

How does a club create New/Alternative Membership categories?

Rotary clubs are now free to create categories of membership that will work for them and enable them to reach out to a broader constituency of potential members. The “official” membership categories of RI remain the same: 1) Active and 2) Honorary. However, clubs have the freedom and blessing to create their own membership types. There is, therefore, no definitive list of membership categories; the “menu” on the reverse side of this paper is intended to stimulate your thinking, not to limit it.

Here are some things to think about when you create alternative membership types.

1. For membership categories that include more than one person, such as Corporate, Non-Profit and Family:
 - a. What are the maximum number of people who can share this membership?
 - b. Only one member can be the primary (active) member registered with RI. So how are additional members to be recognized? *(Some clubs make additional members honorary members so that they will receive some RI recognition and receive “The Rotarian” and other communications. Some object to that use of honorary membership; it’s your choice and decision)*
2. You will need to consider how an alternative membership category fits into your club’s attendance requirements as defined in the Bylaws. In the case of multiple person membership categories, the appeal of the membership would include others in the group helping to fulfill the primary member’s attendance requirement.
3. You will need to determine what dues will apply to this category of membership. In the case of memberships that include more than one person, dues will need to be less than a multiple of your regular annual dues; probably somewhere between \$25 and \$50 additional.
4. If it is your club’s practice to assess for meal costs at the time that dues are invoiced, you will need to consider how this membership is affected by that practice.

It is suggested that you not immediately alter your bylaws to reflect the new alternative membership categories that you are trying as a club. Define the category, run it past the club’s Board of Directors for some careful vetting and then put it into practice for a defined period of time; one year would be a reasonable period of time to experiment with a new category.

At the conclusion of the experimental period, schedule meetings to review the alternative membership type with the club’s Board of Directors and with the general membership at a Club Assembly. Once the kinks have been ironed out, it’s important to take the time to document the new membership category in your club’s Bylaws.