

WANT TO KEEP YOUR MEMBERS? TRY THIS!

There seems to be a pervasive practice of “panic induction” in smaller clubs when faced with reduction in their current membership or an unrealistic membership goal. After an invitation, a handshake or pat on the back and a short welcoming spot on the program, the visitor has become a member and a Rotarian!

Then, the new member’s club meeting attendance becomes sporadic, committee assignments are not met or are dropped altogether. And if the new member was voted in as an officer, a void in leadership develops due to lack of knowledge, uncertainty and insecurity which usually leads to inattention. The once new member finally either quits coming to meetings, and remains on the roster, or announces his resignation from the club.

Following the recommended procedure for getting new members is imperative to the survival of a club, especially a smaller club! Newcomers need to feel they have made a good decision and are wanted and needed by the club. That is why a newcomer should attend several meetings before being asked to join. It is during these initial visits the prospective member is exposed to Rotary’s practices

A thorough explanation of the obligation of members to club, district and the international level of Rotary should occur before any invitation to join is offered. Several clubs have made it a practice to have a 6-month learning phase as a part of the membership induction. Red Badge clubs are also a way to more fully educate the new member. Mentoring is essential so that for as long as the new member feels the need,

there will be some more experienced Rotarian available for guidance.

Attendance at a district assembly or conference as a prerequisite for holding office at the club level would, at least in part, assure stronger leadership, more knowledgeable committee chairs and most certainly more members with a higher level of dedication to the service of Rotary therein causing membership numbers to steadily and reliably increase.

When members have an opportunity to feel connected to their club through understanding of its purpose and working with others towards Rotary goals, they will want to remain members.