



Developing and Retaining Members



23 Ways to Keep Members from Dropping Out

Many members drop out of their clubs for perfectly understandable reasons: death, sickness, economic hardship, and transfer to an area without a similar club. Others lack the commitment required of a true active member. But most leave for reasons that could have been prevented by a club with a strong membership retention program -- a club determined to retain them. Rotary Clubs must find ways to capture the hearts of their members early in their membership tenure to prevent lost interest.

An effective membership retention effort doesn't just happen. It has four equally working parts:

1. the **cooperation** of your club's officers and directors;
2. the **work** of the members of your own committee;
3. the **understanding and cooperation** of all club members,
4. a well-planned, efficiently executed **retention program**.

The first step is to analyze the reasons for the membership losses and then take the necessary measures to overcome them.

From a survey of club presidents and directors, the following are the most mentioned reasons for dropped members. Examine this list objectively to see if any ring true for your club.

26 Reasons Why Members Drop Out of Clubs

1. Poor club leadership.
2. Lack of proper screening for quality members.
3. Improper induction ceremony.
4. Inadequate orientation of the new member.
5. No participation or involvement.
6. Non-fulfillment of sponsor's responsibilities.
7. Insufficient attention to members (new and old).
8. Lack of friendship or fellowship.
9. Cliques.
10. Misjudgment in committee appointments and improper use of talents.
11. No meaningful club projects.
12. Clubs do not measure up to expectations.
13. Boring meetings -- too formal and inflexible.
14. Wrong meeting time and/or place.
15. Poor order, planning and objectives.
16. Lack of individual and collective discipline in reaching a common purpose.
17. Complacency, indifference and apathy on the part of some club members and officers.
18. Loss of faith.
19. Lack of proper recognition.
20. No motivation, enthusiasm or dedication.

21. Poor communication between officers and members.
22. Excessive cost -- too many parties and social events.
23. No follow-up on transfer members.
24. Lack of encouragement to members (new and old) to attend district and international affairs, such as forums, conventions, district conferences, training seminars, etc.
25. Inadequate publicity to gain community support.
26. Lack of continuing membership growth and development programs.

No matter how many of the above you found true for your club, there are simple, basic solutions you can implement starting today to minimize drops.

23 Ways to Retain Members

1. Leadership training at the club level.
2. Concentration on quality members through proper screening.
3. Impressive and meaningful induction ceremonies.
4. Education or orientation of new member on Rotary history & culture.
5. Involvement of all members (new and old).
6. Family involvement. Spouse & children should be included club service activities.
7. Sponsors should carry out their responsibilities toward the new members.
8. Members must feel needed and wanted.
9. More emphasis on service and quality fundraising projects. A connection with the community.
10. Meetings should start on time and close on time.
11. Meetings with free, creative spirit; tolerance and flexible moral sense; abundant good will and quick wits.
12. Improved attendance through good and interesting programs.
13. Better planning and establishment of objectives and goals.
14. Proper recognition.
15. Reorientation and motivation of old members.
16. Improvement on communications between officers and members.
17. More teamwork.
18. Cost of meals and social events should be low to keep dues reasonable.
19. Members leaving the club due to job transfer should be referred to new club.
20. Members should be encouraged to attend district and international conferences.
21. Prestige and image of the organization should be maintained through good public relations.
22. Advice and counsel from the district governor and assistant governor should be sought to solve individual problems as soon as they arise.
23. A year-round membership growth and development program should be consistently applied and monitored as a priority.

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