

# Membership Guide – Rotary District 7910

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## **Membership Guide - Rotary District 7910**

Tom Sturiale – Membership Chair; District Governor Nom Designate 2016-17

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## I. Growing Our Rotary Clubs

### 1. Advantages of Being a Rotarian

Rotary International has a great worldwide reputation based on a multitude of good works by ordinary people in thousands of communities for over one hundred years. We are aware of the six Future Vision Rotary goals in the areas of Peace & Conflict Resolution, Disease Prevention, Water & Sanitation, Maternal & Child Health, Education & Literacy and Economic & Community Development. And it is well to talk about these goals when speaking with a prospective member.

Sometimes it might be appropriate to rephrase the advantages of being a Rotarian by talking about the opportunity to be a better world citizen and to be able to help others less fortunate than us, to enjoy the fellowship, fun, friendship, acquaintance, entertainment and family programs with nice people, to engage in ethics development, cultural awareness, prestige and pride of being a Rotarian, to add to one's personal growth, leadership development, continued education, public speaking ability and social skills and to know that Rotarians are welcome anywhere in the world in anyone of 34,000 clubs in 200 countries. So call someone you think may be a good Rotarian and say "Hello, my name is --- and I am with the local Rotary Club. It was suggested by one of our members that I call you to see if you may be interested in learning about our Rotary Club. You are! That's great! Will you please join us at one of our weekly meetings?" It is really as simple as that!

### 2. Why Are You a Rotarian?

Why are you here? What are you doing in Rotary? Why did you join Rotary? I mean, what really turns you on? Do you like being with other Rotarians? Are you really interested in helping others less fortunate than you? Is it the opportunity for networking and expansion of business contacts? Is it just the opportunity to meet friends once a week or on other occasions for a nice meal, socializing and a good speaker? Maybe it is having the chance to visit with folks from other countries or even visiting other countries? Or is it because you have reached the stage of life where you just want to give back to your local community some of what you have received during your life?

Maybe you simply need a support structure to help you develop self worth, leadership skills, public speaking skills or ability to carry out some special needs of your own? Is it because you are retired and need to have something really worthwhile to do with your time? Or are you just starting out on your career and need to be a part of something big, really big, even worldwide, to help you develop and progress? Could you be an empty nester and want to find opportunities to help develop young people through RYLA or Interact? Can you add to this list? Whatever your reasons are, and there are many, it would be helpful to articulate them. Use an assembly meeting to get all the members to talk about their reasons. When you are talking with prospective members, your passion will become obvious and contagious.

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### 3. Why Are We Rotarians?

Reports from clubs continue to show great progress in attracting new members. Watertown, Wellesley, Montachusett and Leominster have brought in 23 new members during the first nine months of this Rotary year. It would be great if all the new members attended the reception at the District Conference at the Boxborough Holiday Inn on May 18 at 5:30 PM (they will all be invited).

It becomes a much easier task to attract new members to Rotary if we are able to articulate why we joined or, indeed, why we continue to remain Rotarians. It would be an interesting exercise at your club assembly meeting to have a discussion about why we were attracted to Rotary. Research shows that most new members are interested in networking, building friendships and developing leadership skills. These goals tie in the first two Objects of Rotary (developing acquaintances and honoring vocations). When new member's initial goals are satisfied, they become more interested in serving others, developing their community and in serving local and international humanitarian needs which are the next two Objects of Rotary (community service and international understanding). Understanding our own motivation will help us articulate the meaning of Rotary to others. Open up the discussion at your club and your members will become better advocates of Rotary.

### 4. The First Object of Rotary

Have you thought about why folks join Rotary? Why did you join? It would be an interesting and educational exercise to ask every member of your club to write down the reason(s) they joined Rotary and why they remain Rotarians. Try this exercise at an assembly meeting - hand each member a piece of paper and ask them to write down their reasons for joining and their reasons for staying, then summarize the inputs, distribute them and discuss at the next assembly meeting. While we each have varying reasons for being Rotarians, the reasons usually fit within the context of the four **Objects of Rotary**.

The first Object of Rotary is "**The Development of Acquaintance as an Opportunity for Service**". One of the more common reasons for joining Rotary is the opportunity for joining together with people we want to associate with and to enjoy fellowship, fun and friendship. We may want to network for business or for personal reasons. Maybe we want the camaraderie or the support structure the organization provides. These are all legitimate and rational reasons for joining Rotary and must be nurtured by the club leadership. Have you noticed how much more committed members are to working on club projects when they are accepted as members of the Rotary club family?

How does your club leadership develop opportunities for fellowship? Do you have several opportunities throughout the year to get together either as members or as families either for fun or for service projects? These events do not happen by accident. They require planning and organization. They are great as ice breakers not only for your members, but for prospective members. It is an opportunity for you to show prospective members that you are a friendly and welcoming organization they would be proud to join.

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## 5. The Second Object of Rotary

Here we are at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month ninety-five years after the Armistice which ended the most horrific conflict in human history up to that point. It was 13 years after the beginning of the Rotary movement by Paul Harris and a few of his close friends. Rotary was growing rapidly as many responsible people wanted to right the wrongs of the world. Early on they developed the **Object of Rotary** which all clubs need to advance.

This week we will discuss the **Second Object of Rotary** which is " **High ethical standards in business and professions: the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society**". Such high minded, lofty goals - what do they mean? Some of our clubs touch on this by having every member talk about themselves and their professions through biographical sketches at club meetings - a so called classification speech. These are always extraordinary and interesting talks affording the opportunity to learn something about our members.

