

MEMBERSHIP TOOL MENU

6th Edition – Additions in **Bold**

* Small Clubs Take Notice

Suggestions for Meetings are in red

Suggestions for Service Projects are in blue

Thanks to contributions from the Membership Best Practices Discussion Group on rotary.org, Rotary Leader, and many other groups and individual Rotarians sharing ideas.

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**MEMBERSHIP TOOL MENU**

This is not supposed to be comprehensive. It is just a list of ideas that the Club Membership Chair(s) can organize and use as part of an overall plan.

One general recommendation: talk to clubs that have won membership awards or have had success in their membership efforts.

EVERYTHING IN ROTARY IS A VALUES PROPOSITION.

When you ask a Rotarian to spend their time or resources doing something, they must get something of value back that is worth their effort.

The place where most Rotarians spend most of their time in Rotary is the club meeting. When Rotarians leave a meeting, they must feel that it is time well spent.

Retention – New Members - ACT!

“Membership techniques are just beginning when someone joins the club.”

Be Welcoming

Make new members feel welcome and at ease. Have a welcoming packet for new members. Give new members special badges.

Assign a member to mentor a new member. Give mentors a list of objectives and tactics for their mentoring. Follow-up with the mentors.

Use past presidents as mentors. It will keep past presidents active and engaged, as well as keeping new members active and engaged.

Emphasize to experienced members that they should sit with newer members.

\* Have a formal orientation for new members.

\* Have pictures of new members projected from a computer onto a screen for three months after they have been accepted into the club.

Expectations

What do new members want to gain for their membership? Ask them. Make sure they get opportunities to fulfill their expectations.

* Create the club’s list of expectations for new members: take part in service projects; be prepared to take a leadership position in the club.

No commitment to engagement..... No can join! Some clubs require new members to commit to being in a certain number of club activities. If they can’t commit, they “no can join!”

Engagement

* Have a pre-agreed destination for every new member in your club organizational chart.  In other words every member has a place in the organizational chart of the club.  They are all assigned.

Have a New Member Committee.  Give them a $500 budget for a service project of their choosing.  If you have a small club, encourage the new member or the small New Member Committee to have non-Rotarians join them in the service project.

* Pay the registration fee for new members to participate in Rotary Leadership Institute. Preliminary data in one district indicate that 90% of new members who participate in RLI I are still in Rotary several years later.
* Pay registration for new members to attend a district conference, Zone Institute, or (North American) Rotary Convention

Have new members attend a service project.

* Have new members be a greeter four times as soon as they join.

Assign new Rotarians to the Club’s outreach programs and regular projects.

\* Have the new members be responsible for a program.

Constant Rotarization. Send out weekly emails for perhaps 16 weeks. Include a fast fact about Rotary, a task to complete, a more detailed Did You Know section about a Rotary program, and the definition of a Rotary acronym, to familiarize them with Rotary lingo. The regular orientation often contains too much to retain. By giving it to them in weekly chunks — as they are getting integrated into the club — it may make it easier to get acclimated.

\* Have new members spend a few minutes talking about themselves so that club members get to know them better.

Retention – All Members.

Responsibility

Have a membership chair for retention.

Have an Exit Committee to ask why a member is leaving and his/her other thoughts about the club. Utilize the sample exit survey in the R.I. Membership Assessment Tools.

Recognize all the member sponsors twice a year by asking them to stand and put their names on a PowerPoint. Put a gold star on each member's badge when they sponsor a new member.

Engagement

Have meaningful conversations about club projects or "hot topics" by creating table conversation pop cards. E.g. “What do you think about the current literacy issues in the city?”

Have the Club pay for members to attend the Rotary Leadership Institute.

Have a charity be the beneficiary of someone who misses meetings. Example, Shoes for Orphan Souls. If they miss five meetings, they owe one pair of shoes. If they miss 15 meetings, they owe a second pair of shoes. If they miss 25 meetings, they owe a third pair of shoes (and someone should be talking to them).

\* Personally invite members to District Training Assemblies.

Constant Rotarization. Invite continuing members to orientations.

Keep track of engagement so that the Club knows that every member has participated in a club activity and service project.

