

RI CONVENTION 2014 SYDNEY
BREAKOUT SESSION MONDAY 2 JUNE
ATTRACTING YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO ROTARY
PART TWO

**RESULTS OF A QUALITATIVE ANECDOTAL SURVEY CONDUCTED IN AUSTRALIA
AMONG YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN ROTARY**

What can Rotary offer that work cannot:

- For professionals, hands-on work, get outdoors and into the community
- For those in trades etc, the opportunity to learn management and project skills
- Further develop leadership and public speaking skills
- Moral satisfaction – not for profit, sense of doing good
- Opportunity to be a part of something global
- Achieves something concrete, immediate, with real effect in the society

What can Rotary offer over other community service/charitable organisations:

- Vision and ambition (e.g. End Polio)
- Non-political and non-religious
- Unlike some NGOs, you can actively contribute without being a tiny cog in a giant machine and not all just fundraising to raise money for the central organisation
- Not cause-specific – Rotary does good on a needs basis - rather than a cause basis.
- Rotary provides a variety of activities and effort across community, international, vocational and youth service

What will attract young professionals to a Rotary Club:

- A can-do attitude and positive outlook
- An active club
- Openness to change – at least willing to discuss new ideas
- Respect for younger persons (which includes not ceaselessly referring to your age)
- Realisation that young is relative – a 30 year old has nothing in common with a 15 year old
- A club that is able to manage conflict/personalities rather than letting them take over

- Acknowledgement that finances may be tight with low salary, young family etc, so they can't always make a contribution or attend a paying event
- Acknowledgement that they may be time poor with work, young family etc, so contributions to club activities and meeting attendance may be variable
- Tight, effective meetings
- Pro-active mentoring of new members and development of their Rotary knowledge
- Encouragement to attend District training and conferences
- A membership strategy , and one that involves attracting more young professionals
- A club that connects with RI and District
- User-friendly and informative website and/or social media pages
- A healthy spread of responsibilities across the club (not just a core group doing all the work)
- Willingness to give them committee/board/leadership roles and significant responsibilities as they develop their knowledge and experience in Rotary

What deters young professionals from joining/or staying in a Rotary Club:

- Being treated like free labour rather than a member of the club
- Not being taken seriously
- Statements like "because that's the way we've always done it"
- More knife and fork-ers than do-ers
- Grace (and to a lesser extent, toast)
- More ceremony than substance
- Rotarians who can't remember your name, or the fact that you've been a member of the club for 3 months now
- Cliques of Rotarians who don't make you feel welcome
- Saying "we need more young people" without actually doing anything about it, as though you'll just invite all your friends along (which you would have tried before anyway)
- A club fraught by personal tensions
- High meeting costs and subs, pressure to donate
- Sticklers for rules
- Long meetings that feel like a waste of time, don't achieve outcomes
- Technological incompetence AND the expectation that every young person is an IT expert
- No website or one that hasn't been updated since two Presidents ago
- A club full of old men (i.e. all one age group and no gender equity)
- An insular club, that just does its thing without linking in to the wider world of Rotary
- Being thrown into the deep end without sufficient support/preparation (e.g. President in your second year in the club because no one else put their hand up)
- Bad singing and the faint aroma of mothballs

N.B. Fellowship is not a major attraction for young professionals – it’s hard enough to make small talk over a meeting with someone twice your age, although they should not be excluded from social activities either.

N.B. Don’t *over* estimate Rotary’s professional benefit for young people – it’s really not much of a plus on a CV and employers may see it as a distraction rather than a valuable part of your week.

Why are you still in Rotary?

- It might sounds corny but I want to do good in the world.
- Being a member of Rotary helps my more 'instant' goals of trying to establish my life (i.e assets, finances, job etc). Things like RYLA and RLI and hanging out with people who have walked down the same path. Rotarians can be great mentors and educators.
- I'm in Rotary because I like being able to make a difference in my community. At 24 in a club of mostly older members, one of the projects I was involved in was to assist chartering a young Next Gen Rotary Club. My club has been inclusive of me at a younger age & my ideas have always been welcomed and accepted.
- I have been a Rotarian for 2.5 years, since I was 35 and I intend to stay a Rotarian my whole life. It took me a while to be ready- I had to finish my postgrad studies and also realise that I couldn't keep waiting for children to appear (As a youth exchange alumna, I wanted to be a host parent and thought I needed to have my own children first!). My clubs fees are quite reasonable.
- For me, being in Rotary is all about the difference I can make and clubs can overcome all the barriers that people talk about if they just set their mind to it and make it happen.
- Where else can you sit next to the CEO of a major company and network.

NOTES FROM BREAKOUT SESSION WORK GROUPS ON SCENARIOS - REPORT BACK

These are as recorded; please adapt them to your Club situation and in light of the survey responses above.

SCENARIO TWO

- Connect with a passion that a Young Professional has.
- Offer alternative membership, meeting formats and cost structures.
- Have a Young Professional tell their story to the club to build acceptance

- Look at another club in the area if yours does not suit the Young Professional
- Give them a once a month attendance option and build up from there.
- If you have a youth program alumnus - ask them to assist with a youth program and build a longer term strategy for them to join.
- Ask Young Professionals when they might be available, figure out what their passion is and keep them on a list of service projects, invite them and their family members to activities, so they have volunteered, enjoyed the company of Rotarians and are now more knowledgeable; ready to be invited.
- Consider corporate membership, one membership with four members
- The experiences Rotary has offered a Young Professional should be used in some way to engage them further. Mentor them in Rotary activities and humanitarian activities.
- Rotarians can be guest speakers at other professional networking groups.
- There is an organisation called Young Professionals of America, tap into their network.

SCENARIO THREE

- Issues are with time and money and making sure our cause is clear.
- Not convinced that money issue is universal.
- Time is not an issue if Rotary is seen to be of value
- Network with Young Professionals and talk about our (Rotarians) business experience and facilitate introductions etc.
- When you ask people to join, they say they are time poor and similar reasons, but they do not really understand what Rotary is. So meet with them over coffee away from Rotary at a time and place of their choice. Address their objections, educate them on what Rotary can do for the world and for them.
- Do not focus too much on being a member, invite them to volunteer at activities, become friends, find out what they like and what their issues are, and then invite them to join the club.
- Involve the school itself in a fund-raiser on behalf of the Rotary Club - collect funds or shoes or something that is then funnelled through Rotary to do good - go on through secondary schools with programs that engage them - use schools for referrals to Rotary.

Thank you for joining the breakout on Young Professionals

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