



December, 2007

### Membership and Attendance

By Dennis Dinsmore, PDG, Zone 28 RIMZC

At the last Council on Legislation, it was recommended to the RI Board, and subsequently approved by the board, to reduce the meeting attendance requirement from 60% to 50%. Many Rotarians heralded this as a step in the right direction as they felt that Rotary's attendance requirement is a barrier to new member recruitment. Others disagree with that point of view and think it is *because* Rotary requires weekly meetings and an attendance requirement that we have remained strong for 102 years.

An attendance requirement of 50% essentially means 24 meetings per year since, on average, most clubs meet 48 weeks per year. Given that a member can substitute participation in a Rotary service project or educational program or do a makeup just about anywhere, even online, the bar is really pretty low.

Oddly enough, good attendance does not automatically indicate that the member is an effective Rotarian but poor attendance is a good early warning sign of a member who is headed for resignation. In general, good attendance is part of being a valuable member. Our traditions of fellowship and service are built upon the foundation of weekly face-to-face meetings. On the flip side, when a member quits attending regularly we know there is a narrow window of opportunity before that member resigns.

Given that we recognize this pattern of low attendance leading to loss of membership, what can we do about it? Here are a few tips.

- The club's membership chair needs to be kept current on the attendance figures. Usually the club secretary does the attendance report and sends the totals on to the district. The secretary should pass along the detailed attendance report to the membership chair every month.
- Attendance delinquency should be identified early. We all miss occasional meetings for very legitimate reasons but we are looking here for the members who suddenly miss 2 or 3 meetings in a row for no apparent reason. At this point many clubs have standard notices or emails which are sent out.
- Members who are identified through the club's attendance tracking as being a potential dropout should be contacted in person or at least by phone. The best person to do this is the member's sponsor or, if that is not possible, by the membership chair. The tone of the contact should be concerned, not punitive. For example, "John, we've missed you at Rotary lately. Have you had some problem that kept you from coming? Is there anything we can do to help?"
- In some cases there may be a personal problem, perhaps illness of the Rotarian or family member, perhaps business pressures, perhaps a death in the family. In these cases, the personal contact of a Rotary friend will be genuinely appreciated and the Rotarian will probably return in due time.
- In some other cases, the problem may be that the member is growing tired of Rotary and is headed for resignation. From here, the conversation may head in any direction. Hopefully, the reason for dissatisfaction can be addressed and the member saved. At the very least, the member will know that he or she was considered an important asset of this club and the club cared about his or her thoughts and opinions.

### The Exit Interview

By Dennis Dinsmore, PDG, Zone 28 RIMZC

It is said that one thing all Rotarians have in common is that, other than Paul Harris, somebody had to ask us to join. Another thing all of us have in common, including Paul Harris, is that one day we will leave Rotary.

On average, clubs lose about 10% of their members every year mostly through resignations, moving and death. Fortunately most clubs make up the loss so that worldwide Rotary's membership stays stagnant. Of

these "Big Three" reasons, we can't do much about death. However, we can do something positive about a member moving out of the area, namely, clubs can help the relocating member to join another Rotary club in the destination city. The big reason where everybody loses is resignation.

Loss of a member through resignation, even though frustrating, can be an opportunity to learn. If a club can determine why a member had become dissatisfied to the point of resignation, it has the opportunity to change for the better. Determining the reason for the resignation is critical.

The best tool for determining the reasons for member resignation is the exit interview. The Resigning Member Questionnaire attached to the end of this newsletter may be used to glean valuable information. However, as with recruiting, there is no substitute for personal contact. We suggest that the club membership chair, the resigning member's sponsor or the club president sit down with the resigning member to discuss the questionnaire. Chances are there is more to the story than can be summed up with a checkbox.

The membership committee should then thoroughly review the exit interview information to determine if the problems identified can be fixed by club action and report their findings to the club board. Often the trick to analyzing this data is to repeatedly ask the question "why" and keep drilling down until the root problem is uncovered.

For example, "Why did the member resign?". *Because he felt like he didn't belong.* "Why?" *Because he never really got to know anyone in the club.* "Why?" *Because he never participated in any club activities.* "Why?" *Because he didn't know how to express his interest.* "Why?" *Because nobody bothered to introduce him around the club and nobody invited him to join a committee.* Ah Ha! This club needs a mentoring program!

By going through the simple process of exit interviewing, this club was able to identify a weakness in its new member process and subsequently enhanced its retention by implementing a mentoring program. Other problems may yield other solutions but clearly the solution must start with the exit interview.

### Sponsor Pins



Rotary International President Wilf Wilkinson has challenged all the members of his leadership team to bring in one new member this year. Those meeting the challenge are awarded a sponsor pin. A number tag (shown here) may be added to designate sponsors with multiple new members.

President Wilf would like to see this challenge extended to every Rotarian. The sponsor pin and the hanging number tabs can be ordered from most of the licensed Rotary suppliers.

