

Rotary Large Club Conference



Rotary Large Club Conference October 14-15, 2021

2021 Cincinnati LCC - Membership Engagement and Development Best Practices Session

Dave Carlin

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT/CUSTOMER SERVICE

Mobile Club expressed need for help with better technology for hybrid Rotary meetings and asked if RI could perhaps help with solutions. Milwaukee Club expressed similar concern. San Jose Club said they are close to Zoom HQ and these 3 clubs said they will work together to see if Zoom or someone else can help a consortium of clubs identify better solution - might include tiered solutions.

All clubs agreed the goal is keeping a good connection with members - difference of opinion as to whether things will ever return to in-person only meetings, or will have changed for the long term even when COVID is done.

One Club asked if it's a better thing to have a small number of members but with a high participation rate (e.g., 80%) vs having a very large number of members, but a very low participation rate (e.g., 15%).

Dave Carlin asked: what's your objective? Is it engagement? Or, to have a Club with a lot of members?

One Club wondered if it's better to end Zoom option so some members finally decide to return in-person and participate.

Tulsa Club suggested clubs survey their own members to see how important on ongoing remote option like Zoom is to them.

Another Club suggested the LCC survey clubs to see how many would be helped by the consortium to get a better hybrid options

Phoenix Club raised the concern of a club bifurcating into a Zoomers group, and an in person group. They and if there's a way with hybrid to show those who are on Zoom in larger enough format that those in person can see them during the meeting.

Denver Club said you need the staffing to do hybrid right.

Indianapolis Club plans to do a member survey soon and asked Cincinnati Club to share the survey it used.

One advantage of Zoom is that it has enabled clubs to get bigger name speakers.

Atlanta Club asked if RI is thinking of a new model of Rotary meetings, rather than weekly ones, ex., like every two weeks. Denver Club shared they have moved to a new model of lunch meetings on first and third Wednesdays, second Wednesday for activities, and fourth Wednesday for happy hour. LCC could suggest some models.

Grand Rapids Club shared they use Know Me Better format with table facilitators using questions that help members get to know new, interesting facts about each other.

Corpus Christi Club asked question about what culture you want in your club. They use to have a number of big wigs who weren't engaged. Now they have a number of new, younger members who are engaged.

San Jose Club shared there is no correlation between higher level executive members and engagement.

Several clubs said ten key thing is engaging new members, find out what they want to do, and get them engaged in projects and activities quickly.

Clubs talked about taking care of members needs during COVID, and how that is now helping with members engaging

Cincinnati Club shared how its New Member Advisor program helps retention of new members. Dallas Club shared that new members attend a new member dinner with their spouse or partner which helps to better engage the family and retain the new member.

Many clubs shared how service projects help engage and retain members.

Springfield Club and other clubs shared how they get together with other local Rotary clubs to plan projects.

Rochester Club shared they use text messages to help engage members by reminding members of meeting locations.

One Club has the under forty YP members plan a number of their own activities which has helped a bit with growth.

Cincinnati shared they have neighborhood coffees to better engage members, and also use Happy Birthday postings for its members in social media.

Oakland Club uses a Ring the Bell activity where members pay one hundred dollar donation to come up front at the meeting ring the bell and update other members on a topic they choose.

LA Club uses an incentive of giving members the chance to come up front and profile their business if they sponsor a new member, join a committee, and do two other engagement items.

San Diego and Cincinnati clubs use Greeters on Zoom for 30 min. before the meeting starts - this helped engagement and outreach.

San Jose has a fund to pay for members to stay in Club who have a financial challenge.

Other clubs also took some special actions during COVID such as not charge dues for a while, or reducing dues.

Some clubs shared how they post Member news on their clubs social media sites.

International projects are one way that a number of clubs have seen members get very engaged.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT/SALES

Charlotte club asked which clubs have Corporate Memberships. Portland club responded they do, and that some companies want a rotating seat for Corporate Membership. It was then discussed that each member in a Corporate Membership is still an individual member of Rotary. Corpus Christi Club will carry a person in Corporate Membership till the next year if changes in the Corporate Membership occur.

Cincinnati Club has a couple if types of corporate memberships (3 member min.).

Grand Rapids club responded they have 7 different types of Membership.

Phoenix club: quality people bring in quality members. Young professionals aren't big wigs yet who have same clout in bringing in new members so bigger executives still part of sales process and are used to help.

Lexington Club has found many young professionals switch jobs or move and leave the Club. They are finding some success in getting executives in their mid-50s who've just retired to join the club and stay. Cincinnati Club shared a good recruiting field is people 45-50 YP whose kids are now away.

Portland club: Ask/assess if prospective members want to give of their time, talent and treasure.