However, the real power of this Object of Rotary is to share our life and career experiences with the young folks in our community - the middle, high school and college students in our midst. These young folks hunger for knowledge about the world, about industry, about business, about the many career opportunities in front of them. Rotarians have the opportunity - nay, the obligation, to impart as much of our life experience to them as we can. Think about the influence we could have on all these young people. Think about how we might have gained from hearing from our seniors when we were impressionable and hungry for knowledge many years ago. Through the Second Object of Rotary, we build pride in ourselves, our members and our clubs. What is your club doing to advance the Second Object of Rotary?

## 6. The Third Object of Rotary

Continuing the theme of the **Object of Rotary**, this week we will state the third object - " **The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business and community life**". Service Above Self! The ideal of service! How do we live up to these grand ideas of service? The ideal of service is the essence of Rotary and we are surrounded by opportunities to apply the ideal of service in our communities and internationally. How do we identify these opportunities? They may not be apparent to us as we go about our daily lives but there are many devoted folks in our communities who dedicate their lives to helping people. Consider the many organizations devoted to helping the poor, the homeless, the indigent, the elderly, the sick, the hungry, the injured veterans and many other needy people. Have we reached out to them to offer support either financially or with hands on help? Do we invite them in to speak to our members about community problems and issues? Have we invited them into the family of Rotary as members? Have we tied our fund raising efforts to specific community needs?

We sometimes lament the lack of public knowledge about Rotary but what do we do about it? Satisfying critical community service needs represents the best opportunity to gain public image, public knowledge and public support for Rotary. Search out the folks who are doing this work and invite them into Rotary. They may be reluctant to join because of time and financial constraints but Rotary has relaxed attendance requirements and clubs can be creative in their applications of dues and fees. There are so

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many wonderful folks working to alleviate pain, suffering and anguish. They are Rotarians and don't know it. Let us seek them out. Together we can satisfy the third Object of Rotary.

As an example of a Rotary Club who has applied these ideas, go to the following YouTube presentation by Dr. Satya Mitra, President of the Worcester Rotary Club. It is quite amazing!!

<http://goo.gl/neAzpj>

## 7. The Fourth Object of Rotary

The **Object of Rotary** is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise. This week we will review the fourth statement defining the Object of Rotary - "**The advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service**". The worldwide accomplishments of Rotary are really quite astounding. International projects funded by Rotary clubs around the world amount to hundreds of millions of dollars. Think about the progress made in the eradication of polio, Peace scholars, exchange students, Gift of Life, GEMINI, disaster aid, water and sanitation, disease prevention and countless other projects. Our district alone this year is currently funding projects in 25 countries amounting to over \$1.5 MM based on contributions from our own members of \$285 K. In the last 15 years, our district has supported District and Global grant projects (domestic and international) worth \$6.3 MM!!! That is simply astounding.

Everyone who contributes to The Rotary Foundation is a part of this worldwide effort. Every Rotarian Every Year (EREY) means that we each contribute some amount to The Rotary Foundation (TRF) each year. It can be as little as \$10/yr or as much as you like. It is so simple to have \$10/month deducted by credit card. All you have to do to finance that contribution is one less latte and a cookie each month - you will never miss it. Then you can proudly claim that you are a part of the effort to advance international understanding, goodwill and peace. Is your club educating its members about these programs? Does your club participate in these international projects? Does your club communicate these Rotary projects in your community? The more your community knows about the total face of Rotary, the more able you will be in attracting like-minded people to Rotary.

As an excellent example of a Rotary Club that has **attracted 35 new members since July 1** by embracing the four **Objects of Rotary**, please view a YouTube presentation by Dr. Satya Mitra, President of the Worcester Rotary Club. It is quite amazing!

<http://goo.gl/neAzpj>

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## II. Why New Members?

### 1. Satisfying Community Needs

Did you know that Rotary International grew from 0 members to 1,200,000 members in 90 years from 1905 to 1995 with over 32,000 clubs in 200 countries? Since then we have leveled off at the 1.2 MM member mark while adding 2500 more clubs. And in the USA, we have actually declined from 450,000 members to 370,000 members. Why did that happen and what can we do to change it? One reason is competition - the number of charitable organizations has more than doubled in the last ten years up to 1,250,000 different organizations. There are dozens of new models and internet tools available for groups to raise funds for charitable uses. While the basic goals of Rotary have not changed, and indeed, they have been enhanced, individual clubs may need to reexamine their own *raison d'etre*. Clubs need to revitalize and take stock of their goals and objectives. What are their visions and strategies for accomplishing the five avenues of service - Community, Club, Vocation, International and Youth - in detail?

All great companies and organizations need to reexamine their strategies and business models periodically. Have you heard of companies like Kodak, Bethlehem Steel, Polaroid, Digital Equip, or Data General, and there are so many more who have fallen by the wayside? We need to intensify our Focus, our Accountability and our Impact and what we do. We need to reexamine our value to the Community and to our members and to prospective members and to our donors. Have we done a thorough job in evaluating our community needs: poor families who need a boost in heat, food, electricity or education; children with serious illnesses or diseases; minority school children who need help or mentoring; elderly folks who need help; returning veterans with serious wounds or PTSD or who just need a helping hand? These needs will be met by someone. If Rotary is not breaking down the doors to do it, someone else will. We have to really begin to dig in to increase public awareness of Rotary, to increase member involvement, engagement and excitement in Rotary, achieving community benefits which we can all be proud of and attracting new Rotarians. Think about it - can this work be done with at a one hour board meeting once a month and a few minutes at a time at assembly meetings? What will you do?

