

District 7950 Conference - May 15/17, 2009

Membership Retention

Problem:

Membership development District 7950 during period 12/1/2004 through 12/1/2008:

District 7050	Total Members 12/1/2004:	2710
	Total Members 12/1/2008:	2618
	Membership decline during period:	3.4%

Breakdown by club size:	12/1/2004	12/1/2008	gain/(loss) in %
Clubs sized larger than 75	940	837	(11.8)
50 – 75	671	662	(1.3)
25 – 50	621	549	(11.6)
Up to 25	469	570	21.5

If you loose clients as fast as you win them your future is endangered. No company will survive that in the long term.

Therefore increased **focus on retention must be encouraged**, so much so that it is recommended **there should be a separate Retention Committee in every Club.**

Retention Committee members have different people skills than those who bring new members in. It is easy to find initial attraction. The challenge is to live together for the rest of your life!

Presidents - Focus on retention:

Remember Rotarians become Rotarians for different reasons

Let not one member leave because he or she have is not engaged with club activities or programs and feels their resources are not utilized.

Know what attracted a member to Rotary

Make sure your members are **engaged**.

Know the resources each member brings to your club

Facilitate what made them want to be a Rotarian.

Make use of those resources as a club

Talk to them and make them contributing members. **Take responsibility.**

Make their dreams real and their being a Rotarian fulfilling and fun.

Make sure each member **feels welcome** and **enjoys the fellowship.**

It is your responsibility to act before a member leaves.

Work with your Retention Committee

Presidents & Retention Committee: Seek to engage those you have not seen at your meetings lately:

Help them overcome what is keeping them away from meetings or participating.

If their resources and interests are not met by the club, **ask** how this can be corrected and **provide** them with opportunities that will **empower** them and to provide service through the club.

“Don’t have time”: Create synergy between potential Rotary programs and prospect’s interests. Rotary requires 50% attendance. **Be flexible how attendance is being credited (committee work, e-club, social meetings with a group of Rotarians)**. Give credit for following through on Rotary programs your club would like to have. Invite spouses/family to meetings. Attending meetings then is no longer time away from family.

Be creative and positive, think of a solution to a problem, make a solution happen!

Reengage them. Communicate among selves and with the membership

In this difficult economic times some members may find it financially difficult to maintain membership. Be creative and sensitive to these problems. Find solutions within the club to make membership possible for these members. They are your Rotarian friends!

Expenses/Costs: Allow installment payments for dues etc. Allow well off members to make contributions to the club account (which may be in support of their less well off friends). Introduce social time before a dinner meeting to allow people who may not want to participate in the dinner to enjoy fellowship. Allow members to join the meeting after the dinner for the presentation (This would also allow them to have dinner with their family and take away from the “no time” argument).

A Challenge to all Members - It may not be the new member who is the problem, it may be your club that is the problem:

Make your new member feel **welcome, included, appreciated and respected**.

Include your member in social functions even outside the Club.

Provide information, educate about Club activities and programs as well as District and RI events.

Make sure each new member has a **mentor**. Be **open to new ideas and suggestions** coming from new members.

Ensure Club **programs are interesting, fellowship is fun, respectful** .

Do Not Sidestep Challenges/Issues re Membership Growth and Retention but Focus on and Address,

- a. what makes Rotary International attractive/unattractive to existing, to new members?.
- b. What makes your club attractive/unattractive to existing, to new members?
- c. What makes your Club successful/ what holds it back?

A Challenge to the Presidents - Be prepared to Manage Knowledge and Diversity :

- d. Be a resource to and supportive of what made members join your Club and Rotary International (which may be different and go beyond your reasons of being a Rotarian)
- e. Know the strengths and weaknesses of members
- f. Communicate with members individually as to their interests . Know their interests
- g. Ensure they have an activity within their field of interest –help them build one, facilitate resources
- h. Empower members draw them into the planning process (which includes solutions to funding certain service programs. Remember, most Rotarians are professionals)
- i. Think outside the box, encourage thinking outside the box.
- j. Communicate club wide as to goals which must have support from within.

A Challenge for Retention Committee - Do not procrastinate, but communicate, be proactive, respectful and resourceful in dealing with

- a. Any membership issues going on in a club
- b. Any retention issues
- c. Ensure, encourage, facilitate that all members are active in service programs, communicate with all committees
- d. Ensure all members are aware of all the club's service programs, fundraisers and challenges.

Retention is a vital matter. It needs to be a dedicated and focused effort in the Club entrusted to qualified members with a defined mandate who have direct access to and the ear of the board. It is best addressed through a Retention Committee made up of seasoned Rotarians.

“Firing” members at the end of the year for not participating or attending is **not a creative solution.**

In most cases it is merely an indication of having failed to address a problem.

Check out District 7950 website under Membership