

Developing New Rotary Clubs

A District Guide for The G Line and DMC

I. Develop the Plan

- a. DG, DGE, DGN, District Membership Chair, District PR Chair, and other appropriate persons assemble to devise a multiyear plan to develop new clubs
 - i. Typical Club formation time, from initial meeting to signing of the club charter is typically 6 to 9 months (sometimes much quicker, sometimes longer),
 - ii. A club dependent on technology, such as an e-club, can require as much as 18 months, due to budget cycles, etc.
- b. Club Development will require support by the G line, the district use of social media, and other methods of outreach
- c. The district must be aware of the alignment and agreement of the G line for the plan to work optimally.
- d. DG, DGE, and DMC must establish a communication and feedback loop to address issues and for the DMC to give the DG and DGE up to date status reports and talking points.

II. Announce

- a. District Membership Chair (DMC) works with District Governor (DG) and District Governor Elect (DGE) to announce their ambition to grow the District through creation of new clubs.
- b. DG and DGE must validate the efforts of the District Membership Chair (this effort must be perceived to be a District initiative) by:
 - i. Using Assembly, PETS, and Training events to announce the intention to grow new clubs.
 - ii. DG and DGE state they have assigned the DMC the task of leading this important effort.
 - iii. DG, DGE and DMC use District Newsletter, District Facebook Page, District Twitter account, and other communication tools to reinforce, communicate and solicit advice and assistance.

- c. District leadership must be cheerleaders for this effort.
- d. DG and DGE should take every opportunity to encourage the Clubs with whom the DMC is working.
- e. Be certain everyone in the district is aware the effort is real, will last several years, and that new clubs in their area might be a real outcome.
- f. A big splash announcement will create energy, interest, ideas, and Rotarians who want to help. Leverage all of the positive energy and effort. It may also help to reduce resistance.

III. Identify Opportunities

- a. Query the Governor line, PDG's, ADG's, Past Membership Chairs, Club Presidents, other respected Rotarians. Ask them:
 - i. Where do we need a new Rotary Club or a new Satellite Club? (Do not separate satellite options until later in the process.)
 - ii. Where do we have the opportunity to form a new morning, noon, or evening club?
 - iii. Where did the district have clubs that shut down or terminated?
 - iv. Which clubs have a new member waiting list or significant applicant "turndown" rate?
- b. When the DMC makes the inquiries:
 - i. Tailor inquiry method specific to the Audiences.
 - 1. A solicitation e-mail is sufficient for ADG's. Let them know you will be reaching out to Club Presidents and Presidents Elect before contacting them.
 - 2. Use e-mail inquiries to Club Presidents and Presidents Elect due to their number and varied locations.
 - 3. Personal discussions with the Governor line and PDG's are more appropriate, and will yield better and more thoughtful responses.
 - ii. Take copious notes.
 - 1. Capture names associated with ideas.
 - 2. When you are given ideas, ask the respondent if they would be willing to be an information resource to you or if they would like to help.

- iii. A membership history/club history is a valuable tool in understanding the opportunities and pitfalls associated with starting new clubs
- iv. The DMC will hear “We tried there and failed” on a regular basis, especially when speaking with PDG’s. When this occurs, inquire about specifics:
 - 1. Who was involved?
 - 2. What was their approach?
 - 3. Why did it not succeed?
 - 4. Any other historical background or leads to restarting the effort.
- c. Remember that past failure is no indicator of future success. A past failure could be a high value future opportunity!!
- d. Always follow up questions with:
 - i. “Do you know someone who might be willing to lead a new club formation effort?” and,
 - ii. “Is there some way in which you would like to participate or help?”
 - iii. Thank them for their time and input.

IV. Explore the Opportunities

- a. Make a list that should include:
 - i. All suggested or identified opportunities.
 - ii. Locations you believe that should be included.
 - iii. Locations where clubs existed in the past.
 - iv. Locations where attempts were made to create new clubs.
 - v. Locations where recent major economic activity has positively affected the population growth.
 - vi. Unconventional locations such as large employer campuses, large government campuses, commercial districts where a significant number of businesses exist in close proximity, schools and university campuses, and hospitals.
- b. Work toward a Prioritized List
 - i. Discuss the top ten or so opportunities with:
 - 1. Local Clubs in the vicinity
 - 2. The respective ADG

