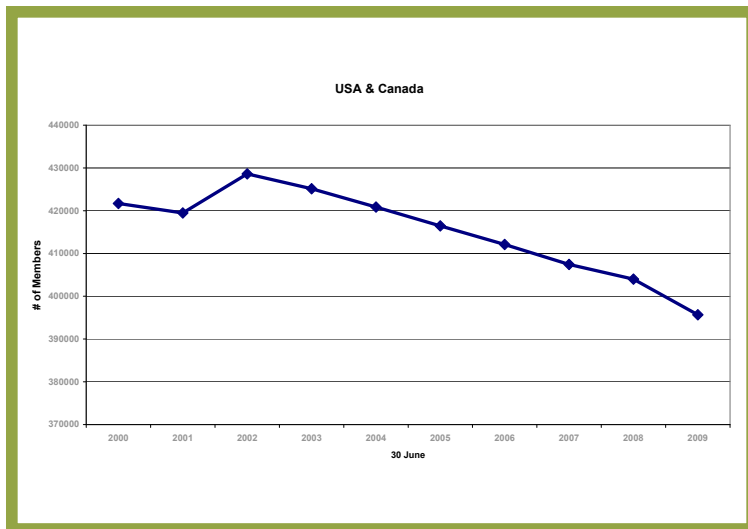




North America and Caribbean Islands

10-Year Trend

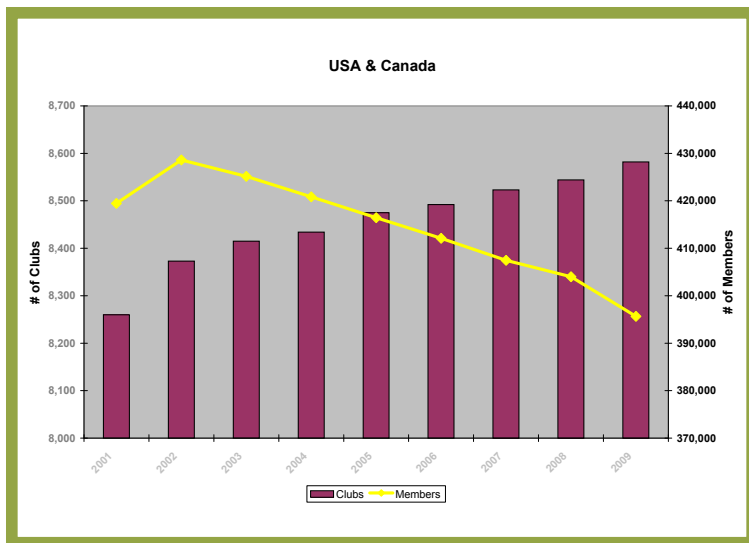


Over the past 10 years, USA & Canada showed a spike in membership in 2002, followed by a steady decline since that year, resulting in a net 6% decline over the past 10 years.

In the Caribbean Islands, membership increased sharply in 2003-04 but then dropped off again, followed by moderate growth since 2007. The net change over the past 10 years is a 6% growth.

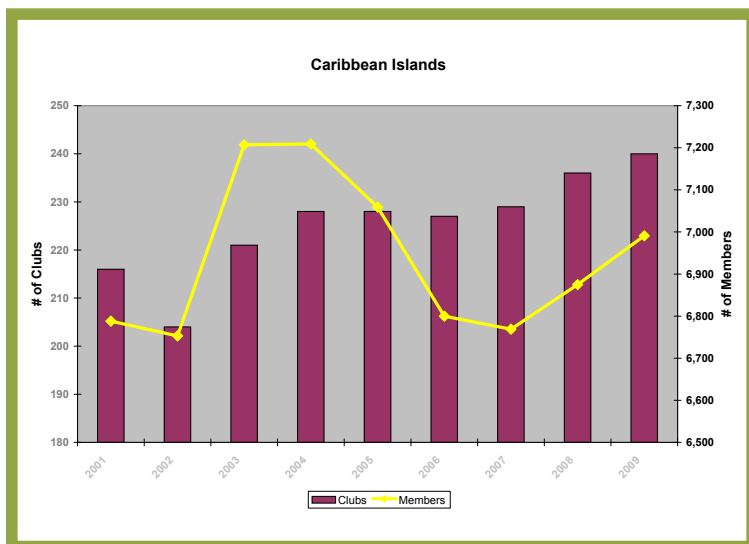
Membership growth is a crucial element in continuing the important work Rotary does throughout the world. Simply put, in order for Rotary to offer more services to more communities at home and abroad, a strong and engaged membership base is needed to provide the time, energy, and resources required to carry out these much-needed projects.





