

100 Rotary Club Ideas

(Compiled from Members and PETS, District & Pre-Pets Meetings)

A. Board Meetings (4 Ideas):

1. Exec committee should meet (or at least confer) prior to board meetings to establish agenda, priorities for time; note time allocations if possible on agenda.
2. Maybe hold quarterly meetings of all committee chairs to review goals & progress.
3. All E-Mails should have "Rotary" in subject line to be sure they are read.
4. NEVER use Rotary mailing lists for commercial purposes, establish heavy fine ahead of time!

B. Family of Rotary (6 Ideas):

1. Pay for lunches of members with financial difficulties (especially old members) so they can stay in Club with help on a confidential basis.
2. Respect members' attendance re their kids' or family events, etc.; their reason to miss may be valid!
3. Poor attendance: Committee members call on those members at their place of business to reassure of their importance to the Club. Have it handled by "Membership Retention" committee.
4. "Chat time" (better term than "networking time", which always implies business-gathering) before the formal meeting is important; protect it from intrusion by meetings. Give Members time to socialize!
5. Add to Committee sign up sheet: "List two close Rotary Buddies". Then make the buddies responsible for one-another's attendance, feedback to club re illnesses, anniversaries, etc.
6. Invite past Rotarians and/or widows/widowers of Rotarians to a meeting every year.

C. Fund Raising (4 Ideas):

1. Create a spreadsheet with all club giving: Down the side charity/project names; along the top, the past ten years. This will show your members how great a job you're doing, allows keeping perspective.
2. Be sure Foundation gifts go through club treasurer,

so you can see *all* Rotary charitable giving!

3. Goal setting: Talk about "The half million" (or whatever) since Club founding, make fund-raising cumulative over the Club's history.
4. If you have fines, keep track of who has been fined, spread it around, avoid same old persons.

D. Inspiration & Member Nurturing (9 Ideas):

1. Always keep in mind "total investment" (time, energy, labor, as well as money) members are making, commend them for it!
2. Awards/citations are important! Recognition is the only "pay" in a volunteer organization.
3. Have a budget for recognition/awards to *members*.
4. Tell older Members: "We cherish you: You are our Club's treasures, so we honor you. But we must take your legacy and move it forward!"
5. Every Member should have the opportunity to mentor a younger person.
6. Every Officer and Board Member brings in a new member at first new year's meeting!
7. Teams are CRUCIAL to effective projects and fund raising for support and competition.
8. Remember, things happen! Be understanding of Members who cannot attend for a period because of work, family, financial, travel stress: They may be great members next year! Grant them a leave if necessary, then follow up with them.
9. Members' sponsors/nominators encouraged to stay involved for at least two years with their nominees.

E. International Projects (2 Ideas):

1. "We must share what we do with the world, so it can benefit from our knowledge, skills, and resources."
2. Have a "Sister Club" in another country with which you sponsor an international project; arrange international visits to their Club and to your Club by each Club's members!

F. Programs (3 Ideas):

1. Establish Audio-Visual Committee (Just like High School) so your programs run smoothly.
2. Have "family" meetings (Fifth Monday?) for spouses, even kids tables, light program. (See "Meetings".)
3. Have a standard letter for all speakers with program parameters (length, fund raising limits, etc.) and directions to your meeting place.

G. Meetings (7 Ideas):

1. See "Fifth Monday" idea under "Programs": Make these meetings family oriented, invite wives.
2. Several Clubs have "Social Hour" half-hour before meeting, very popular with older members. Some have these sponsored by businesses providing a glass of wine/refreshment to anyone coming, (costs little, loosens up crowd, may require liquor permit secured by sponsor), perhaps could do at start only on family "Fifth Monday", highlight a committee by having all committee present at reception to mingle, answer questions, tell of work. Some Clubs make the Fifth Monday meeting a 5:30PM meeting, either in lieu or in addition to regular one.
3. Think about our meeting "Rituals" and traditions. Worthwhile? Every meeting minute is precious!
4. At least at a few meetings, use assigned tables and seating to move folks around.
5. Set up PowerPoint every week, run "Rotary Club Facts", meeting notices, on continuously repeating slide show. Bury a Member's name in it for "free lunch next week" to get everyone to watch a cycle.
6. Consider Joke of the Week --- but keep it clean.
7. Give away baseball/football/basketball tickets from local college.

