

Weekly meetings

Overview

The program for the Club weekly meetings and other activities is extremely important and requires a lot of planning, innovation and imagination. The program chairman must liaise with all directors and committee chairmen to ensure a balanced and interesting program which covers the five Avenues of Service, projects and activities of the Club for the year as well as informing members on current issues of vocational and international interest to them.

An interesting and balanced program will entice members to want to come to meetings. Not every meeting has to be a 'traditional' Rotary meeting. Vary your meetings with visits to interesting or unusual places.

The next few pages will provide you with ideas for an interesting and balanced program.

1. Planning your Program

Begin planning your program with the whole year in mind. District dates and also a blank grid are provided for your reference and use. The special months will be a guide to possible activities e.g. April is Magazine Month. Invite a guest speaker from Rotary Down Under or plan a visit to RDU House in Parramatta.

Enter all the set functions and events such as:

- Changeover - Club and District
- District Conference
- District Assembly
- District Governor's official visit (your President for 2007-2008 has this date)

As soon as possible enter in:

- Public holidays and other big events which may affect Club plans, e.g. Easter Sunday,
- Anzac Day, Australia Day, Queen's Birthday
- Pride of Workmanship / Community Awards
- Christmas functions
- Club Birthday
- Club Assemblies (meetings of Officers, Directors and Committee Chairmen)
- Club Forums (meetings of all Club members to discuss service activities)
- GSE welcome and farewell where applicable
- Special partners' meetings
- Youth Exchange presentations - inbound and outbound where applicable
- RYLA, RYPEN, MUNA, Science & Engineering Forums etc. reporting back
- Other special events your Club usually has (Refer to 10.5)
- Board and Committee Meetings intended to be held at your meeting venue (to ensure that (the venue operator is aware of them).

2. Organising Guest Speakers

A program needs to be balanced and contain a variety of speakers who are inspirational and practical drawn from:

- trades and professional
- charities and educators
- business and entertainers
- sports people and motivators

Tip

Use your connections when looking for a guest speaker, don't go it alone. People will be more receptive to speaking when they are approached by someone they know.

Tip

The expectations of speakers from charities need careful management - your members may not react well if they feel they are being "put on the spot".

a. Book your guest speakers months in advance

Confirm the booking in writing on Club letterhead specifying:

- day, date, time of meeting - starting and ending times, duration of presentation, approximate time during the meeting guest will be asked to speak, time allocated for questions; in particular explain why the timings must be adhered to.

Note that a sample running sheet may be found in Section 9 Meeting Management and Protocol.

- indicate size of audience (for handouts),
- location of venue parking or transport (include a map),
- indicate if a meal will be served,
- ask about dietary requirements, special access and any presentation aids required
- for a speaker from a "charity" ensure they realise that they can't simply tout for money
- unless the Board has approved that. Request a brief profile from the speaker for the person introducing the guest speaker.

b. Confirm arrangements

Confirm these arrangements closer to the meeting date. Speakers are only human and they can forget.

c. Publicise your meeting program in advance

Publicise your meeting program 3-4 months in advance in your bulletin. Indicate if it is a partner's event or if a social event in the diary of coming events.

d. Liaise with the roster person

Liaise with the roster person well in advance to allocate introduction and Thank You duties. Publicise these well in advance.

e. Look after the Guest Speaker

At the meeting arrange for someone to:

- Ensure the speaker is given entry and exit if secure parking is provided at the venue,
- Identify and greet the guest speaker and introduce him/her to the President,
- Help with equipment or displays, test the microphone etc,
- Indicate where the toilets are, organise a drink, indicate where the speaker is to sit during the meeting,
- Outline the program for the meeting e.g. Grace, toasts, reports, fines session, as this may be this person's first Rotary meeting.

Many Clubs roster a person other than the Program Chairman to identify, greet, host and introduce the guest speaker. Don't forget the gift or Certificate (for the Guest Speaker).

For example your Club may make a small donation to the ARHRF in the speaker's name and present them with a certificate to acknowledge this fact.

f. A Guide To Introducing The Guest Speaker (GS)

1. Obtain the Guest Speakers CV/introduction brief from the Program Chairman at least one week prior to the meeting.
2. Meet the GS outside and escort them into the Club. Assist by carrying in any props or aid material. If the venue has secure parking, let them in/out of the carpark.
3. Introduce the GS to your President, book them in and organise name tag and maybe a raffle ticket.
4. As host, organise a drink and any special meal requirements - show location of the toilet and check if any additional aids are required.
5. Show the GS the meeting room, the microphone and their seating location.
6. Assist with the preparation of any equipment to be used (a screen projector, displays, power point and rostrum) and the distribution of any handouts.
7. Sit with the GS - discuss Rotary and prepare them for your procedures and customs, e.g. Rotary Grace, the Queen, Sergeant, toasts, etc.
8. Inform the GS that they will be on 5 minutes (as a courtesy). Maybe arrange for a glass of water and check that they have a watch or clock visible.
9. Keep your introduction short (about 2 minutes max). Highlight the speaker's qualifications and the topic, then adjust the microphone height to suit the GS.

10. At the conclusion of the meeting, the GS is still in your hands. Please help them to pack up and leave you with the feeling that Rotary is a great organisation. If your Club has a Visitors' Book, ensure they have the opportunity to sign it.
11. Don't overlook the fact that the GS could be invited to join Rotary.

g. At the end of the meeting

- At the end of the meeting arrange for someone to help the speaker pack up, carry equipment to car, let them out of the car park etc.
- Help them to feel that they would like to come back.

h. Follow-up after the meeting

- Write a letter of thanks to the Guest Speaker and include a copy of the bulletin in which the presentation is reported.
- Seek approval from speaker and if appropriate recommend the speaker to the District
 - committee to 'spread the word' to other Clubs
 - Remember the Guest Speaker may be a potential Rotarian. Invite him /her to another meeting.

3. Club Meetings - suggested Guest Speakers

Interesting and unusual Guest Speakers can be sourced from radio interviews, newspaper articles and other Rotary Clubs. Local newspapers can be a rich source of leads. The District Secretary and/or your Assistant Governor also have access to a list of interesting speakers compiled from information supplied by other Rotary Clubs over the last few years.

Another good source of outstanding Guest Speakers is Margaret Gee's "*Australian Celebrity Contact Book*" (www.mgeecelebrity.com.au)

Note that many of these celebrities may request a speaking fee. Do not agree to any such fee unless you have the approval of the Board.

Tip

Involve the media by sending out a notice indicating Speaker event, noting subject and speaker. Send a report following the event to local press and include pictures.