

Membership Development

Attracting Young Members to Rotary

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The minimum age for admission into Rotary is “adult”. How adult is defined is up to each Rotary club. Never forget that Paul Harris was 36 in 1905 when he started Rotary. There is a need in all Rotary clubs to recruit young members. The reasons young business and professional people are attracted to Rotary are the same that attract most people. However, there are some specific ways to attract younger members and ways to ensure they never want to join. Which column represents your club’s approach?

How to attract young members to Rotary:

- Have active local and international service projects and actually do hands on projects
- Have members who are motivated, enthusiastic and not burned out
- Young members attract young members. Keep a balance of young members and female members
- Provide opportunities for members to become involved with hands on programs
- Provide an economical approach to Rotary membership (lower cost meals or no-meal club meetings)
- Ensure members represent a range of ages, careers and backgrounds that represent the demographics of the community- in other words apply the classification principle
- Have members who are open to new ideas
- Have family social events
- Develop a club web site. The internet is the primary source of information for people under 30
- Networking opportunities are very important for young business leaders and professionals
- Younger members are interested in service projects that address needs such as AIDS, environment or homelessness
- Offer young members club leadership positions that enhance their resume

How not to attract young members to Rotary :

- Don’t involve new members in the operation of the club or in club leadership positions
- Ensure the club dues and meal costs are kept high
- Don’t involve families in club activities
- Don’t invite young members to sit at “your” table
- Keep the club membership disproportionately older retired members
- Make gender and racial jokes or comments as part of the meetings
- Sing WW I songs at Rotary meetings
- When ever a new idea is suggest say, “We tried that once and it didn’t work.”
- Concentrate on fund raising from members rather than hands on service projects
- Waste time at committee meetings with rambling discussions that never come to a conclusion

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