



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

OUR TWO GREAT STRENGTHS ARE ROTARY CLUBS AND THE FOUNDATION

My fellow Rotarians:

The playwright George Bernard Shaw once wrote, "Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine; and at last you create what you will."

There is no shortage in this world of people able to imagine a better future. But in Rotary, we do not just imagine that future -- we will it, and we work to create it. This we do through our two great strengths: our Rotary clubs and our Rotary Foundation.

Over the years, I have been privileged to witness firsthand the fruits of the outstanding work carried out by Rotarians all over the world, supported by the programs of our Foundation. One thing that impresses me is how these programs focus not on short-term satisfaction or reward for the giver. The best Rotary programs and projects focus on building for the future – and making lives better for generations.

Two decades ago, we Rotarians made a promise: to make life better for the entire world, forever, by eliminating polio. It has always been an ambitious goal, but it has always been a realistic one. And now, thanks to our Rotary Foundation, we are closer than ever to reaching it.

It is my hope that with the help of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and [Rotary's US\\$200 Million Challenge](#), there will soon come a time when we will be able to say that we have made polio a thing of the past. For if we fail now, we will fail all those who have gone before us, and every child to whom we made a promise. If we fail, we risk our own good name, and the good name of all the Rotarians who came before us.

We will not fail. We can and we must succeed.

I know that each one of you recognizes that *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands* – and that the future of our Foundation is as well.

John Kenny
President, Rotary International





THE TOOL KIT IS HERE AND IT WORKS.....



THE MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT is proving a real winner with Rotarians and there is strong evidence that it is being used and works.

Over 60,000 of the "Join Rotary & make a world of difference" leaflets have been supplied from Alcester along with over 350 DVDs and nearly 400 sets of posters.

These tools direct those interested in Rotary to the RIBI website and we are seeing a sharp increase in the number of people expressing a wish to join Rotary via this route. In fact the number of such approaches has more than doubled in the last few weeks (before the marketing campaign started).

Whilst many clubs like to use their own leaflets to recruit exclusively for themselves we must remember that our supporters at events and activities are not necessarily local. They might be more attracted to another club near their home or place of work. Giving them the opportunity to visit the RIBI website, now fully friendly to potential members, ensures that they can get the right information in a professional way that suits them. The important thing is that they find out what they want to know about Rotary and, in increasing numbers, express sufficient interest to find out more by making contact. Using the tools will mean that we all benefit.

Increasingly the web is the first point of reference when most of us are considering any purchase or involvement. Having visited the RIBI website potential members may well decide to research clubs near them in the same way.

Peter Davey - Chairman
RIBI Membership, development & retention Committee

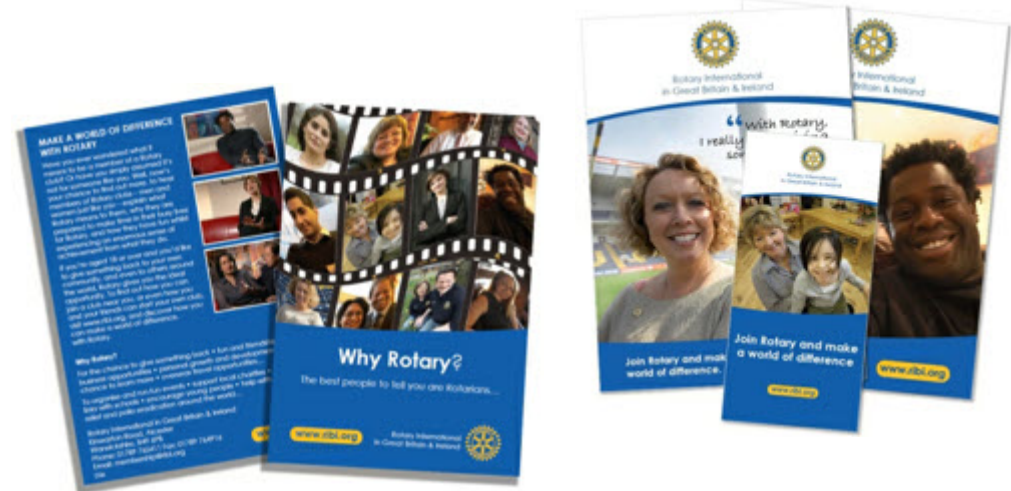
Does your club have a good informative web site? Is it always up to date? Does it make it clear that potential members will be welcome and how they should make contact? Do make sure that it does so that your club doesn't loose out. If you have any difficulty with this or don't know where to start do please contact your Assistant Governor, District Membership or Communications team who will be pleased to help.