### 2. Why Do We Want New Members?

Why do we want or need new members? New members improve our ability to resource community projects, youth programs and dozens of important Rotary objectives. New members help us to revitalize our clubs, improve our community recognition and overall reputation. New members energize our clubs, invigorate all the members and challenge us to change with the times. New members bring in fresh ideas, new technologies and help us to respond to community needs. New members are the lifeblood of our future. Every club must establish an active, sustainable membership improvement effort! What are your plans and ideas? Plan to share them at the Membership Forum. Forward your comments to the Membership Committee.

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## 3. Why Do We Need New Members?

The Membership Corner has returned from a two week battery charge in Aruba. Nice place! The Rotary year is getting ready to recharge its batteries again as the Presidents-Elect attend Pre-PETS and get ready for PETS. This may be an excellent time for the PE's to begin thinking about the Membership issues in their clubs and how they will address them during their year. New faces, new ideas and new approaches will yield progress!

A suggestion. Think about engaging all your members during assembly meetings in serious round table discussions about why we want or need new members. Members may have different ideas on this issue and it is important to have agreement on the club's approach. New members bring in fresh ideas, new technologies and different approaches to community needs. New members improve our ability to resource community projects, youth programs and dozens of important Rotary objectives. New members energize our clubs, invigorate the members and challenge us to change with the times. New members replace attrition which every club experiences. It is only through a concerted, well planned, active, sustainable membership effort that clubs will grow and prosper. How will you, new President, help your club achieve its membership goal? An idea - assign the past three Presidents to the Membership Committee

## 4. How Do You Respond to Change?

Nothing is forever! Times change and we must change with the times. The Object of Rotary is constant but we may have to change our approach to achieve the objectives. How has your club adapted to a changing environment? Do you still conduct fund raisers for general purposes or is there a detailed plan in mind? Has your club developed a vision, a long term plan and a strategy to achieve the plan? More importantly, do all your club members understand and accept the strategic direction of the club? It does require real thought and considerable effort to develop a strategic vision but the benefits are worth it. Do you utilize your assembly meetings to reach consensus on the key issues facing your club? It is clear that the members we want to attract to Rotary are facing more time, work and economic pressures than many of us did several years ago. We cannot afford to conduct our club operations in a loose manner without a plan or a consensus of members. It seems clear that any club that really wants to grow and prosper needs to achieve a consensus amongst its members of a clear vision and a plan of action. Members from clubs which work towards these goals will be able to articulate and communicate the Object of Rotary to prospective members in a convincing and comfortable manner.

## 5. How To Effectively Challenge Members

A month ago I had a great time speaking to the Worcester Rotary Club about my past experience at an industrial company in Worcester and sharing a few ideas about enhancing membership through improved strategy, dynamic leadership and motivated people. The development of a Value Proposition, basically club vision and strategy, and the ability to adapt to changing environments, basically dynamic leadership, were discussed in the last two Membership Corners. The third critical ingredient is "People". Unquestionably, we have legions of great people in Rotary. But we come in all sizes and shapes - we are all good at many things, great at some things and not so good at a few things. Some are leaders and many are followers. Some are extremely social and many are more reserved. Some are very creative and



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many work hard to implement the ideas of others. The 80/20 rule usually applies. In a volunteer organization, it is critical that the leaders determine the best fit for members and work at keeping all members motivated.

The managers at private corporations spend an inordinate amount of time and effort to determine which people are best at certain functions and moving them to areas where they will function most effectively. Failure to properly place employees can cause great harm while success leads to greatly improved results. We have a similar challenge but in our volunteer organization we have to accomplish the task with softer and more collegial means. We need to insure our officers and chairpersons understand their jobs and are well prepared and trained. But we also need to think about how people are placed in jobs where they will be best suited for the task. Forcing a follower to lead a major effort will usually fail. Challenging a leader with creative ideas to take on a big task will get big things done fast. Asking a very nice, quiet, reserved and even willing member to be the membership chair for the club is not going to work very well. Challenging a social, outgoing and happy faced member to meet and greet new members and they won't be stopped. Sure they need names and contacts from the other members but they will close the deal. Properly placing and motivating people in key club positions is one of the most critical challenges for leaders.

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## III. Attracting and Engaging New Members

### 1. What is Your Club's Focus?

As Rotarians, we are all very busy people. Most of us are hard at work in our many and varied careers while some of us are retired. We all remain very active in our clubs and communities. Once in a while it is important to sit back and review what it is we are doing and why we are doing it. We need to reflect on what it means to be a Rotarian. We do know that it is "Service Above Self", and we do know about the five Avenues of Service - Community, Club, International, Vocational and Youth, and we are aware of the six areas of Future Vision - Peace, Disease, Water, Health, Literacy and Community Development. But do we spend enough time at our club assembly meetings, our board meetings, our committee meetings or our district meetings to really understand what these goals of Rotary are and how they may be implemented by our club?

It is difficult, if not impossible, for any one club to be effective in focusing on all these goals at the same time. However, it is important for every club to have a clear understanding and a commitment from its members on what their club's strategic plan is to accomplish whatever they are interested in. Is your club so busy conducting the same fund raisers and community projects which you have been doing for years that you have not spent any time thinking about the future? Have you devoted any time towards the development of a longer range plan, say two or three or four years out? What do your newer and younger members think about your club's activities? Indeed, have you concentrated on bringing in newer and younger members? Is your club growing, shrinking or static? Does your club reflect the changing demographics of your community? Every organization has to guard against becoming irrelevant either to its own members, or more importantly, to its community. How does your club see the future?

