

# CHAPTER 5

## STRENGTHENING YOUR MEMBERSHIP



Plan meetings and activities during Youth Service Month (May) and Membership and New Club Development Month (August).

Engaged and active club members make it possible to serve communities at home and around the world, to support the work of The Rotary Foundation, and to develop future leaders. But most of all, engaged and active members make your club a fun place for all members.

Make certain that your membership reflects the diverse professions and cultures of your community. A diverse membership not only attracts potential candidates, it also promotes innovation and provides the skills and experience your club needs to make positive changes in your community.

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

AS PRESIDENT-ELECT	AS PRESIDENT
Appoint and meet with your membership committee members, make sure they're reported on My Rotary, and encourage them to attend your district membership seminar	Lead by example: Propose a new member and encourage each member to do the same
Assess your club's membership and analyze trends	Modernize your policies and procedures, making them flexible to address the needs of today's professionals
Assess members' satisfaction with the club and work with your leadership team to increase your club's flexibility	Implement new meeting formats to attract and engage members
Set your club's annual membership goal in Rotary Club Central; align your goal with district goals	Coordinate membership committee efforts to develop ways to engage members

If you are sponsoring a new club, the [Start a Club](#) page on My Rotary can help.

AS PRESIDENT-ELECT	AS PRESIDENT
Promote training for members at all stages, including new and current members	Conduct a club assembly on successful strategies to attract new members
Look for opportunities to sponsor a new club in your area	Work toward full representation of your community's diversity in your club
Define a strategy for engaging program alumni in club events and activities	Recognize club members for sponsoring new members
	Recognize members for their contributions to the club
	Manage your online membership leads or delegate the responsibility to someone in your club

## CLUB MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Strengthening membership is a top priority for Rotary. Your club membership committee is responsible for implementing your membership plan, which should address your club's unique strengths and challenges.

The committee's main role is to attract, engage, and educate club members. Your club may amend its bylaws to reflect the specific responsibilities of your membership committee, adding subcommittees as needed. See appendix 1 for sample committee structures.

The membership committee should consist of 5 to 15 club members, or at least 10 percent of your membership, who have strong connections to a cross-section of the community, are interested in improving the membership experience for all your members, enjoy working with people, reflect the diversity of your club and community, and have a thorough knowledge of Rotary. Committee members, especially your membership committee chair, should attend the district membership seminar, where they will learn how to use Rotary's online tools and share ideas for improving membership. See appendixes 2 and 3 for more information.

Check in regularly with your membership committee to learn about any new strategies they will implement to achieve your club's membership goals. Your membership committee has these responsibilities:

- Identify prospective members
- Introduce them to Rotary and your club
- Invite them to join if they're a good match for your club
- Engage new and existing members

See appendix 4: Club Membership Committee Checklist for ideas on how to use these steps.

If membership committee members cannot attend your district membership seminar, they can take the online membership courses in Rotary's [Learning Center](#) instead.

Subscribe to the [Membership Minute](#) e-newsletter and join the Membership Best Practices [discussion group](#) on My Rotary.

## ASSESSING YOUR CLUB

Before setting membership goals, work closely with your club's membership committee to assess your club. You can start by analyzing your club's membership trends to understand your current challenges. How many new members is your club gaining each year? How many members is it losing? Use [membership reports](#) on My Rotary and Rotary Club Central to view your club's membership trends, and consult with your district governor, assistant governor, district membership chair, or Rotary coordinator.

Next complete the [Rotary Club Health Check](#) with your club leaders and discuss your results. As a group, determine which areas of your club could improve. To get your members' input, use the [Member Satisfaction Survey](#) and include their suggestions in your membership plan.

Once you've evaluated your club's membership trends and drafted membership goals, enter them into Rotary Club Central and develop an action plan for achieving them.

The course [Is Your Club Healthy?](#) in the [Learning Center](#) can help you identify opportunities for growth and sustainability, along with strategies to improve in those areas.

## DIVERSITY

A club that embraces and celebrates diverse perspectives is simply more interesting and relevant. A diverse club can draw from a greater pool of experience and knowledge for creating positive change in your community.

Your club's representation of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and professions should be as diverse as your community. Use the [member diversity and classification](#) assessments to evaluate your club's diversity. Then take the [Building a Diverse Club](#) course in the [Learning Center](#) to find out how to diversify your club.

Rotary policy prohibits limitations on membership based on gender, race, color, creed, or national origin. Refer to the [Rotary International Bylaws](#) for more information.

## ATTRACTING MEMBERS

New members can bring new vitality to your club, fresh ideas and energy, increased capacity to serve your community, and potential future leaders, all of which can help ensure your club's long-term success.

Work with your membership committee to:

- Implement innovative new projects that spark interest or address a pressing need in the community
- Promote club activities using social media, direct marketing, and local media to show your club's impact on the community
- Target members of groups or professions in the community that are not represented in your club

Register for an upcoming membership [webinar](#) or view [recordings](#) of past sessions at [rotary.org/webinars](http://rotary.org/webinars).

Celebrate new members by holding a meaningful induction ceremony. Find ideas in [Introducing New Members to Rotary: An Orientation Guide](#).

- Reach out to [Rotary alumni](#)
- Invite prospective members to participate in events or projects
- Update your club brochure to distribute to guests at your meetings
- Hold prospective member events to help members of your community [discover Rotary](#)

The Strategies for Attracting New Members course in the [Learning Center](#) offers ideas for connecting with potential new members in your community.