Other tools are available now too. Take a look at examples of our newspaper and radio advertisements at www.ribi.org/restricted/membership-marketing/campaign-update-1-october-09

Really useful YouTube videos can be seen at:- www.ribi.org/resources/committees/marketing-pr-and-communications/videos
You may well want to use these at events too.

RI have also produced some very useful videos that can be seen at:- www.rotary.org/en/aboutUs/joiningRotary/Pages/ridefault.aspx

<http://www.rotary.org/en/MediaAndNews/Multimedia/RVMVideoMagazine/Pages/04-3.1-women.aspx>





DISTRICTS ARE FORMING ROTARY FOUNDATION ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS TO SUPPORT ROTARY'S GOALS

The District 4920 Rotary Foundation Alumni Association has rapidly emerged as an energetic, proactive member of the family of Rotary in Argentina. Formed in January 2008, it is the first Foundation alumni group to be established in that country.

“The association is doing an outstanding service to our district,” says Past District Governor Juan Pedro Torroba, a member of the group and former Rotary Foundation alumni coordinator for the region. “We have our bulletin, *ConEXiones* ; raise money for polio eradication; and assist the district Foundation chair with every district and club Foundation program that requests our attention.”

The 76-member group, which meets monthly online, raised US\$1,000 for [Rotary's US\\$200 Million Challenge](#) by selling stickers promoting the eradication of polio. It also provides support to the district's Rotary clubs by

- Helping to select and orient Argentine [Group Study Exchange](#) team members and planning activities for visiting teams from other countries
- Participating in club service projects
- Encouraging association members to request space in their sponsor Rotary club's bulletin and offering to collaborate on service efforts
- Maintaining a catalog of club service projects to help promote shared efforts among clubs within and outside the district
- Providing district officers with a list of successful club fundraisers that can be implemented by other clubs

“We aspire to be authorized spokespersons in order to enhance the public image of Rotary,” wrote Guillermo Salas, founding president of the association, in the first issue of *ConEXiones* . “We are aware of our capacity as global ambassadors for peace ... We see the association as a vehicle of unity, reconnection, and selfless goodwill.”

For more on the District 4920 Rotary Foundation Alumni Association, go to their [facebook page](#) or e-mail exbecarios4920@gmail.com.



reconnections The Rotary Foundation's alumni bulletin, is now a bimonthly e-newsletter. By subscribing to **reconnections** you'll get the same great updates on alumni activities, accomplishments and news delivered to your email inbox.



Ken Buck, IPDG 1240
Foundation Alumni Coordinator Zone 18a





Reversing a Membership Freefall and Shifting Membership into Drive

IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES, JIM HENRY, REGIONAL RI MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR FOR ZONE 34 EXAMINES THE MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE



*Jim Henry,
RRIMC Zone 34*

No club or district deliberately loses members. External forces cause a low percentage of membership loss. Internal issues that are difficult to recognize and resolve cause clubs' major losses, primarily because they tend to render the clubs ineffective at satisfying member's needs. Eager to succeed within Rotary's one-year leadership cycle, club leaders often try quick fixes (like membership drives) which generally waste time, effort, and resources that should be used to identify and improve the clubs' ability to satisfy present and future members' reasons for joining.

What are these issues and how do organizations go about overcoming them? The details differ according to time and location, but they fall into these categories, usually in this order: (1) Lack of leadership agreement on purposes and goals. (2) Loss of desire and initiative to make the necessary changes. (3) Losing sight of the overall objective. (4) Failure to properly educate and communicate with all involved. To overcome these issues, clubs (and districts) should follow these overall guidelines, each of which, in future articles, will be discussed in more detail:

- 1. ESTABLISH PRIORITIES.** To reverse membership decline by making clubs more effective is not a one-person show; it requires the cooperation of many. To attain this cooperation, club (and district) leaders must establish priorities around which they can build a consensus. Only then can clubs become more effective in satisfying their members' needs and further advancing the Object of Rotary.
- 2. CREATE A POWERFUL GUIDING COALITION.** At the club level, the board is a logical place to start building a coalition, but it would be a mistake to leave out long-time or new members. The coalition's size will vary according to club size, but improving effectiveness will fail without a dedicated and cooperative coalition. At district level, the coalition should consist of the present and future leaders and select past district governors.
- 3. ESTABLISH AN ATTAINABLE VISION.** The coalition must establish goals that are attainable within a reasonable length of time. This will solidify the group because they will have worked together to define the objectives and, most important, will believe they are attainable.