### 2. Attracting and Engaging New Members

**Remember to Save The Date! Membership Forum Tuesday, September 10 from 5:00 - 8:30 PM at the Boxborough Holiday Inn.**

**Attract and Engage!** That is the theme of the Membership Forum. What do we do to attract new Rotarians and then what do we do to engage them in the way of Rotary?

After we tell a prospect that Rotary is the oldest and largest humanitarian organization in the world and there are 1.2 million Rotarians in 200 countries and our motto is "Service Above Self" and we have a "Four Way Test", what do we do for an encore? Oh, we do have an annual auction, or we do have an annual golf event, or we do support the food pantry, or we do have an annual pancake breakfast, and we do have a scholarship program, yada, yada..... Oh really! Have we developed a story that really conveys the true meaning of Rotary and grabs the attention of folks immediately - our efforts to change lives, our focus on youth, our support of the elderly, our help programs for the sick, or the disabled, or the indigent, or the hungry? Unless we develop a meaningful story which conveys the true meaning of Rotary and what we are really trying to do, we will not be very effective in attracting new members. What is your story? Bring it to the Membership forum and share it with us.

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Now that we have those new members, what are we doing with them? Have they met every member of the club? Has every member of the club introduced themselves or are they waiting for the new member to take the initiative? Have they been assigned to a mentor? Do they know who Paul Harris is (it took me a year to find out)? Are they being familiarized with the basics of Rotary or did we just give them a copy of the Basics of Rotary? Have you asked them to do anything - be a greeter, start the Pledge, pass out the raffle tickets, get out the Rotary banners, collect meal fees, work on a committee, attend a District event, go to a Rotary Leadership Class - at the club's expense, take pictures at the meeting.....Anything? Or are they sitting at the back of the room wondering when they will become a part of your Rotary Club? What does your club do? How do you integrate new members? Bring your story to the Membership Forum and share it with us. We need you!

### 3. Satisfying Community Needs

While it is true that all Rotary Clubs are unique in terms of their history, members, communities and character, it is also true that we are all joined together by a common Rotary vision, goals, purpose and philosophy. We have a common motto "Service Above Self". It may be helpful to discuss this motto at your assembly meetings. What do your members think it means? Why did your members join Rotary and why have they remained Rotarians?

We are a worldwide organization of inspired individuals whose aim is to change lives for the better at home and elsewhere. We are engaged in translating our passions into social changes in our communities. We do that by taking action on local community projects aimed at improving and changing lives. Service projects can take many forms and it all depends on the community and the nature of the club. The job of leadership is to insure clubs have a mechanism in place to review, discuss and to prioritize local community needs, engage members in a review of those needs and to take action to pursue those needs. That is the secret to a successful club! Satisfying community needs helps to satisfy current members through engagement and also helps to attract new members. Every community project touches a number of people who may also be "inspired individuals" and those folks are your new member prospects. Ask them!

### 4. Engaging New Members

It was a great District Conference Meeting! Hats off to all those who organized it and made it happen. We learned that all clubs in the district added more than 100 new members. And we bowed our heads at the Necrology service to the 25 Rotarians who passed away this past year. So the job of attracting members continues. Did you think you were done? Now our job is to insure we keep the new Rotarians engaged and invested in our clubs while we go about our Rotary activities. Here are two thoughts for you to consider in improving your retention rate.

1. Your new members want to be involved and recognized. They, like most us, are a bit reticent to approach members and introduce themselves, to seek recognition and to volunteer for activities or projects they know nothing about. THAT IS YOUR JOB! Embrace them - they are your club's future! Welcome them - make them feel wanted! Tell them you need their help! Don't simply ask for volunteers. That is a simplistic and an ineffective way to get them engaged. Ask them! Who can resist a

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senior Rotarian who approaches you and says "I need your help!" and "I need it now!". There are so many things to do. Start them off with a relatively simple but important task and keep adding to it. Before long you will have another candidate for President in your club. If you do not pay attention to this very valuable new member resource, they will quickly lose interest in you.

2. Another way to get folks invested in Rotary is to get them to invest in Rotary. Yes, we all gave at the office, the church, the local favorite charity, our children and our grandchildren, and so on and so on. Of course, we did - that's what we are supposed to do. We're Americans and we help everybody because we can and because we want to. But we are also Rotarians and we have a higher calling - that's why we are here - Right? So, when the time is right, sit down with your new Rotarians and talk to them, in a very low key manner, about the Foundation and how it works and how it can help your local community and how it will make them feel good. Take them through the process of donating through the credit card process a minimum of \$10 a month which is the price of two lattes and a chocolate chip cookie. By the way, try the same thing with all those other members who are still thinking about it. Once someone starts donating to the Foundation, they are in for the long term.

## 5. Retaining Satisfied Members

It does take considerable effort to attract and induct new members but it takes even more ingenuity and leadership to retain members. Notwithstanding the legitimate reasons for losing members such as moves, job changes or illnesses, many members leave because they are not satisfied. They are not engaged and they lose interest. Why? There needs to be some genuine interest in joining Rotary in the first place. It may be the need to network, to give back to the community, the fellowship, the association with likeminded people or any number of motivations.

However, becoming a Rotarian takes a much longer time. Club leadership does need to think about that. People become integrated in an organization over time. We go through a lot of hoopla and ceremony to induct new members and then what do we do? Do we greet them with open arms every week, do they sit with senior members, do they join an action oriented committee, do they attend a district event, do they share their biography with the club, are they included in fellowship events? Or are they allowed to sit quietly awaiting an opportunity to join in? Every member of every club should be assigned to some action committee.