Connect with members that have not attended meetings, events, projects and fellowships and get them involved! One club member was working at a litter clean up and asked a member who had been missing for a year to join him. The fellow did, got reinvolved, and eventually became club president.

As your Club members approach retirement, ask them how they will get more involved in Rotary.

\* Develop a plan to have more utilization of Facebook.

\* Conduct mini-service projects during meeting instead of a speaker, e.g. stuffing school backpacks, emergency kits for women’s shelters, etc.

\* Have club grants be determined during a club meeting. Invite potential recipients to present their organizations and projects as the subject of a meeting. Like a House of Friendship or a job fair, the non-profits are set up around the meeting space and the members go to each area and listen to the presentations. Members receive a sheet with the list of non-profits and are asked to divide up a pot of funds available for grants in any way they choose. Based on the members’ input, the grants committee then determines who will get what. The members are engaged and the attendance at these types of meetings tend to be very high.

Have a signature project that is well promoted.

**Acts of Kindness. The club is divided into teams of six. Each group chooses a project and receives $200 from the club for its project. They can add to the budget, partner with other groups. Complete club engagement.**

Contact with members

\* Include classification, year member began, on name tags.

Have greeters at the door. Rotate this activity.

Have music before the start of meetings. Selecting the right type of music for the mood you wish to create will definitely give you a head start, and it gives an air of style.

\* Call or e-mail when a member misses two meetings in a row.

Do "Rotarian in the Spotlight" with a twist.  Play "Three Truths and a Lie" with a member each week in an effort to get to know members better.

\* Recognition of members’ service contribution leads to more engagement and lifelong bonding to the club.

\* Celebrate a member’s personal and professional milestones.

Divide members into groups each made up of senior-active, senior-not-so-active; non-senior-active and non-senior-not-so-active.  The idea is the active members to get the not-so-active members to active status.  Each group is assigned to handle the program and physical set-up as well as drum up the attendance of the entire club to every meeting. Award the best group every month and every quarter.  Members become more engaged and looked forward to every meeting.

To increase the value of membership, form peer advisory groups among members to help attack their business problems and grow their businesses. Unorthodox approaches such as this can add value for a member.

**Consider "continuous mentors."  Have mentors for initial phase when a new members does some basics to gain Permanent Badge status.  Then have Connectors step in.  Each Connector has 11 people assigned to be in touch with by email, conversation, phone, etc.  Their group is called a Circle.**

Fellowship

\* Conduct social bonding activities, fellowship events.

Have a happy dollar. Member is chosen at random; whoever shook his hand first gets a silver dollar.

Value

Enlist good speakers; inform other clubs of special speakers. When members see who is going to speak, they must say, “I have to go to that.” Members must leave a Rotary meeting saying "Wow! That was good!"

\* Have joint meetings with other clubs if they have a great speaker.

Create a committee whose job it is to make meetings entertaining. If it is not fun to be a member of a Rotary Club, no action, no matter how good or well intentioned, will produce what we all want - a lasting and sustained growth path.

\* Create an award that will make members proud about being in the club.

\* Have tangible results for club activities.

Attraction of New Members – ASK!

Responsibility

Have a membership chair for acquisition.

Teams

Create teams whose goal is to get one member.

Split the club into two teams with captains. Teams are awarded points for bringing a guest and additional points for a completed application. The contest runs for six weeks. Team captains keep the weekly tally alive within the club by announcing the score each week. Have a prize at the end for the winning team. It builds membership, fellowship and spirit.

Encourage all club members to invite people to meetings to talk to them about the good work the Rotary club is doing and the impact it’s had on their lives.Have some accountability**.**

Accept new members only if they will bring along with him/her another recruit. A relative is an especially good idea. It may be a son/daughter, mother/father, sister, Aunt/uncle, cousin etc. Sharing Rotary with a relative especially the younger ones will ensure the life of the club for generations.

\* Set individual and club goals. This should be a club expectation of being a member of the club.

A generous member or members donates $1,000 to be awarded to the winner of a drawing. Names entered in the drawing were those who brought a visitor who chose to become a Rotarian. The more members someone brings in, the more his/her name is entered. Have the drawing at the club installation ceremony or some other major club event. This is fun and builds membership.

