

Edina Morningside Rotary Club 17% Membership Growth in Past 3 Years

Tom Gump – President

NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT . . . IS IT MAGIC? NO – JUST A LITTLE BIT OF INNOVATIVE EFFORT.

How Edina Morningside Rotary Club grew its club by more than a net 10% in less than two months.

September 4, 2016

Edina Morningside Rotary Club (EMRC) has added 10 new, high-quality members to its Club in just under two months and they have an equal number interested in joining. How did they do it?

Above all else, EMRC members are **proud to be Rotarians and of their club and they talk to their friends and colleagues about the great work Rotarians are doing and how much fun they are having.**

Below are a few additional, easy to implement and proven actions you can take if you want to increase your membership numbers.

Update Your Membership Brochure. Using the Rotary International template, the Club produced a tri-fold membership brochure filled with vibrant pictures of its members doing fun activities.

Host a Potential New Member Social. EMRC hosted a “potential new member social” at a club member’s house. Potential new members, new members and veteran members were equally represented. This event led to three potential members planning to attend EMRC’s next meeting.

Recognize Potential New Members when they attend a Club Meeting. The EMRC President includes a slide featuring each potential new member with their picture and some points of interest about them for the club’s PowerPoint presentation.

Update and Customize your New Member Packets. EMRC’s new members love getting their new member packet. Everything from the Four-Way-Test card to the decal for their car (yes- even the eye-glass cleaning cloth) makes them appreciate their new club more.

Encourage Interaction between New and Veteran Members

- Make Picture-frames with Pictures of Newly Initiated Members. EMRC makes a small picture frame with the name and picture of each newly initiated member and places these at various table locations at each meeting and encourages its veteran members to meet the new members. The frames move to different locations each meeting so that the new members have an opportunity to sit with different groups each week.
- Have New Members Interview Veteran Members and have them Present the Veteran Member’s Classification Talk. EMRC does this and the new and veteran member become close. They both stand up at the meeting and inevitable the new-member-presenter ends up encouraging the rest of the club to get to know the veteran member. It has energized the club like no single action they have ever done before – try it. It takes a little coordinating but the results are amazing. Remember – it not just getting members in – it’s engaging them to be active Rotarians. After all, it is the net number of members that counts!

DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK AND ASK – All a person can say is “no.” Asking someone to join your club is great. They appreciate being asked, even if they don’t join. If you don’t ask, they won’t join.

It’s not magic. Rotary is a great organization and our district has outstanding clubs. It’s easy to sell and make people feel welcome. Try it and you will see the results!

EMRC Membership Chairs

St. Cloud Rotary Club

15% Membership Growth in Past 3 Years

Jill Magelssen – Immediate Past President

Our Membership committee has clarified and defined how to invite a prospective member, how to communicate the process to the club, what should happen once a member is vetted in the process, how to inform the new member about our club (how to become engaged, what participation in our club means and what they can expect from being a member) and opportunities for service.

By creating a more formal process, documenting and communicating to the club membership increased. We were able in the last several years to increase membership from 113 to 133 as of July 1 2016.

Members now know-

- How to invite a guest/(prospective member) to a meeting
- How to find the application, complete it and where to send it
- What should happen to move it to the Membership committee, then to the Board
- Are notified when that prospective member is accepted into membership
- What steps the new member needs to complete, when to attend an orientation
- We acknowledge “members in transition” as they attend our weekly lunch meetings
- New Members are officially welcomed into the club by the President at Red Badge, and then celebrated when the new member gets a blue badge (another President acknowledgement)

Our Service Projects, programs and volunteer opportunities attract prospective members but we have learned they do not stay without a good membership process and a focus on retention. This club has done a good job with that.

Pegg Gustafson – Membership Chair

We have been very fortunate over the years. As the new Membership Director, I believe it is because of the visibility we received from investing in Lake George renovation along with our weekly Summertime by George 12-week music series. We are seen as “doers” and having influence, and success breeds success. The Int’l programs also reflect our values and achievements. We have attendance requirements and an orientation program for new members. As a unit, I’d say we make every effort to engage our members. We’ve streamlined the process so that it is less cumbersome.

