

# IMPROVING YOUR MEMBER RETENTION



Keeping current members is a sign of a club's stability and overall well-being. Many clubs don't recognize their retention problems if the number of members remains somewhat steady. However, clubs that consistently lose members and compensate by inducting new members are not managing their growth or retention well. This assessment provides a view of how both the induction and the termination of members contribute to the net gain or loss of members.

## OUTCOME

Conduct this assessment and act on its results to:

- Determine when and why members leave your club
- Generate strategies to keep them engaged and involved so they stay

## GETTING ORGANIZED

To complete the steps below, you will need access to club membership reports on My Rotary. The club president, secretary, treasurer, membership chair, and Foundation chair have this access and can delegate it to any fellow club member. It may be helpful to work with a member who has experience in data analysis.



Note: Each of the steps can take a week or longer. When planning your assessment, be sure to allow enough time.

## GETTING STARTED

Ready to start? Here's how.

### Step 1: Review your club's historical and existing member retention percentages

Go to Rotary Club Central's [Reports page](#) and, under **Club Reports**, choose the **Member Viability and Growth** report to see current retention rates for existing members.



To export reports, click or tap Export (the  icon), and choose a program or format. You can now save or print the report.

To run the Member Viability and Growth report without following a link to the Reports page:

- Sign in to My Rotary
- From the **Take Action** menu, choose **Rotary Club Central**
- Choose **Reports** from the options on the left
- Under **Club Reports**, choose **Member Viability and Growth**

### Step 2: Determine when members leave your club

Run the Membership Termination Profile report to see when people are most likely to terminate their club membership and the reasons they give for doing so. Knowing at what point in their Rotary tenure members are most likely to leave can help you recognize the club's retention strengths and weaknesses and focus your efforts accordingly.

Go to Rotary Club Central's [Reports page](#) and, under **Club Reports**, choose **Membership Termination Profile**.

To run the Membership Termination Profile without following a link to the Reports page:

- Sign in to My Rotary
- From the **Take Action** menu, choose **Rotary Club Central**
- Choose **Reports** from the options on the left
- Under **Club Reports**, choose **Membership Termination Profile**

### Step 3: Generate strategies for keeping members

Once you've reviewed the Member Viability and Growth and Membership Termination Profile reports, discuss the results within the membership committee. Consider these questions:

- Who is leaving your club? Veteran members? New members? Both?
- Why are members leaving?

### Step 4: Develop an action plan

Report the membership committee's findings to the club. Facilitate a discussion about how you might address areas of weakness and build on what you're doing well.

## ROTARY RESEARCH

Understanding why members leave is crucial to strengthening your club. The Exit Survey in Understanding Why Members Leave is designed to gather this information. Rotary International has conducted extensive research on the reasons members leave their clubs worldwide. Here's what we've found.

### Members who stay less than 1 year

Many members leave within the first year because they were not fully informed about the responsibilities of membership before joining or not fully educated about Rotary after joining. Some have trouble meeting attendance requirements or struggle with financial obligation, while others say that their networking expectations were not being met.

#### *What you can do*

If your club loses members within the first year, focus on:

- Communicating better to prospective members, both about the personal and professional benefits that your club has to offer, as well as about the responsibilities of being a Rotary member
- Planning meaningful induction ceremonies that celebrate this special step and making sure current members make new members feel welcome
- Making club meetings fun, energetic, and humorous, without losing sight of Rotary's mission
- Assigning new members mentors who can explain club workings and traditions, answer questions, help them get to know other members, and, if they miss any meetings, make sure all is well
- Offering useful new member orientation programs
- Assigning newer members to committees or otherwise involving them in the club
- Connecting often with new members to answer questions and teach them about Rotary



Use the Member Satisfaction Survey in **Enhancing the Club Experience** to ask all members for feedback about your club and ideas for improving their experience.

## Members who stay for 1-2 years

Many members who leave after spending one to two years in a club do so because they do not feel engaged in club events and activities, their fellowship expectations aren't being met, or they have difficulty meeting the attendance requirements because of competing priorities.

### *What you can do*

Take action to keep members who have been in your club for one to two years:

- Identify members who have been in your club for one to two years and make sure they are involved in a project or committee that interests them.
- Ask these members for their feedback. They may have ideas for revitalizing the club's fellowship activities or service projects.
- Suggest hosting a Youth Exchange student, or see if they would like to serve as a liaison to your Rotaract or Interact club.
- Assign mentors to members who don't have them, or suggest that they change mentors if they would like to.

## Members who stay for 3-5 years

Members who leave after spending three to five years in a club may do so because their fellowship expectations are not being met, they are frustrated with the club's leadership, or they have difficulty meeting the attendance requirements because of competing priorities.

### *What you can do*

For members who have been in your club for three to five years:

- Provide leadership opportunities. Members can get more involved by serving as club officers. Encourage those who have already held club leadership positions to mentor newer members or participate in district activities. In taking on leadership roles, they will feel useful, valued, and connected with the club's decisions and events.
- Organize new activities, such as continuing member education, or revitalize established club activities so that members remain engaged and excited about attending club meetings and fellowship opportunities.
- Get members' feedback on their club experience and ask for their ideas on what could be improved.
- Put their expertise and skills to use and recognize them for their efforts.

## Members who stay 6-10 years

Some members who leave after spending six to 10 years in a club report that their fellowship expectations weren't being met and that they were frustrated with the club's leadership. Others leave when they retire or need to relocate.

### *What you can do*

For members who have been in your club for six to 10 years:

- Recommend they mentor newer members and get involved in more district activities, such as planning the district conference or serving on a district committee. Or they might wish to join a [Rotary Fellowship](#). Both can help them meet more people and experience Rotary beyond the club.
- If members are planning to leave upon retiring, remind them that retired members are an important part of Rotary. They provide valuable perspective and can serve as mentors to younger professionals in the club.
- If members are relocating, forward their contact information to the clubs in their new area, [refer them](#) through My Rotary, or encourage them to let Rotary know they want to [change clubs](#).
- Put their expertise and skills to use and recognize them for their efforts.

## Members who leave after 10 years

Many members who leave after spending more than 10 years in a club say they are not interested in the club's meetings and activities. Other members choose to leave because of retirement, family obligations, financial constraints, or health problems.

### *What you can do*

For members who have been in your club more than 10 years:

- Spend some time with them to learn whether any of the reasons above could prompt them to leave your club. Some reasons for leaving are beyond your control, but learning why members might leave can help you find ways to prevent it.
- Ask for their opinions on how to energize or reinvent your club meetings, or gauge their interest in taking on a district leadership position — assistant governor, district governor, or district committee chair.

- Consider easing the financial obligations of members of this group, who may be under financial strain because of retirement or other factors.
- Put their expertise and skills to use and recognize them for their efforts.
- See if they would be interested in mentoring a new member.

### **Interested in doing other assessments?**

[Representing Your Community's Professions: A Classification Assessment](#)

[Diversifying Your Club: A Member Diversity Assessment](#)

[Finding New Club Members: A Prospective Member Exercise](#)

[Enhancing the Club Experience: Member Satisfaction Survey](#)

[Understanding Why Members Leave: Exit Survey](#)