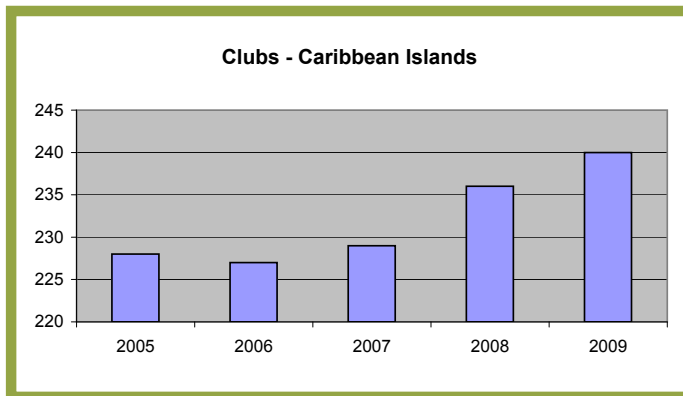
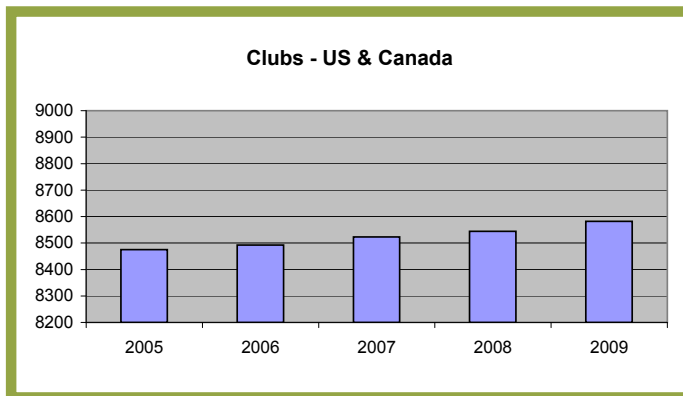
These graphs show growth in clubs as compared to growth in members. Over the past 10 years, the number of clubs in North America has steadily grown while the number of members has decreased. In the Caribbean Islands, there are more clubs than 10 years ago but only slightly more members.

Next, we'll examine club characteristics to see what factors may be affecting membership trends in the region.



Club Characteristics

Number of Clubs



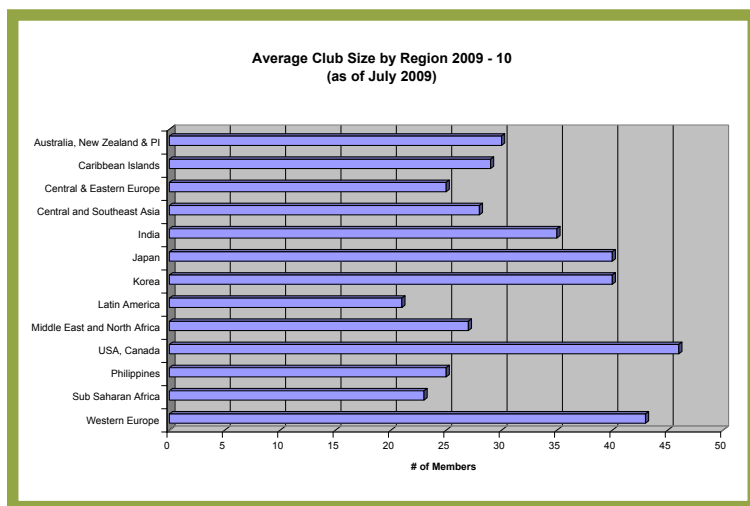
In the past five years, the number of clubs has increased by 1% in the USA & Canada and by 5% in the Caribbean Islands. This compares to a 4% growth in the number of Rotary clubs worldwide over the same time period.

