

## **Creating Buzz in your Club, Steve Hayter**

Imagine how it will feel to talk into your meeting and seeing new faces engaged in warm and compelling conversations about their passions, what brings them to Rotary and how you clubs projects fit in with those passions

Club buzz and having a membership strategy is important to a club because:

- More members means more people to do more work and achieve greater results
- It ensures your club knows the demographic that it's wanting to target
- Allows you to integrate membership opportunities into each of your clubs projects and initiatives
- It creates and encourages diversity in the club and this is attractive to new comers
- It keeps club ideas fresh and innovative
- It challenge the status quo
- And ultimately it means that clubs will be around for a lot longer to continue the astounding work that Rotary does around the world.

So here they are, the take away tools and strategies that you can start implementing in your club straight away to achieve your membership goals.

All members are in the membership role - club buzz does this.

Keep in touch after non members visit. A Phone Call, Emails, SMS, Newsletter, Invites

Use appropriate discovery questions in your conversation with potential new members. If you don't have time to have this conversation properly at a meeting, make time to catch up before a meeting or schedule a time to catch up for coffee and value their time. Take an interest in what type of fulfilment they're wanting to get from Rotary in order to find your commonality. If you don't ask you can only assume and this often results in disengagement.

From a retention point of view, run a survey of what members want to see more of from projects, guest speakers, vocational visits etc. Keep existing members contributing and engaged because we want to avoid having those in our clubs who pretty much only come along for the meal each week.

Ask for help on projects and events even though your potential new member is not yet a member of the club. This gives them responsibility and buy-in to your club and its projects. It creates pride and ownership of their contribution towards the greater good.

Empower potential new members to have a say in your club meetings and value their contributions. If you are talking about club projects, activities or upcoming events on that night, invite them to get involved in the

organisation or get hands on with some work that needs doing such as packing a shipping container or helping with the set up and pack up of your fundraising event.

**For example:** Many of our new guests to the club were able to put forward their ideas during our planning meetings at the start of the year when we had a smaller turn out from club members. This gave them a sense of contribution and ownership that they wanted to remain a part of rather than just sit and observe because they think that they're opinion cannot be given yet. Actively engage their point of view.

What is your club feel? How are you seen by non members and what would they say about your club after attending 4 or 5 meetings? Do you have politics at play that may be off putting to potential new members and stifling the progress of your club? Or are you holding onto ideals and outdated modes of operation that may be deterring members from inviting people to come along to events and meetings? Are the attitudes reflected by your members consistent with that of the rest of your club? **\*Story about my generation Y having 20 jobs over lifetime.\*** It's a different world, more dynamic and changing. Not one single employer.

Rotarians aim to work together and embrace each other's' strengths for the betterment of the club. Encourage each other to work to their strengths to be the best volunteers they can be. If you have someone in your club who is an accountant they may not necessarily be passionate about doing that job in their spare time. We're Rotarians because we like to do good and enjoy ourselves along the way.

Consider if you club has moved on or is moving on from gender stereotypes and ensuring that the same opportunities are offered to all.

Are your members ready with a Short, Sharp and Shiny elevator speech when asked, "Yeah I've heard of Rotary but what's it all about", or "Tell me about Kent Town Rotary?" Are you ready if someone put you on the spot right now? What are your clubs crowning achievements and achievements to come? If you're not sure if your members have an elevator speech about your club to PNM's, just ask them. If it could be more punchy or they need help consider running a club development meeting where members are shown how to create a short snapshot that details how the club gives back and why someone would want to get involved. It's a great confidence builder and help break down the barriers to talking about Rotary and inviting someone to come and check out your club.

Is your club welcoming to new faces that walk through the door or do they struggle to strike up conversation? Welcoming is about so much more than having a member on "welcome duty", it is every members responsibility and will ensure that your guest feels warmly welcomed and wanting to come back to another meeting.

### **How does your club have fun?**

Who sees you having fun and how can you maximise this. Consider platforms such as Facebook and other online social networking that allow you to publish pictures of your meetings, projects, uniqueness and the smiles of people having fun. This creates a buzz around your club that will influence how non members, other Rotarians and members perceive your club and what you're about.

How does your club talk about other clubs? Make sure it's positive. Get them engaged, find out what they're doing that's working well for them and collaborate. Make partnerships with other services organisations like Lions and run a fundraiser together or have a fellowship night. Even if you just continue to support each other by filling a table or two at each others events. You'll be surprised by what might come of it.

And it doesn't have to be other Rotary Clubs or other service organisations that you decide to partner up with. You may like to seek out a particular cultural group in your community and together organise a culturally themed fundraiser. These types of partnerships allow you create new relationships in your community, they get members engaged because they're often exotic and fun and you can show them what's possible in our community through the world wide Rotary movement.

### **Do it!**

Today you've heard quite a few tips and strategies for engaging existing members, being an attractive club for potential new members and creating buzz in your club.

A person much wiser than me once said, "knowledge doesn't mean zip! Unless you're willing to take action on that knowledge."

We know that the same actions reap the same outcomes. So my challenge to you as passionate Rotarians is to introduce some of these questions and strategies into your working group meetings and club meetings and take action in those areas where some positive agitation is needed. If you'd like me to speak at your club about this topic I'm happy to help where I can or if you'd like a copy of my notes I can get them sent to you also.

The most important question for any club trying to increase its membership and only have positive attrition is this: How do you engage people and create buzz in your club and let others like you see it, hear it, and want to be a part of it?