## MANAGING MEMBERSHIP LEADS

Rotary receives thousands of membership leads from people around the world interested in joining Rotary. These leads come from potential members who click “join” on Rotary.org and fill out an online form. Rotary assigns each lead to a district. The district then assigns the lead to a club that’s likely to meet the person’s needs. You, your membership committee chair, and your secretary will receive an email alert when a membership lead is assigned to your club. Access information about the candidates on the [Club Administration](#) pages in My Rotary. Decide who will manage your club’s membership leads. Be sure to follow up promptly by contacting the prospective member, or by asking the district to reassign the person to another club if your team decides he or she isn’t a good fit. Be sure to [Create a Positive Experience for Prospective Members](#), even if they don’t ultimately join Rotary.

To better understand membership leads, take the Online Membership Leads course in Rotary’s [Learning Center](#).

## ENGAGING MEMBERS

Engaging current club members is as crucial as attracting new ones. To engage members, involve them in activities, assign them leadership roles, and communicate with them regularly. To help devise a strategy for maintaining your club’s membership, ask former members about their [reasons for leaving](#), and identify your club’s strengths and weaknesses using the [Retention Assessment and Analysis](#).

Members who are engaged are dedicated, active, and motivated. Engaged members will make your club activities more fun and effective. They are also more likely to invite prospective members to join.

When members prioritize their Rotary club over other activities, they renew their membership. Learn what your members like and don’t like about your club by conducting a [Member Satisfaction Survey](#). Use the results to improve your club experience. Find more ideas for making your club effective, fun, and relevant in [Be a Vibrant Club: Your Club Leadership Plan](#). This guide includes best practices for strengthening clubs, tailored to regions around the world.

To help get younger members into your club, use the [Engaging Younger Professionals toolkit](#), which includes tips for connecting with younger audiences.

Use the [Creating Your Club Leadership Plan](#) worksheet to develop your own plan.

Get new members involved as soon as they join. Refer to [Connect for Good](#), which describes a multitude of ways to make a difference in the club, the community, and the Rotary world. Every member of your club should play an active role in introducing and welcoming new members. Find ideas in the course [Kick-start Your New Member Orientation](#) in Rotary's [Learning Center](#).

If you have questions, consult your assistant governor, your [Rotary coordinator](#), immediate past president, or [Club and District Support representative](#). The [Best Practices for Engaging Members](#) course in the [Learning Center](#) can also help.

## YOUR ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Your club has a valuable asset in the thousands of [Rotary alumni](#) who've participated in a Rotary program. They are powerful advocates for Rotary as well as potential members and donors. Rotary program alumni include those who have participated in any of the following programs:

- [Interact](#)
- [Rotaract](#)
- [Rotary Youth Exchange](#)
- [New Generations Service Exchange](#)
- [Rotary Youth Leadership Awards](#)
- [Rotary Peace Fellowships](#)
- [Rotary Scholarships](#) (funded by global grants and district grants)
- Vocational training teams (members and leaders)
- Ambassadorial Scholarships
- Grants for University Teachers
- Group Study Exchange (members and leaders)
- Rotary Volunteers
- Club or district scholarship programs

Invite alumni to become members. If they're not ready to join, keep them engaged in Rotary by encouraging them to participate in club events and activities. Put their skills to use by recruiting them to advise on projects. Engaged alumni will be more likely to become members in the future. Alumni can help your club:

- Connect with clubs from different countries for service and fellowship
- Promote Rotary by sharing their personal account of Rotary's ability to change lives with club members and the media
- Encourage their peers to get involved in Rotary programs
- Select, prepare, and host program participants

Rotary offers alumni a global network of influencers, including community and business leaders, who can be a tremendous resource throughout their careers. Emphasize the opportunities and advantages of being involved in Rotary when speaking with alumni about their involvement in your club.

Subscribe to the quarterly e-newsletter [Reconnect](#) to learn about alumni activities, events, and news.

Club officers can access the [Program Participants and Alumni Report](#), which includes names, program details, and contact information for all former Rotary program participants associated with your district.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How will you engage your members?

How can you help your club become more flexible?

How will you attract new members to your club?



## CLUB MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

The role of the club membership committee is to write and follow an action plan to attract and engage members. An effective committee should be composed of five to 15 motivated members to guide the implementation of your membership plan. The committee's composition should allow for continuity from one year to the next and should represent the full diversity of your club's membership and your community.

### 1. Identify:

- Complete the member diversity and classification assessments, found in Membership Assessment Tools, yearly. Identify individuals in the community who fill gaps in the club's membership or exhibit interest in Rotary's ideals.
- Ask all members to complete the Identifying Prospective Members Worksheet at least yearly.
- Regularly go to the Club Administration area of My Rotary to manage the member leads assigned to your club.
- Meet at least monthly to review prospective members and their status in the membership process.
- Ask current members who are assigned to each prospective member to move them to the next step of the membership process.

### 2. Introduce:

- Select the most appropriate club members to engage prospective members. Keeping each prospective member's particular interests in mind, explain how your club can help them pursue their passions.
- Periodically hold events for prospective members to introduce them to Rotary, your club, and our core values.
- Invite the people you identified as prospective members to attend a service project or meeting.
- Tell qualified prospective members about your club, what to expect at meetings, and the networking, social, and service opportunities your club offers.

### 3. Invite:

- Designate the appropriate club member to invite each prospective member to join.
- Hold a meaningful ceremony to induct new members. Include their families and involve the entire club.
- Give new members a welcome kit that includes club and Rotary resources that they will find useful.
- Celebrate the addition of new members to your club. Announce it on your club's website, social media pages, and newsletter.

### 4. Engage:

- Welcome new members both through an orientation program and by involving them in the club.
- Assign a mentor to each new member to share professional expertise, community knowledge, and Rotary information.
- Engage each club member in a service project or club committee.
- Check in with all current members using the Member Satisfaction Survey at least yearly.