Once a new member completes orientation, the sponsor receives credit for one month’s dues (up to 3 new members/months).

\* Whenever a new member is inducted, have someone (e.g. the club president) do pushups. This will not grow membership, but members get a kick out of it and it raises their consciousness about the membership issue.

**\* Be sure that the District Governor or the Deputy Governor for Membership is receiving and distributing Membership Leads from Rotary International, and then follow-up on those who are designated for your club.**

Who to Approach

The possibility of a person’s joining should be a high priority in who you go after.

Diversify.

\* Widen the circle of potential members; accept new ideas.

If you want to increase the diversity in your club and are finding it hard to do so:

\* Try to approach groups that have the kind of members you are looking. Have them recommend potential members.

**\* Government officials usually know community leaders in all walks of life.  Approach local elected leaders for recommendations about potential minority members.**

\* Do a classification study; ask people who reflect the community. Consider the whole range of professions and businesses in the community, including those that haven’t traditionally joined Rotary (from IT professionals to tattoo artists).

Create a list of professions (e.g. education, business, non-profit, arts, science, agriculture, labor, etc.), demographics, residence, etc. Ask members to check as many of these that relate to them. Find out what is least represented and seek people that fill the holes.

Young Professionals.

\* Use of social media indicates younger professionals. Keep your eyes open for these people. Create a goal for finding people who use social media.

\* Target businesses where there are young professionals you want to attract.

Change club meeting times. One club has moved half of its lunchtime meetings to late afternoon to attract Young Professionals. You need only attend two meetings a month. Although members are encouraged to attend all meetings, there is a two-tiered set of dues depending on which you attend, lunch dues being higher because of the food costs.

Broadcast your meetings live on social media and show the world how much fun it is to be a Rotarian.

Consider how a prospective member would fit in.

Invite visitors to the regular gathering.  Give them brief, attractive printed material about the club. Greeters make sure they are introduced to the leadership and other members and introduce them as guests to the entire membership.  Ask them to complete a short form.  The "form" includes the question, "May we contact you about upcoming events and projects?" It asks how they heard about the club, did they feel welcomed, would they visit again, would they like to be considered as a guest speaker.

After a prospective Rotarian has been invited to join, expose them first to at least three different Rotary activities. Then, let them decide if they are still interested to join.

\* Rotary alumni. People who have been in Rotary organizations or have worked with groups that the Club has been involved with are good potential members, e.g. former youth program participants and Foundation scholars and GSE recipients either sponsored by the club or now residing in the area.

Treat Program speakers as potential new members. Have Rotary materials for them. Follow-up with them.

Organizations: Companies, non-profits, governmental organizations.

\*Look at local organizations rather than just individuals for potential members.

\* Consider corporate memberships.

Hold a Meet 'n Greet at a restaurant to thank sponsors of Club and other community organizations and projects. Use a private room, set out a display of Club brochures, magnets and banners, run a continuous loop slide show of activities. Offer hors d’oeuvres and non-alcoholic beverages, and a cash bar. Ask for an RSVP and issue nametags. Invite all members. Thank the sponsors for their community support. This should generate some new memberships as well as community good will, and a fellowship event for members.

\* Contact the HR department of several businesses and ask if a rep from your Rotary club can make a short presentation to their employees about what Rotary is. Send two people who are very different in demographics. Bring information about Rotary and your local club as well as an invitation to attend. Emphasize what happens in Rotary, how you help the community, and how being a member is a great networking opportunity like no other to meet other business leaders locally and around the world. Make sure the presenter is enthusiastic and has lots of energy. Emphasize the opportunities to develop skills such as public speaking, fundraising, event planning, leadership, etc.

\* Who would make a good Rotarian? Qualify individuals. Determine the criteria you are looking for. **And consider that “A leader is not made by their title, but by their attitude.”**

Lapsed Members.

Continue to send the newsletter to members who have left.

Invite lapsed members to club events.

Form a Lapsed Member Committee in the club to devise strategies to get lapsed members back in the club.

\* Retirees

\* Think of what Retirees like to do with their time and provide targeted material to attract them at those locations.

