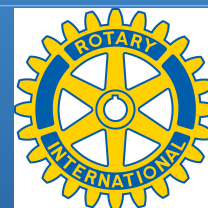


Club Builder



Tips, Ideas, and Success Stories for Attracting and Retaining Members

With this End-of-the-Rotary-Year edition, we're taking a look at the good membership things going on in our District's clubs.

Successes!!! from Around Our District

It's nice to see so many clubs beefing up their efforts to attract new members and hold on to their current members. Membership is a year-round continuous focus. It never stops. I think you know that. And so, this month we bring you an expanded 8-page issue of Club Builder featuring some interesting thoughts contributed by the clubs here in District 7430. I hope you are able to gather some ideas for your own club's attraction and retention efforts.

I think we've had a very successful year in the District with a special emphasis on bringing in new members and a renewed focus on retention. The statistics demonstrate that it is working.

I would like to sincerely thank the members of the District Membership Committee for their insight, wisdom, and contributions to the membership efforts this year. Thanks to Loretta Ottinger, Chris Potter, Deb Evans, Bob Halsey, and Paul Krumenacker, and Gary Fedorca. And much thanks to DG Tony Jannetta for his leadership.

Enjoy reading these stories and reflecting on your own club's membership status and efforts so we can capitalize on our progress in the new Rotary year.

Terry L. Reed, District Membership Chair

I wish I knew...

I wish I knew the answer to membership. And that may be the point - there is no one answer.

In Morrisville-Yardley Rotary we attracted an outstanding member through the Corporate Membership program that we adapted from the RI trial that we enrolled in.

We attracted one member who happened to see the T-shirt I just happened to be wearing that said "Rotarian at Work", which led to a conversation that resulted in his joining our club.

(Continued on p. 2)

Coming in July

As the current Rotary year turns over at the end of June, we'll bring you some ideas to get you started for the new Rotary year.

I wish I knew...

We recently got a member who found our website and visited us as a result. And we got a new member because his organization (a non-profit) wanted their execs to get involved in the community and become more visible. I am working to get some people in my general neighborhood involved in a service project that we are defining, with the hope that they will bond through the experience and later join the club.

These days I believe that ...

1) We must keep the name of Rotary and of our club in front of the community as much as possible. We have installed new road signs in new places. (The old ones go back almost as far as the beginning of the club in 1928 and there were no signs in many of the newer developments.) We submit Rotary Highlights and articles to our local newspapers and generally get them published. We recently promoted an especially interesting dinner speaker to the public and garnered some good newspaper press coverage.

2) We must keep the websites fresh and take advantage of the social media (which we have yet to get the hang of).

3) We need local projects that can appeal to those in mid-career who are beginning to feel they should be "giving something back" and challenge them to participate without trying to overtly recruit them for membership. I'm hoping that membership follows involvement. We have lost prospects and new members in part because our emphasis has been first on joining and then, after becoming members, trying to find someplace to get them involved.

4) We need to critically examine our meeting format and location. As an evening club we compete with people who have growing families and need to be at home in the evenings. Some of us are struggling to just change our format from dinner and speaker to speaker and dinner. This would let members with young families attend but not have to sit through a dinner before hearing the speaker and being a part of the fellowship. They could leave after the speaker and be at home with their families for perhaps a late dinner, help with homework or attend evening school programs. The speaker programs themselves are very important and I believe an active programs chair is critical. Without good programs, even the most dedicated members begin to drop off in attendance. We have been blessed to have a dedicated program chair and excellent speakers.

5) We can use some outsider help in assisting us to think outside the box. We recently met a person in our community who specializes in what she calls "jetnetting" as the alternative to networking. We will be asking her to speak to the club with the hope of learning a thing or two.

(Continued on p. 3)

A Radical Idea

The Rotary Club of Las Vegas has created the 25 Club, a club-within-a-club. The members hold additional meetings, sponsor regular social gatherings, and carry out a number of service projects. The inductees are generally younger, and after a year, they transition into the parent Rotary club.