New clubs are a crucial part of overall membership trends in a region. Establishing new clubs can be an effective way of responding to the changing needs of a community — whether demographic, geographic, or even economic.

Action steps:

- Use **Organizing New Clubs (808)** to learn about the process of starting a new club.
- Consider sponsoring a new club in an underserved geographic location in your community.
- Start new clubs that focus on a particular demographic group that may not be served with a community's current club. Perform the **Membership Diversity Assessment** in **Club Assessment Tools** to see if any demographic groups are underrepresented in your club, and determine if a new club could respond to those needs.
- Consider starting a Rotary e-club. Recent Council legislation approved the establishment of up to two Rotary e-clubs per district. E-clubs may be a viable option in your area for members who find it difficult to attend in-person meetings. Review **What You Need to Know about Rotary E-Clubs**.
- Perform the **Membership Satisfaction Survey** in **Club Assessment Tools** to gauge members' happiness with the time your club meets, and consider sponsoring a new club that meets at a time more convenient for a significant percentage of your club members.

Club Size



As of July 2009, the average club size in the USA & Canada was 46 members; in the Caribbean Islands, the average club size was 29. The average club size for all Rotary clubs worldwide is 37.

Of the 240 clubs in the Caribbean Islands, 32% have fewer than 20 members. Of the 8,582 clubs in the USA & Canada, 21% have fewer than 20 members.

The RI Board has established the following provisions to ensure that clubs have adequate numbers to remain viable:

- As of January 2011, any new club is required to have a minimum of 25 charter members. At least 50% of the charter members must be from the local community in which the club is established.

