

*(NOTE: This was included in the August 2011 1Governor's monthly newsletter)*

AUGUST IS MEMBERSHIP EXTENSION MONTH - (By the way, you should make it a year round goal)

This is the August monthly newsletter for our district. Every month a new emphasis is placed on various parts and programs for Rotary. I want to present to you some ideas and tools to extend your club membership.

To grow membership is more than having an increase in your total membership. It is also retaining the members you have by simply reinvigorating your club meeting so it is attractive to current and future members.

This year, and afterwards as well, I hope you will practice the 3 R's:

Reinvigorate - Retain - Recruit

In that order.

What is it you love about your club? What is the thing you brag most about to your friends and family? You probably have a few. You disappear each week to your meeting. Hopefully you are sharing to your co-workers, family, and friends what you enjoyed and learned.

Now what is it you don't like? The ever-present rubber chicken or cold scrambled eggs? Is it you don't really like singing or lack of singing? Are not enough members involved in the meeting and maybe feeling like an audience vs. being a participant?

Ask yourself, "What could make it better?"

What can you do to make your club more enjoyable and attractive? What few small things can be done that then add up to a noticeable change. By reinvigorating your meeting and the way you do what we do you will create more value for your member's time and money!

Now how about retention? We work so hard to bring members in only to let them slip away without maybe even a call or email. Did you ask where that member was this week? Did you notice they haven't been there for two or more weeks?

If a member misses a meeting or two and nobody thinks about them they might just think that they don't need to worry about showing up and participating, No one noticed. Then all of a sudden they may say they don't feel a part of the membership and service Rotary offers.

What if we simply contacted each other and said "Hi Bob! We missed you at the meeting this week. Hope all is well! See you next week." How long would it take to just let them know they were missed. I understand we all have different size club memberships and monitoring membership each week may be difficult. But look for the members that all of a sudden aren't there, or have fallen off a committee. Get them back and involved. Let them know they are appreciated! Retain them!

We have thought about Reinvigorating and Retaining our membership, We are NOW ready to Recruit new members. Doesn't this make sense?

I am sure we have at one time thought about inviting someone to our club to check it out. You may have hesitated but you finally made the effort to bring a guest. Then you get them there and what happens, you realize some areas of opportunity? Something that makes you say to yourself, "I wish we could greet our guests better? I wish our room had more Rotary atmosphere with banners and flags. I wish we made our guest feel special."

Remember back to your first Rotary meeting. What did you think about it? Something about Rotary brought you in. Otherwise you wouldn't be reading this Rotary newsletter. So put yourself in your guest's shoes and look at your meeting. What would they say after attending?

Make some effort and have your guest say, "Hey this is a pretty nice place to attend. All these Rotarians make me feel special or welcome. All those Rotarians were smiling and involved in the meeting. I even learned something about the community from the great program and I met some new people." By making your club members more satisfied with small changes in their Rotary experience they are now energized for recruiting new members and your guests will see it.

One other recommendation, arm your membership by helping them with the 30-second elevator speech on "What is Rotary." This will help them promote Rotary when they need to. Remember, the membership committee is the only one that EVERYONE is on!

August is membership extension month. Let's extend our current membership's time in Rotary by making it a better Reinvigorated club. Retain those members! And let us extend a hand to our community and Recruit a new pair of hands to help us perform "Service Above Self!"

I am Bob James, Jr. this year's District Membership Chairperson. Please look for my upcoming Membership Tips Newsletter coming out soon. If I can be of any assistance in your membership goals, please ask me! Your district leadership is here to assist.