

The Development of Acquaintance as an Opportunity for Service.

Another base assumption is that a Rotary club member is to be a business, professional, or community leader, active or retired, that has discretionary use of their time. In our society, this type person is normally a busy achiever accustomed to the pursuit of excellence. They are generally service and community oriented, but their interests target satisfying their customers, clients, and employees because that's what keeps their family cared for, their business functioning, and their community vibrant. How do you go about getting this type person to join a Rotary club? They will not join because you want them to, they will join for their reasons and their reasons only. So what reason would a person use to justify joining a Rotary club – your club? By far, the major reason falls in the realm of helping them satisfy their personal interests by associating with contemporaries. That's networking.

It is entirely possible that what started the membership decline was a simple oversight that inadvertently and without malice began when Rotary leaders centered their energies and resources on emphasizing the wonderful programs and projects Rotarians accomplished satisfying achievement needs and simply overlooked tending to the newer member's basic networking and friendship requirements. As years passed and membership began leveling out or declining, leaders who had not been taught the Object of Rotary, or that Rotary clubs are community-based networking organizations, simply followed previous examples and stressed local and worldwide projects and programs while minimizing, or ignoring, the need to satisfy potential and new member's social, networking and friendship requirements (*Please refer to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs.*)

Some long time Rotarians may object to a Rotary club being called a network of business, professional, and community leaders. They may object to having such things as networking events. If your club, or district, has a stagnant or declining membership, is it going to expect different results while doing the same thing over and over again? Or is it going to experiment with different practices to develop acquaintances among business, professional, and community leaders?

When asked, "*What's Rotary?*" might not a young, busy, local entrepreneur be more interested in listening to "*Rotary is a network of business, professional and community leaders - - -*."

* * *

Is that all there is? Not by a long shot. Let's assume that business, professional, or community leaders do join a Rotary club – your club. After these busy achievers develop new acquaintances, what will keep them in your club? This is where advancing the remaining three Objects of Rotary spring to the forefront, which could be the subject of future essays.

But before a club can advance the second, third, and fourth Objects of Rotary, it must be successful with the first. Is your club?

The Object of Rotary

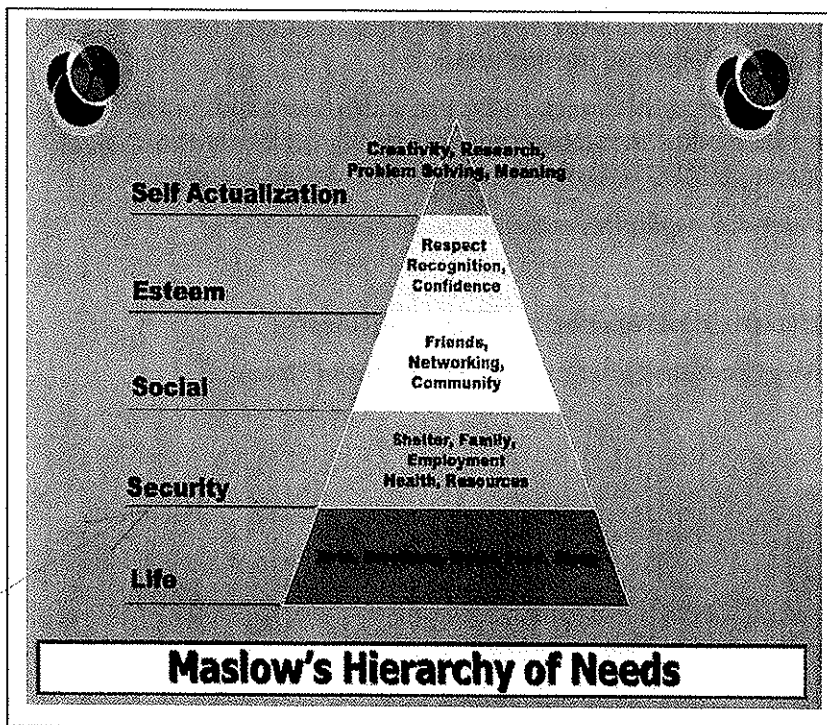
Why are Effective Clubs Effective? Or What Motivates Rotarians?

by
Jim Henry, RRIMC Zone 34

Why do effective Rotary clubs have few membership problems? Why could membership in a Rotary club threaten some business, professional, and community leaders? In this article, we will explore some possible answers by examining Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs, which clarified motivation as it affected human behavior and makes it easy to understand what motivates people to become, or not to become, Rotarians.



