

May 18, 2013 - District 5450 Membership Seminar:

Best Practices for Club Growth and Engagement

Synopses from phone conversations with RI-designated high-growth North American clubs

1. What has been your single most successful recruiting activity to bring in qualified members?

One-on-one contact of Club member with prospect.

2. What event is most successful in attracting visitors?

Club has become well-known in the community through Club meetings, service activities, community events, and fund-raising events - then prospects find the Club.

3. What is your single most successful member retention activity?

Involvement in service activities and engagement in fun social events.

4. Where is the best place to devote efforts in finding member prospects?

Members individually ID prospects.

4. What are your best practices for keeping track of member prospects?

One-on-one attention to member prospects - prospects are tracked by one person, who oversees all members' follow-up with prospects - and persistent contact over months.

6. What are your primary sources of leads on member prospects?

Contact and follow-up with new residents and businesses in town.

7. What keeps members of your club actively engaged?

Making it easy for members to be active in service or engaged in social activities as their time, expertise, and location allow.

8. What spurred your club to keep growing membership over several years?

****We had a plan and followed it.****

9. What are the top reasons people leave your club?

financial hardship	✓✓✓✓✓	ill health	✓✓
death	✓✓✓✓✓	personal time limitations	✓
job transfers	✓✓✓✓✓	workload changes	✓
moved away	✓✓✓	early-morning meeting time	✓

10. Have your club demographics changed with membership growth? If so, how?

If club demographics changed: more women, more diversity and lower median age.

Nuggets and Pearls from Clubs that Succeed at Increasing Membership

..... in no particular order

1. What has been your single most successful recruiting activity to bring in qualified members?

- Make sure members' Facebook pages show they are a Rotarian, so everyone who sees their pages sees their commitment to our club.
- High-caliber, high-visibility speakers with well-crafted presentations, then members invite guests to attend the program.
- Use Facebook to promote past speakers to intrigue prospects.
- High-energy meetings are attractive to prospects.

5. What event is most successful in attracting visitors?

- All year long, sell tickets as chances to win a monthly drawing for a free meal for 8 at a designated local restaurant; restaurants love to donate the meals.
- "Shrimp and Suds" community event and fundraiser, all you can eat shrimp (or alternate menu) and beer, selling booklets of 6 tickets for \$125.

6. What is your single most successful member retention activity?

- Calling members who miss a meeting to touch base.
- Surveying, then matching, members to their interests, insuring everyone is involved.

4. Where is the best place to devote efforts in finding member prospects?

- Watch for newcomers. Assign each prospect to a member with whom they "click" to connect and stay in touch with them.

7. What are your best practices for keeping track of member prospects?

- Coordinated and tracked follow-up to discuss membership expectations with prospects over coffee or drinks, gentle and continuous follow-up over months and months.
- Provide info to member prospects from District that covers all RI, District and clubs' activities within the District.
- Persistent follow-up by membership development committee, inviting them to coffee, explaining Rotary and the club.
- Low pressure on attendance; high follow-up with prospects.

6. What are your primary sources of leads on member prospects? ----

7. What keeps members of your club actively engaged?

- Survey and match members to their interests, insuring everyone has something to do.
- Encourage attendance at social events and fundraisers.
- Active Exempt members mentoring Active Ordinary members = 100% member engagement.

8. What spurred your club to keep growing membership over several years? ----

9. What are the top reasons people leave your club? ----

10. Have your club demographics changed with membership growth? If so, how?

- Young professionals do lots of local service activity but cannot bring in much money; the club emphasizes local service activity exclusively.
- More women, as more women work.
- More women aged 50s, male minorities aged 20-40, with an overall focus on quality.

11. Other?

- Any 3 members at the same place at the same time may claim that as a make-up.

BONUS! – from Rotary International Satellite Club Pilot Program LinkedIn page:

If you were able to change three things about Rotary, in order to INCREASE membership, what would they be and why? {Synopsis of answers – check out the full postings}

- Change mind-set of older Rotarians – emphasize service and ethics, not job titles, degrees, and business stature.
- Be more open to young people and their ways of doing things.
- Change the public stigma of Rotary as an “old men’s club” or an elite group.
- Help the world understand the difference Rotary makes in the world.
- Dare to do things differently, don’t be stopped by the way things have “always been”.
- Ease up on classifications and welcome people who desire to be of service.
- Allow multiple meeting modes – meal and speaker works for some, but don’t force all into the same mold.