H. Public Relations (21 Ideas):

1. "Adopt a Highway" (Hands-on project). Clubs that do this work 4x/year, Saturday morning, meet for breakfast before or lunch after, make it fun and good work.
2. Don't just use identifying Rotary signs at projects, but also "What is Rotary?" detailed sign.
3. Get a street named after the Club(s). "Rotary Road".

4. Put a Rotary Ad on a Member's semi-trailer or truck.
5. Of course, Rotary Club signs at city entrances.
6. Weekly or monthly newspaper ad co-sponsored with other Clubs. See rotaryclubofchilliwack.org, go to "Rotary Corner".
7. Note that Rotarians take their volunteer work seriously: 23 Rotarians were killed in action while on volunteer projects in 2002 alone!
8. Be sure Schools post their Rotary Students of the Month. Perhaps present annual plaque listing all 12?
9. Give students a better recognition memento.
10. Hold a poster contest for elementary students, winner is on town billboard.
11. Bus ads are cheap, effective, often free.
12. Take a reporter from paper (Club pays for their trip) on GSE or friendship exchange.
13. Provide "Rotary Shuttle" for big community events with banners on vehicle(s).
14. Have a "Media Day" with all media present at meeting; perhaps get high-powered media Rotarian.
15. "Rotary Day" proclaimed by Mayor & County Exec.
16. Get reader boards owned by Rotarians to promote Rotary project involvement: "Thanks to Rotary for (project name)".
17. Get print, radio, video PSA's from RI & RI Website
18. Use the PowerPoint show from your meetings (see above) at your local Home Show or other civic event.
19. Invite reporters regularly, get budget from board.
20. Big sign at each project "Rotary Volunteers at Work"
21. Don't forget joint announcements with beneficiary organizations to which funds are given by the Club.

I. Rotary Foundation (5 Ideas):

1. Members of Club can give Paul Harris Awards in honor of Family Members.
2. Give to Rotary Foundation projects in honor of children or grandchildren so they learn about charity.
3. Add GSE recruiting to this committee's job.
4. Add Ambassadorial Scholar recruiting to this committee's job.
5. Have a plaque or banner on wall with TRF Paul Harris Fellows and Sustaining Members.

J. Member conduct (1 Idea):

1. Club needs a clear set of guidelines for appropriate conduct vis-a-vis business solicitation, language and "humor" at meetings, etc. Publish it in yearbook.

K. Membership (14 Ideas):

1. Membership Matters website is a great resource: <http://www.rotary5040.org/membershipmatters/membershipmatters.html>.
2. Get names of former GSE members from Club area, recruit them into the Club after their return.
3. "Selling" senior members on "The new Rotary" and the need for change: Have members picture a typical 40 year old Rotarian businessperson 20 years ago as to name, gender, motto, priorities, clothing, what's in his hand during the day, what kind of drink he drinks, what kind of car he drives, what his job is, how his schedule is determined, etc. *See right...*
4. Involve Members in decisions via surveys, Club assemblies, etc., but always remember that the Club is led by the officers and Board.
5. Create and post "Wanted Poster" each meeting with open classification name, i.e., "Wanted: Machine Shop Operator" with clip art cartoon or photo.
6. Hold a "Rotary Guest Day": Every member gets one card/ticket that invites a guest to come to a specific day's meeting as the member's guest. The meeting has an extra-good speaker, and the short program is about Rotary (sample of tickets available).
7. Hold a "Rotary Open House". Open the Meeting to the public: only "The First XX will be admitted". Same program concept as Guest Day, above.
8. Sponsor a Chamber of Commerce Reception like other sponsors, sell Rotary.
9. Set lower dues & initiation for members 25-34 years of age.
10. Get booklet 916-03EN-(902) on Membership Development from RI -- Great booklet.
11. Read "Membership Development: Six Retention Ideas", and use "Member Satisfaction Questionnaire" and "Membership Development: 10 Easy Ways to Attract & Retain Rotary Members".
12. New Members: Give them "ABC's of Rotary" and Frank Devlin's book.

