

**Retention Ideas from the “Closing the Back Door” Workshop  
RI Convention in Montréal, Québec, Canada  
Palais des congrès, 22 June 2010**

The breakout session “Membership Retention: Closing the Back Door” was moderated by Michael K. McGovern, 2009-10 Membership Development and Retention Committee chair. Panel members included Hendreen D. Rohrs and Peter M. Snider, regional RI membership coordinators, and Ron Beaubien, past RI director. The workshop focused on what's working in different parts of the Rotary world and encouraged attendees to share their own ideas. The following is a list of ideas shared.

**FELLOWSHIP**

- Make Rotary fun.
- Travel together to club meetings and projects – or take a club trip together.
- Form a hiking fellowship to get active outside of weekly meetings.
- Go out to Sunday brunch with a group of members.
- Have dinners at a member’s home, but don’t let the member know who is coming.

**PROJECTS**

- Find out what gets a member excited about Rotary.
- Do a hands-on project to replace the regular meeting once a month.
- Get involved in a new, innovative project.
- Ask “Rotarians in name only” what they want to do.
- Identify a signature project – one the club is known for throughout the community.
- Change the holiday party for members to a holiday party for orphans (or something similar) to provide fellowship as well as a fun project.
- Take on a challenging project, such as creating a wheelchair basketball court.
- Select and conduct an outstanding and relevant community project.

**FUNDRAISING**

- Create a variety show as a fundraiser, and get the entire club involved.
- Hold a Men Who Cook fundraising event.

**GETTING MEMBERS INVOLVED**

- Ask members to participate and take on responsibility.
- Stop asking for volunteers. Use the direct approach, and ask individuals to get involved.
- Promote attendance at district and international conferences.

### **CLUB ADMINISTRATION**

- Hold a collection to help defray the cost of dues for those who are going through financial difficulties.
- Reassess club processes.
- Change the meeting time so it accommodates members' schedules.
- Conduct a "visioning" process, and promote continuity.
- Periodically have a 15-second "commercial" on each member's business.
- Have six Rotarians introduce themselves to newer members during a monthly club assembly.
- Offer different speakers and topics. Reach out to a speakers' bureau.
- Offer a "business intern" program for qualified younger members in the community. Provide lower membership fees and costs.
- Ask members what Rotary means to them individually.
- Recognize important member events, including anniversaries, promotions, etc.
- Move the location of the club meeting to accommodate more members.
- Have a prepared agenda for each weekly and committee meeting, and keep to it.
- Have a "reversed classification speech," where one member does a speech for another member in the club.
- Celebrate each member's birthday.
- Select one day a month to meet in a location more convenient for members who find it hard to attend, or at a venue that will cost less.
- Hold summer meetings as picnics.

### **MENTORING**

- Create a mentor committee, and offer three-year mentoring to new members.
- Designate someone to round up members who haven't participated in a while and drive them to the club's meetings or events.
- Develop a buddy system, pairing up a new member with an existing member.

### **FAMILY**

- Plan outings to involve new Rotarians and their families.
- Promote the family of Rotary.
- Invite families to club meetings.
- Visit members' families.

### **RECRUITMENT**

- Promote the practice of younger members introducing other younger members.
- Issue a challenge to attract younger members so that 50 percent of the club is under the age of 50.
- Specifically promote women in Rotary.
- Organize a New Generations club to target young professionals.
- Enlist the help of all club members in a recruitment drive.