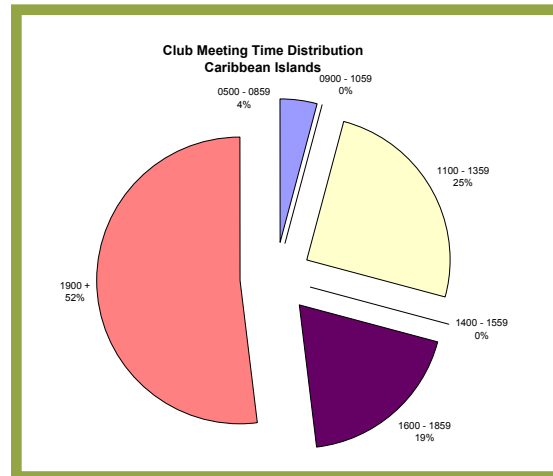
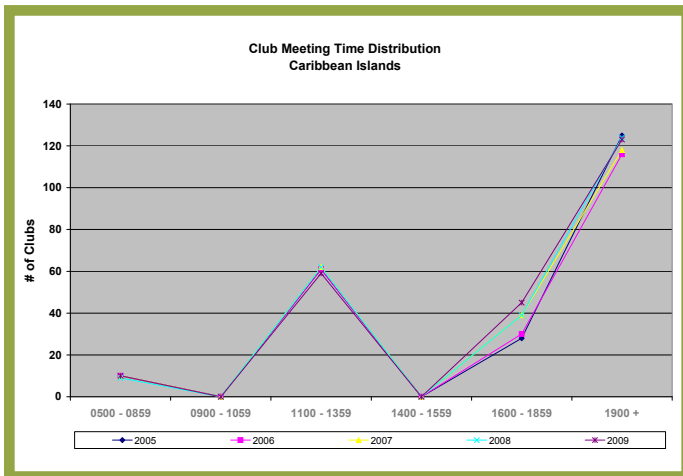
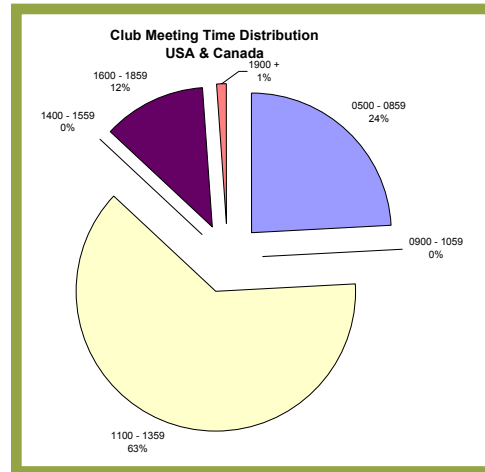
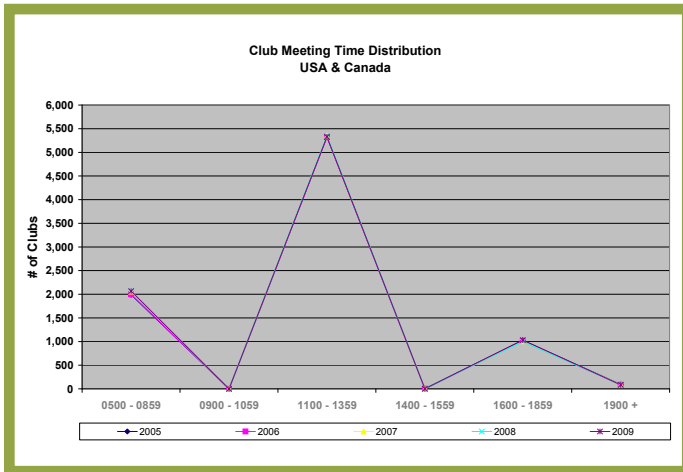
- A club that wishes to sponsor a new club must have at least 20 members.
- Each club is required to pay RI dues for a minimum of 10 members.

The challenges for smaller clubs can be that there aren't enough members to successfully carry out service projects for the community or to lead the club and adequately fulfill all of the club's administrative roles. Also, all professions in the community may not be represented, and the club may not sufficiently reflect the demographic composition of the community.

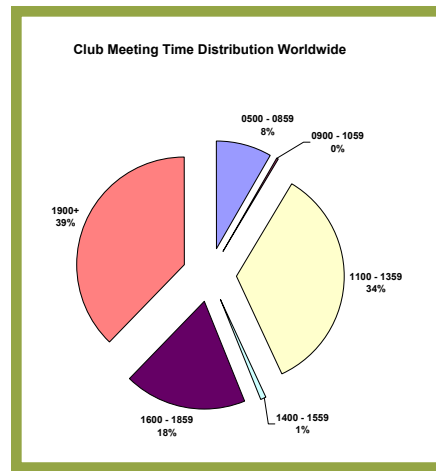
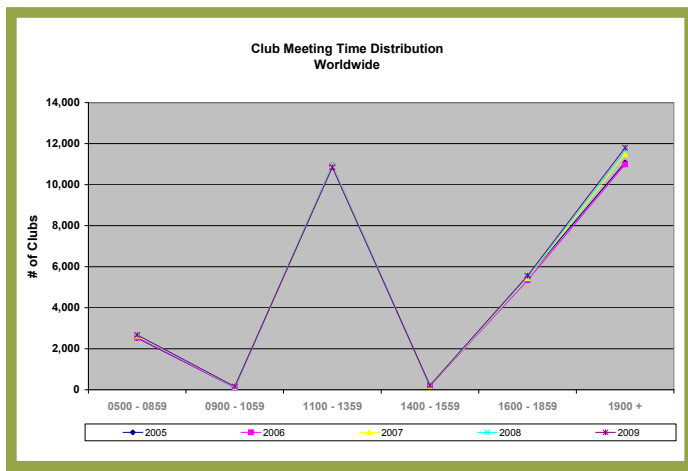
Action steps:

