likes scuba diving in Florida like you do" or "John, this is Sam Smith. Sam is a pharmacist and John likes to use drugs." (JUST KIDDING, wanted to see if you were reading.)
4. Don't leave guests or new members standing or sitting alone. This will not help them decide to join/stay in your club.
5. Give visitors a card, flyer, mug, or general info about your club.

6. Always invite them back to another visit or set up a private meeting/lunch/ phone call, etc to discuss membership.
7. Find out what they are interested if they decide to join.
8. Make them feel welcome!!!!!!!

#### I. Elevator Speech

1. Elevator speech is a term that refers to a short (30 sec.-2 minute) speech that illustrates the best points about you, your business, or your rotary club. It should be concise, with high impact, and cause the listener to want to learn more. Just as the opening sentence or paragraph of a book helps you determine if you want to read more, a good elevator speech helps a sales person get an appointment or a potential member to come to a meeting. Clubs can practice elevator speeches. There is also a YouTube video on bad elevator speeches which could be shown as a program at a meeting. We asked our audience to relate powerful aspects of good elevator speeches for Rotarians. Here's what they said:
2. "If you want to save lives and feed the needy..."
3. "Best thing I've done in my life"
4. "Rotary has helped me leave the world better than when I found it"
5. "I've met some of my best friends through Rotary"
6. "Rotary helps me, as one person, help many."
7. "Every penny raised goes back to helping people in need."
8. "Rotarians are wiping polio off the face of the earth."
9. "Rotary is where my friends are."
10. "Rotary helps me belong and matter."
11. "Because of my involvement in Rotary, I'm helping children in this country and around the world have hope."
12. "Rotary has changed my life."

Pretty powerful stuff to remind your fellow Rotarians about when they wear their rotary shirts, or work a festival, or help with a project. Don't forget that at the end of the elevator speech, you can invite potential

members to a meeting, or hand them a card that reminds them where and when you meet.

#### **J. Fireside Chats**

1. The Fireside Chat was a term used by the FDR administration during the depression. Families would gather around a radio and listen to President Roosevelt explain his plans to get out of the depression. In a comfortable setting, with a soothing voice, he helped people get over their fears. Which, in part, explains why he was elected president four times. Rotary uses this term to describe a club getting together in someone's home, where elder members of the club describe and detail rotary history for newer members. They explain and describe different aspects of rotary to give new members a greater sense of the breadth or global nature of the organization.
2. OUR RECORDS INDICATE THAT WE LOSE ABOUT 1/3 OF OUR MEMBERS EACH YEAR, SO WE HAVE TO FIND WAYS TO HELP PEOPLE BECOME MORE VESTED IN THEIR ROTARY MEMBERSHIP. WE HOPE A FIRESIDE CHAT WILL HELP RESTORE THE PRIDE THAT OTHERS FEEL ABOUT BEING A ROTARIAN.
3. Lots of clubs have lost this custom and the SW sector is going to resurrect it in 2015 with a Fireside Chat at a local golf club for the 14 clubs within our sector. Older and newer members alike may attend to network with surrounding clubs and hear stimulating speakers from our area. Details to be arranged. Contact jane hodgkinson at [janeh1213@gmail.com](mailto:janeh1213@gmail.com) for those details.

#### **K. Membership Events and Strategies**

1. Carol Stream just invited potential members to attend an evening cocktail reception with a Power Point presentation on Rotary, testimonials about why club members joined the club, and a social hour of visiting.
2. Leads from Facebook and RI are sent to each club president, membership chair, their Assistant Governor, and the Sector Membership Chair. Be sure to follow up with these leads and

determine if the person has interest and let the district know the outcome of the contact.

3. What are diversity (age, gender, race, etc.) strategies?
  - a. Rotary Scholars (info at district or RI)
  - b. Business associates of members
  - c. Chamber members
  - d. Change meeting times from set 4- lunch or 4 breakfast to 2 an 2 evening or morning meetings for service, fun, etc.
  - e. Social events on the fifth night (Mon- Thursday). Evanston does a wine and cheese event on second Tuesday. Other clubs have fines, raffle wheels, etc for socials.
  - f. Clubs move meeting locations to see different programs, such as the culinary program or homeland security program at a junior college, another club met in a warehouse where owner stored vintage car collection. Invite guests to something different.
  - g. Project with other groups. Wheaton does a backpack-stuffing project with the Chamber as an example.