We have an orientation meeting for new members. We track attendance/participation; members genuinely want to be involved. We combine fun, education, volunteerism. Our weekly meetings are also very interesting.

Our club is well respected and highly regarded. Someone would want to become a member to be a part of a club that accomplishes things locally and abroad.

Our membership committee members will reach out to each member by the end of the fiscal year at least once to see how things are going. When someone falls below 50% participation, we will contact them to see if they have any issues or obstacles. We have mentors assigned to new members in addition to their sponsors. We personally invite new members to Rotary After Hours. Board members are great about keeping members informed on a regular basis. All committee meetings and events will be posted on our website to make it easier for members to get involved.

Some of the attributes of our club that make it a strong club are:

History. Vision. Influence. Doers. Pride. Great leadership. Accountability. Visible projects. Dependable partners (with City, businesses, etc.)

Jerry McCarter – President

SummerTime by George, our free summer concert series has made our club famous, but more importantly it is some of the best fellowship time any club could have. 60-70 members volunteer each Wednesday at the event. We don't have much time for fellowship at our regular meetings, so SBG is a fantastic opportunity for our members to work together and get to know each other better. 98% of our members volunteer each summer. Our community is so very appreciative and they let our members know it. We've worked with Willmar to help them establish a summer event and we're in the process of assisting Excelsior as well.

Secondly, our international projects give our members a unique opportunity to do projects in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. The experience can be uplifting for our members who participate and are a source of pride for our members. Our International projects are open to other clubs to join in and we'll be promoting that more in the future.

Rotary After Hours is an opportunity for members to gather at a local bar for some fellowship on the first Thursday of each month. It's a great opportunity for those needing a make-up and some great fellowship. 15-20 Rotarians join in each month.

It's easier to grow if you don't have lots of turnover. We've been fortunate that our losses have been manageable. Good food and great meetings are important to retention. We're trying to upgrade our web site and newsletter to keep everyone connected.

North Minneapolis Rotary Club
10% Membership Growth in Past Year

Kelley Eubanks – Immediate Past President

To attract new members, we held a business networking session to explain to community members and organizations what Rotary is and what our plan is to impact North Minneapolis. We take our peace pledge to as many community events as we can to engage community and tell our Rotary story. We ask people if they will read the pledge out loud as they take ownership for doing their part around peace.

We engage our members by keeping the humor flowing. We model the commitment to Rotary. We try to attend as many Rotary events with as many members as possible to create a team building effect. We keep the line of communication open.

We have strengthened our club and made it more vibrant by becoming fit for service by getting our bodies moving at the beginning of each meeting. This gets our blood flowing. We have a little competitive short dance off and creates laughs. Rotary vocation talks give us an opportunity to hear a small narrative on each member (have a game/quiz when all have provided their story – gave movie tickets to winner small but fun).

Our club has a high-energy level. We have diversity of ethnicity, leadership, background, interest, and multiple generations represented. We enjoy the passion of the people and have respect for the clear stances they have which makes a great opportunity to listen actively to many perspectives outside my own in a safe space. We create internal incentives to help us be more engaged with each other through a fundraiser, or for happy bucks have a bidding game on an item to get the laughs flowing.

We treat each other like friends and family. It is an opportunity to appreciate each member and the unique talents and sometimes quirky behavior they bring.

We engage our members through a mentorship process where we link a new member up with an old member to help them navigate. We are intentional about welcoming a new person individually and invite them if they wish to share their story or what brought them to our club. We have a comprehensive new member orientation program that we open up for all members to attend and learn pieces they never knew about Rotary or to learn as a beginner. We have found that so many questions about Rotary are elaborated more or you love the Ah..ha moments together!!!!!!

