



DG Marlee Diehl inducts a new member of the Olean Rotary Club, Elena Bombardier

RESOURCES TO HELP OUR CLUBS GROW AND PROSPER

Membership District 7090

Rotary 

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You identify a good prospect for membership... now what??

By IPDG & District Membership Director, Kevin Crosby

How many non-Rotarians do you know who might become good Rotarians? In the past three months, how people have you invited to consider becoming a Rotarian? I'm guessing there is a bit of a gap between these two numbers.

Why does it seem to be so difficult to ask a friend or colleague to join Rotary? Here are a few possible reasons:

1. We assume they are too busy.
2. We're not sure if they can afford the cost.
3. We aren't sure what kind of first-impression they might get upon visiting our club. If they're under 40, will they feel like they don't

fit into the "age profile" of the club. If they are female, will they feel like they're joining a men's club? Will they see people of similar ethnic or cultural background?

4. We want to wait until we know we have some good speakers or other interesting activities so they don't visit during a business meeting, club assembly or when only a handful of members show up.
5. We don't feel confident in our "sales pitch" about joining Rotary.

I know there are many other reasons Rotarians find it difficult to recruit new members. I suspect a lot of Rotary Clubs rely on just a few

members to be the recruiters. That's not good enough.

There are many reasons why it is getting more difficult to recruit new members into Rotary: Employers seldom pay for such memberships or grant time off to attend meetings; people often feel overwhelmed with busy lives, especially if they have a young family; the cost, particularly if a weekly meal is included, might be prohibitive – especially for a young person with a family; it is widely believed that young people, although altruistic, are not interested in the structure of regular meetings and long-term commitments. Certainly, there are many other reasons why people might be reluctant to join an organization like Rotary – despite the amazing work being done by Rotarians in their communities and around the world.

So, how do we overcome the reluctance of our fellow members to be active recruiters and how do we

respond to the reluctance of prospective members to join?

Suggestions for Getting Your Members to Actively Recruit

1. Run a two-month membership campaign. Offer rewards or recognition as an incentive. Get everyone involved in defining the rules of the campaign. Recognized success frequently.
2. Ask each member to identify 2 or more prospects they will approach personally.
3. Identify local businesses or other organizations that you club can target. Organize a team to pursue these.
4. Build a list individuals with some prior contact with your club: e.g., speakers, beneficiaries of your service projects, former members, YE parents or host families, etc. Organize a team to pursue these.
5. Designate a few “closers” in your club who will meet with, or call, prospects that have been contacted by other members. These would be those members who are very comfortable making the “pitch” and the “ask”.
6. Make sure you have non-meeting activities every month (e.g., service projects, fundraisers, social events) – perhaps including events conducted by other nearby Rotary clubs – that you can invite prospective members to attend. It’s important that prospective members experience Rotary and something more than just meetings.

7. Create special offers that allow prospective members to attend one or more meetings or other events at no cost or obligation. Make it easy for a prospect to “test drive” your club.
8. Have good collateral (print) material to give to prospects. The RI brochure “Impact Begins with You” is excellent. You can attach a business card to the back of the brochure.
9. Be ready to talk about costs in a very straightforward way. Typically, dues (club, district & RI) are not deal-breakers. Meal costs tend to be more of an obstacle.
10. Make sure someone takes responsibility for following-up with each prospect.
11. When talking to a prospect, find out their motivation and how the club can help them achieve their goals. Recognize that prospective members are most often interested in doing local community service so make sure you focus on this.
12. Consider doing some joint recruit events with other Rotary clubs in your area.

Suggestions for Addressing the Typical Objections to Joining Rotary

1. Have your club address the issue of meeting frequency and attendance requirements. Can you accommodate prospective members who can’t attend every week? Can you offer committee meetings, service activities or

other related activities as an occasional substitute for meeting attendance? Can your club focus on *engagement* instead of attendance?

2. Have your club address the total cost of membership – including meal costs. Is there a way to modify the cost if necessary?
3. Have your club consider alternate membership types like Corporate Memberships, Family Memberships, and Associate Memberships to make it easier for people to participate. NOTE: RI & district dues must be paid for each person who is to be given the status of Active Rotarian.
4. Make Membership Development a regular topic for club meetings. Be prepared to welcome new ideas that will make your club more attractive to prospective members.

Great Resources for Membership

There are many great resources available from RI and other sources to assist clubs with their recruitment and retention strategies. In each of these newsletters, we’ll feature a few of these.

Introducing New Members to Rotary
<https://my.rotary.org/en/document/introducing-new-members-rotary-orientation-guide>

This is an excellent guide to “on-boarding” new members. You can download the guide for free.

Connect to Membership Leads
<https://www.rotary.org/MYROTARY/en/document/connect-membership-leads>

Another great free resource from RI.

Questions? Contact IPDG Kevin Crosby, 2016-17 Membership Director, at kevin@d7090.org.