At a meeting a couple days ago, I learned of an effective method for integrating new members - "**A Dance Card!**" Have your mentoring committee prepare a list of the 6-8 critical achievements for a new member which will require signoff as each are accomplished during the first 6 - 12 months of membership. Then at a second ceremony, honor the new member with their permanent badge. Honor and recognition! Help the new member feel important and critical to the success of your club and they will become permanent Rotarians.

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## 6. Engaging With Other Rotarians

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! The holiday season is suddenly upon us and just as suddenly gone. The new year is about to begin. The Rotary year is at its midpoint. Where does the time go? Some new presidents are thinking the year is almost over and they have only just begun, while others may be happy there is only six months left to their term. Some new presidents rush in with great ambition and many new ideas, while others may wonder what cruel fate cast them in the role. But all are probably discovering just about now there is so much to do, so little time left to do it and how much easier it would be if only the whole club was engaged.

How do we improve the effectiveness of transitioning our Rotary Club's leadership from year to year and of insuring continuity, consensus and consistency of programming? Every club should have a steering committee made up of 2 or 3 past presidents, the current president and an incoming president. And every club should make an effort to engage all the members in committee assignments. The Visioning process will assist clubs in achieving those objectives in a way that also engages the members in voicing their ideas and opinions about the overall club process. But these are essential first steps in assuring the satisfaction of our members that club presidents can implement - **NOW!** All members join Rotary with certain expectations and needs about fellowship, service, networking, community needs, international service, youth and elderly development or any of the myriad ways Rotary benefits humankind. It is up to the leadership to create an environment where these expectations can be satisfied. It is only through satisfied members that Rotary will attract other like-minded individuals to join our worldwide organization.

## 7. Engaging Satisfied Members

**Visioning! It is coming to your club soon. Welcome the process.**

It will help to open vistas you may have only dreamed about. What is the big deal? First of all, the Visioning process helps to extract ideas from all the members. It helps to get members engaged and involved and it will allow you to reach a consensus on objectives. Secondly, it becomes very clear, very soon that the club leadership is every member doing their part - not just the President and a few key members. Surely, some are more adept than others at some things but everyone is adept at something. There is much to be done and it will take all the members doing their part to accomplish great things.

The Visioning process will help to facilitate your club in engaging all the members, in reaching consensus on direction and involving everyone in the process of achieving your club's objectives. How else will you be sure your members are satisfied? They must be allowed to voice their opinion. They must be allowed to expend their energies doing what they believe to be the reason they joined Rotary. It is so easy to fall back on old habits that worked well in the past and to rely on processes that may be outdated. While it may be difficult to change, it is necessary to adapt to our changing societies and communities. We have to leave the 20th Century behind and face the challenges of the 21st Century. We must get all our members involved, engaged and committed. The Visioning process is an excellent way to achieve this objective.

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## 8. Insuring Rotary Club Continuity

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! The holiday season is suddenly upon us and just as suddenly gone. The new year is about to begin. The Rotary year is at its midpoint. Where does the time go? Some new presidents are thinking the year is almost over and they have only just begun, while others may be happy there is only six months left to their term. Some new presidents rush in with great ambition and many new ideas, while others may wonder what cruel fate cast them in the role. But all are probably discovering just about now there is so much to do, so little time left to do it and how much easier it would be if only the whole club was engaged.

How do we improve the effectiveness of transitioning our Rotary Club's leadership from year to year and of insuring continuity, consensus and consistency of programming? Every club should have a steering committee made up of 2 or 3 past presidents, the current president and an incoming president. And every club should make an effort to engage all the members in committee assignments. The Visioning process will assist clubs in achieving those objectives in a way that also engages the members in voicing their ideas and opinions about the overall club process. But these are essential first steps in assuring the satisfaction of our members that club presidents can implement - NOW! All members join Rotary with certain expectations and needs about fellowship, service, networking, community needs, international service, youth and elderly development or any of the myriad ways Rotary benefits humankind. It is up to the leadership to create an environment where these expectations can be satisfied. It is only through satisfied members that Rotary will attract other like minded individuals to join our worldwide organization.

## 9. An Extraordinary Membership Effort at Worcester!

The Membership Forum was well attended by 80 Rotarians. It was educational, interesting and fun. There were several highlights including a discussion on the importance of strategic focus on community needs by Roy Balfour, District Foundation Chair, and the panel discussion by seven new members of their first year experiences in Rotary. The panel members were Rick Macpherson - Framingham, Amy Mosher - Worcester, Jim Mcfarlin - Acton-Boxborough, Jason Camuti - Westborough, Lisa Trainor - Nashoba Valley and Joanne Rossley and Gina Wilson both from Montechusett. Everyone participated in two roundtable brainstorming sessions on Attracting and Engaging New Rotarians. During the coming weeks the results of the sessions will be shared with the participants and summarized in this column.

Following dinner, the final event was a talk by Dr. Satya Mitra, the President of the Rotary Club of Worcester. He spoke about motivating the community and Rotarians in sharing our passions. Dr. Mitra delivered an incredibly persuasive and emotion packed talk on why and how we should all increase our efforts to engage ourselves and our community in improving the lives of our fellow citizens and those in need around the world. Arriving here from India almost 40 years ago with a Doctorate in Biochemistry, Dr. Mitra worked in biomedical research until 1995 when he changed careers into the tax, accounting and financial planning business. As a very successful entrepreneur, he joined Rotary six years ago and became President of his club two months ago. Satya believes strongly in the ideals of Rotary and is passionate about sharing those ideals with everyone he comes in contact with. He proposed to us that we all become VIP's in Rotary - that is, that we develop a **Value**, an **Image** and a **Product** that we can be proud of and share that value, image and product with Rotary soul mates where and when we find

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them. He has been tireless in his efforts to reach out to people in social agencies, charitable organizations, city governmental departments and business people of all stripes.

