

# Rotaract Recruitment Matters



## GETTING YOU UP-TO-DATE ON ROTARACT NEWS, TRENDS, BEST PRACTICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

*In this special one-off edition, learn all about recruitment and retention in Rotaract. Whether you're a Rotaract Member looking to improve your club's practices, a Club President in search of innovative ideas to help your club grow or a district leader supporting Rotaract Clubs in your area, this issue of Rotaract Recruitment Matters will provide all the tools you need to achieve your recruitment and retention goals this year!*

### Rotaractors' Best Recruitment Practices

I remember sitting in a district conference some years ago, listening to every club enumerate their strategies to attract new members. They ranged from having a website to wrapping sweets in Rotaract paper. It occurred to me then that, for most clubs, recruitment and retention was a little bit of a guessing game. Yet, it doesn't have to be. By understanding the recruitment process better, you can deliver the right kind of messages to your potential members and thus gain new members.

The first step in achieving this is to understand that recruitment is really a 6 step process. At each of the steps, the new members seek different types of information and is involved in different ways.

To get an idea of what your prospective members go through when they consider joining your club, have a look at the table below.

For recruitment to be effective, a club must first determine what stage the new member is involved in, and then progressively move that prospective member to the next stage, and the next, until they become a member.

By learning to view your interactions with prospective members as a friendship, your club will be able to approach the new members and retain them into Rotaract.

Written by: Corina M. Paraschiv, ACCT Communications Director



"We're Strangers!"	"We're still strangers!"	"We're acquaintances"	"We're friends"	"We're friends"	"We're Partners!"
Awareness	Credibility	Interest	Preference	Selection	Loyalty
A person first finds out about Rotaract from a friend or poster ...	The person must trust that Rotaract is a legitimate organisation before considering joining	At this point, the club can present its activities, matching the interests and expectations of a prospective member	The person then compares different options (joining Rotaract vs. another club) & forms a preference	At this stage the person must be able to participate (time & budget constraints, accessibility to meetings...)	This is what Rotaract Clubs strive for: <b>retention</b> . What is your club doing to keep its members satisfied?

Do you notice how a prospective member has to be informed of different things at different stages of the recruitment process?

# Rotaract Research for your club

*How can your club best advertise itself to attract new members? In this article we reveal the do's and don't of a successful ad!*

A group of Undergraduate Students studying marketing at Concordia University, Canada, have recently carried out a market research project to investigate what kind of advertising might be most effective when trying to attract new members. Here are the key findings:

1. **The average person does not seek out Rotaract**, even though 70% of the survey's respondents had participated in a Rotary Youth Program previously. As a result, Rotaract clubs should make a conscious effort to reach out and be seen.

2. **PR is more effective than advertising.** Clubs can achieve greater awareness of their existence by generating a buzz about Rotaract or through word of mouth. Generate this buzz by ensuring your successful events are covered by the local newspapers - don't wait for a reporter and photographer do it yourself - both before and after all your events.

3. **Potential Members may not have a positive attitude towards Rotaract.** You can respond to this by increasing your visibility in your community - get people, magazines, associations to talk about you so that prospective members do not think you are biased when you tell them how great Rotaract is!

4. **Be Careful with Humour!** Several ad campaigns were tested to see students' preferences when it came to posters and marketing messages. The campaign that bore the title "Bored? Why not save the World?" ranked least attractive. Lesson learned: humour on humanitarian matters is a sensitive topic!

5. **Use emotional appeal.** The study revealed students preferred and remembered ads that had an emotional appeal rather than a fear appeal or a rational discourse.

6. **Speak of Freedom, Excitement, Novelty and Exploration.** The motivations for students to join clubs significantly scored highest on these than on other categories (such as self-actualisation, involvement, etc.)

7. **Stress Professional Development & Fellowship.** Stressing the club's friendly culture (fellowship) and the professional development aspect to prospective members could get members to prefer your club to other clubs in your community. It's Rotaractors USP (Unique Selling Point!)

