



Breakout 2

Attracting Members Scenarios

Breakout A

Over the past two years, the Rotary club of Uptown, a noontime club of 96 members, has lost 30% of its membership, mostly to resignations, although there have been a few job transfers.

During visits to the club, the AG noted that the meetings were somewhat disorganized. They didn't start or end on time, there was no club bulletin, visiting Rotarians and guests were barely mentioned and rarely made welcome, and program speakers tended to go on and on, seemingly without any limit.

The Sergeant-at-Arms seems very arbitrary and even mean-spirited in imposing fines. The obvious intent was to raise money rather than to have some fun and enforce club rules.

The meeting place is a restaurant with little separation between the rotary club and other patrons of the restaurant, so the atmosphere is noisy and confusing, especially for visitors.

What can you do to turn this club around and stem the tide of lost members and create an inviting atmosphere for attracting new members?

Breakout B

The membership (about 25) of the Rotary club of Smithville has remained fairly level for the past several years. Although new members have been inducted, they don't seem to stay around very long, and then they just seem to disappear.

The regular membership averages 62 years in age – exactly the average age of Rotarians worldwide. On visiting the club it appears that there are several cliques in this club, demonstrated by the fact that the same people sit at the same tables every week, and they seem almost to resent an “intruder” penetrating their space.

The new members that are inducted into the club don't seem to know much about Rotary, don't contribute to the rotary Foundation, and often not assigned to committees, and don't get involved in the few service projects that the club does.

Also, there is no gender or racial diversity in this club; it consists entirely of white males.

How can you help the club to revitalize and to educate and retain its new members?

Breakout C

In preparation for the District Governor's official visit to the Rotary Club of Mainstreet, the AG met with the leadership of the club. S/he reported a lack of spirit and enthusiasm among the leadership of the club. In reviewing the club's plans and budget, an imbalance was noted between the funds needed to implement their service projects and expected income. When asked how the club would meet its service financial commitments, the president answered that they would just "pass the hat." The club does not have a fund raising program.

They appear to be a typical "meet'n'eat" kind of club. When visiting the AG observed that the members arrive for meetings showing little camaraderie or enthusiasm as well. They go to their places at the tables and sit quietly throughout the meeting. When the meeting ends, the members quickly disperse.

How can you get them excited about Rotary service and help them meet their financial commitments?

Breakout D

Centerville recently suffered the closing of a major and long-time industry, resulting in the loss of several members' jobs. The city as a whole has an unemployment rate of 9.8%.

The slumping economy has several others worried about their jobs. The Rotary Club, with 37 members could lose as many as 20% of its members as a result. One of those members who has already lost her job is the club's President-elect.

The Board of Directors of the club is meeting to deal with the issues that exist in both the city and the club. The focus of the meeting is to help them find a way to (1) deal with their potential membership losses, and (2) to help them find a way to help their fellow Centerville residents in these tough times.

What do you suggest?

Breakout E

The president of the Rotary Club of Chelsey, a club of about 75 members, calls you for help solving a problem that exists within his club. It seems that several members of his club are rebelling against his attempts to change some of the long-held traditions in the club, and he is unsure what he should do.

When he was first installed as his club's president, he was told by his club that it was "his year as president" and to do whatever he felt would make it a successful year. He took his club members at their word and made some changes that have resulted in several member resignations and lowered attendance at meetings. However, his relatively young board of directors has supported his efforts.

This Rotary club is an old club, both in the age of the club and in the members' average age. Many of the old-time members remember when being named a Paul Harris Fellow was an honor bestowed on the member by the club for service "above and beyond" and have rejected the now accepted concept that it is a form of recognition for contributions to the Rotary Foundation.

These old-time members, all male, and all retired have grumbled and muttered and opposed a number of the new president's other initiatives like obtaining a

matching grant, conducting a Dictionary Project in the local schools (which would include obtaining a District Grant to help fund the dictionaries), and volunteering in the local homeless shelter. This has resulted in these projects not being successful.

Now, with attendance and membership dropping, and few of the old-time members willing to work on any of this new president's projects, the club is in turmoil and has taken sides "for" or "against" the new president's programs.

What do you suggest to the club president?

Breakout F

A recent visit to the Rotary Club of Midtown revealed that they are only a social club. This assessment was based on that visit in addition to annual plans and the club's reputation in the district. The club does not seem interested in supporting any of the district's programs and this club has never given more than a small amount of support to the Rotary Foundation. They do little in their community other than ring the bell for the Salvation Army each year. They have never had a member hold a district office or even a committee chair, and it is always a chore to convince the President-elect that attendance at PETS is a requirement for holding office.

They keep telling the District Governor and previous Assistant Governors that, in Rotary, ALL clubs are autonomous, and that they are not interested in doing anything that would take them away from their families beyond a weekly meeting. Only a very few of the members of this club ever attend district events, such as assemblies, Foundation seminars, and District Conferences, and even then, you have noticed that they often slip out early from those meetings.

Their meetings are very well planned, and they have a lot of fellowship and fun at their meetings. However, the District Governor is concerned that this club is not more supportive of her programs and the Rotary Foundation this year. The DG's visit is scheduled in four weeks.

What strategy do you suggest? How can you convince this club president to do what the DG wants them to do without alienating them?