Please examine the tiers of Maslow's hierarchy. Most people have to satisfy the needs of each tier before they put much effort into attaining the next higher tier. If a tier is not fulfilled, the higher tiers, which do not go away, serve as ever-present motivators. Now let's examine each tier as it applies to effective clubs and Rotarians, potential and existing.



Physiological needs – Most existing Rotarians have long ago fulfilled the physiological tier.

Safety needs – Most Rotarians have also fulfilled their safety needs, but, to a potential Rotarian, believe it or not, one of their major hesitations is most likely based on this tier – their safety could be threatened. (WHAT? Membership in Rotary threatens their safety?) They will not say it in this manner, but people generally are very protective about taking time away from

their livelihood and family – their safety net. They have to be satisfied that joining a Rotary club would not put a hole in their safety net.

But the desire to fulfill this need could be the reason they join a club! **Why? Joining an effective Rotary club could help fulfill their safety needs!**

The Object of Rotary

Social and Esteem Needs – It is within these tiers that effective clubs excel. Paramount in their activities is assuring that their members' friendship, networking, belonging, achievement, and attention needs are being met, which is primarily advancing the first and second Objects of Rotary. It is also important to note that effective clubs have little difficulty advancing the third and fourth Objects of Rotary. The reason: their member's social and esteem needs are satisfied; therefore they are motivated to seek higher tiers. All the club has to do is create appropriate opportunities, and in Rotary, opportunities abound.

Self Actualization – Effective clubs generally produce excellent leaders, and the reason is simple: their members, whose lower tiers are fulfilled, strive for self actualization. It is in satisfying this need that Rotarians, hence Rotary, shines.

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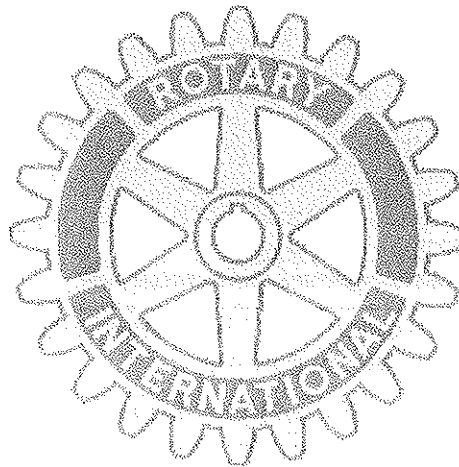
Service above Self – An Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, wrote, *"I slept and dreamed that life was happiness. I awoke and saw that life was service. I served and learned that in service, happiness is found."* In personal, corporate, and political life this is true, and it is based on humans achieving the higher tiers of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs. Happiness truly is found in service. But, if a person, or a club, concentrates only on the higher tiers of need, they will find themselves, as Rotarian Haresh Ramchandani from Jamaica so eloquently says, *"Without a sound base."* (For a visual representation, turn Maslow's Hierarchy upside down.)

Rotary clubs are not in the service business, they are in the personal satisfaction business. Effective clubs are successful because they continually advance the Object of Rotary by encouraging members to fulfill each of Maslow's tiers while they learn

"... that in service, personal satisfaction is found."

Is your club effective in advancing the Object of Rotary?

Is your district assisting its clubs in advancing the Object of Rotary?



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Membership: An Eight Member Florida Club grows to Seventeen

by

Jim Henry, RRIMC Zone 34

The Triple Analogy

Several members of a struggling eight-member Rotary club in a growing Florida community were also members of a networking group. In 2008 the two groups merged to become one seventeen-member Rotary club that maintains virtually 100% attendance. Networking is a vital part of the club's meetings; the meetings are more fun, their businesses more successful, and the members are more involved in community activities.



Jim Henry

Years ago, a young tradesman left home and wandered the eastern seaboard doing odd jobs before settling in Philadelphia where he began learning a trade. An observant but lonesome young man, he met some fellow tradesmen, and they decided to network every Friday night at a local bar. Their priorities were libation, conversation, debate, mutual support, and education. This group rapidly grew in number, and in their many discussions, they noted that Philadelphia could use some of their unified expertise. They started a lending library, a fire department, a fire insurance company, a hospital, and many schools.