3. PDG's from the area
 4. DG, DGE, DGN.
- c. Seek to find:
- i. How welcome (or unwelcome) the opportunity is to local clubs.
 - ii. Interest and excitement about the opportunity.
 - iii. Who wants to work on it, is there a local champion? Is an individual willing to "own" the effort?
 - iv. Is there a population of potential members? (Rotarians who recently left local clubs are a potential resource!)
 - v. Are there favorable logistics, meeting locations, etc.?
- d. Evaluate the Opportunities
- i. The Best Opportunities are:
 1. Local Clubs welcome the opportunity, and one or more want to sponsor a new club.
 2. There are people who want to participate, and a local champion (defined later) who is passionate and excited about starting a new club, or a committed team leader.
 3. A population of potential new members is easily identifiable.
 - ii. The Worst Opportunities are:
 1. Local clubs are vehemently opposed, and the local ADG is cool to the idea.
 2. No Champion or team leader is interested in helping.
 3. There are not many readily identifiable prospective new members.
- e. Rate the Opportunities
- i. Develop a Rating for each opportunity based on:
 1. The size of the opportunity. Presence of a large number of potential members may override other potential issues.
 2. The presence of people who want to participate, and existence of a team leader or a local champion (defined later) who is passionate and excited about starting a new club.
 3. Any other factors which you feel are important to the possible success or failure of a new club.

4. Document your rationale.
- ii. There will be obvious high value opportunities with which to start. Select your top 3 or 4 to begin:
 1. These locations will have team leaders or champions who have agreed to lead the process, and willing team members who have agreed to serve. They will likely already have begun to meet.
 2. There will be locations that are attractive opportunities but do not have individuals who have agreed to serve in a leadership role, or team members who have agreed to serve.
 - » Consider how you will launch those opportunities.
 - » Avoiding false starts is important. It is better to continue to cultivate the opportunity than to launch prematurely and fail.
 - » Consider how you might continue to encourage local clubs to continue to seek that leadership to begin a team.
 3. There are likely to be obvious nonstarter opportunities, put those on hold for now.
- f. Before proceeding to the next step, review your conclusions and rationale with the DG and DGE to confirm their continued authorization and support!!! They need to buy in and be knowledgeable on the approach! Move forward throughout the process as a unified team!

V. Start Building New Clubs

- a. Work your top priority opportunities:
 - i. Work with the key contact for each opportunity to begin putting together a team, and to identify a sponsor club.
 - ii. When you have a team of at least three or four, and someone who has committed to lead the team, schedule an organizational meeting.
 - iii. Prior to the organizational meeting, work with the key contact on ideas for a sponsor club (must have 25 or more members).

- iv. Identify and recruit a person (preferably a PDG) to be a Rotary resource to the team.
 - v. Keep the ADG informed, but involve only if they wish to be.
 - vi. When the team holds its first organizational meeting, the District Membership Chair Role becomes advisor/mentor/cheerleader, ad hoc Organization Team member.
- b. In the Organizational Meeting the Team will:
- i. Discuss team organization and roles. Some team members will be part of the new club, some will remain with their existing club.
 - ii. Discuss (charter) member attraction.
 - 1. Identify sources of potential members.
 - 2. Provide the Rotary Values as a job description for potential members and how that can be used to identify prospects.
 - 3. Discuss Attraction Strategies with the DMC and a timetable to receive training on Attraction Strategy Action Plans.
 - iii. Discuss a regular meeting date, time and location for the organization committee meetings.
 - iv. Agree on action steps, persons responsible, and timetables going forward.
- c. Club Organization Committee Objectives
- i. Set a goal of becoming a Rotary Club (20 members minimum) or Satellite Club (8 members minimum) If satellite club formation is selected, the DMC becomes an advisor to sponsor club and ends the organizational team role.
 - ii. Identify location and frequency of meetings, and establish the cost of membership.
 - iii. Start conducting regular meetings as soon as possible, before receiving the club charter, to begin engaging club members
 - iv. Work on developing ideas and timetables for fundraisers and service projects
 - v. Create a club Facebook page to announce meetings and attract prospects. Post regularly, even if it is simply Rotary information.