The results he has achieved by this outreach effort are nothing less than phenomenal. He has received 28 applications for membership (18 already inducted) in just the past two months!!! That is a little more than 25% of the total new member effort of the entire district for the prior twelve months. Simply astonishing!!! He is a delight to listen to and I am sure we will hear from him again. The message was clear - Rotary has an incredibly persuasive value proposition to offer the community. The way to attract new Rotarians is simply to share the values with those we meet in a passionate, articulate manner and they will come. Thank you for showing us the way Satya.

## 10. Attracting New Members

Congratulations to the Rotary Club of Worcester! Again we salute the great job by President Satya Mitra and his team for reaching their goal of 50 new members in one year. Actually, they have gained 54 new members in seven months, bringing their total membership up to 104. Simply awe inspiring! How does he do it?

Dr. Mitra spoke about his approach at our Membership Forum in September 2013. He described how he tries to motivate the community and Rotarians by sharing his passion for improving the lives of our fellow citizens both at home and abroad. He is indefatigable in his zeal to spread the good word of Rotary with everyone he meets. He shared with us his idea of everyone becoming a "**VIP**" - that is, that we develop a **Value**, an **Image** and a **Product** that we can be proud of and then share that VIP idea with everyone we come in contact with. Satya has developed a very persuasive Rotary Value Proposition which he shares with everyone. He has been tireless in his efforts to reach out to people in social agencies, charitable organizations, city government departments and business people of all types. His pride in Rotary is palpable and his approach is direct - Rotary is ready, willing and able to help and we expect you to join us. It is difficult to deny him.

How can we emulate Dr. Satya Mitra's approach? Who can we reach out to? What can we say? Let me suggest that you first listen to him as he passionately explains his approach. Go to <http://goo.gl/neAzpj> and watch his presentation. Develop a prospect list of all the folks your club comes into contact with during Rotary community events and service projects. Contact them with your own VIP message and do it with passion and pride. Invite them to a Rotary information meeting. Joint club meetings and cross visits are excellent ways of stimulating and/or validating ideas aimed at membership so schedule some meetings with local clubs and share your ideas. Satya will be speaking at a joint club meeting for several clubs in February and another joint club meeting is being planned for several of the central area clubs in March. We need to accelerate our sharing of membership ideas.

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## IV. What Is The Rotary Value Proposition?

### 1. Satisfying Member Needs

The purpose of these weekly notes is to plant the seed of an idea in the minds of a few Rotarians in the many clubs of our district. Hopefully, the cumulative effect will be to stimulate a greater and more sustained drive towards increasing our total membership and strengthening our clubs. While that remains a critical objective, a more important objective is to insure our current members are satisfied and enjoying their total Rotary experience. While all Rotary clubs are following the same overall guidelines of service, ethics and community responsibility, they do exhibit unique characteristics based on their history, experience and member makeup. Have you noticed any differences in the level of enthusiasm, the number of service projects, the fellowship or the energy in clubs you have visited? What is your club doing to insure your members are satisfied clients of Rotary?

We do have the Five Avenues of Service which undergird the actions of clubs and in which each member of the club should be engaged. How does your club implement the Avenues of Service? If your members are sitting on the sidelines waiting for other members to implement the Avenues of Service, they will become lethargic and bored and will not be engaged. They will not be great representatives of Rotary to prospective members. It is very clear that one of the highest responsibilities of club leadership is to get members engaged by getting them involved. Every member should be active on one or more committees. There is so much good work to be done by implementing Club, Community, International, Vocational and Youth Service projects. Engaging all your members in these committee projects will stimulate them and generate enthusiasm. Busy hands make light work and happy hearts!

### 2. What is our Rotary “Value Proposition”?

The usual answer to the question of "What is Rotary?" is that "We are a service organization" and "Service Above Self is our motto". If that represents the full understanding of the meaning of Rotary, then we will not be successful in attracting new members or in retaining the ones we have. There are many ways to volunteer and provide service to others through church groups, volunteer groups, food pantries, shelter organizations, etc. without having to go to meetings and pay dues. But the Value Proposition of Rotary is much deeper, richer and broader. Think about it! Think about the meaning of the Five Avenues of Service - Community Service, Club Service, International Service, Vocational Service and New Generations Service.

There are embodied in those avenues of service many facets of networking, service, leadership, education, personal relationships, ethics development, and so many more. The hard work of attracting new members to Rotary is not the task of seeking them out and talking to them - that's easy. The hard work is in defining the Value Proposition of your club. It is in getting the members to understand what the objectives and strategies are for achieving the Five Avenues of Service. This is a difficult task and not easily achieved by a few discussions in a couple meetings. It is an ongoing task and a work in progress. It would be very beneficial to get a few members of your club to begin by defining each Avenue of Service, how it fits in your club and community and how your club will implement it. Then communicate the findings to the membership and discuss them. From this process consensus develops. Now your club will have a Value Proposition that can be easily communicated to new members.



### **3. What is Your “Value Proposition”?**

The term "Value Proposition" has been used a few times in the Membership Corner and some have asked "What is that?", "Who cares?" and "What does it mean?". It is a term used in business to describe the value an economic enterprise presents to a client to justify the client spending time, money and effort on the products and services being offered. The firm with the best Value Proposition will usually win the business. Our clients are the Rotarians who belong to our clubs and those we wish to attract. Why should they remain in and/or join Rotary? What value are we offering which exceeds the cost, in terms of time, money and effort, of belonging to or joining Rotary? People need to know what they are working for. What is the program? What are the objectives? What is the strategy? Why are we doing this? Why am I here? Why should I be here? What do you want from me? How can I contribute?