The young Philadelphia tradesman was Benjamin Franklin. The year – 1745. The group - the Junta Club, now the American Philosophical Society. One school – The University of Pennsylvania.

Years later, P. Percy Harris, after graduating from law school, spent several years wandering the world “finding” himself before settling in Chicago to practice law. After working four years, the 37 year-old noted that business and professional leaders enjoyed varying degrees of success and respect. He thought both attributes could be enhanced if professional acquaintances networked, so he started meeting weekly with select fellow professionals. After awhile, they concluded that Chicago could use some community service projects so they took the lead and completed many.

This was Rotary's beginning. The year - 1905. Today, Rotarians, through their worldwide network of business, professional, and community leaders, have accomplished thousands of humanitarian projects, and, with its networking partners, are about to complete the greatest health initiative the world has ever experienced – eradication of the wild polio virus.

The Joining Force

The Joining Force that breaches time and location is networking. The commonality in the three success stories was that networking encouraged business, professional, and community leaders with discretionary use of their time to develop friendships, improve at their businesses and professions, and become achievers at performing small and large humanitarian service projects, which were, and continue to be, significant by-products of the Joining Force – networking.

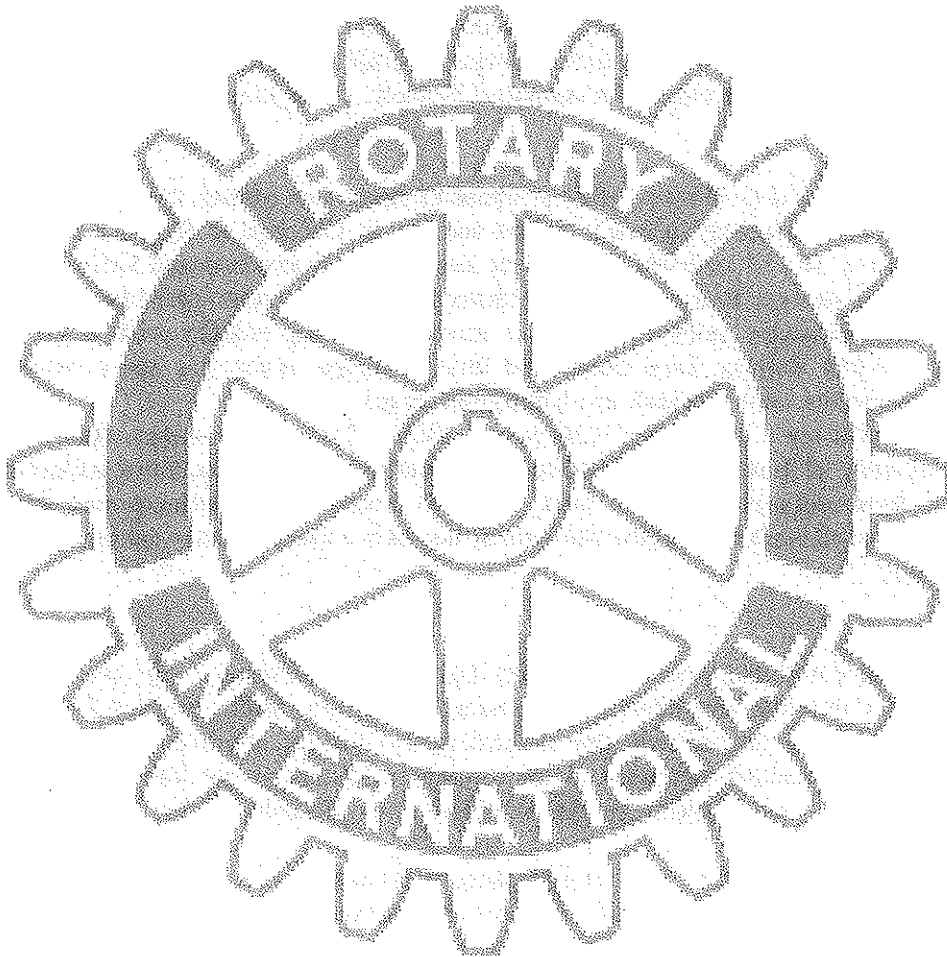
When Rotary clubs were just getting started, networking was considered so important that many clubs practiced keeping track of potential customer referrals to each other. Some clubs included referrals as part of the orientation process (*to become a full fledged member, new inductees had to refer x (number of) potential customers to member's businesses.*) Other clubs had various year-end awards, and still others gave free meals after x (*number of*) referrals.