- Use the *Planning Guide for Effective Rotary Clubs* to assess the club's current state, establish goals for the coming year, and develop strategies to pursue the club's long-term goals.
- Use *Be a Vibrant Club: Your Club Leadership Plan (245)* to help you make your club more active, engaging, and vital to the community.
- Use the **Retention Model** and **Termination Profile** found in *Club Assessment Tools* to gauge the club's ability to keep members active and to address any weaknesses uncovered.
- Use the *Strategic Planning Guide* as a framework for establishing long-term goals for your club, including increasing your club size.

Club Meeting Time



In the USA & Canada, 63% of clubs meet at lunchtime (1100-1300), and another 24% hold breakfast meetings. In the Caribbean Islands, 56% of clubs meet in the evening (1900 or later), and 27% meet at lunchtime (1100-1300).



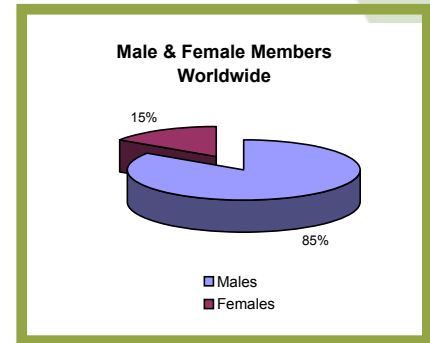
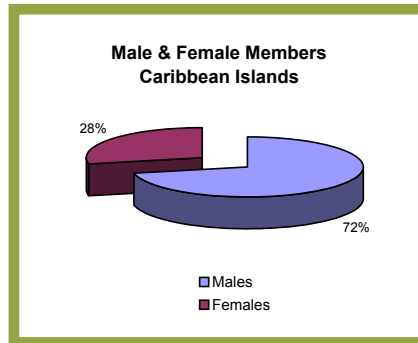
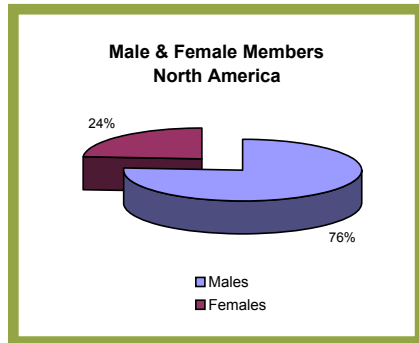
Worldwide, 39% of Rotary clubs meet in the evening (1900 or later), 34% meet at lunchtime (1100-1300), 18% meet late afternoon/early evening (1600-1900), and 8% hold breakfast meetings.

Club meeting times can affect the ability to attract and involve members. Professional demands have made it difficult for many to attend lunchtime meetings. Younger members with families may have time constraints preventing them from joining evening meetings. Morning meetings may be more convenient and have become popular in some regions. The goal is to provide meeting opportunities that are convenient to different situations and different segments. Research indicates that flexibility is key to meeting the needs of members.

Action steps:

- Use the **Membership Satisfaction Survey** in *Club Assessment Tools* to determine if club meeting times are optimal for your current membership.
- Use the **Resigning Member Questionnaire** in *Club Assessment Tools* to find out if meeting time is a factor in members' decision to leave.
- Consider other meeting times to attract young professionals who may have family obligations that could preclude them from attending evening meetings or cannot attend lunchtime meetings.
- Consider sponsoring a new club in your area with a different meeting time to accommodate prospective members who can't make your club time.

Member Gender



Women make up 24% of the members of Rotary clubs in the USA & Canada and 28% of the club members in the Caribbean Islands. The Caribbean Islands is the region with the highest percentage of female members in the Rotary world. Worldwide, women represent 15% of members.

