

Saturday, March 22, Panel Discussion - Small Clubs - Best Practices

- Notes from DG Dave

List your advice, links, ideas, and points. These can be a 'top 10' or some kind of 'a-ha' moment. I'll start with a few examples. We can build our points and then as a panel we can speak to these. We could grade the points on some easy to hard scale. This is the basic flow of the Best Practices Session:

- Flip Chart Paper at 4 Stations (Membership Retention, Local Service Projects, Fundraising, Membership Attraction)
- Facilitator for each station (Role is to keep flow, minimize people hogging time, generate ideas if people have writer's block)
- Participants will break in groups and rotate through the stations posting ideas written on sticky notes
- Move group along every 10 minutes; providing forty minutes of ideation
- Last forty minutes each facilitator will read off the brainstormed ideas; allow conversation no more than 10 minutes each topic.
- We will compile ideation into document to circulate afterwards.

This is the transcription from the white boards...plus a little extra.

Fundraising

International/TRF/Polio

For Club Foundation or community

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| ● Astronaut Speakers | ● Purse bingo |
| ● Speaker Series - sell tickets | ● Corn hole |
| ● BBQ at a car rally | ● Catch the Ace |
| ● Digital/online raffle | ● Fantasy of Trees (for 10 charities) |
| ● Bocce tournament | ● CWineries/vinyard tours |
| ● Dragon Boat team | ● Greenhouses |
| ● Corporate sponsors | ● Ribfest |
| ● Basket raffle | ● Concerts in the park (free will giving) |
| ● 50/50 at events/business | ● Bingo |
| ● Bowl-a-thon | ● Pancake breakfast |
| ● Diaper Drive | ● Tip jars |
| ● Chilli Cook off | ● Fireworks (free will giving) |
| ● Casino Night (turn key) | ● Lobsterfest |
| ● Craft show | ● Name that tune |
| ● Flu in Breakfast | ● Dog Day Afternoon (fun pet show, vendors) |
| ● Car show | ● Trivial night |
| ● Car rally | ● Food drives (out of truck) |
| ● Car raffle | ● Rotary Trunk Sale (parking lot sale) |
| ● Wine Elimination Draw | ● Shredding |
| ● Fall fling with auction | ● Meat raffle |
| ● Chicken dinner | ● District Letter appeal |
| ● Football square letters | ● Bike the benchlands |
| ● Tour De Dundas Cycling and vendors | ● Walk for polio/Pedal for polio |
| ● Hot Dog Sale | ● Duck race (in a river) |
| ● Theater | |
| ● Golf tournament | |

- Direct in dues
- Ham dinner
- Wine tasting
- Guess who is coming to dinner
- Happy Dollar fines

- Power Lifting/walk around the clock 24hr walk
- Partner with a brick and mortar club
- Pints for polio
- Partner with others

Local Service Projects

- Fresh food distribution/gleaning (Hamburg)
- Food drive
- More advertising of projects
- Little free libraries
- Building indigenous relationships (orange shirt days)
- Thanksgiving Dinner - EVL
- Ham giveaway - Christmas - EVL
- Warm the Children (Hamburg PM)
- (New winter clothes distribution)
- Health education
- Literacy day
- Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup
- Tree Planting (Fonthill)
- Cleanup in Village - EVL
- Kevin's Guest House - (Buffalo)
- Ronald McDonald House (Hamburg PM)

- Rail to Trail (Fonthill - Thorold) Greater Niagara Circle Route with 6 Rotary Clubs and 2 Lions Clubs (\$3.5 million)
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed / Blessed Beds (Amherst)
- Pumpkin Walk/ Grimsby Glows - composting (Grimsby)
- Municipal government implementation
- Geographic disparity (eClub/twin)
- Adopt a highway/street cleaning
- May Day of Caring (LeRoy)
- Collaboration w/other service clubs, chamber of commerce - EVL
- 'Rent-a-Rotarian' LeRoy
- Care time bank

Member Attraction

- Personal letters to identified community members
- See how much fun we have
- Value in what we do vs other service clubs that are larger
- Meet and Greet
- Elevator Pitch
- Collaborative event
- Member business card with QR code
- Community night - guest speaker
- Each one invite a friend
- website/media
- Service project invites
- Targeted recruitment
- Ask
- Skill learning

- Door hanger invite - sponsored and meeting on us
- Advertise service
- Local media
- Market everything/public image
- Key organizational involvement
- Corporate Membership
- Volunteer appreciation/events
- Go applaud someone
- Emphasize time of day
- Membership fees/sponsorships (energy exchange/winter work)
- Value add
- Organize tours of local businesses
- Types of memberships - e.g. - family

