

**Notes from District Marketing and Membership Workshop**  
**Held at the Monash Enterprise Centre, Bendigo Bank Training Room**  
**7.30 pm, Tuesday 17 November 2009**  
**Beef Up Yo' Membership!**

An enthusiastic group of Rotarians participated in a vigorous workshop of strategies and resources that clubs can use to boost their membership. Summary Notes of the workshop follow. Clubs are encouraged to access all information herein and from other items from the website.

**Discussion Group 1: Finding New Members**

**Top ideas:**

1. Members networks – targeted/qualified
  2. Rotary information nights/breakfasts
- Both part of a co-ordinated campaign which plots the sourcing, the marketing, the approach and the followup.

**Sources:**

Letter box drop –

- Marketing within the membership database/lists
- Rotary Door knocks – business (not residences)

Rotary programs

- RYLA
- Foundation Alumni

**Know these for your campaign:**

- a) Who do you want to approach
- b) How are you going to target a potential member
- c) What are you giving the potential member when you approach them
- d) What is the followup that follows the initial approach

**Building a “people network”**

- a) Most people have friends/neighbours/suppliers – use the excitement of the experience of existing members to ignite and advertise the programs of Rotary.

**Are we capitalising on the Rotary badge – our icon?**

1. Are we pushing the Shelterbox program as part of the Rotary badge/icon?
2. Are we pushing the Polio eradication success as part of the Rotary badge/icon?

**Discussion Group 2: Quality versus Quantity**

**Assumptions:**

1. A quality club is well run, well organised with good projects.

2. Make sure the club is in “order” before recruiting to expand the club
3. The club knows what it is doing and why they are doing their projects.
4. There needs to be a breadth of projects to attract a variety of people.
5. There is a need for “shakers and movers” to initiate projects and activities and “champion” projects/events/activities
6. There is a need for quality management skills in the running of the club, time awareness, programming, skill match for tasks to be done.

Consider:

Should we have a mystique?

Should we advertise?

Or is the answer a combination of both?

Ensure there is an opening and an opportunity across both organising skills and “doing skills”

Ideas shared:

Use the opportunity of a “cup of coffee” to get to know potential members.

Ensure that potential member has an opportunity to understand the club, and the club has an understanding of the potential member.

Take time to get quality.

### **Discussion Group 3: Retention of Members**

Why do we lose members?

Age

Conflicts/tensions within a club

Time management – a problem for some people

Business changes

Relocation

Consider:

What are the demographics of the catchment area

This determines projects, plans, meetings, topics

- For potential members, be able to identify what interests a new members.
- Successful club have a variety of projects – Healesville encourages member to have a passion for a project and if one doesn't exist, say so and help identify a project to meet their passion.
- Ensure the social activities are involving of all members.
- Remember club service – looking after the members of a club, making sure that the club serves the membership
- New members get new members – the fire, the enthusiasm are strongest in the early years of association.
- Use the business approach sensitively, ensure that the social activities do not create a business conflict and that the business approach doesn't stifle the social.

- Plan the membership input and the activities that are involving of members and are sensitive to the time requirements.
- Keep an interest in the membership – ensure that you have a connection for all members – don't allow a member who is not attending to remain un-contacted for long periods of time.

Checklist:

- a) Venue
- b) Costs
- c) Program
- d) Business approach to the running of the meeting
- e) Business approach to the projects of the club
- f) Use the networking power of the organisation
- g) Utilise the skills of the members
- h) At any time, each of us can lead.

Do we conduct “exit interviews” with people who leave?

Some clubs do.

Use the opportunity sensitively to gain considered reasons why people leave.

Always refer relocating members to potential clubs in their new area.

Is there a time to **not** retain the member, but to consider letting them go?

Consensus was **yes** in some cases.

Discuss the changed circumstances

Use the MoP to outline the requirements and invite the member to discuss.

Suggestion to have a discussion first, and a letter is the last resort.

Personal is always better.

**Presentation by President Shia Smart – Rotary Club of MASH**

A successful club – why has it happened? What's worked for our club?

- All the items from the Finding new members apply
- Use members' networks
- Two-up program
- Letters of invitation
- Information nights – club event, there is a letter campaign, members allocated tasks and use a club meeting night with a focussed speaker or a vocational visit. Make sure the information night allows a good program for follow-up (i.e. avoid a public holiday).
- Community newsletter – Federal MPs can often find budget to print these for community groups. Now being done quarterly
- Retention of new members/existing members: Get them involved but not too much so.

- Weekly roster needs to incorporate new members – take care not to set it too far in advance.
- Use new members in meeting running/committee chair, and support with a deputy to incorporate the Rotary experience and maximise the business skills of the new members.
- How long will you wait for new members to “become experienced” before you use their skills?
- Recognise that not everyone wants to lead – some people volunteer to follow and will resist the challenge to take leadership.

MASH meeting procedure:

- 6:45 for 7:00 – finish at 8:00 **on the dot**,
- 44 members currently.
- Meeting charge is \$8.50 which is to cover tea/coffee and then to the house for homeless youth project which is run by Boxhill Institute.
- 1 hour meeting – includes a speaker for 20 minutes
- There is a sergeant, but no fines – there is heads and tails
- After the meeting adjourn to the RSL for a meal, or just a soup, or just a coffee, or a drink or even just a chat.

Gender mix 50/50 maybe a few more females. Strong presence of couples – means that nights are not specifically “partners’ night”. Average age is around 50 years of age. Some of the members have school and pre-school age children and they attend meetings. The dress is very casual without a “tie/jacket” requirement.

**Ps: Thanks to Diane Fisher for assisting with meeting notes!**