Do a promotional guest invitation for a month (free lunch, breakfast, dinner) and advertise it at the local country clubs, golf ranges, churches, bankers specializing in senior clientele who manage retirement portfolios, shopping plazas/malls, etc. Key is producing marketing material targeted towards this demographic. Appeal to their desire to utilize their professional skill set and free time to do more with their retirement years to make a difference and improve their community.

\* Ask your members for names of individuals who retired recently.

\* Self Employed. Some self-employed may have flexibility with their schedules.

\* Empty nesters/singles

\* Non-working home-makers

                        \* 501 (C) (3) Volunteers

\* Members of the Medical and Educational professions

* Guests. Give a packet of information about the club and Rotary International to every guest including a membership application.
* Happy Hour with members expected to attend with a prospect, wife, husband, friend, co-worker, etc.  Make it a networking event also with exchange of business cards. Follow-up on prospects.

The Case

**\* People make their decision to join or not to join in two seconds!**

**\*** Increase the knowledge of selling points to members so they will be effective in attracting members.

\* Clarify the elevator speech so that new members arrive with expectations that are quickly fulfilled by the Club.

\* How is your Club different from other service organizations?

\* Develop a list of how Rotary makes a difference.

We are action-oriented in the community; if the club isn’t, become action-oriented.

\* Find out what the interests are of the potential member and show them how Rotary satisfies that interest.

\* Find out what kinds of new skills the new Rotarian would like to learn and show them how Rotary can satisfy that interest.

Keep meal costs separate from dues. Members only pay for meals when they attend.

Public Relations

Increase brand awareness of Rotary in the community by increasing contact with media and opinion leaders. Wide publicity of projects in print media and electronic media can directly motivate potential members**.** People will join your Rotary cause before they will join a Rotary breakfast, lunch, or dinner.  So, it is important to make community members aware of what your club does with a signature project.

Develop a plan to strengthen public relations to share what Rotary does.

Create a bookmark or postcard listing club events and projects.

\* Brag about what your club does via flyers, networking, and open houses and on social media such as Facebook or Twitter (on the club’s social media or asking each member to send it through their own social media).

\* Through social media, let people know you don’t have to be invited to attend a meeting; if you want to serve, just come to a meeting.

Use the Club website as a repository of information for those looking to find out about why your Club may be for them.

Have a roulette wheel at the local shopping mall made up of donations from Mall businesses to raise funds for Rotary.  It’s a promotion opportunity for new members as well as donations.

\* Affix two red dots to each member's badge.  These dots may be removed as each member brings a guest to a meeting.  The goal is to expose more people to what the club does and see the enthusiasm for the projects.  It is not a hard sell but a way to encourage members to get engaged in attracting new members.  Members take delight in being able to announce that they qualify for removal of the dots.

\* Encourage guest speakers to tweet and otherwise notify their social media followers that they’ll be speaking at the Rotary club. This will increase awareness of Rotary and might bring some non-Rotarians to that meeting to hear that speaker.

\* Banners/decals are fairly inexpensive and promoting placement through club members and other community members could get you more than a good location. By reaching out to non-Rotarian businesses and land owners while asking for permission to place a banner, you might wind up with a new member or two as well.

Club Gatherings

Clubs must make a good first impression. Make sure your website or Facebook page is attractive and up-to-date, and presents an accurate picture of your club.

\* Have the Membership Chair report regularly at Club gatherings.

\* Have a "Guests day" the first club gathering each month. Thirty minutes prior to the regular meeting is dedicated to new visitors explaining first what Rotary is, and then more club specifics - projects, values, activities. Have a Rotarian give a small talk during the regular meeting on a certain Rotary topic/area of interest. New guests are invited to continue coming to the meetings and encouraged to take action in our projects.

\* Programs!

Have programs that a potential member will say when leaving, “That was an hour worth spending. I think I will come back.”

Create programs with an eye to inviting other individuals and organizations, e.g. local economics expert – Chamber of Commerce; wildlife expert – members of the zoo; etc.

\* Is the pre-meeting fun and engaging?  For a visitor, the meeting starts when they arrive - not when the bell rings.

