

Visualize Your Club Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to enable club leadership to visualize their club from a visiting guest's perspective. At the start of the exercise, ask each participant to relax and close their eyes. Inform them that they are now a visiting guest who is attending their in-person Rotary club meeting for the first time. Explain that you would like for them to visualize each step in the process that you will verbally state. Let them know that the goal of the exercise is for them to identify any areas of improvement at each step in the process as it relates to their club.

Moderator to convey each of the following to the participants. Read slowly and give them time to process and to think about how their club relates to each.

1. Open the front door to your club and walk in. What is the first thing that you see? Is there a Rotary table by the front door for you to walk up to and is there someone there to welcome you as a visiting guest to the club? Or, is the visitor in charge of walking through the venue and asking someone "where is the Rotary meeting"?
2. After you pass the front door (and table if there is one), does a Rotarian take you and personally introduce you to the president or perhaps to the membership chair of the club, or are you required to walk into the room on your own and seek out the first person who makes eye contact?
3. When you look around the room, how is it set-up? Are there Rotary banners and signs that show off the club and the good things that Rotary does? Or perhaps the room is totally empty other than tables and/or it is a co-mingled room at a restaurant where it is hard to even see that Rotary is taking place there.
4. Does a Rotarian take you to a table, show you to a seat and introduce you to the rest of the people sitting there? Or do you have to find a table on your own and make your own introductions?
5. During the meeting, does the club President or SAA announce the guests and allow you to stand and state your name and some info about yourself or do you go through the entire meeting without any acknowledgement?
6. After the meeting, does the club membership chair or President come up to you and thank you for attending and ask you to come back for another visit? Or perhaps you simply shake the hands of the people you sat with and exit the venue without any "thank you" or recognition of any kind?
7. A day or two after, does someone from the club email or call you and thank you for attending the meeting, offer to answer any questions that you may have and invite you back to another meeting? Or do you never hear from that club again?

These are all critical items to think about for your own clubs. If your club isn't set-up in a way where it makes a guest who walks in the door feel welcome and included during and after the meeting, then there is little chance that that individual will come back a second time and even less of a chance that they will ever visit another Rotary club. WE ONLY HAVE ONE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION. When assessing your club, think about what a guest sees from the second that they walk in the door, how they are treated during the entire meeting and if any member of your club ultimately reaches back out to them to thank them and to follow up.