

5 moments of truth for first time visitors to our club

The **pivotal event** in member recruitment is the voluntary decision that someone makes to come to their **second** meeting of our club. This will be greatly affected by their level of comfort during their first meeting.

Therefore we should critically examine what we do, and address any probable moments of discomfort or confusion for first time visitors, and make it clear to them in simple terms what Rotary is all about.

1. The first thing new visitors will do is check out Rotary.org, and our club, on the web. (They will most probably do this on a mobile device, not a desk top PC.) Therefore we must be consistent and show the correct Rotary branding, font and visual design elements on our website, on the screen during our lunch meetings, and everywhere else.

We should also remove all traces of our own unique version of the Rotary brand. This is more than 2 years overdue. Every other capital city club has changed their web site branding to comply with the global RI branding guidelines – why do we tell the world that this global brand does not apply to us? By not complying, we are deliberately compromising the RI global branding strategy, and contributing to Rotary's awareness problem.

Also, by changing the Rotary branding on the screen during our meetings, we would be reminding ourselves each week that some changes are required, and are happening.

2. Ensure that each guest, upon arrival, skips the normal registration table and is immediately partnered with a member, who, inter alia, sits with them, explains what will happen in the meeting, and introduces everyone at the table, before the meeting starts.
3. Make it clear what is NOT changing, and state "why we are here". Reflect Rotary's core values (the 4 way test) and core purpose ("helping others") by simplifying our statement of purpose at the beginning of each meeting:

"United in the spirit of service we value truth, fairness and friendship; and we welcome the opportunity that Rotary gives us to contribute our talents and resources in support of others."

This reminds us at each meeting that our core values and core purpose are the same as they were when our oldest members joined. They are still important to us and we want to protect them, not change them.

4. No toasts – or limit them to the President change over and Major events like Christmas lunch. What data do we have that supports the proposition that first time visitors will feel more comfortable if we ask them to make a toast at every meeting?
5. No communal singing. What data do we have that supports the proposition that first time visitors will feel more comfortable if we ask them to sing in public the words of a song that they probably don't know, with a group of strangers?

Individually, these are minor changes, each with minimal effect, but the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

These changes will also remind us each week that the Club needs to reconsider how we do things, and act us into a new way of thinking - thereby encouraging a mindset more accepting of new ideas.

Other moments of truth for first time visitors are already covered:

- Convenient Location
- Reserved Parking
- Consistent start and finish time
- Reasonable cost
- Convenient toilets
- They welcome me
- Food quality – special diet no problem
- Wine available
- Interesting speaker
- They ask me to come back

We should also think about improving the current registration desk process and removing the traditional sergeant's session but since neither of these need apply to first time visitors, they are probably not as critical to that pivotal event as the 5 points above.

John Hendrickson

January, 2016

The invocation we have when we are not having an invocation.

Early in the change process, after we decided what the CORE was, we changed our “invocation” that historically we had recited at the beginning of each meeting.

For many years the sergeant would call the room to order with a bell, and say:

Rotarians and guests, please be upstanding and join with me in welcoming to the top table the following people:

Our President *****, our Secretary*****, and our guest speaker *****.

(This was followed by applause.)

Please remain standing for the invocation.

For good food, good fellowship, and the opportunity to help others through Rotary, we give thanks. Please be seated.

We changed this invocation without any prior warning to club members, and replaced it with a statement of purpose:

“United in the spirit of service we value truth, fairness and friendship; and we welcome the opportunity that Rotary gives us to contribute our talents and resources in support of others.”

We then explained why we had made the change – to remind all members each week what would not be changing. (this is referred to as *cognitive therapy*, i.e. you act someone into thinking differently, not try to think them into acting differently)

At about the same time, we put the new, RI preferred club logo on the video screen and two pull up posters behind the speaker, and told members that the Board had decided to follow the RI branding strategy.

Furthermore, we removed the requirement for members to stand and applaud the top table. Instead, we asked them to be seated.

These changes, though minor, combined to deliver the message that some things were changing, but the important things were not. In the meantime, through our online discussion forum, we encouraged all members to discuss what else should be changed. The catalyst for this discussion was the questions in the “5 moments of truth” briefing note.

During the next 12 months, we shortened the statement of purpose to its current form, to focus on *Friendship*, as Paul Harris originally intended. The member nominated to run each meeting (we don’t have a sergeant any more) now says:

Rotarians & Guests, Please take your seats

We come together in the name of Rotary, for friendship and the opportunity to help others.

*- Please Welcome President: ******

John Hendrickson

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Rotary Club of Adelaide

August 2017