A comment from a Rotarian in the region:

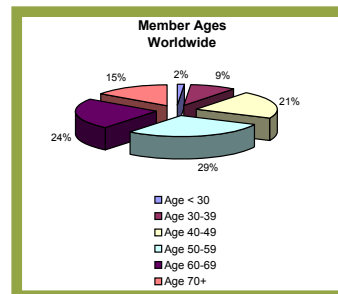
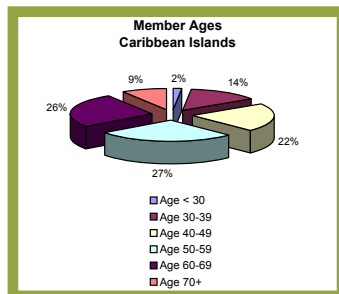
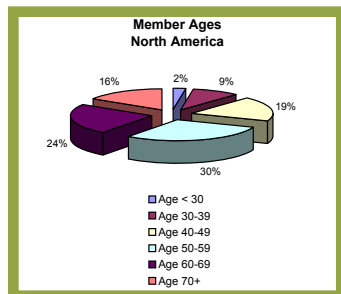
“Clubs in my area (USA) have seen growth in membership by women, but those numbers still do not reflect the number of women in business. There is still an opportunity to attract additional women members into Rotary. This can be enhanced with more women in leadership positions at the club level. To facilitate this change, district leadership could provide guidance on recruiting women and promoting women in leadership at the district level.”

Women assume leadership positions in organizations and businesses and in professional capacities such as medicine, law, consulting, and finance. Actively seeking out female members is a goal for all Rotary clubs in the 21st century.

Action steps:

- Check your local business association for statistics on female business owners and professionals. Then make it a goal to match your club’s gender profile to the gender profile of your business community.
- Consider **designing a PR campaign** targeted specifically to women. Research indicates that the public image of Rotary clubs is predominantly male. Often, changing people’s perception of an organization can be the largest hurdle to improving diversity.
- Send out the **Membership Satisfaction Survey** found in **Club Assessment Tools** to learn from female members what may or may not be working for them in the club. Do they feel welcome? Does your club’s structure and schedule fit in with their other responsibilities?
- Perform the **Classification Survey** found in **Club Assessment Tools** to make sure your club is representative of your community’s business and professional interests. Professional and business interests that are not represented in your club’s membership can be an opportunity to focus your club’s recruitment efforts. Consider professional women who might be approached to fill these gaps.
- Have female Rotarians run a club information/promotion meeting to invite business and professional women in your community.

Member Age



In the USA & Canada, 70% of members in Rotary clubs are age 50 or older. In the Caribbean, 62% of members are age 50 or older. Worldwide, 68% of Rotary club members are age 50 or older.

A good balance of member ages allows Rotary clubs to better understand and more effectively address the needs of their communities and to remain relevant to all segments. Clubs with an adequate number of younger members will also be less likely to encounter certain problems in the future, such as lack of qualified leadership and attrition. Maintaining a good representation of members in all age groups is a goal for all Rotary clubs worldwide.

A comment from a Rotarian in the region:

“One way to attract younger members is by providing a better benefit to becoming and remaining a Rotarian. One idea that may deserve further exploration is the concept of business mentoring. In the United States, most corporations have eliminated middle levels of management, leaving less experienced employees without the benefit of a mentor. A younger or less established Rotarian can discuss business issues with and seek advice from a more established Rotarian, who serves as a coach of sorts.”

Because younger prospective members may have pressing professional and family obligations and busy

schedules, along with limited financial resources, take appropriate steps to encourage younger membership (particularly people in their 30s).