4. CREATE A SYSTEMATIC STRATEGIC PLAN WITH SHORT-TERM, ATTAINABLE MILESTONES. Real change takes time, but the vision may become lost in the fog if the coalition does not build in short-term successes. Timely milestones with appropriate celebrations tend to keep the vision in focus while getting more and more people involved. Success breeds success.

5. COMMUNICATE. Failure to communicate is a common, costly oversight. Plan to communicate priorities and dependable, accurate, timely updates to all parties involved. For example, at the club level, if the coalition plans to reach a specified membership retention goal, the membership chairperson should periodically bring members up-to-date where the club stands relative to its goal. Districts must do the same with clubs. At all levels, communications must focus on priorities. Priorities must be headliners, not mid-page articles.



REVERSING A MEMBERSHIP FREEFALL AND SHIFTING MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INTO DRIVE

6. REMOVE OBSTACLES. Obstacles will arise as any organization proceeds on their path to success. Many try to side step or ignore impediments rather than deal with them. Perhaps the most common obstacle is those who fight the winds of change. Leaders should find a way to recognize and overcome obstacles. Leaders will have to make hard decisions like asking uncooperative individuals to step aside. At the district level, do not waste time on ineffective clubs that will not change, but take care: It is much better to populate communities' effective clubs than to populate communities with ineffective clubs.

7. DO NOT DECLARE THE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED TOO SOON. This is perhaps the major reason membership drives seldom accomplish their desired goal. It is important that the club and district continue to refine priorities until the new customs and practices that have made them more effective become operational norms. Only then can the coalition declare victory.

“To pursue new and retain existing members by doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results is lunacy.”

*Jim Henry,
RRIMC Zone 34*



OVER 1300 ROTARIANS TURNOUT TO MAKE ROTARY STRONGER IN ZONES 17&18A.

MULTI DISTRICT REGIONAL SEMINARS....have witnessed fantastic support recently when over 1300 Rotarians, representing hundreds of Rotary Clubs, attended seminars at Wetherby, Horsham, Stirling, Bristol, Maidenhead, Solihull, Northampton, Hampshire, Chester, Ashted, Durham, Barton upon Humber.

PLAN FOR THE DIVIDEND from every event

- **EVENT PLAN**
 - Financial or service objective.
 - Action needed
 - Who, how, when, where?
 - Action
 - Evaluation

- **MEMBERSHIP PLAN**
 - Identify potential
 - Participants, audience, parents,
 - Decide sales strategy
 - New members or new club
 - **Who, how, when, where**
 - Action, Evaluation
 - Follow up

For every project we hold, we need someone or a team working alongside the project planners with a specific objective to identify and realise the best possible membership development gain from that activity. Running an event or activity will not yield a membership gain unless we plan for it.



News from around the Clubs - Witney RC Membership Plan

WITNEY ROTARY CLUB ENJOY GREAT SUCCESS WITH THEIR ROTARY OPEN EVENINGS.

With sixteen new members inducted into the Witney Rotary Club in West Oxfordshire in twenty months, the age profile has been reduced and a new vigour has been added to club meetings and activities. Club Membership had slowly declined over the previous ten years from fifty down to forty, with recruitment entirely dependent on members inviting potential members to Monday lunchtime meetings.

Then in 2007 a further eight members left in a short period and the alarm bells rang in earnest. Everyone became aware that action was urgently needed to avoid a further decline. On the basis that “better to do something and fail, than do nothing at all” a new strategy was adopted. A “Rotary Open Evening” was planned, described as an opportunity to discover who we are and what we do.

It was deliberately not described as a “recruitment drive” to avoid putting undue pressure on guests. We were confident that if we could describe the ethos and range of activities encompassed by Rotary a sufficient number of our audience would be interested enough to accept our invitation attend two or three lunchtime meetings to ‘take a look at us’. This in turn would lead them to eventually expressing a wish to apply for membership. The first lady member in the Witney Rotary Club, Rotarian Grace Noble, was inducted in February 2008 as a result of Witney’s Open Evening. Subsequently three other ladies and a married couple have been inducted as a result of our ‘Rotary Open Evenings’.

Why did we succeed? Because the whole club became urgently aware that we needed to recruit and so became committed to the cause. Other factors included a structured approach, and a determination to succeed. Most important of all, every action was focused on the need to find new members. Nothing was allowed to distract from that goal even though we didn’t emphasise that fact in the lead up to the evening.