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Thoughts to ponder

The Philadelphia tradesmen helped each other professionally and some became lifelong friends. The Chicago professionals helped each other professionally and some became lifelong friends. The Florida business and professional leaders have networked and some will most likely become lifelong friends. And in all cases, the networking led to service projects, large and small. So why have so many Rotary clubs abandoned the networking concept of enjoying libation, conversation, debate, mutual support, and education? Why shouldn't clubs today, like the struggling eight member Florida club, consider going back to the future and start actively promoting networking again? After all, the first Object of Rotary is ?

(Hint: Look at the header. In light of the stories you have just read, how about having a discussion on the meaning of the first Object of Rotary?)



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Membership: It's Okay to Join Rotary for Business Reasons

by
Jim Henry, RRIMC Zone 34

When Paul Harris began meeting with other professionals, he probably had business in mind. After all, the very phrase 'Development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service' is an action that many businesses take. Except these days it is often referred to as "sales calls." So Paul Harris most likely thought he could expand his circle of friends and create a potential client base. So why do many Rotarians today think this is wrong?



Jim Henry

*Let me tell you two stories:

In 1990, Jean, fresh from dental school, was proposed to become a member of a Rotary club. She had two pre-schoolers, a residential contractor husband, and heavy debt. After the 'fireside chat' she was invited to fill out an application, becoming the second woman in a sixty member club. She did so because she thought it would be a wonderful networking opportunity. The president assigned her to a committee in which she actively participated. She came to Rotary almost every week and made particular effort to sit with different groups. The next president asked Jean to be the bulletin committee chairman. She accepted; the first of several committee chairmanships on her way to becoming club president several years later. As she progressed in Rotary, her dental business grew. Many Rotarians and their families became clients. Today, she has a highly respected practice and is influential in civic circles. She is a Paul Harris fellow several times over, is a member of the Bequest Society, and takes time to contribute dental services through local and international organizations.

A few months after Jean joined the club Lex, local branch manager of a nationwide home services company, was inducted. Lex joined because he, too, thought it would be a wonderful networking opportunity. The president assigned him to the same committee as Jean, but he had limited participation. Throughout the year, his club attendance was sporadic. During his month as the club's greeter, he missed two meetings and failed to arrange replacements. The next Rotary year, he was asked to take a month on the program committee but turned it down because he was too busy. Later, the company's regional vice president was in town on his annual visit, and Lex took him to Rotary. After lunch, the vice president asked Lex how much business could be traced back to Rotary contacts. Lex couldn't trace any, and the vice president asked why. Within a year, Lex resigned.

So, should people like Jean and Lex join a Rotary club for business reasons? Yes – most people join Rotary to network – business or otherwise. It is simply good thinking to associate with established business, professional, and community leaders. These are the type people who contribute time, talent, and treasure toward making communities a better place in which to live.

Jean developed acquaintances and earned their respect. She profitably performed vocational service by satisfying patients and employing local citizens. Once established, she continued serving the local and international communities by having fun, doing good, and donating money.

Lex didn't.

**The names and circumstances have been fictionalized to protect the guilty.*

NOTES

The Development of Acquaintance as an Opportunity for Service.

Effective Networking – Rotary's Heartbeat

by

Jim Henry, RRIMC Zone 34

Effective Networking is the heartbeat of a successful Rotary club and of Rotary International itself. Local and worldwide networking of business, professional, and community leaders who have discretionary use of their time has made Rotary the most successful alliance of its type in the world today. Why? The answer is simple: Effective networking. Effective Networking (EffNet) is defined by how many business, professional, and community leaders get to know, and receive value from, an individual or organization.