Action steps:

- Consider reducing club meal expenses.
- Think about waiving or reducing fees for younger professionals for a period of time.
- Assign a veteran member to mentor new, younger Rotarians.
- Organize club projects and events that include families and that provide active, hands-on involvement.
- Set up social and networking activities that are convenient for younger members and are fun and engaging.
- Make members aware of alternative arrangements for getting involved and becoming engaged, such as e-club meetings, attendance at a club committee meeting, or participating in a club-sponsored service project.
- Maintain relationships with Rotary Foundation alumni, including Ambassadorial Scholars, GSE team members, Rotary Youth Exchange students, Rotaractors, and Interactors, and keep them involved in your club's activities. Ask them to become Rotarians.
- Complete the **Membership Diversity Assessment** in *Club Assessment Tools* to help uncover ideas for attracting younger members.

New Club Trends

RI performed a five-year regional analysis of clubs chartered between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2005. It was published in January 2010.

New Club Viability

	Clubs				Percent Net Change
	Clubs Chartered	Terminated	Reinstated	Surviving Clubs	
India	905	420	94	579	-36%
Philippines	191	96	34	129	-32%
Latin America	653	250	87	490	-25%
Central & Southeast Asia	374	163	75	286	-24%
Africa	195	97	56	154	-21%
Korea	263	57	15	221	-16%
Middle East	97	27	16	86	-11%
Caribbean Islands	24	13	11	22	-8%
Central & Eastern Europe	267	45	24	246	-8%
Canada & USA	491	50	27	468	-5%
Australia, New Zealand & PI	51	6	4	49	-4%
Western Europe	478	16	10	472	-1%
Japan	45	0	0	45	0%
Worldwide Total	4,053	1,240	453	0	-20%

Just 5% of the new clubs formed in the USA & Canada between 2000 and 2005 are no longer in existence, and 8% of the new clubs formed in that time period in the Caribbean Islands are no longer in existence. This compares to a worldwide average of a 20% loss of new clubs.

New clubs fail for many reasons. Lack of direction and support are cited frequently. According to research, the largest loss of clubs and members occurs during a club's second year of existence. Having a strong sponsor club assigned to any new club is highly recommended and will contribute to the club's long-term success and viability.

Action steps:

- Use the **Planning Guide for Effective Rotary Clubs** to start setting and working toward goals early in the process that will lead to a vibrant and active club.
- Use **Be a Vibrant Club: Your Club Leadership Plan (245)** to help establish plans for service projects and social events in new clubs.
- Use the **Strategic Planning Guide** to set three-year goals to ensure your club keeps on track and achieves its vision.
- Use **Community Assessment Tools** to assess your community's particular needs and provide focus and direction for your club's service projects.
- Use the **Membership Satisfaction Questionnaire** in **Club Assessment Tools** early on to uncover and address any issues before they become major challenges to retention and growth.
- Review **Best Practices** frequently to see what methods have been effective for other new clubs and adapt these practices for use in your club.

Membership Activity

	Members in Surviving Clubs			
	Charter Members	Members After 5 Yrs	Net Change	Percent Net Change
Latin America	11,598	7,751	(3,847)	-33%
Australia, New Zealand & PI	1,254	939	(315)	-25%
Philippines	3,300	2,518	(782)	-24%
Africa	3,886	2,999	(887)	-23%
Central & Southeast Asia	7,684	6,024	(1,660)	-22%
India	14,911	12,916	(1,995)	-13%
Korea	7,703	6,748	(955)	-12%
Caribbean Islands	554	507	(47)	-8%
Central & Eastern Europe	6,100	5,817	(283)	-5%
Canada & USA	12,018	11,567	(451)	-4%
Middle East	2,165	2,091	(74)	-3%
Japan	1,363	1,400	37	3%
Western Europe	11,699	14,317	2,618	22%
Worldwide Total	84,235	75,594	(8,641)	-10%

Citing the same five-year analysis, in clubs that survived (i.e., were active at the end of the fifth year), membership was down 4% in the USA & Canada and down 8% in the Caribbean Islands. This compares to a worldwide membership loss of 10% in new clubs organized during that time period.

A comment from a Rotarian in the region:

“More time should be taken to identify, educate, and nurture new provisional club members before a club is allowed to charter. Educated members who know what is expected of them are more likely to stay around.”

