

# ROTARY DISTRICT VISION PAPER: RETAINING & ATTRACTING MEMBERS

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How to keep our members involved in this key need of clubs will require some out of the box thinking.

- Virtual – Some good ideas that have been floated for virtual fundraising include conducting an on-line auction, on-line black tie, email coordination of a food drive including contactless pick up and drop off, and coordinated social media activities to support Go-Fund-Me or related type efforts.

- In Person – Though traditionally one of the primary means to raise funds for our efforts we will need to consider the number of people we can have at a given fundraiser. Will a reduced attendance make the event profitable? A consideration may be to break even to maintain the visibility for the event for the future. In any case an analysis of the cost/benefit will need to be conducted.

## Recruitment

“Adding new individuals to a population or subpopulation.” Recruitment of late has been a challenge without the pandemic. People are busy and the many options we all have with our time makes attracting members – both old and young alike – hard. We have to adapt and use our existing recruitment processes in unique ways. We also have to use new technologies. Clubs should invest in new resources and assigning a Club member to become expert in online platforms like Go-To-Meeting, WebEx, Zoom, and others.

- Prospect Identification: The most effective means of prospect identification will continue to be referrals. Additional means for identifying prospects, which should carry over after the pandemic, could be a digital campaign on Facebook, via email, or a promotion on your

website. It would also be a good idea to reach out to past prospects, speakers, and others who have interacted with your club to gauge their interest in joining at this time. For in-person meeting, keep in mind the demographic, which could be vulnerable to COVID19. Continue to have your one-on-one interaction with consideration of physical distancing, website enhancements (e.g., links to other RI sites/elsewhere, auto email generation, usage of the DACdb CRM module, and other efforts begun prior to the pandemic). All of these activities should support our outreach and prospect generation and management.

- Needs Matching: What is the Rotary value proposition we can offer to existing and prospective members? What if any changes to the time commitment need to be taken into consideration and effectively communicated? How and why Club activities will change needs to also be effectively communicated.

- Closing: Typically, after a prospect decides to give Rotary a try, we have the ‘Fireside Chat’. This is an option to ensure the expectations of both parties are clearly articulated and things such as the dues structure, committees, etc. are communicated. What changes may be required to conduct this over the phone or as an online meeting?

- Onboarding: How will member inductions change? How can we make inductions a big deal when may not be able to do this in person? How to introduce fun in a live streamed induction?

In summary, we need to rethink the ways we meet, connect with, and close the deal on new member prospects. This includes:

- The things we say in our local community advertising to attract new members.

- The need to perform internal and external surveys to identify new ways to raise Rotary brand awareness and attract new members.

- How best to exploit Rotary branding (e.g., Rotary Brand Central), Club email signature lines, virtual backgrounds on Video Conference meetings, the potential value of using additional items with the Club’s logos (e.g., bags, announcements, etc).

## Conclusion

The involvement of your entire Club on these and related decisions will enhance retention and recruitment by ensuring members feel valued and engaged, and will ensure prospective members feel like they want to be a part of Rotary’s winning team. Now more than ever is the time for your Clubs to be innovative and adaptive in all you do to retain and recruit new members. Think out of the box. Consider new Club investment in online meeting resources, tech training, graphics, digital marketing campaigns and enhanced Club websites. Most importantly, enhance your member engagement.

## Questions/Comments:

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