Jim Henry

Put another way, EffNet isn't what is gained from the people the networker knows, it's the result of the value the networker gives to those they get to know. Look at our association, Rotary International. Rotary International's vision and leadership, and ability to network with UNICEF, WHO, the Center of Disease Control, and World governments to eliminate polio is a value given to humanity that is unmatched in the annals of World humanitarian service. And all of this was accomplished by applying the EffNet principle; giving value instead of expecting to receive value. But value it has received. Do you think the Gates Foundation would have given the millions of dollars to Rotary had Rotary not given, and continues to give, to humanity? Would Rotary have the worldwide recognition and prestige that it enjoys?

Another example of the EffNet principle at work is demonstrated by Rotary District 7020, which consists of approximately 2,500 Rotarians in seventy-two clubs on islands scattered over the vast area of the northern Caribbean Sea. D-7020 has grown steadily in membership for the last five years, and is on target this year to grow between 4 and 5%. One way the clubs apply the EffNet principle is that they are particular about who is accepted into membership. By being selective, they get members who give value to the clubs, which in turn give value to their communities through community service, which in turn makes it an honor to be a Rotary club member. District 7020 leaders serve the clubs by applying sound leadership practices, one of which is systematically recognizing and awarding clubs and individuals when the honors are warranted. The clubs and Rotarians return value by actively supporting district goals, projects, and functions.

Effective Rotary clubs should be networks of business, professional, and community leaders, active or retired. So, should a person join a Rotary club to network? Absolutely! If a person joins a club for networking purposes, the networking value they gain will be a result of the value they contribute. No contributing value – no networking value.

From an earlier article, *"Membership: It's Okay to Join Rotary for Business Reasons"* comes the story of two Rotarians, Jean and Lex. The names and circumstances have been changed to protect the guilty.

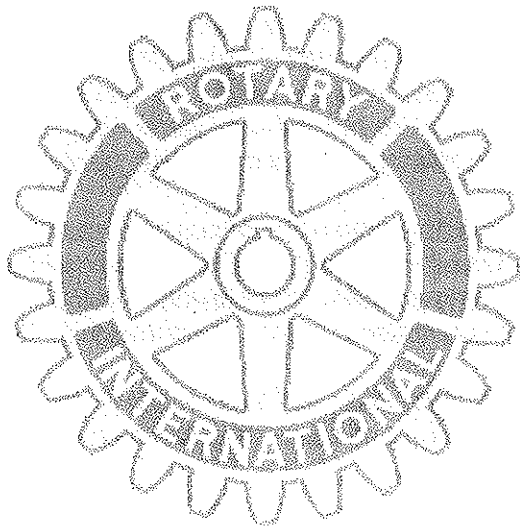
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Jean applied the EffNet principle. She made sure the members got to know her, and she gave value by serving the club and its members.

Lex didn't.

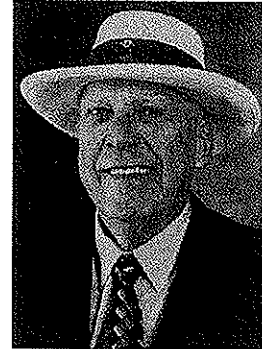


The Development of Acquaintance as an Opportunity for Service.

Assistant Governor – An Ideal Position to Effectively Network while Developing Acquaintances as an Opportunity for Service

*by
Jim Henry, RRIMC Zone 34*

Assistant Governor is the ideal position in which to expand one's circle of quality contacts, and to Effectively Network. Where else does one have the opportunity to allow so many diverse business, professional, and community leaders to get to know you while you are having fun? First, if you do not consider building your own sphere of influence fun, you should not be an assistant governor. Remember when you were a kid and your mom or dad said to go out and play? They were really telling you to go out, make friends, build your sphere of influence, and have fun.



Jim Henry

When a Rotarian gets the opportunity to serve as an assistant governor, they should enthusiastically leap at it because automatically they have a chance to expand their list of quality contacts. And the more contacts one has, the more opportunities for service will arise – or fall – depending on the value given to those contacts.