I wish I knew...

6) And when we do attract a new member we need some real hands-on, dedicated mentoring. That takes time and dedication and it is very easy to put off making that phone call, setting up a breakfast, lunch, or dinner to talk about interests and opportunities and seeing that the new member is getting involved and is getting satisfaction out of the involvement.

Those are 6 points that I believe can make a difference. But all six (and no doubt others) need to be addressed together. PR, publicity, and websites are a waste if the members themselves are not motivated to find those "suspects", help turn them into "prospects" and then work to recruit them as members. Maybe this is the 7th and most critical point:

Do we see finding members and turning them into Rotarians as the most vital thing for us to do if we are serious about meeting the goal of Service Above Self? For without Rotarians there is no Service Above Self.

Cheers in Rotary,

Hal Long
Rotary Club of Morrisville-Yardley Area

Membership Success Stories in Our District Clubs

Hal has covered most of the issues regarding membership recruitment, but I would emphasize the importance of informative programs. Our normal attendance of late has been between 15 and 25. We recently had Werner Berger, the Everest Guy, speak to our club about his mountain climbing exploits, and we had 43 attend. True, we did a great deal of promoting but out of that effort I'm hopeful we may attract new members. I'm convinced that our programs have to offer information and not just solicitation for financial support. We have to turn members (potential as well as existing) on, not off.

- Andy Thompson, RC of Morrisville-Yardley Area

(Continued on page 4)

Why didn't I think of that!

The Rotary Club of Bricktown Oklahoma City meets in a tavern at 5:30 pm. After 15 minutes of social time, the meeting is kept under 45 minutes. First-time guests are treated to two free beverages, compliments of the club. Some members go out to dinner together afterward. This is a much younger than average Rotary club.

... Success Stories

Our last few members came to our club due to one member's connections to another organization. He was able to bring in a new member who he knew through the VFW. The new member then recommended 2 other new members who were also members of the VFW. It seems pretty clear to me that VFW members already have shown a propensity to serve, and are still motivated to be involved and serve others. The VFW seems to me to be a good source of potential members for any club, and there is usually one in the vicinity of nearly every Rotary club.

- **Joe Deegan, RC of Willow Grove**

Attracting members? Be bold and simply ASK good candidates and Rotary sells itself. We have a great member who is not afraid to invite potential people. I had known Dr. Mike Seidner for years and as I represented my company at a Rotary-hosted street fair, he invited me to visit and evaluate. Rotary is attractive... And now two years later I am our club's VP.

- **Will Liegel, RC of North Penn**

Our club has seen a slow but steady growth in membership. We attribute this growth to our members' enthusiasm and involvement. That enthusiasm is contagious. You feel it when you come to your first meeting as a guest and it never ends. We recently changed meeting locations. Hesitant about the change at first, it has been so positively received, that meeting attendance is up. You just want to come back every week and be a part of it. As a matter of fact, we strongly feel that our success as a club is directly attributable to our well-run, informative, fun-loving weekly meetings, and making sure that we have dynamic speakers every week. Everyone leaves a meeting feeling refreshed, inspired, and upbeat.

- **Marlie Watts, RC of West Reading-Wyomissing**

The "Each New Member Attending RLI During the First Year of Membership" Initiative

More and more attention has been shown in recent years to the problem of membership retention in many parts of the Rotary World. While Rotary is arguably the greatest worldwide organization of business, professional and community leaders, most Rotarians who are not district governors or other international officers know very little about the great world of Rotary outside their own clubs.

Hoping to help solve this problem, The Rotary Leadership Institute has undertaken a worldwide project to urge Rotary clubs to send all their new members to an RLI course within their first year of membership. Statistics have shown that if a new member is not enthusiastic or engaged in Rotary in the first year after joining, the chances of membership loss are greatly increased. It has been clearly shown that RLI creates enthusiasm for Rotary in those attending the courses.

