

Membership Development



Home Businesses: An Untapped Source of New Members

by Chris Offer
Membership Matters, Vol. 3 No. 7 January 2004

The growing number of home based businesses and people working at home is an opportunity for Rotary. Home based businesses are an untapped source of new Rotary members.

A study in 2002 by the US Census Bureau reported that during a typical week about 7% of US workers (9.3 million people) worked at home at least part of the time. Two thirds of these people worked only at home.

The Census Bureau found that:

- 50% of those who worked at home were self-employed and 54% were women.
- 52% were employed in executive, administrative, managerial and professional occupations.
- They had high levels of education, 52% had a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Average annual earnings were about \$15,000 a year higher for this group.

Census Canada reports that 8% of the Canadian work force works at home. It is clear that there is a large pool of potential Rotarians waiting to be invited to join Rotary. Like Adam in the 'Adar cartoon home based workers need social contact outside of the home. Adam finds his at Starbucks. Many people will find the fellowship, the community service opportunities and the networking offered by Rotary an ideal enhancement to their home based business.

Most Chambers of Commerce maintain a category of members with home based businesses. This list may be a treasure trove of new members.

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21 places to find potential new members for your club

by Chris Offer
Membership Matters, Vol. 3 No. 5 November 2003

Membership development and retention is a constant challenge. Here are 21 kinds of people that can be potential members of your club.

People You Know

- Spouses/partners of current members
- Former members of the club, club secretaries can access a list of former members at rotary.org
- Program speakers
- Government employees, city, province/ state or federal
- Volunteers involved in other organizations, such as United Way and Cancer Society
- Customers and vendors of current members
- People who are involved with you in leisure activities (tennis, golf, curling, bridge)
- People you see in church, synagogue, mosque or temple
- People with whom you work
- Your relatives, friends, classmates, and neighbours
- Fraternity/sorority brothers and sisters
- Recent retirees
- People from organizations supported by your Rotary club

People You Don't Know

- Chamber of commerce membership list
- City or community directories, residential and business
- Parents of Youth Exchange Students
- Rotary Foundation Alumni, a list of all known alumni living in your community is available from RI
- Classifications not represented in your Club, update your classification list
- Promotions that have been announced in the newspaper
- People who work in town but live in other communities
- People new to the community

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20 Ways to Boost Club Membership



Struggling with membership? Here are some simple, proven ideas to help you grow.

by Chris Offer
Membership Matters, Vol. 2 No. 12 June 2003

If your Rotary Club is like most, membership growth is a constant challenge. One month, you pick up two new members and the next month, you may lose one. Even if your club is active and successful, members will leave due to job transfers, career changes or for a variety of other reasons. That is why club must be continually on the lookout for prospective new members.

Not only does increased membership add to your club's ability to conduct effective service projects, but additional new members bring fresh ideas and different perspectives. New members will expand opportunities for service both locally and internationally. It is not always easy to attract new members. But the benefits can provide are worth the effort. Following are 20 simple, proven methods for boosting your club's membership.

1. Take turns inviting guests. Members should take turns inviting prospective members to club meetings. At least one member should be expected to bring a guest every week. This effort could be conducted in alphabetical order, based on the members' first or last names. After the last member in the order brings a guest, go back to the member who started the order and do it again. It's a sure bet that some of those guests will want to come back and join. In addition, this consistent approach to growth helps get members in the habit of identifying prospects and asking them to join.

2. Organize teams. Organize teams of 4 or 5 club members. The goal of each team is to recruit one new member within 3 or 4 months. Each team needs one member who is active in the community, one knowledgeable about Rotary and one who is prepared to make cold calls to sell Rotary.

3. Go public. Ask one or two members to work on a public relations campaign, sending news releases about your club to local newspapers, radio and TV stations or put up a billboard or use truck ads to promote Rotary. Make sure to include a contact phone number, e-mail address or web site.

4. Feature great programs. Once you succeed in getting guests to a meeting, make sure they like what they see. Organize interesting club meeting programs that will make those guests want to come back for more.

5. Educate members. The more your members know about Rotary, the better they will be able to sell Rotary to prospective members. Make sure your club meetings feature regular Rotary education segments. One program every month should be on a Rotary topic.

6. Start a speaker's bureau. Just as outside speakers promote their causes to your club, your members can visit other organizations and talk about how they are helping the community, eradicating polio and sending more than 7,000 Youth Exchange Students around the world. While they're speaking, they can hand out your club brochure.

7. Look up old friends. Pull out some of your club's old membership rosters and circle the names of those who have left the club. Give those members a call, their situations may have changed since they left and they may be ready to return to your club. If for some reason they are unable to rejoin, ask them for the names of some people they think would make good members.

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8. Make the most of your service projects. Every time your club conducts a service project (which is hopefully often), promote Rotary to those you're serving. If your club invites the parents of scholarship winners or outgoing Youth Exchange Students to club meeting give them information on Rotary and encourage them to join. If your club makes a contribution a local charity, ask the staff members to visit your club.

9. Knock on doors. Round up a few of your members on a weekday morning and visit stores and businesses in your community, especially those near your meeting place. Drop off a club brochure or newsletter and invite the owners or managers of those businesses to an upcoming meeting.

10. Set up shop. Does your city or town have community fairs or trade shows? If so, consider renting a booth and handing out information on Rotary. Set up a television and VCR and play the "This is Rotary" video available from RI. A good video is worth several thousand words

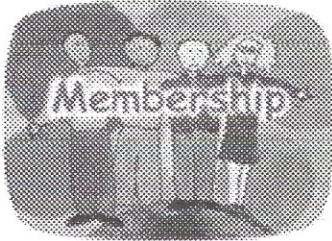
11. Learn from others. Scan your district bulletin and other publications for news of clubs that have recently grown. Pay those clubs a visit and find out how they increased their membership. Observe how they handle their meetings and welcome guests to the group. Also, attend the district conference, district assembly, district leadership seminar and most important ensure your club is well represented at the district membership seminar.