Retention

- Involvement in committees
- Give opportunity
- Shorter meetings
- Establish a routine
- Pods responsible for program for three months
- Offer training for specific roles
- Sponsor/mentor follow-up
- Checking in if peoples attendance decreases
- Avoid shaming/rudeness
- Exit survey/meeting/interview
- Avoid burnout - be aware of capacity
- Don't overload people in their first year
- Highlight Rotary opportunities
- Welcoming new members' ideas
- Community events involvement
- Recognizing limitations (i.e. switch to digital auction)
- Socials
- Accommodate time
- Engage and listen
- Educating members - mindful of workload
- Have fun - fundraising
- Name that tune
- Understand why came to Rotary, why you are leaving, and are we still meeting that need?
- People feel valued
- Fireside chat with mentor (casual)
- Formal member onboarding checklist (see myRotary and tools) Intro to club, fundraisers, committees., etc.
- Flexibility with engagement form
- Switch location to accommodate needs

And I did prepare this in case it was a panel discussion...

- Membership Retention (15 Minutes)
 - Meet with each member 1:1 as soon as possible. Ask what they want out of their Rotary journey. Have an open ended time, one or two questions, then go from there. Agree to develop that journey together and integrate this into the club's plan.
 - Have a member care program. Information is available on line for this. Call people if they missed a meeting. Make sure there is a synopsis of a newsletter.
 - Circulate a monthly summary as part of your board meeting. Keep on track with awards and recognition. Consult with the District calendar to avoid any specific District main events. Plan your Rotary year out and even forecast into the next year.
 - Prepare a quarterly (or other) newsletter that you can circulate to the community including member spotlights, recent past accomplishments, upcoming events and activities.
 - Feature a member's business or passion project as a spotlight ad. Find ways for members to go to local networking events to brag about their work, but also talk about the good work the club does in the community.
- Local Service Projects Including Collaborative (15 Minutes)

- See if there is a broad (or specific) needs assessment in your community, perhaps by the municipality or other cause-based group. Get a few speakers to present to your club. Have your members discuss and agree upon one need that your club can address.
- Big organizations have longer range capital plans. Have them visit your club and talk about this on a regular basis. Pick off a piece that serves a specific (perhaps vulnerable) population. Find out if other Rotary clubs have been a part of that capital plan in their communities (look further afield than D7090)
- In a way, starting a new club in your community is a service project in and of itself. Consider starting one of the following:
 - An interact club at the local high school...or do a community interact club.
 - A Rotaract club, perhaps together with other neighbouring clubs. Help this club gain its footing by partnering on a District grant.
 - Participating in supporting one of our two eClubs by signalling you want to show up at their meetings, help with their plans
 - Starting a new club or reviving a charter. Not every community member can join your club. Listen carefully to them - perhaps they can't meet at noon, but could do a morning or evening meeting. Consider a single issue in your community that a group of leaders could get behind. Look at the '100 men/women/people of community xyz' movement as a model.
- Fundraising (15 Minutes)
 - Do a couple of FUNraising projects or events that bring out your club's friends and supporters. It can be games, a raffle, a contest. This takes the stress off of selling tickets - which is a skill that can be developed.
 - If your community has a farmer's market, promote a 'shop fresh, shop local' movement. Sell ads on a shopping bag..
 - Give your newest members a good amount of money to solve a specific, overlooked, yet issue that 'bugs' the community. Ensure that there is a fundraising component to this and position it as an emerging component of the work of the club that grows with them. Ensure that there is a story to tell and that they are acknowledged in the media and on social media.
- Membership Attraction (15 Minutes)
 - EVERYTHING your club does needs to have a membership attraction consideration 'bolted on' to it. Whether it be showing off what your club does, who you support, and asking people to want to belong to your efforts in making a difference.
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 - If a guest shows up at your meeting, especially if they are a 'walk in' – all members know the drill - make that person feel welcome, but not overwhelmed – a friendly atmosphere, and not too much Rotary jargon. You want to find out what interests them into coming back.
 - Understand what the needs and wants are with the millennial generation in your community. Tailor your offerings to these folks. They may want business connections more than friendships. They may want to focus on the service project instead of its planning. Provide seminars that feature topics and speakers that speak to their issues.

- Bonus round - general operations
 - Create a FRIENDS OF ROTARY contact list: all the businesses, former members, organizational contacts, Paul Harris awardees, scholarship winners and their families, media contacts, 'hub' groups, member associations, other service clubs, etc. You want this list to be all of a phone tree, a mailing list, an email list, and a social media list. Send out at least a quarterly newsletter of upcoming events and in turn keep your website up to date.
 - Develop an intern program and have them work with members to improve their social media skills. Also, everything goes back to your website - so keep it up to date as well as everyone's contact information on ClubRunner. Make sure you set time aside for 'working meetings' to do this - prep a heads up, do the work, do the test to burnish the skills, then follow up and encourage/thank.
 - At the start of the year review the Rotary Club Excellence Award and the D7090 Lighthouse Award. Use these as goal setting frameworks. Go down the list and check these off, discuss stretch goals, set timelines, and commit to submitting these at the end of the year.