Past District Governor Bill Palmer highly recommends that each club seriously consider taking this on as a requirement of new membership. "In my mind every club should send every new member and the older ones to at least Part I of RLI. The Oct 5 session will be in King of Prussia again."

... Success Stories

Here's an interesting idea that Allentown Rotary has done in conjunction with Bethlehem, Allentown West, and Emmaus clubs. We have reinstated an old tradition of bi-annual joint meetings with the Bethlehem Rotary Club (a commitment that the presidents-elect made to each other at PETs). Each hosting club also invited Rotary clubs from its own area. We encouraged everyone to bring guests and prospects and had a high-profile speaker. Real estate developer JB Reilly presented on his multi-million dollar projects in downtown Allentown. We sent out press releases in advance, and asked club members (and the other clubs to heavily promote this program. The president-elect wanted to record the program (and did, with the speaker's permission), so we have a high-quality audio recording of the program which is available on our web site, and has been sent out through our Facebook page. It's been very well-received, and shared on social media. The Bethlehem club also cancelled their regular weekly meeting to drive attendance to the joint program and so that they wouldn't have to ask their members to attend two meetings in the same week.

We believe this will continue to be a great way to leverage both of our club's size, social media, and web sites. The ultimate goal is to get members and prospects to see the value of Rotary in service, program, fellowship, and networking.

We had a few prospective members who completed their membership applications immediately after this very successful joint program.

The link to the program audio is here: http://allentownrotary.org/program_archives.html

We are looking forward to continuing the traditions of joint programs, and also building on the collective strength of our clubs.

- **Jonathan Epstein, RC of Allentown**

Our club recently held a new member contest. We split our club into four groups and ran a 6-month contest to see which group could attract the highest number of new members. At least one meeting each month contest updates were then presented. It provided a whole lot of good-natured club competition along with giving us 11 new members.

Retaining members continues to be a challenge and we have had some success by getting all new members actively involved in our clubs committees.

- **Jim Heilman, RC of Hatboro**

No Meals

The Rotary Club of South Metro Minneapolis Evenings meets in the evenings and lowers costs by not having meals. The third meeting of the month is a happy hour/networking event at different locations in the city. The fourth meeting is a volunteering opportunity.

... Success Stories

Our club's upcoming fundraiser, "Taste of Kutztown", (www.tasteofkutztown.org), is raising the profile of our club in our community. We are doing this by reaching out to people for sponsorships and ticket sales. There is a lot of chatter about this event. We are hopeful that the event will give our club lots of recognition and attract a lot of potential members.

- **Jim Springer, RC of Kutztown**

The Rotary Club of Saucon is up three members from last year. Most new members were recruited from Rotarians asking colleagues to visit a meeting and consider joining. Each of our new members has become active in the events of the club and has regular attendance.

- **Linda Young, RC of Saucon**

Over time the most successful method to attract and more importantly retain members has been one on one contact by our current membership with other business professionals. The Club member can determine if the personality of the candidate as well as their commitment to service will fit the make-up of our Club.

- **Steve Fisher, RC of Horsham**

Attracting members has apparently been a difficult task for our club but we have had success in retaining members. We believe the secret to retaining members is getting every member involved in some way, finding the individual key to engaging them. This might be volunteer activities, selling tickets, or attending a fundraiser. Each person has a different way in which they can make a difference. Our club tries to have multiple mechanisms by which members can show support.

- **Greg Hucklebridge, RC of Warminster**

We have had success with sponsoring a booth at the local annual Business Expo. We get a chance to speak with some of the prospects that come by and some of our members have been great with inviting prospects to come to our meetings. We brought in a couple of new members through this effort.

- **Tom Morrissey, RC of North Penn**

College Students

Through a student membership initiative, the Rotary Club of Hope Island, Queensland, Australia invites college-age students to meetings and subsidizes the cost to bring a youthful perspective to the club.