Organizations need to have a plan and a Value Proposition members agree with. Leaders need to develop a dialog which leads to a consensus amongst members. There are obvious fellowship, social and networking benefits available in Rotary and we should work to enhance those benefits continually. To many they are the primary benefits of Rotary. However, there are many other humanitarian aspects of Rotary to which many aspire. Every club needs to think about those aspects and develop plans to achieve them. What community needs does your club aim to address - and why and how? How is your club addressing those issues and communicating them? The clubs which do a good job in articulating a total Value Proposition to current and prospective members will continue to grow and prosper.

### **4. What is Your “Value Proposition”?**

When the benefits exceed the cost, clients will invest the time, money and effort to acquire the product, service or offering before them. That is the basis of a Value Proposition. What is it that Rotary is offering to its members and to its prospective members? As Rotarians, we are aware of the costs - club dues and fees, meal costs, raffles, district meetings, training sessions, donations to the foundation or any other club projects, time for meetings, projects and fund raisers and the list goes on. What are the benefits? How do you articulate them? We sometimes agonize over developing statements of Rotary Value when it really is right before us. We only need to look at and think about the meaning of the Object of Rotary, Service Above Self, and the five Avenues of Service. We all join in and remain in Rotary because we believe the value we are receiving exceeds the cost we are expending whether it is in terms of money, time and/or effort. Now how do we translate our experience of value into a statement of value which will attract Rotary soul mates?

None of us have the time or inclination to fully explore and become totally immersed in all five Avenues of Service but we should be deeply involved in a couple and interested in the rest. Does your club spend enough time discussing Community Service, Club Service, Vocational Service, International Service and Youth Service. Exploring the five Avenues of Service leads one to networking, fellowship, service - in so many ways, friendship, leadership, personal relationships, youth development, ethics development, international and in so many other areas. Every club cannot excel in every avenue, but every club can

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excel in something that resonates in their neighborhood. What is yours? Discuss the avenues of service in your assembly meetings. What do they mean? How does your club approach them? Not only do the new members need to learn about them but the senior members may need to be reminded. It needs to be pointed out this does take some work. Your club leadership may need prodding. These issues need to be discussed on a regular basis at club assembly meetings.

Therein lies the great value of Rotary. There are many service clubs but none offer a greater variety of service opportunities through so many clubs to so many people throughout the world. Many years ago, one of my old bosses told me "If you can't sell that, you can't shoot a fish in a barrel".

## **5. How Do We Market Rotary?**

Everyone is working to increase membership and there are some bright spots - most notably the Rotary Club of Worcester, incredibly up to 35 new members in the last five months. What is working and what is not working? What should we do and how should we do it? From a mechanistic point of view, we all know what to do. We go through a classification study of our club, we look to fill certain vocations, we make a list of all the possible candidates, we contact them, we recite an elevator speech, we hold Rotary informational meetings, we convince some of the contacts to join Rotary, we may or may not mentor or get the new members engaged in our clubs or retain our new members and then we repeat the process. But are we treading water or making progress?

What is missing? We are working hard to sell Rotary but are we marketing Rotary? Are we focusing our community service projects towards high profile community needs projects? Are we concentrating our limited resources of money and member time towards those programs that leverage Rotary in the most effective manner? If we focus our efforts on projects that become beacons of good will in our communities, people will come to us. I had the wonderful experience of attending the annual joint meeting of the Acton-Boxborough & Westford clubs last week where they honored the captains of the high school football teams and the principals and coaches prior to the Thanksgiving Day game. Think about the number of people in those towns who are aware of this event. Similarly the Acton-Boxborough Club conducted their first ever Veterans Day breakfast for veterans last week. They had over 200 veterans, including some spouses, served by 100 high school students. Wow!!! These are some examples of high profile community efforts. This is marketing the Rotary ideal. These clubs will have a much easier time of explaining who and what Rotary is all about. They will be able to attract members who want to be a part of this wonderful organization. What will your club do to market Rotary

## **6. RYLA – A Fantastic Rotary Program!**

What is the best advertisement one can possibly hope for? Satisfied clients, clients that believe in your services, inspired clients, clients willing to praise your products loudly and often! The past three days at RYLA has resulted in 170 new Rotary inspired clients. The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards weekend is one of the most inspiring and wonderful Rotary experiences to which a young person can be exposed. They meet as total strangers on a Friday morning and by Sunday afternoon they part as close friends. They are steeped in many leadership skills including communication, public speaking, creative thinking, teamwork - both physical and mental and many other skills. They have learned how to be more sensitive to others needs and their own strengths and developmental needs. They learn about Rotary and Rotary projects. The dedicated few Rotarians who organize and execute the RYLA weekend each year are owed

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a great debt of gratitude. They do an incredibly remarkable job! You really must plan to attend part of a RYLA session. You will be impressed!

Why the plug for RYLA? During the past dozen years or so, District 7910 has matriculated about 2000 RYLA'ns. At least half graduated from college and/or are working in their career fields - maybe in our district. What if each club received written statements about their RYLA weekend from all their RYLA'ns each year? What if we invited them to visit our clubs and tell us about their experiences and their plans for the future? What if we invited their parents to the same meetings? What if we created a P/R package to better enable us to communicate the RYLA program to the schools and communities? What if we maintained a data base of all the RYLA'ns of past years and tied them in to our Facebook pages? The leverage we may gain from so many young people, their parents, extended family, teachers and friends is staggering. We spend about \$45000 every year to train so many wonderful young people. We should plan on maintaining contact.