Solicit from each member a Club Fun Event Idea. Select one per quarter to carry out, each targeting a different demographic group.

\* Have a Membership Minute by the Club Membership Chair or Co-Chair to educate and offer ideas to prospect and attract qualified potential members.

\* Assign each member a Rotary minute to share each week something about Rotary. The information sharing is useful and it will keep everyone engaged.

\* Take a certain number of meetings "on the road" to a service project or a place interesting to the membership. Encourage members to bring family and friends along.

Club Structure. Provide more flexibility in structure of the club so that more people can take advantage of Rotary. What's getting in the way of growing the club?  If it's rules (your club's, not Rotary's), eliminate them. Below are examples of categories that clubs are using.

Satellite clubs: A situation whereby some club members may decide to be meeting at a particular location and time different from the time of parent clubs. All decisions made by the satellite club(s) must be reported to the parent club. This satellite club may admit new members and grow to become a new club.

\* Associate Members: These people may come to a meeting, for example, once a month or once in two months etc. Their coming to meeting may create the interest. They pay a token as dues. It is expected that within two years they must decide to join Rotary. In some clubs, Associate Members are designed to attract those under 40 years of age. These members have reduced dues and pay as they go for meals until they reach 40 years of age.

Clubs can define associate membership as it wishes. Your club can have different policies for these members' other financial obligations (club and district dues, meal costs, etc.), attendance requirements, or service expectations, as long as these policies are reflected in the club bylaws.

\* Corporate Members: A company in the community may be inducted to the club. The company will not be an entity with Rotary International membership. The company select one official representative. Other staff will rotate their participation with the official representative. The company will pay dues for the official representative. In some clubs the non-official members pay 50% of the dues. It is expected that eventually one or more of the company's representatives will join Rotary as a full pledged member. Your club can have different policies for these members' other financial obligations (club and district dues, meal costs, etc.), attendance requirements, or service expectations, as long as these policies are reflected in the club bylaws.

\* Family membership: If an existing active member's spouse or child joins the club, they get half price dues so long as the referring member stays in the club. If the original member leaves, they pay full price.

\* Friendship member: This member only attends service projects and helps with events, but can only attend very few regular meetings due to time or business constraints.

\* Internship: A young person (18-25) pays no dues for the first six months, and learns about Rotary from the ground up. If they decide to join, they become a new member starting at a specific fee.

\* Honorary member: Granted to exceptional individuals on a board-approved basis. No dues required, but donations to events/fundraisers are accepted if they wish.

\* New Parent Membership: This is lower than the typical cost for members that have a child between the ages of 0-3.

\* Dues:

\* Consider setting up the first six months at a discount. After six months, the new member should recognize whether the cost is worth their investment.

\* Legacy Membership: Anyone legally related to a current active Rotarian in another district, zone or country. Legacy Members have two years of reduced dues and only pay for meals when they attend.

Meetings:

Get to two traditional meetings a month. A third meeting for committee meetings at the committees’ time and place.   A fourth meeting is a social Happy Hour with members expected to attend with a prospect, wife, husband, friend, co-worker, etc.  Make it a networking event also with exchange of business cards. Follow-up on prospects.

Do live video meetings. Members can attend in person or on-line.

\***Clones. From the RCO Langhorne.**

**Clones can be designated by any primary Member in good standing to attend meetings / events on behalf of themselves. They must have either a family or business relationship with the primary member. They can attend meetings / events in addition to their primary members. Clone Attendance will be credited to the primary member. Clones pay the guest meal charge when the primary member is in attendance. Annual club dues for Clones is $25 (to cover name tag, mailings, etc.). This is deducted if Clone joins club as a full member. Clones are not reported as a member to Rotary International and cannot wear the Rotary pin. Clones are expected to participate in club service activities, community events, and fundraising efforts - in addition to the primary member.**

Service Projects

Create a Rotary Center for Non-profits to give free consultations to non-profits. It will be a great on-going service project and will spread the word about the value of being a Rotarian.

Have a signature project that is well promoted.

Many clubs invite non-Rotarians to get involved in their service projects as a regular membership tool. It is highly successful.