... Success Stories

Our club is using an idea from one of my networking groups—The Poker Folder Holder! The goal of the Poker Folder is to have more people in the area become familiar with Rotary by having our members bring a guest to our meetings. To start, the club puts \$10 in the Poker Folder Kitty. Someone is selected as the Poker Folder Holder. If the person holding the folder brings a guest, then that Rotarian can claim the kitty. If the Folder Holder does not bring a guest, then the holder adds \$5 to the kitty. The Poker Folder Holder can be creative as to how to pass the folder to the next holder—close eyes, sing a song, etc. The Folder remains with the holder until the next meeting at which the holder may buy breakfast for his or her guest or, if there is no guest, pays \$5 to the kitty. The guest may not be a relative or an employee. We may not always have a guest, but it's always fun to say "Poker Folder Holder!"

- Tom Roth, RC of Hamburg

We have not made great strides in the area of new members this year, 2012-13, instead we have concentrated on retaining members we added last year. In 2011-12 year we held a competition within the club. We formed four teams and each team was charged with recruiting as many members as possible. It was a fun competition and we ended up with six new members.

As you know when you get new members the challenge is to keep them. We got them interested in Rotary by assigning them to committees and getting them involved with fundraisers and social events. So far, we feel that we've been successful not only adding some newer members the last two years but also retaining them.

- Tom Finerghy, RC of Hatboro

Here are some of the things we have done this year to try and attract new members:

1. We are increasing our use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. We have been publicizing our meetings through these outlets.
2. We have revamped our website in an attempt to make it more engaging to prospective members. We have a link to our Newsletter on the webpage.
3. We had our annual business card exchange and we are reaching out to those who attended to see if they are interested in joining.
4. We held our annual Four Way Test Awards Breakfast and there were many members of the Doylestown community in attendance. We hope that the goodwill generated by the breakfast will lead to new members joining our Club.

- Rich Newman, RC of Doylestown

College Officials

Do you have the president or chancellor of the local college or university in your club? The Rotary Club of Raleigh just inducted the Chancellor of North Carolina State University in their club. More locally, the Chancellor of Penn State Berks, is a member of the West Reading-Wyomissing Rotary Club. How about your school superintendent? Is that community leader a Rotarian?

... Success Stories

We are in the process of changing our meeting time to two weeks a month where we meet at 7:30 am for breakfast and the other two times a month for lunch at 12:15 pm. It is our hope to get more members this way. We have gotten some commitments from prospective members if we met in the morning for breakfast.

We also welcomed a member who is the grandson of a former active Rotary Club member of Conrad Weiser. He was so inspired by his grandmother's work in Rotary that he joined us for lunch at one meeting and applied for membership a week later.

- **Sandy Kuchar, RC of Conrad Weiser**

Our 2nd Annual Bethlehem Rotary Night at the Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs will continue to serve two purposes within our club. It provides the opportunity for any member to bring along a prospective member to watch a baseball game and have informal conversations regarding what we do in our club, both locally and internationally. As a result of this event, the club has an opportunity of gaining 15 new members right away or ongoing. This night also provides an informal way for member-to-member relationships to flourish outside of the normal meeting times.

- **George Mowrer, RC of Bethlehem**

Our club holds two Business-to-Business Mixers a year. Our emphasis is on learning about Rotary but it also lets each new prospective member have a 2-minute spotlight to showcase their business. We have a door prize in exchange for their business card. Each person who attends also receives the Basics to Rotary booklet and an application. Follow up calls to those who attend are made and those interested are taken to a lunch with the Club's President and/or Membership Chair.

All new members are quickly engaged in the clubs activities. As an example, a new member this year chaired our Four Way Speech Contest. She also had a natural talent for organization that made her an excellent choice.

After a year membership, new members are evaluated to be on the Board.

We are also using local social media to showcase our Community events and try to use free advertising in local papers like the Penny Pincher.

- **Steve Smith, RC of Pottstown**

A Big Thank You!

Thanks very much to everyone who contributed to this issue of Club Builder. We really appreciate it. We're always looking for new ideas. So don't hesitate to share your success stories and membership concerns. Send to terry.reed731@gmail.com.