

Membership Workshop – Note Summary

District 7910 conducted four area membership workshops in March 2017. Workshops consisted of table discussions of a case study of a Rotary club which has had a deteriorating membership situation. The club members have met and reached consensus about a membership objective but need help in developing an action plan. Each table discussed the case in three separate 20-minute round tables and issued their notes which were published in the District Newsletter.

The following summary is a consolidated, edited compilation of all eleven table discussions.

Summary

The Hopkinton Rotary Club has been an active club for many years but has been declining in interest and membership. The latest membership count is at 13 members. They have attempted to revive the club and have brought in some members but were not able to retain them. They have finally resolved to address their club's future with renewed vigor and enthusiasm to increase membership to 30 members within three years. They have met with the District 7910 Membership Committee seeking help and guidance in developing an action plan to resolve their situation.

Background

Please review the Case Study fact pattern (attached) for details on the club and town profile, community needs and the three table session questions.

I. Initial Steps

1. While focus is on increased membership, club needs to redirect its energy towards visioning, objectives and strategy for future growth.
 - Develop clear, focused achievable objectives for next three years.
 - Conduct a Visioning exercise.
 - Spend time on a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the club.
2. Club has been very poor at PR.
 - Develop a club brochure describing their history and current major projects. Use District PR as a resource.
 - Engage high school or community college students as interns to help with the development of a Facebook page and a simple website.
 - Engage local media for Rotary interest stories about their scholarships, veterans breakfast and marathon support projects.
3. Meetings/Venues/Dues

- Diner breakfast meetings may be fine for low cost and friendly fellowship get togethers but not conducive for speakers or guests.
 - Club should investigate other venues – community centers, town meeting halls, senior centers, libraries, etc.
 - Dues at \$150 and pay-as-you-go meals are an effective way to keep total costs low.
 - Club should concentrate on strategy, visioning, objectives and action plans rather than speakers during their early restructuring.
4. Agenda/Speakers
- It is important to have speakers to develop and maintain interest level.
 - Speakers should be selected strategically to support club interests and objectives.
 - Speakers should be considered potential members and be selected accordingly.
 - At this stage club may have only one speaker a month while they concentrate on planning.
 - Club may consider joint meetings with other local Rotary clubs or other service clubs.
 - Some meetings could be directed towards service projects.
5. Community Needs
- It appears that club has evolved into an “old boys” networking and fellowship organization.
 - Club needs to refocus on Rotary objective of “Service” as its ultimate objective.
 - Their Visioning needs to focus on community needs – needy families, elderly, veterans, poor children, hungry people, students, YMCA, etc.
 - Club needs to prioritize and identify clear objectives in these areas.
 - These efforts will help them to develop a “Hopkinton Rotary Club” Value Proposition.

II. Members – Types and Sources

1. Types of Members

- Classification may be an outdated concept for Rotary, but the idea of diversification is not.
- Club should consider members from all walks of life – age, ethnicity, gender, professions, careers, clergy, retirees, empty nesters, stay at home business folks, etc.
- Contact prior members to find out why they left.
- Identify club needs – sales, technical, social media, accounting, business, etc. to help prioritize approaches.
- Consider town government leaders – fire, police, parks and recreation, managers, etc.
- Consider non-profit managers and care givers.

2. Sources of Members

- Every club member knows of potential Rotarians – friends, business associates, acquaintances.
- Join Chamber of Commerce and attend meetings to establish contacts and to network.
- Get names of prominent citizens from local media, schools, PTA, etc.
- Collect names from RYLA and scholarship contacts.
- Develop a prospective member list with contact information and go through an initial vetting process.
- Try to determine relative desirability against criteria of time, talent and treasure availability.
- Decide on Contact priority – who will you call on first?
- Consider family, corporate or honoree memberships.

III. Strategy for Contact and Retention

1. The Rotary Story
 - It is essential that the club and its members have a “Rotary Story” to convey to prospective members – both from a Rotary International and from a local club point of view.
 - A club Value Proposition needs to be developed.
 - Need to answer the “WIIFM” question.
2. Membership Chair
 - Chair should be outgoing, social, dynamic, sales type personality. May be the club president for a small club like Hopkinton.
 - Meetings should be face to face – not electronic media.
 - Invite prospects to service events, meetings, social gatherings.
 - Develop a concise “elevator speech” and have all members practice it.
 - Clearly communicate club activities and objectives and member responsibilities.
3. Plan on bringing in new members at the rate of 1-2 per quarter.
4. Club Changes
 - New members will result in changes over time and these should be encouraged.
 - The club should recognize this and plan for it.
 - New members should be engaged very soon by committee assignments and responsibilities.
 - They will bring in ideas and initiatives which need to be welcomed not discouraged.
 - Maintain balance between legacy actions and fresh ideas.
5. New Member Introduction
 - All current members need to be welcoming, warm and friendly with new members.
 - Mentors should be assigned to all new members,
 - Member induction process should be formalized and professional.

- Have new members present their bio's.
- Encourage and accompany new members to attend RLI and district meetings to learn about Rotary.

6. Retention

- Periodically check on new members for interest and satisfaction levels.
- Maintain engagement level in club activities and service projects.