



Background

Jim Toccato, in his youth, had been a Rotary Exchange student and his father had been a rotarian of long standing so it wasn't really surprising that as he got close to retirement he started to think about getting involved with Rotary.

His professional career, after a brief stint with a top five accounting firm, has been with his current company, James, James and Allan (JJA). He has been with JJA for over 30 years, and for the last 5 years as their Chief Financial Officer (CFO). He has another couple of years before retirement but after attending a Women in Rotary's – International Women's Day breakfast he thought he should start to get more involved now.

Over the years Jim has developed a particular passion for helping indigenous families. He spent some time, along with JJA colleagues, building toilets in the Northern Territory.

He decided to join his local Rotary club and has been there for just over a year and has what he thinks is a great project – there is a nearby community, to where he built his toilets - that he imagines might benefit from having a children's playground.

Although, he hasn't spoken to the community or any potential stakeholders, and he is still time poor, he believes he can get some of his Rotary colleagues involved to organise this.

Jim's club is around 50 people and after speaking to his president Janita Marisha – she offered him the opportunity to present his idea at their weekly meeting. He hasn't yet discussed this with any of his colleagues but he's sure that they will be as excited as he is.

He prepares a wonderful set of corporate slides and prepares to present what he thinks is a water tight business case to his club lunch.

Presenting the project at the club

Jim presented his project to everyone at his club and asked for those who would be interested in joining his project to speak to him. As he sat back down at his table he was surprised at the lack of enthusiasm – he'd spent a good deal of precious time on his slides.

He was disappointed that no-one immediately offered to join him and it is now six weeks since he presented and he's had no interest at all. Indeed, he is finding it a little difficult to engage with his Rotary colleagues since his presentation – although, to be fair he has only been able to attend one of the last six meetings.

He hasn't spoken to his company, either, but thinks that they will be supportive as part of their corporate social responsibility. He also knows that he has to speak to the NT local community businesses but is sure that they will see it as a great opportunity to get involved.

Whilst, he provided a compelling business case for the playground, many of his Rotary colleagues are concerned that he may not have identified the real community need. They



feel that, even if there is a community need, maybe this is more likely to be a responsibility of government and local businesses. Perhaps there isn't a real role for Rotary. They also think that maybe Jim hasn't really got the time and commitment to drive this project.

Talking to the club elders

Jim wasn't satisfied with the comments of his colleagues and he decides he will talk to some of the elders of his club and ask them the following questions?

- 1) I put a slick presentation together but no-one seemed to be interested – why?
- 2) There was a good business case for the playground?
- 3) Why can't I generate any interest to get behind this project?
- 4) Why does Rotary not get involved more quickly in projects such as indigenous affairs?
- 5) What makes for a successful Rotary project?
- 6) How do I get my club involved?
- 7) What do I need to do to get community interest?

Getting the project back on track

It is your job now to get the project back on track. Thinking about how the club elders might have answered the above questions - In your groups consider:

- *What might Jim have done differently?*
- *What are Jim's greatest obstacles to getting Rotary involved?*
- *How might he get his project back on track?*

Report back to the rest of the group.