Our club is a strong club due to our intimate level of learning about each other and learning to appreciate or understand differences is huge. We are not afraid of holding members accountable and educating members that having passion is not being rude or disrespectful –this can be uncomfortable but when done with love and respect it can be powerful!!! You can remove hidden agendas through this process and stop/minimize triangulation. We keep our discussions relevant and real to our vision for the current year.

I am so proud of this club and really want members to feel our success, because beginning with no other Rotary members was a challenge all by itself. I like the drive that members bring.

Minnetonka Rotary Club**34% Membership Growth in Past 3 Years****22% Membership Growth in Past Year****Mark Magney – Membership Co-Chair**

In my opinion the membership growth of our club can be summed up with two words: Welcoming and Fun! When potential members visit, they are welcomed and we try to make them feel comfortable. And of course, we always have a LOT OF FUN at our meetings. I think we have created this atmosphere over the past 10 years with great leadership and with a membership base that believes in having fun and creating a welcome atmosphere.

We try to assign mentors to all new members. These mentors help the new members understand what Rotary is all about and steer them into service projects and club committees so they begin to feel a part of something bigger. We typically hold Fireside Chats (new member orientations) twice a year to help get the new members up to speed. We have club social events monthly which helps the new members get acquainted. We also schedule monthly community service projects so new members have plenty of opportunities to get involved.

Lastly, I feel that we don't put a huge amount of pressure on members, either financially or with pushing involvement in committees or projects. I think pressure makes it too much like work. We just have a core group, which is a large percentage of our club, that leads by example.

Bottom line I believe a lot of our membership growth and sustainability can be attributed to a great membership base.

Minneapolis University Rotary Club**17% Membership Growth in Past Year****Ellen Kennedy – President**

Our club has a wonderful practice of being warmer and more welcoming than any other club I've ever visited. We invite guests and try to do our best to make them feel glad that they came. We also integrate new members right away into club duties and roles, in part because we're so small that we must do this to survive!

Chaska Rotary Club**16% Membership Growth in Past 3 Years****Tom Moore – Immediate Past President**

We have made an effort to get our name out in public more than in the past. Specifically, with stories in the newspaper. I believe this does two things – one it encourages folks that may be looking for a club to join to consider us, two – I think it brings pride to our existing members and they feel good about inviting friends to join.

Eagan Kick-Start Rotary Club
14% Membership Growth in Past Year

Michael Ferber – Immediate Past President

We have attracted new members by identifying potential leaders in the community that we know. Personally invite them to a meeting and not charge them for the meal. Made sure we have interesting speakers. Greet them, introduce them, follow up with them. Created a brochure about the club. Created a one page basic facts sheet. Maintained a prospect list with member assigned who knows them best. As president, I made it a priority to work on membership with 4 members assigned to the committee.

We engage new members with an official pinning at a meeting. Vocational talk given by new member. New member assigned as greeter for 3 weeks. All members take turns as greeter and giving Inspiration. All members are assigned to a committee. Up and coming leaders. Made sure women are being recruited and serve on the board of directors. Encourage them to attend District functions.

We keep our members informed with weekly newsletter. Recognize those that have done the extra things at meetings. Gave them all polo shirts with our club name and rotary logo.

We watch for members not showing up and would call them to follow up. I also made it a point to let them know I was glad to see them when they did show up after an absence.

We went after and received Presidential Citation in first year. Younger and more women than a lot of clubs. FUN! Good programs. A welcoming environment. Happy Bucks rather than fines.

Something that had a big impact on our success was the support we received from the Eagan Rotary Club (luncheon club) especially from Scott Swenson.

Willmar Rotary Club
11% Membership Growth in Past 3 Years

Bruce Schoeman – Membership Chair

My sense about our growth is individual members inviting potential members to be our guest for lunch or a social and see what they think. We have good leadership from the top showing the importance and value of bringing new folks along on the journey. When we induct new members it's an honoring time and sharing who we are and what we do as Rotarians not only to educate the new members but great reminder to current members of why we're doing this.