Members leave new clubs for the same reasons new clubs fail: lack of direction and support. Charter members in new clubs should continue to be involved in the club and are responsible for its long-term success or failure.

Action steps:

- Develop a club leadership plan using *Be a Vibrant Club: Your Club Leadership Plan (245)* to establish an administrative framework for the new club, appoint committees, set expectations for those committees, and establish reporting requirements so that committees are held accountable to their tasks.
- Implement **service projects** and involve members in projects as early as possible.
- Inform and involve new members with an orientation program outlined in *New Member Orientation: A How-to Guide for Clubs (414)*.
- Use the **Membership Satisfaction Questionnaire** in *Club Assessment Tools* every six months to canvass members and get their input on ways to keep the club interesting to them. Communication is key at this stage.
- Use the **Resigning Member Questionnaire** in *Club Assessment Tools* to identify the factors causing members to leave new clubs and address those factors before they become a bigger problem.

Keeping Members

The most recent retention study (1 July 2003 – 30 June 2006) shows the following retention rates for the USA, Canada, and the Caribbean Islands:

Retention Rates (%)

	Overall	Existing Member	New Member
North America	74	70	73
Worldwide	76	73	78

A comment from a Rotarian in the region:

“While potential members weigh the benefits of Rotary membership as an intellectual exercise, most often Rotarians leave Rotary because we have failed to capture their hearts. I believe that there is a Rotary culture and that if we do a good job of communicating the culture of Rotary to our membership, we stand a much better chance of winning their hearts and their continued membership.”

Keeping members in your club requires constant monitoring and attention. A high turnover rate is one of the most significant membership issues Rotary clubs face today. Simply replacing lost members with new ones is not the solution; clubs should take steps to not only ensure that new members are involved and engaged in club activities, but also that its existing members are continuously challenged and rewarded by membership in their Rotary club. Clubs should emphasize engagement and participation in all club activities and

being connected to the club, not just attending the weekly meetings. Additionally, if a member is relocating outside of the immediate area, it is important to keep them connected to Rotary through another Rotary club.

Action steps:

- Use the **Retention Model** in *Club Assessment Tools* to gauge how your club is doing through all phases of club membership — from induction to termination.
- Keep on track with the *Planning Guide for Effective Rotary Clubs*, paying particular attention to the goals in the membership section.
- Employ the **Termination Profile** in *Club Assessment Tools* to determine how long members stay before resigning their membership and to pinpoint specific areas that are problematic and need addressing.
- Use the **Membership Satisfaction Questionnaire** in *Club Assessment Tools* regularly to measure members' happiness with the way the club is functioning at any given time, and adjust club operations and programs as necessary.
- The **Resigning Member Questionnaire** in *Club Assessment Tools* should be used to identify the reasons members leave and to take steps to prevent it in the future.

If you find your retention challenges come primarily from new members who leave within two years:

- Hold induction ceremonies for all new members. The new member's spouse or partner should be invited; the occasion should have a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, and perhaps feature testimony from current members.

- Make sure new members are well aware of the many opportunities with which to get involved.
- Assign a mentor to the new member who will help guide him or her through the steps to becoming involved and active in the club.
- Develop an **orientation program** for new members so that nothing drops through the cracks. Offer the *Membership Video Set (427-MU)* as part of the orientation process.
- Get the new member engaged as soon as possible in a service project that is meaningful to him or her.
- Appoint the new member to a committee that can benefit from his or her background or interests.
- Offer the *New Member Information Kit (426)* to all new members, or create your own new member kit.

- Focus on the following seven action steps, which a recent RI **pilot program** found to be effective in retaining members:

- Identify
- Inform
- Invite
- Orient
- Induct
- Educate
- Involve

A strong and engaged membership base is the result of ongoing, diligent work by clubs. The external environment in which Rotary clubs operate is constantly changing, and clubs must respond by addressing these changes in order to remain vibrant and relevant for today's members.