- d. Club Organization Committee Objectives (Continued)
 - i. Develop Charter, Bylaws, Constitution, and a leadership team.
 - ii. Have Rotary information speakers at some club meetings to:
 - 1. Educate the prospective members about what the Rotary Foundation does (not how it works), specifically the good works funded by the Foundation in local communities and around the world.
 - 2. Educate the club members on the Avenues of Service, and include examples of the types of projects that have been done in the district that targeted each of the Avenues.
 - iii. Submit the application for charter with the appropriate number of signatures and a matching amount of money for dues.
- e. Objectives for the new Rotary Club at time of Charter
 - i. A motivated leadership team is in place.
 - ii. A plan is in place to continue to attract new members
 - iii. A list of projects, fundraisers and other strategies are in place for engaging charter and new members.
 - iv. A sponsor club is in place and participating.
 - v. The club is engaged with the District, and has knowledge of and access to Rotary resources, both at the local and district level.
 - vi. The club leadership team stays connected with the District Governor and the Assistant Governor for help and support.

VI. Celebrate Success!!!

- a. Honor the Signing of the Charter:
 - i. The District Governor, DGE, DMC, Sponsor Club, and the Charter members gather to make signing of the Rotary charter a historic moment for the club.
 - ii. The Sponsor club will present the banner, bell and gavel to the incoming Club President.
 - iii. Photos are taken of the District Governor pinning each charter member with their Charter Member Pin
- b. Advertise the charter ceremony

- i. Invite community leadership, including elected representatives, business leaders, community leaders, etc.
 - ii. Invites on Facebook include a call for “interested members of the community to attend.”
 - iii. News stories in advance and following the ceremony will produce interest and excitement for the community.
- c. Announce Club plans for service
 - i. President’s brief statement should include community service plans to attract additional interest.
- d. Accolades for all of the responsible parties involved.

VII. Special Considerations

- a. Decision to create a new Satellite Club instead of a new Rotary Club
 - i. The DMC should always begin the new club process with the objective of creating a new 20+ Charter Member Rotary Club
 - ii. Considerations that might cause the effort to shift from new club to Satellite club formation
 - 1. It becomes clear that 20 members is not going to happen quickly, and prospective charter members are losing interest
 - 2. There is insufficient leadership in the Charter Member group, and leadership from the Sponsoring Rotary Club is needed for a longer period of time
 - iii. Should the decision to create a new Satellite Club instead of a new Rotary Club occur.
 - 1. DMC should evaluate whether any other decision is practical.
 - 2. DMC and soon to be Satellite Sponsor Club leadership agree the option is the correct path forward.
 - 3. DMC withdraws from the effort except on an as needed advisory basis.
 - 4. The Satellite Sponsor Club moves forward to create a Satellite Club with at least 8 members.
- b. Champion versus Organizational Team Leader
 - i. Champion Attributes
 - 1. Takes personal ownership of Club formation

2. May not currently be a Rotarian, but will be a Charter member of the new Club
 3. Works tirelessly for the new Club's success.
 - ii. Team Leader Attributes
 1. Likely a Rotarian in an existing club
 2. Will probably remain with their original club
 3. Accepts the challenge to help build leadership in the new club membership
- c. Existing Club Opposition
 - i. Hazards that Local Club opposition may create
 1. ADG may feel obligated to support the existing club position as a part of their job
 2. In smaller communities the community leaders in the existing Rotary Club may be able to prevent the formation of a new club by pressuring potential new members.
 3. Risk of alienating the existing club from the district, reducing their involvement and participation in district activities.
 - ii. How this can be assessed:
 1. Work with the DG and DGE to assess the level of Risk.
 - a. Define each hazard that antagonizing the local Club might create.
 - b. Determine the degree of exposure the district might face for each hazard.
 - c. Agree on which of the risks, if any, require action and what actions are needed.
 2. Agree on whether there is value in pursuing the new club at this time.
 - iii. Thoughts on how the District might address the issues
 1. DG or DGE could speak with the ADG about their dual responsibility to both the club and the district, and their role as a problem solver.
 2. DG and/or DMC could speak to the club president about the source of their concern and opposition, and ask how it can be mitigated.

3. DMC could speak to the Club Membership chair and the President Elect about the membership advantages of satellite clubs and the opportunities for starting one (or more.)
- iv. **Existing Club opposition to a new club, by itself, may not be sufficient reason to eliminate a good opportunity from the list.**

VIII. You Have Led the Creation of a New Rotary Club!

- a. Congratulations to the DMC, DG, and all involved.
- b. Now:
 - i. Go back to your list, review the rankings, adjust according to what you have learned,
 - ii. Review the next step with District Leadership, and
- c. **Work on your next New Rotary Club!!!**