Rotarian Grace Noble, the first lady member in the Witney Club, inducted in February 2008

16 new members in 20 months - 50% increase in membership

John Simpson
Immediate Past President
The Rotary Club of Witney





News from around the Clubs – Witney RC Membership Plan

To ACHIEVE SUCCESS WE UNDERTOOK THE FOLLOWING 12 STEPS:

1. To motivate existing members we asked them, at a regular meeting, to fill in a questionnaire thus reminding themselves why they joined Rotary in the first place and what they enjoy about being members. This was followed up by a discussion based on the answers received.
2. The date for the Open Evening was fixed some two months ahead and members were continually reminded to invite likely people known to them.
3. The target attendance was no more than 20 guests on the night each accompanied by the Rotarian who had invited them. The small numbers were totally manageable so that everyone could receive a personal approach.
4. The evening was held at our normal hotel venue with a free drink on arrival. We circulated for 30 minutes, had an illustrated talk, and followed by a finger buffet.
5. We were very clear that we did not want any Rotary waffle, so we asked one person to do all the speaking. He gave a 20 minute illustrated presentation about Rotary, focusing mainly on what we have achieved as a club, but with a mention of the national and international dimension of Rotary (eg Polio Eradication etc.).
6. We felt it was necessary to personalise the presentation for maximum effect. This was achieved by the presenter explaining his personal background, describing how he became a Rotarian, what it means to him, and an impression of the time involved with the club.
7. The fun, friendship and enjoyment aspects of being a Rotarian were also heavily emphasised.
8. During the following Buffet we were able to circulate, answer questions, and sound out our guests about their level of interest. This was done in a relaxed manner, with those who indicated a continuing interest being invited to join us for a lunchtime meeting.
9. Everyone attending was given as a “take-away” a copy of ‘Rotary Basics’ and a special issue of the club Bulletin which was a composite of reports on club activities, taken from the past year’s Bulletins.
10. Four similar evenings have now been held with a good proportion of those attending coming to subsequent lunchtime meetings, and then deciding to join.
11. The outcome is that the Rotary Club of Witney has welcomed 16 new members from February 2008, an increase in membership of 50% from our lowest point, with more in the pipeline.
12. By ensuring a warm welcome to our new members, quickly involving them in activities and careful mentoring, the club has retained all but two of our recruits. One moved house and transferred to another club, and one sadly resigned due to a serious health problem.

Only during the presentation did we come clean with these words:

*“We have **called** this a **Rotary Open Evening** quite deliberately, the main purpose is to increase public awareness of Rotary, its activities, and to demonstrate our friendliness and openness. Now if I said that was our only motive **you would be suspicious** of me and think I was trying to deceive you so I will say--- yes--- we would be delighted if those of you here this evening decide to explore us further, and even more pleased if you then decide “Yes that’s for me”.*

John Simpson, Immediate Past President
The Rotary Club of Witney

Without doubt the softly, softly, approached paid off – the results speak for themselves.



Thanks For Life - A Membership Opportunity

**STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS
STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS**

In an unprecedented show of support, TESCO has agreed to assist the Thanks for Life - End Polio Now project by offering a 'Rotary Day' (Saturday, February 27 in 377 of their largest stores. This will mean that our clubs will be able to access the stores to arrange 'Information stands' and collect cash for Thanks for Life - End Polio Now.

Obviously this gives us a fantastic opportunity to meet all the Thanks for Life objectives...

- *Raise the profile of Rotary (in general) in the relevant community and the End Polio Now campaign in particular.*
- *Fund-raise for the Thanks for Life - End Polio Now initiative.*
- *Maximise the Membership Dividend that this campaign is designed to achieve as part of its key aims.*

As you will be aware, the footfall through these stores on a Saturday is massive and we see this an a unbelievable chance to maximise our goals. The TESCO day will be Saturday, February 27 and all managers on the list will be encouraged from 'HQ' to assist Rotary clubs in organising this event. The offer to assist was in the form of a 'challenge'. If Rotary did not take up the offer, then the day would be offered to another charity.

And, more good news. SAINSBURY'S Chief Executive Officer Justin King has given an encouraging 'Thumbs-up' to Rotary clubs to approach their local store managers with a view to mounting a similar event - perhaps on Saturday, February 20

As you will all be aware, the Sainsbury date could mark the start of Thanks for Life week, while the TESCO date could make a great finale for the project.

What a fabulous opportunity for all of us to meet our £1 million objective.

Full details of the decision will be forthcoming ASAP and work will now progress rapidly



Thanks for Life

Rotary Day - February 23, 2010



END POLIO NOW

Thanks to Rotary

Humanity In Motion

Sainsbury's

TESCO