### **Your Membership Support Team**

Zone 27	RRIMC	Terry Mueller, PDG	6201 N. Wyndwood Dr. Crystal Lake, IL 60014	815-459-2176 <a href="mailto:roterry@sbcglobal.net">roterry@sbcglobal.net</a>
	RIMZC	William "Bill" Rust, PDG	4701 Clark Ave. White Bear Lake, MN 55110	651-429-1913 <a href="mailto:brust@rustarchitects.com">brust@rustarchitects.com</a>
	Districts 5640, 5950, 5960, 5970, 6000, 6220, 6250, 6270, 6420, 6440, 6450			
Zone 28	RRIMC	James "Jim" Ives, PDG	1130 Livernois Troy, MI 48099	248-588-7005 <a href="mailto:jives@att.net">jives@att.net</a>
	RIMZC	Dennis Dinsmore, PDG	PO Box 273 Clio, MI 48420	810-687-7870 <a href="mailto:dennis@dinsmoregroup.com">dennis@dinsmoregroup.com</a>
	RIMZC	John "Jack" Young, PDG	3303 Twain Circle Brunswick, OH 44030	440-877-1900 <a href="mailto:jack1villa@aol.com">jack1villa@aol.com</a>
Districts 6290, 6310, 6330, 6360, 6380, 6400, 6540, 6600, 6630, 6650, 7090, 7280, 7300, 7330				



## Appendix 3: Resigning Member Questionnaire

We regret that you are leaving our club. This questionnaire will help us assess your satisfaction with your experience as a member of our club. The information you provide will benefit current and future club members. Please return the completed questionnaire to the club secretary.

**Why are you leaving our club?** (Please mark all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relocating to a new community | <input type="checkbox"/> My fellowship expectations were not met |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time                  | <input type="checkbox"/> My service expectations were not met    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing priorities          | <input type="checkbox"/> My networking expectations were not met |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial constraints         | <input type="checkbox"/> Did not feel included                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                   |  |

**If you are moving, would you consider joining a Rotary club in your new place of residence or occupation?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Did you feel welcome in our Rotary club?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**If no, why not?** (Please mark all that apply)

- ☐ I felt demographically isolated: (Please mark/circle all reasons that apply)
- ☐ Other members were OLDER / YOUNGER / DIFFERENT GENDER / DIFFERENT ETHNICITY.
- ☐ Other demographic reason \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I did not make an effort to meet other members.
- ☐ Other members did not make an effort to interact with me.

**Did you feel comfortable sharing concerns with club leaders?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**If no, why not?** (Please mark all that apply)

- ☐ Club leaders had so many responsibilities, I did not want to burden them.
- ☐ Club leaders had their own agenda and were not interested in other ideas.
- ☐ I was not a member long enough to feel comfortable approaching club leaders.
- ☐ I did not want to be perceived as a complainer.
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you participate in club projects and activities?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**How did you become involved?** ☐ I volunteered ☐ I was asked

**I was VERY SATISFIED / SATISFIED / DISSATISFIED with my participation in club activities and projects.** (Please circle the appropriate response.)

**If you were dissatisfied, why?** (Please mark all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient knowledge  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of resources                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personality conflicts   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of support from other members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient family involvement    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal time conflicts | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                        |

**How do you feel about the level of our club's involvement in the following types of activities?**

ACTIVITY	LEVEL OF CLUB INVOLVEMENT			
Membership Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware
Member Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware
Local Service Projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware
International Service Projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware
Club Public Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware
Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware
The Rotary Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware
Fellowship	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Aware

**How do you feel about the following additional costs associated with membership in our club?**

TYPE OF COST	PERCEPTION OF COST		
Club dues	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
Cost of weekly meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
Amount of club fines/assessments	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
Voluntary contributions to service projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
Voluntary contributions to The Rotary Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate

**Did you enjoy our weekly meetings?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please circle the appropriate response in the following questions:

The amount of Rotary content in our meetings was ADEQUATE / EXCESSIVE / INSUFFICIENT.

The length of our meetings was ADEQUATE / EXCESSIVE / INSUFFICIENT.

Our club should have held MORE / SAME AMOUNT / FEWER fellowship activities.

Our club bulletin contained SUFFICIENT / EXCESSIVE / INSUFFICIENT Rotary information.

Our club bulletin was (please circle all that apply)

INTERESTING / USEFUL / INFORMATIVE / BORING / LIMITED / UNINFORMATIVE.

Our meetings were WELL ORGANIZED / POORLY ORGANIZED.

Our meeting time was CONVENIENT / INCONVENIENT.

Suggestion for change (if appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_

The location of our meeting was CONVENIENT / INCONVENIENT.

If inconvenient, suggestion for a different venue \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the following aspects of our meeting place do you find to be unsatisfactory?**

(Mark all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service              | <input type="checkbox"/> Décor/atmosphere                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meal quality         | <input type="checkbox"/> Meal variety                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parking availability | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety of the area in which it is located |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          |  |

Suggestion(s) for change \_\_\_\_\_

The following changes would improve club meetings:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better speakers                     | <input type="checkbox"/> More focus on fellowship                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased variety of program topics | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased emphasis on vocational information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More involvement of family          | <input type="checkbox"/> Better time management                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More service opportunities          | <input type="checkbox"/> More leadership opportunities                |

**How did your spouse/partner/family feel about your involvement in Rotary?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proud of my involvement  | <input type="checkbox"/> Felt it took too much of my time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to know more/be involved                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Felt it was too expensive        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sought interaction with other Rotary spouses/partners/families |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |   |

**Is there anything that our club could have done differently to meet your needs?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like us to contact the Rotary club in your new place of residence to notify them that you are interested in joining their club?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

New place of residence:

_____	_____	_____
City	State/Province	Country

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire and for your commitment to improving our club.**