Let me tell you a story: JR, who specialized in the design of educational, commercial and medical facilities, jumped at the opportunity to be an assistant governor serving eight clubs in a metropolitan area. At a scheduled area-wide meeting, he met the president-elect of each club and got their personal information. The following week, he made lunch appointments with each and marked his calendar to visit each club – asking not to be introduced as anything but a visiting Rotarian. From this initial bit of information, JR pieced together sufficient information to be able to assist each president-elect (PE) with items that could benefit them in preparing for their year – things like District Conference location, registration fees, meal prices, hotel room costs, possible GSE hosting expenses, District Governor visit customs, – various types of beneficial minutia that could be of some use. As JR met with each PE, he asked when would be the most convenient time for an area wide meeting and got them to talking about their club's projects. As the conversation progressed, more information was shared about ways to deal with typical club problems. Most important, the PEs left the lunch feeling that JR was someone they could call upon for assistance if needed.

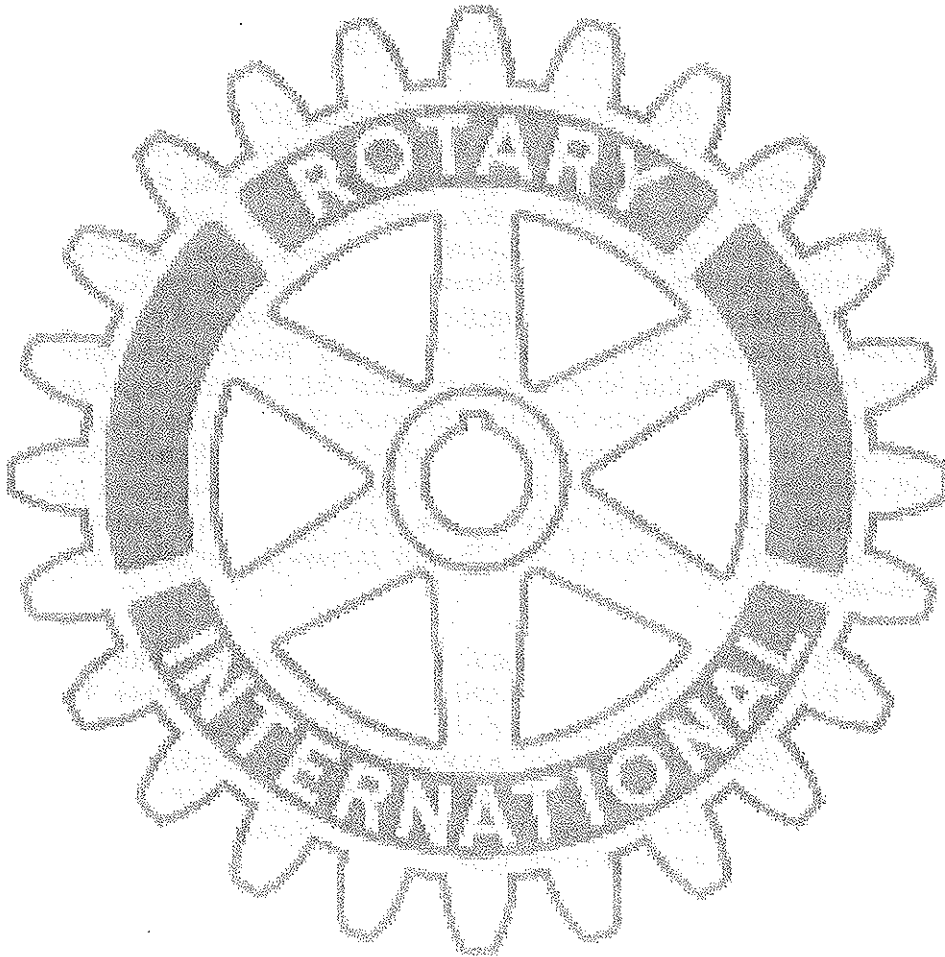
For every area meeting, JR prepared and sent each president an advance agenda. Area meetings started and ended as scheduled, and, most often, issues that needed decisions got them. JR's goal was to make sure the meetings were not a waste of time and that each president left feeling that they had received something of value. Every time JR called the presidents, his calls were taken or returned in a timely fashion. This activity set the stage for the area clubs, over a several year period, to complete joint major local and international educational and humanitarian projects.