13. New Members: Have a "New Members' Breakfast Club" once a month, require new members to attend perhaps six times in first year, informal discussion with leaders & older Rotarians, counts as make-up for anyone.
14. Establish, ratify, and circulate frequently to all Members your Club's procedure for "Bringing a New Member to Rotary."

A Reminder About Rotarians

Professional focus-group results:

20 Years ago, a typical Rotarian was:

"Bob",

Male,

Says, "I like tradition and being an entrepreneur";

Priority order is Work-family-church;

Wears Brooks Brothers suits, carries Cross pen,

Drinks Scotch and water, drives a Cadillac;

Is an attorney, Realtor or banker;

Sets own schedule all the time and takes off

a half day for golf or skiing often.

Today, a typical Rotarian is:

"Chris";

Male or female;

Says, "Change is Good";

Priority order is: Family-lifestyle-work-church;

Wears casual clothes, often jeans; carries a

Palm Pilot, drinks Corona, drives a BMW;

Is a systems engineer;

Must attend business meetings per schedule from

head office or set by customers.

Obvious conclusion:

Our members and prospective members have changed!

What this means

We need a clear mission

We need to harness Members' energy

Members need "Ownership"

Members want current, significant projects

L. Greeters (2 Ideas):

1. New Rotarians always teamed up with a member at door who spends rest of meeting with him/her.
2. Greeters introduce Rotarians from other clubs to a Rotarian "host" (who stays with them) at meeting.

M. Social Events (2 Ideas):

1. Most Clubs report only some members come to any one event, so you need lots of events to appeal to all!
2. Social events are very important. Favorites: Ski Bus or Train. Baseball Game. Picnic. Bowling Night. Progressive Dinner. Bridge/poker nights. "Firesides".

N. Club Newsletter (8 Ideas):

1. Include list of non-local makeups by members with, perhaps, a quote from member about the experience.
2. Really have a separate editor who reviews spelling, propriety.
3. Add headlines, "In this issue" bullets to beginning of Newsletter to make more readable.
4. Add "District Corner" with short story from district website each week.
5. Add "Rotary Minute" --- Brief Rotary Fact --- to every issue.
6. Add "Rotarian of the Month" with story, add "Today's Rotarian" with picture, job, family info every issue (still takes four years to go through our Club!)
7. Publish "Annual Report" in July or August of each year.
8. Insert "Why I Am a Rotarian", written by a Member, in one newsletter each month.

O. Vocational Service (5 Ideas):

1. Distribute "Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses & Professions" Form
2. Annually present "Vocational Leadership Award" to high-business-achiever
3. Respect legitimate business commitments that impede attendance
4. Rotarians give practice interviews to H.S. & college students
5. Find way to have members give other members "Inside Scoop" on new business trends: "*How my business is significantly changing/has been changed by (current trend)?*"

P. Club Web Site (2 Ideas):

1. Don't distribute stuff to Board, etc.; make then get it from the web site, send email reminders items are "now posted".
2. Make committees post reports on web site.

Q. Other Ideas (5 Ideas):

1. Establish a Club identity on E-Bay, auction stuff donated by Members there.
2. Instead of giving guest speakers a gift, make a contribution "in their name" to a local charity.
3. Suggest Members assign small insurance policies (such as service policies, etc.) to the Club's charitable fund.
4. Recognize each quarter Members who have nominated a new member by having them stand with their nominee.
5. Establish "Rookie of the Year", "Chairman of the Year", and "Rotarian of the Year" awards, and make them important!

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This paper was published by the District 5050 Membership Committee, Gene Vickers (gene@metromotors.com) Chairperson.