### **7. Vocational Service – A Youth Opportunity!**

What do you want to be when you grow up? Do you remember that question when you were a teenager? How did you reply? You were fortunate if you had an answer - most kids do not. Most kids do not have any idea at all.

Vocational Service! That is Rotary's answer. We have a wonderful opportunity to help young folks address this very difficult subject. Just think about it. We are 1500 strong in District 7910. We have thousands of years of life and career experiences in many varied fields of commerce, industry, professions and industry. Just think of the stories we could share with young folks who are starving for information about what engineers, bankers, lawyers, financiers, store owners, manufacturers and so many others do.

How can we help? That is what Vocational Service is all about. Career days, job fairs, reality fairs are some of the ways we can help. We could arrange tours of bakeries, factories, auto repair shops, banks, ship yards, subways, ships, the state house and hundreds of other work places. How can we help tie the educational needs of these professions to the need for knowledge of math, science, English, history and logic? There are so many opportunities for Rotarians to help these young folks bridge the gap between their uncertainty of the future and their ultimate careers. And think of the leverage. You will establish a life long connection with the students and a close association with the parents, the school administrators and the teachers. There has got to be a few Rotarians in there somewhere!

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## V. Managing The Membership Process

### 1. You Are the New Membership Chair – Now What?

The President of your club has just asked you to chair the Membership Committee. After you accept the challenge, you think "Oh my! What do I do? How do I do it? Where do I start?". Here is a suggestion for you to try:

#### 1. Set a **Goal** for your club.

- We will double our membership from 40 to 80 in the next three years.

#### 2. Develop **Objectives**.

- We will add 1 - 2 members per month during the next three years.
- We will increase the diversity of our membership to reflect the local community.
- We will increase the retention rate of new members from x to y.
- We will streamline the approval and induction process for new members.
- We will engage all new members in a committee activity immediately after induction.

#### 3. Develop a **Strategy**.

- The Membership Committee will consist of 5 members and will meet once a month.
- We will develop a Rotary Value statement describing Rotary and our club's goals and accomplishments.
- We will develop a target list of prospective members reflecting the diversity of our community.
- Two person teams will contact prospective members to review Rotary and their interests.
- We will maintain a continuing record of all contacts, status and results.

#### 4. Develop a **Tactical Action Plan**.

- The committee will gather all the tools, brochures, publications and associated background information required.
- Each person (or two person team) on the committee will have a specific set of contacts to make and when they will do it.
- The chair will report progress to the club once a month.
- Each new member will be assigned to a senior member for mentoring.

**Goals, Objectives, Strategy and Tasks (GOST)** - This is a hierarchical process developed by Texas Instruments in the 1960's and is still used by corporations today. It helps you think about what the overall goal is, specifically what you are trying to achieve, how you are going to accomplish it and who is going to what by when. It is a process that is much more effective than exhortations from the podium about every member bringing in a new member, etc, etc, etc. It does take some upfront work but after going through the thinking process, members are committed to making it happen.

Membership Chairs - gather your teams, start meeting, develop your own "**GOST**" and take action. There is a big job to do. Get started!

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## 2. Attracting New Members

Some clubs have found remarkable success in attracting and retaining new members. How do they do it? They certainly have followed the basics of developing a club vision and a strategy to achieve it, they are able to articulate the values of Rotary and how their club works towards those values and, importantly, they have developed a detailed plan to identify and attract new members. Great ideas do not come to fruition unless someone is willing to step up and carry them out. The details of an implementation strategy are important. Here is a suggested plan:

- At an assembly meeting, get all the members to suggest names of prospective members.
- Complete a classification exercise. Review the Chamber list of businesses. List all your speakers of the past year. Get the names of the butchers, the bakers and the candlestick makers, etc.
- Make an Excel list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Develop a package of information about Rotary and your club.
- Identify the friendly, social, outgoing Rotarians in your club and ask them to help in the initial contact.
- Call them - "Hello, my name is ---. Members of my Rotary Club suggested I call and ask if you would be interested in learning more about Rotary. Would you be willing to meet with me for a few minutes?".
- If Yes, set a date and meet. If No, thank them and move on. If Maybe, call back. Keep track of contacts on your Excel form.
- Spend one hour each week and repeat the process every month.

## 3. Key Membership Process Steps

Thanks to Lynne Luongo, Bedford. Club, and Jillian Vorce, Natick Club, who shared their experiences in Membership and Networking with 70 attendees at the Membership Forum. Lynne pointed out the few critical steps necessary for a successful membership effort:

1. Appoint an energetic Membership Chair and committee.
2. Develop a target list of prospective members with specific skill sets or experiences.
3. Develop an "elevator" talk aimed at attracting prospects to want to learn more about Rotary.
4. Set aside a specific time and place for " Fireside" chats to share Rotary info.
5. Develop a streamlined process for approving, inducting and integrating new members.
6. Develop a Mentoring process for new members.
7. Repeat the process - Continually!

## 4. Membership Planning Process

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## 5. Welcoming New Members

Welcoming a new member into your Rotary Club. How do you do it?

- Do you expedite the approval and induction process?
- Do they receive their new badge, member book and introductory materials ASAP?
- Are they assigned to a more senior member who will act as a mentor?
- Are they introduced to all the members soon after induction?
- Have you explained who Paul Harris is? And other matters of Rotary historical importance?
- Have they been assigned to a committee?
- Will someone take them to an RLI learning session?
- Will someone take them to another Rotary Club meeting or a District function?
- Has someone explained how to enter the RI and the District 7910 websites?
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Above all, are you certain they are not being ignored?