12. Sing your praises. Don't be bashful about your involvement in Rotary. Whether at work or at play, talk up Rotary to those around you. You never know when you might strike a responsive cord with someone just waiting to get involved. Always wear your Rotary pin.

13. Increase your circulation. Does your club send a bulletin to members before every meeting? Why not increase its circulation? Send copies to prospective members, to media professionals and to former members. Add a personal note on each, inviting the recipient to attend the next meeting.

14. Recognize recruiters. When a member successfully recruits a member, publicly thank and recognize him or her for a job well done. Do something special to show that member (and everyone else) just how important it is to bring in new members. You could ask both the recruiter and new member to sit at the head table, send a hand written thank you card to their home and recognize their work in the club newsletter.

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15. Roll out the welcome mat. Whenever guests come to a meeting, make them feel right at home. Encourage your members to introduce themselves and talk up the club. Many clubs assign one or two longtime members to accompany the prospect and make sure he or she gets a good introduction to your Rotary Club. First impressions are important.

16. Use Rotary business cards. How many times a week do you hand out business cards? Hand out a Rotary card at the same time. Every time you hand out a card, you'll be introducing another person to Rotary. Include an invitation to attend your club on the back of the card with details of when and where your club meets.

17. Put prospects to work. If your club is planning an upcoming service project, as several prospective members to get involved. Why wait until they join the club? Perhaps hands-on involvement in a service project may be just the thing to prod some good prospects into making a commitment to Rotary.

18. Plan a fun event. Not sure you want to put prospects to work before they join? Then how about organizing a party or other fun event? Invite as many prospective members as possible, along with all members and their spouses or significant others. While having a good time is the main objective of the get-together, you can also work in some Rotary education and even a soft-sell invitation to join.

19. Just the fax. Ask your members to round up as many business cards from area firms as possible. (Most members probably have quite a collection in their desk drawers.) Come up with a nice letter inviting the managers of these businesses to a free lunch at your next club meeting. Then, using the fax numbers from the cards, fax the letter to them and follow up the next day with a phone call.

20. Put your club on display. Are there any vacant storefronts on a nearby street in a nearby shopping mall? If so, contact the owner and ask if your Rotary Club can use a front window to display a poster and other information on your Rotary Club. Make sure to provide the names and phone numbers of some club leaders who can be contacted for more information.

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Rotary International

Membership Development



Attracting Young Members to Rotary

by Chris Offer

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The minimum age for admission into Rotary is "adult". How adult is defined is up to each Rotary club. Don't forget that Paul Harris was 36 in 1905 when he started Rotary. There is a need in all Rotary clubs to recruit young members. The reasons young business and professional people are attracted to Rotary are the things that attract most people. However, there are some specific ways to attract younger members and ways to ensure they never want to join. Which column represents your club's approach?

How to attract young members to Rotary:

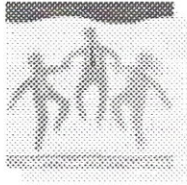
- Have active local and international service projects and actually do hands on projects
- Have members who are motivated, enthusiastic and not burned out
- Young members attract young members. Keep a balance of young members and female members
- Provide opportunities for members to become involved with hands on programs
- Provide an economical approach to Rotary membership (lower cost meals or no-meal club meetings)
- Ensure members represent a range of ages, careers and backgrounds that represent the demographics of the community- in other words apply the classification principle
- Have members who are open to new ideas
- Have family social events
- Develop a club web site. The internet is the primary source of information for people under 30
- Networking opportunities are very important for young business leaders and professional
- Younger members are interested in service projects that address needs such as AIDS, environment or homelessness
- Offer young members club leadership positions that enhance their resume

How not to attract young members to Rotary :

- Don't involve new members in the operation of the club or in club leadership positions
- Ensure the club dues and meal costs are kept high
- Don't involve families in club activities
- Don't invite young members to sit at "your" table
- Keep the club membership disproportionately older retired members
- Make gender and racial jokes or comments as part of the meetings
- Sing WW I songs at Rotary meetings
- When ever a new idea is suggested say, "We tried that once and it didn't work."
- Concentrate on fund raising from members rather than hands on service projects
- Waste time at committee meetings with rambling discussions that never come to a conclusion

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Is your club doing enough to welcome new members?



Member retention is a challenge for most clubs these days. You work hard to attract new members, but are you doing enough to keep them interested once they

It is important for a new member to feel welcome by everyone in the club. This may involve taking them to a club event, training session, or just as simple as greeting him in a friendly manner at the club. But how do you let your members know to do this? What about following up on those activities?

ClubRunner has a new member program built right into your site. You just name all the activities you like to perform on a new member, assign the duties accordingly, and let it remind everyone until they are done.

Reminders for event registrations, volunteer commitments and duty rosters are kept on each member added to the bottom of their personalized bulletin, so you don't have to keep tabs on anyone - ClubRunner keeps reminding them until the job gets done!

It's important to keep in mind that your members are all very busy people, and neglecting to do something with a new member does not mean that they don't care - it has just slipped their mind. Now you can use your website to give gentle reminders to everyone.

Does your club have any special programs for new members? Let us know! Share your tips with us on your club recruits and keeps new members. Email us at clubrunner@doxess.com.