

Club Builder



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

Retention Ideas

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We Need to Focus on Retention

We all want to build our clubs by successfully recruiting new members. After all, if you're not growing, well then, you're heading in the other direction. And we all know what that means in the long run.

In our District and club membership efforts we seem to place the most emphasis on recruitment.

But, the successful clubs are those that are really good at engaging members in meaningful ways so that they stay in Rotary for a long time. These clubs know that a well-balanced organization has their house in order – the club is meaningful, exciting, and fun. These elements help to recruit new members, but also help the members stay engaged for the long term.

This month we offer some examples of engaging your members so they are with you for years to come.

Yours in Rotary,

Terry L. Reed
District Membership Chair

1st Task

One of the first things you should ask a new member to do is to bring in another new member. You will accomplish two things – first, you will gain another new member keeping up the momentum, and second, a new member who brings in someone else is more likely to stay engaged.

A Reminder

Do “something Rotary” at each Rotary meeting.

Coming in July

Kicking off the new Rotary Year on a high note.

It's About Membership! From Rotary District 7690, central North Carolina

Our laser focus on membership attraction and retention is yielding great results as our District numbers show us growing from a negative position to +37 as of March 1.

Not one to rest on our laurels, let us share a best practice from the High Point Club's PDG, Dave McCoy, who has an exceptionally well organized system for recruiting potential new member guests that really works and will undoubtedly help to ensure an increase for your club.

You are encouraged to take the time to implement your own version of this highly effective program.

1. When a member brings in a prospective member guest, a simple form is completed with name, address, phone number and email along with the member's name. That info goes immediately into an email group of prospective members. They then start to receive the Club newsletter.
2. A welcoming email is sent to the prospect that invites them back for the next meeting and offers a membership contact. An explanation is given of attachments of a formal welcome with a listing of all the board members as well as a power point slide show about Rotary and the Club.
3. The third attachment is a combination of pertinent items relative to the Club such as dues structure, payment policy, blue badge requirements, attendance rules, bio.
4. The President, Membership Chair, and member/sponsor are required to send a follow-up welcome email.
5. An orientation is held when a minimum of 3 members are ready to join. (Remember High Point Club is a large Club, 125-130.) Ten past presidents conduct a 1-hour session. The new member is then introduced to the membership by the sponsor and is assigned a mentor. (High Point has found that a mentor and a sponsor, together, is more effective.)

I'm impressed with this thorough process!

Please know that this info will be available in more detail on our District website, under Membership. Remember, we have great resources to share...*all you have to do is look or ask.*

As spring is a time of renewal, give your membership and orientation programs a thorough review and implement these creative ideas to foster new growth for the coming Rotary year!

Cindi Hewitt and Cory Newton
District Membership Co-Chairs

President for the Day

Have you ever thought about having members other than the president conduct the weekly meeting? The club president could open the meeting and then turn it over to another member. The president could give a brief bio of the "President for the Day", highlighting Rotary activities, work, family, civic/volunteer activities. Wouldn't that be an interesting way of spreading around the responsibilities. Think about calling on a senior member who has perhaps lost some interest in Rotary. It could bring 'em back.

Retention Ideas

From Rotary District 5950, Central Minnesota

Involvement of Every Member

- Identify committee members responsible for Retention on the Membership Committee.
- Set club expectations for involvement and make sure everyone is aware of the expectations (attendance, committee involvement, community service participation, fundraisers, financial support).
- Encourage every member to serve on a committee.
- Suggest that the Community Service committee organize monthly done-in-a-day community service projects. This provides opportunities for members to gather, do meaningful work, get to know each other, and foster fellowship. Recommend that each member participate in a minimum of 2-3 community service projects each year.
- Invite family members to participate in community service projects and social events. We need more time with our families not less.

Recognition

- Recognize new members and their mentor as they complete the New Member Checklist.
- Publicly thank individuals who participated in fundraisers, service projects, and other club activities/events from the podium.
- Order some special pins and conduct a ceremony each year for members with perfect attendance.
- Recognize members who have brought in new members at the 3-member, 5-member, 10-member mark.
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Dan Barnett and Katie Lee

New Members Engaged Immediately

The moment that a person becomes a new member – that’s the time to get her involved. Do not wait. New members are confused. They want to get involved, but they may have no idea how to go about doing it. You need to hold their hands for some period of time. Don’t let even a few weeks go by.

A Job for Everyone

Make sure that every member has a job to do. Everyone!

A Program a Month

Every month, you need to have a weekly program focused on something Rotary. It could be your club’s latest project or one of the major Rotary global efforts, like Polio.

Getting Lost

After a member has missed several meetings, it may be difficult for them to come back. Don’t let that happen. Reach out with a friendly, sincere “We really miss you”.

Write Notes - Rotary District 6450, Indiana

I heard a club president describe this on a recent membership webinar, and how simple handwritten notes, (yes, those old fashioned things written in cursive), build up esprit de corps of her club. This small gesture makes an impact like you would not believe. I still remember the kind notes that I received from others in my own club. These are lasting impressions. And yes, they will take a little bit of your time. But, their power to attract and engage your members is priceless. – Gary Frey