8. **Be clear on Time Commitments.** The research showed that students actually had the time required to participate in a Rotaract Club and were willing to spend on average 5 hours per week for a community service club. If you are clear on the number of hours required to be a Rotaractor, you increase your chances of gaining a member.

Written by: Corina M. Paraschiv, ACCT Communications Director

## Publicity & Recruitment Campaign Plan

Every Rotaract Club should have a publicity and recruitment campaign plan so that their club is always in the forefront of the local community. Recruitment should not be seen as a one-off exercise each year, it is something that *needs* to be happening all the time.

Maidenhead Rotaract in District 1090 have used the dripping tap method during 2008-09 and have seen amazing success with a **136% increase in their membership!** How you may ask? Here are some of their tips:

- Get to know your local reporters by name
- Create press releases for **all** your events no matter how small they may seem to you e.g. a social night in the local bar to attract new members
- Send your press releases to the local press before your event and ask if they will send a photographer
- Send a press release after your event
- Get your club website listed on all other local websites
- Add your events to online calendars
- Put up posters round town in shops, doctors, dentists etc
- Write to local employers asking them to put up your posters
- Send your posters to local colleges/6th forms
- Whenever you are out and about wear your Rotaract T-shirts
- Hire the display stands in your local library
- Create videos of your events & post them on YouTube and on your website
- Join the town groups on Facebook & post messages about your club



# Membership Retention Starts with Friendships

*Have you ever wondered what is the best way for a group to retain its members? With increasingly numerous alternatives to joining a Rotaract Club, such as taking up a job offer, getting involved in another organisation or going to the gym, Rotaract Clubs increasingly face the challenge of retaining members in their clubs. Here are some insights on the topic.*

With increasing mobility, people's need for communities and sense of belonging is rising dramatically. This new trend is great news for organisations such as Rotaract, who place an emphasis on teamwork and fellowship, by the very nature of their programmes.

Yet, if your club is fairly new or small, it may be buried in day-to-day tasks, trying to run projects without too many resources, trying to raise awareness in the community to get some more members and trying to train new members to run projects. Although all these activities are crucial to any Rotaract Club, community building remains a must in order to retain your members. In addition, you will find that members that relate to the group have an easier time choosing projects and causes as they feel part of a community and can even help to identify new projects as needs arise.

Once you meet a prospective member how do you actually get them to come back? A first impression can be the make or break of a new person joining your club so make sure you give out the right signals from the get-go. Outreach a hand in friendship, make them feel welcome and make sure their first meeting with you and your club is not too formal.

As a long-time Rotaractor I know that one of the reasons I have stayed part of the organisation for so many years (8 in total so far) is because I have made some great friends, ones that I know I can count on in hard times and ones that I enjoy their company.

You can kick-start those friendships with potential members by introducing the "buddy" system in your club. If someone new turns up, appoint one existing club member to "buddy" the new person. This includes providing a friendly welcome when they first show up, offering to buy them a drink, sitting with them during their first meeting and explaining what is going on. After their first visit to your club their buddy calls them a couple of days later to find out how they are and what they thought of it. Whilst on the phone they can tell them about the upcoming events your club is planning and invite them along, even offer to give them a lift. Believe me this is a sure-fire way to make them feel welcome and put them on the road to making new friends.

Written by Lisa Burnett, Past RGBI Chairman and Corina M. Paraschiv, ACCT Communications Director

## Recruitment Resources

There are numerous resources available online via [www.rotaract.org.uk](http://www.rotaract.org.uk) to help you with your recruitment and retention needs, including:

- Kickstart Manual - a guide to kickstarting your club and finding new members
- Sample Marketing Letters to send to local employers advertising your club
- Marketing Materials including leaflets, posters, business cards
- Guides on how to build club/district websites
- PowerPoint Presentations
- New Member welcome letters
- Club Membership Certificates