Tulsa Club: find the emerging leaders by having other emerging leaders find them.

One Club shared younger generations like "episodic" engagement that has a beginning and an end.

Cincinnati: put a "sales person" in charge of Membership Development. Some groupings within a club can be helpful in the process of attracting have new members join: young professionals, women in Rotary, Corporate members, etc.

Louisville Club: clubs can miss a whole segment of people, especially minorities, unless conscious efforts are made. The Louisville Club did two full days on DEI workshops.

Harrisburg club has a one year, fully paid scholarship" for one new member a year.

Various incentives are used by clubs to help encourage members to bring in new members, such as raffling off a trip to RI convention, a year of free lunches, free airline tickets, gift cards, etc. Also, prospective members eat at no cost, etc.

Nashville: every Board member is expected to bring in a new member.

Chicago: waives the dues and lunches for the first few months of Membership.

Washington DC: every prospective member has to go through an orientation first before they're recommended.

Spouse/partner memberships: LA club meets with 5 area clubs and all of them implemented spouse/partner memberships as a very low cost options. Cincinnati Club has similar Membership.

Dallas Club developed a Sales Team with "rainmakers" and "closers": they broke the Sales team in process segments. Cincinnati has members who help close prospective members if the sponsors wants the help.

MARKETING

One Club shared their new Membership Development marketing campaign is: "Rotary Now More Than Ever".

What are large Rotary clubs seeing as competition for new members? Some responses were: Time, other organizations with specific agendas that help careers, and smaller Rotary than operate at half the price and offer quicker path to leadership opportunities.

Challenge is to better advertise the value of Rotary membership.

Chicago Club mentioned younger generation wants instant gratification, not looking at long-term. But when younger people see the types of service projects that the Chicago Club is doing, it dispels the image of Rotary as being an "old white man's Club". The need is for us to better communicate what we do. We need the Inclusion part of DEI to make this work.

Nashville Club rewrote its Mission statement. Image they have and want to keep is that their club is "the business leaders" and that people want to be part of this.

Nashville is going after those in the "40 Under 40", new companies in town, gathering key names and the connect points of who they want in the club. They have top-notch programming.

Louisville and Cincinnati mentioned their new membership packets for prospective members. Cincinnati gives Corpus Christi credit for the design of their packet.

Shreveport Club set up an "Emerging Leaders Program" for those in their 20s and early 30s. They set up a scholarship fund to help with costs: they'll pay half the dues for up to 5 years for younger members (they do this for up to 5 members at a time).

Nashville had discussed a discounted young professional membership, but most felt they didn't want to be at "the happy meal table".

Harrisburg Club removed language from its bylaws stating you "have to be a leader in your company".

Lincoln Club has found that uses traditional print media for advertising still does work.

Louisville Club has been successful in getting TV coverage.

Rochester Club thinks using a combination of many types of social media is the best campaign.

Nashville uses Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media.

Harrisburg recording meetings and posting on You Tube.

Lincoln Club found that introducing new Corporate Membership (3 employees) helped gain new members during COVID. Hybrid meetings also allowed for international guests which added greater interest. Using FB live streaming where anyone can sign in.

Memphis Club gaining members now that they've restarted in-person meetings. They have also found that their community-wide service projects have also drawn in new members.

Sioux Falls Club has made a number of marketing efforts that have helped Membership increase: started in person meetings again in August 2020 and did not close down, used new branding of the Club as the "place where important conversations happen", targeted a list of important people and asked each to join, made the membership process more structured with 5 clear steps, have given very intentional recognition to the current members who bring in new members, created a "forwardable" email to invite people to meetings that also includes "How to Join", created short videos highlighting programs and speakers and posted on social media, and changed the style of their meetings from being just one speaker to being a moderator-facilitated panel of 3 speakers.

Cincinnati Club shared that its own internal corporate roundtable of its corporate members is hosting industry forums with moderator-facilitated panels of three industry speakers.

One Club shared it hosted a Women's World Bank event which resulted in 2-3 new members.

Several clubs shared that they'd outsourced their social media (Cincinnati was one of them). Little Rock looking at it.

Clubs shared the social media platforms they're using which include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube.

Need to make sure your website stays fresh. Wash D.C. Club posts their embassy events which are good ones for prospective members. Cincinnati Club uses RI feed and its own Club FB feed to keep steam if new news.

Good website has work for both internal and external purposes.

Some Clubs also use a paid photographer.

Service projects can often be good events for attracting new members.

Two clubs mentioned they do an Annual Report.

San Diego Club has hired an intern to help with social media.

Dallas Club mentioned that it's often the small businesses who benefit the most from Rotary connections and business networking.

Notes taken by Brett Lebhar, Rotary Club of Cincinnati President 2020-2021