

# Strengthening Clubs Through Membership

## Discussion Leader Guide – Friday, 1:30 TO 3:00p.m.

### 1. ***At the end of this session, participants will:***

- Recognize that the highest priority clubs should have in achieving membership growth is to increase member retention.
- Recognize the importance of treating members as customers so they want to stay, listening to our customers (members) and determining members' satisfaction and needs.
- Recognize that engaging members affects membership and club effectiveness.
- Identify effective membership strategies. Share ideas for communicating with, and engaging, current, potential and new members.

### **Notes to facilitators:**

- This session is intended to be Facilitated Instruction. Walk the Presidents-Elect through a conversation about Rotary's customers (club members). The objective will be achieved by engaging the Presidents-Elect in a conversation of broad questions.
- A critical piece of this session is for Presidents-Elect to understand customer service practices within Rotary that attract new members and retain existing members.

### **Key background points:**

- Since 2007, clubs in North America have lost more members than they brought in. In the US and Canada, nearly 44,000 new members join Rotary each year, but nearly 51,000 members *leave* Rotary each year. *The problem is not one of finding new members- the problem is keeping members!*
- To achieve long-term, sustained growth, Rotary must focus at least as much attention on how to keep our current members as we do in finding new members.
- Rotary's "customers" are our members – in order to sustain or grow Rotary, we must attend to the needs and interests of our club members.
- The Club President should consider the role of being the club's "Customer Service Manager" – the leader who facilitates and implements practices to keep members involved and ensure member satisfaction.
- Key language (a subtle, yet powerful change):
  - Recruiting members: replace with ***attracting*** members
  - Retaining members: replace with ***engaging*** members

**1:30 - 1:35 Introductions & welcome. Remind participants of evaluation process.**

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### **1:35 - 1:40 What is the easiest way to create long term membership growth in your club?**

- Think of this differently, "what is the greatest barrier to long term growth in our clubs?"
- Membership loss
- Three key elements to membership growth:
  - Attract new members
  - Keep current members
  - Start a new club

# **Strengthening Clubs Through Membership**

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**As club leaders, your job is the first two: attracting new members and, more importantly, engaging current members.**

### **1:40 - 1:50 Clubs in North America are losing members**

**If this were the trend line for your business, what would you do?**

Look for answers: try / do something new.

Membership has been a top priority for Rotary.

- Emphasis on asking people to join
- 44,000 new members annually (in North America)
- 51,000 current members leave annually (in North America)

#### **Why do our clubs lose members?**

Most members may use many reasons to explain why they leave Rotary. The real reason is that membership is not as high a priority as any these issues.

The first step in addressing membership is to define members as our customers. When we do so, it changes how we view our members and run our clubs.

#### **If members are our customers, how should we treat them?**

Listen to them.

By listening to our members (customers) before they leave, we can make changes to our club (product) that will increase their satisfaction with the service they receive, decreasing the likelihood that they will leave.

### **1:50 - 2:20 Delivering Value – Keeping Rotarians**

Newer Rotarians indicate that they stay in Rotary to:

2. 1. Serve their community
  3. 2. Network
  4. 3. Represent their vocation and
  5. 4. Develop leadership skills
- How can we develop ideas to engage and motivate new Rotarians? Request attendees share ideas.
  - How can we address these issues to meet expectations of all club members? Request attendees share ideas.

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**2:20 - 2:50      What is your role, as club president, in this process?**

- Cultivating loyalty (a member's desire to stay).
- New members (how they are welcomed and involved).
- Existing members (Satisfaction, Purposefulness, Recognition Education?).
- Improving customer service? (club/committee meeting structure, service, fundraising activities and communication).
- Serve members so they want to be engaged in your club.
- Promote the benefits of belonging to Rotary, and belonging to your club.

### **What happens when you satisfy your customers (members)?**

- Members (customers) don't leave.
- Satisfied members naturally attract potential new customers (members).

**2:50 - 2:58      Individually, ask each participant to write (for their use)**

1. One action they will take as their club's "Customer Service Manager"

2. One action (positive change) they will recommend their board/club considers implementing

Share examples, as time permits

**2:58 - 3:00      Evaluations. Fill out your survey sheets (located in the center of the Program Book) and keep them for the Survey Monkey evaluation that will be emailed to you within a week.**