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All this sounds like a standard Rotary line to get someone to do a job, doesn't it? Well, here's the rest of the story. As mentioned, JR specialized in designing educational, commercial, and medical facilities. Because of the contacts made through the various Rotary clubs, JR received major personal service opportunities, some mounting to fees nearing six figures. But JR did not take the position of assistant governor for monetary gain. He took it because he felt he could expand his network of quality contacts, and it was those contacts that created JR's opportunities. After all, the right contacts make all the difference, and what better group is there to have as contacts but business, professional, and community leaders who care about what goes on in their towns, cities, states, countries, and the world.

That's Effective Networking – Assistant Governor Style. I do not understand why all club past presidents do not aspire to be Assistant Governors.

Now, how many Objects of Rotary were advanced in this little story?



The Development of Acquaintance as an Opportunity for Service.

A Farmer's Story

by
Jim Henry, RRIMC Zone 34

I had the privilege of being in Nebraska recently assisting starting up the Heartland USA Division of the Rotary Leadership Institute. As I drove the wonderful rolling hills of the North American breadbasket, it reminded me of a nineteenth century farmer who invested his time, talent, and treasure tilling his fields, planting precious seeds, and tending his animals. His efforts paid off. Come fall, he harvested a bountiful crop, celebrated lavishly, and stored food stocks for his family and animals.



Through the chilling winter, he fed his family, generously supplied stores for those less fortunate, welcomed the down-and-out to his table, and sent crates of canned goods to his ancestral homeland. His community honored him with many accolades because of his generosity and community service. But, come spring, he discovered he was in deep trouble – he forgot a fundamental – he had failed to develop and nurture a seed stock. He and his family struggled to survive.

Many Rotary clubs are like the farmer. They have worked hard. They put Service above Self and have given generously, locally and internationally. But, they, like the farmer, have failed to develop and nourish their seed stock. They can no longer grow Rotarians and are struggling to survive.

Who is this seed stock?

- They are members who have been in your Rotary club for less than five years.
- They are prospective members – your community's younger business, professional, and community leaders who have discretionary use of their time, *and perhaps have the same work ethic but a different work culture.*



What are their needs?

Like us thirty-plus-year Rotarians did once-upon-a-time, they will join and stay in their club for business and personal reasons – developing and nurturing acquaintances as an opportunity for service, exchanging values with one another, establishing short and long term friendships – in other words – networking. Only after their club's members have advanced the First and Second Objects of Rotary cultivating them will they blossom into bountiful Rotarians who produce the Third and Fourth Objects of Rotary, and more seed stock.

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Walking the Membership Tightrope

by
Jim Henry, RRIMC Zone 34

The main reasons people will join an organization such as a Rotary club falls into one or all of the following categories: security; to enhance self-esteem; to share information and/or gain knowledge; affiliation and fulfillment of social needs; and/or to achieve certain goals or objectives.⁽¹⁾ It is interesting that many clubs, particularly those with membership problems, have overlooked the concept that belonging to a Rotary club can either threaten or enhance one's feeling of security.

The average person qualified to be invited to join a Rotary club walks a tightrope balancing their personal and income-generating time, the safety net for them and their family. They will not – they should not – spend time, talent, or treasure that may jeopardize their security unless doing so is likely to improve their balance. The challenge for the club is to assure potential members that joining their Rotary club will help stabilize them, which it usually does because they would be networking with some of the community's business, professional, and community leaders.



Here is a simple security level Membership Checklist that may help new members and reaffirm to existing members that the club puts importance on developing acquaintances as an opportunity for service – just plain getting to know each other.

- Does your club's information meeting encourage joining because they will be developing acquaintances within the community's network of business, professional, and community leaders? *(From a business standpoint, do not many members have their membership paid for by a company? Doesn't this imply that their company believes that top-level management participating in a Rotary club is a good business investment?)*
- Does your club have a special program encouraging new members to assimilate into the club, to be better acquainted with club members?
- Does your club encourage all members to make their professions known by classification talks or publishing bios in the club's bulletin? *(Many new members most likely do not know the long time member's present or former professions.)*
- Does your club encourage business and social networking by holding special friendship-building events between new and long time members?
- Does your club encourage vocational visits? *(Events sponsored at members' places of business, such as an after-work happy hour.)*
- Does your club have committee assignments and club programs that help assure all members that being an active club member is worthwhile?

(1) *Groups: Theory and Experience; Napier and Gershenfeld, 1999.*

