

How to Prepare a Rotary Classification Talk

Background

When a lawyer named Paul Harris, a coal dealer, a mining engineer, and a merchant tailor first met in 1905 in Chicago, they gave birth to Rotary and, by the nature of their diverse occupations, to the association's most distinctive feature – the classification principle. Today, the classification principle, though modified, remains a cornerstone of Rotary. Upon joining Rotary, you are lent a classification by the Board of Directors to reflect your occupation or primary source of income.

By limiting active membership by classifications, each club becomes a cross-section of the business and professional life of the community it serves. Also, the classification principle makes sure that no one profession or business becomes the dominant force within the club.

Another benefit of the classification system is that representatives of many fields are brought together, providing the opportunity for Rotarians to broaden their knowledge of the contemporary workplace. This, in turn, enables Rotarians to fulfill one of the basic obligations of vocational service – recognizing the worthiness to society of all useful occupations.

A way to share information about your vocation is to give a classification talk at a club meeting. The guidelines below are designed to help you prepare and give a good presentation.

Preparing your 3-minute Classification Talk

Write an outline of points you want to cover. Go from general characteristics of your career field to the specific duties involved in your particular job today. Examples might include:

- Why you chose your particular business or profession
- Parts of your job you find most rewarding and most difficult.
- Forecast employment opportunities in your field for the coming decade.
- Advice you would give persons entering your career field.
- How your profession is being impacted by technology, government regulations, and environmental factors
- Ethical issues you face at work, and how the Rotary 4-Way Test helps you deal with them

Presenting your 3-minute Classification Talk

Speak clearly and in an audible tone – stick to your prepared text or outline
Use hand movements sparingly –avoid nervous habits such as coughing or twitching.

Maintain eye contact with your fellow Rotarians and always face your audience. Avoid the urge to rush through your 3-minute talk to “get it over with.” Try to relax as much as possible and put genuine emotion into your voice. Visuals such as PowerPoint can enliven your talk. Be sure equipment is at our meeting place with a technician familiar with your plans. Our Rotary club coordinator can be helpful at the time of your equipment set up before lunch.

How you share information about your field is up to you! Relax and enjoy your 3 minutes.