

Attracting the Facebook Generation: Change your culture or start a new club!

As a facilitator of a number of Visioning sessions for Rotary clubs, I have noticed that one of the top membership attributes that clubs strive for is "younger members." The kind of club that will attract men and women who grew up on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn will be very different than the clubs we see today. The question is this: Is your club and its members flexible enough to give younger members what they expect?

Strategist Gary Hamel, author of *The Future of Management*, recently wrote a blog post entitled, *Facebook Generation vs. the Fortune 500*. In that article, he listed 12 characteristics of online life. Online life is the life of the "Facebook Generation." Text messaging, Tweeting and YouTube are not tools or channels of entertainment. They are just the way life is. As you read each of the 12 points, ask yourself how your club will make the Rotary experience attractive to folks who see these characteristics as "just the way it is."

1. All ideas compete on equal footing
2. Contribution counts far more than credentials
3. Hierarchies are natural, not prescribed
4. Leaders serve rather than preside
5. Tasks are chosen, not assigned
6. Groups are self-defining and self-organizing
7. Resources get attracted, not allocated
8. Power comes from sharing information, not hoarding it
9. Opinions compound and decisions are peer-reviewed
10. Users can veto most policy decisions
11. Intrinsic rewards matter most
12. Hackers are heroes.



Can your club provide this kind of experience? Can established members accept a world where new members expect to have an immediate say in club matters? If not, perhaps creating a new club makes more sense. Why create a new club?

Sometimes it is very difficult to combine very different cultures within the same location. When IBM saw a huge opportunity for midrange AS400 computer, they built a new plant in Rochester, Minnesota. They located it far from IBM headquarters in Armonk, New York, because they knew that the AS400 was so different, that it would not stand a chance if it was too close to the IBMers who grew up with mainframes in their blood. When IBM got into the PC business, where was its "Entry Systems" Division located? Boca Raton, Florida.

So if you want to attract younger members - and keep them, you have 2 choices. Either change your culture, or create a new club. And if you are going to create a new club, don't think "Extension." Think about applying the 12 characteristics above because you are not extending your existing club by any stretch of the imagination. You are creating a NEW club that your current members probably won't recognize.

From Greg Krauska, Past Membership chair, District 5950 (RI Zones 25-26 Membership News)