

## **Membership Development is Every Rotarian's Business**

Membership is every Rotarian's business for the following three reasons: (1) to recruit new members, so that there are more hands doing "the good work of Rotary"; (2) to retain current members by keeping them informed and involved; (3) to educate all club members about Rotary activities, both locally and internationally. To recruit and retain high quality Rotary club members, a successful membership development plan should have the following action steps: (1) Identify; (2) Introduce; (3) Invite; (4) Induct; (5) Inform and Orient; (6) Involve; and (7) Educate. I will use our own club (Hilo Bay) as an example to illustrate what steps we currently take in each of these areas, as well as new strategies that we could implement in order to increase and retain our membership.

### **A. Identify –**

Our club currently identifies highly-qualified new members by (1) seeking out friends, business associates, and colleagues who act like Rotarians (or who follow the four-way test); (2) seeking out community leaders and volunteers who participate in community service projects; (3) seeking out guest speakers for club meetings. Three additional strategies to identify prospective members are: (1) seeking out previous members who left the club; (2) seeking out beneficiaries of Rotary programs (GSE, HRYF Scholars, Fellows, Ambassadors); (3) seeking out younger people (under 40) interested in Rotary.

### **B. Introduce –**

Our club currently introduces prospective members to Rotary by: (1) inviting prospective members to community service activities and club socials; (2) inviting prospective

members to membership meetings after regular business hours; (3) inviting prospective members to speak at club meetings. Three additional strategies to introduce Rotary to prospective members are: (1) announcing membership information (with phone numbers) on monthly *Rotary on the Radio* broadcasts; (2) creating a Power-Point presentation or a brochure which highlights club history and activities; (3) speaking about Rotary at meetings of other community groups and handing out Rotary cards.

### C. Invite –

Our club currently invites prospective members to become members by: (1) inviting a prospective member to at least three club meetings; (2) providing a prospective member with information materials (e.g., Rotary Basics, ABCs of Rotary); (3) taking a prospective member and family members (with the sponsor) to a lunch meeting for Rotary orientation. Three additional strategies to find qualified prospective members are: (1) inviting a prospective member's family members to club meetings or community service activities; (2) giving out copies of RI audiovisual materials (e.g., *Humanity in Motion*) to prospective members; (3) proposing to reduce or sponsor club dues for younger members during the first two years as a Rotarian.

### D. Induct –

Our club currently inducts new members by: (1) holding a dignified ceremony in which the meaning of Rotary and its obligations are emphasized; (2) providing an opportunity for every club member to personally greet and welcome the new member; (3) providing a new member with an information kit that includes a pin and a membership certificate,

as well as a pin for the new member's sponsor. Three additional ideas for inducting new members are: (1) inviting the new member's family, friends, and business associates to the induction ceremony; (2) asking the new member to speak to club members about the significance of induction into Rotary; (3) asking sponsors of new members to speak to club members about the pride of being a Rotarian.

#### E. Inform –

Our club currently conducts new member information orientations by: (1) taking a new member and family members (along with sponsor) to a lunch meeting for orientation; (2) providing a new member with information materials (e.g., *Rotary Basics*, *The ABCs of Rotary*); (3) holding a club membership meeting or social for new member orientation. Three new action steps to add to our new member information orientations are: (1) persuading new members to attend the District Assembly and the District Conference; (2) providing detailed information about Rotary Foundation and international service that it funds; (3) holding “fireside chats” with charter members or Past Presidents to talk about “why Rotary?”

#### F. Involve –

Our club currently involves club members in activities by: (1) getting new members to participate in community service activities and club socials; (2) getting new members to serve on service committees or on the Board (for the year following); (3) getting new members to act as greeters at meetings. Three additional steps to increase club member involvement are: (1) seeking out and assigning Rotarian mentors to new members; (2)

encouraging new members to give vocational presentations at club meetings; (3) encouraging new members to invite guests of their own as prospective members.

#### G. Educate –

Our club currently has a member education program that consists of the following three activities: (1) announcing all local Rotary Club projects and activities at weekly meetings; (2) informing members about Rotary Club activities through E-mail, newsletters, and the club website; (3) encouraging club members to attend the District Assembly and the District Conference. Three additional ways to improve our member education program are: (1) providing written progress reports to members on club activities, Board meetings, and budget; (2) creating a Power-Point presentation or a brochure which highlights club history and activities; (3) providing incentives for members to attend the District Conference and International Convention.

#### H. Priorities –

Our club has strengths in the following three main areas: (1) strong commitment of members to community service, through and outside of Rotary; (2) generous contributions of members to Rotary Foundation every year; (3) fellowship through traditional socials and service projects. Our club has weaknesses in the following three main areas: (1) participation in service activities is frequently lower than desired; (2) fewer than 25% of club members have ever sponsored new members; (3) currently, there is only one member under the age of 40 in our club. Based on this analysis, our club could choose the following three priorities to address weaknesses in our membership

development: (1) invite prospective and new members and their families to all service activities and club socials; (2) create a presentation or brochure that highlights club history and activities, generating pride; (3) recruit younger members (e.g., Rotary beneficiaries), by reducing or sponsoring dues. Membership is every Rotarian's business!