

Path of Progress

People determine the performance capacity of an organisation. No organisation can do better than the people it has. The yield from human resource really determines the organisation's performance. This calls for considered decisions on whom we take as members, where we place them and how we promote them.

In the area of membership development, Rotary has added around 14,000 members this year. Out of this, nearly 4,800 members are in India. This accounts for over thirty percent. Out of the 120 new clubs formed worldwide, 38 clubs are in India. I congratulate the Rotarians of the clubs in India for this achievement.

Starting a new club or enrolling new members is not an easy task. But the more difficult task is to retain them. Clubs have different programmes to keep members motivated and active. I appreciate the innovative approaches taken by clubs in this area.

What is important is that the club should be run seriously. Its mission, values and objectives should be real and meaningful to the members rather than just rhetoric. The guidelines for recruiting members and retaining them are well established by RI. Read the various literatures that are available in this connection. You can also innovate and share your successful experience with other clubs.

Most of the clubs fail to attract members. One of the reasons I have seen is that some of the members tend to believe that they are good judge of people. To be a judge of people is not a power given to mere mortals. Brilliant physicians do not just rely on their eye when they see a patient. They go through a process of making a diagnosis. Otherwise they may end



up killing people. People in charge of membership development in clubs should learn not to depend on insight or knowledge of people, but to go through, sometimes mundane steps of recruiting new members.

Some existing members think that they know who the right person is to take as a member. They decide impulsively. They are even blinded by friendship, by prejudice or just by habit.

Rotary depends on new blood, young blood. The youngsters are imaginative people. Look at the specific strengths of these people. Admitting a member does not end the process of membership development. The second stage comes months later. When you discuss with a new member on what they have felt and done in the club for the past several months, you can finally judge if you have selected a right person to be a member forever.

Any organisation has to develop people. It has no choice. It either helps them grow or it stunts them. Your club

can form a person or deform a member. What do we know about attracting people into Rotary? We know a lot. But we should know what not to do. To attract new members, especially young people, don't just start searching for people. Start with what activities are there. Clubs should ask themselves, 'What are we trying to do and what our key activities are?' These questions will help the club to bring in the type of people who will be Rotarians and build the club for tomorrow.

RI President D K Lee hopes that India will lead the Rotary world in membership development and I look forward to the co-operation of all the leaders of Rotary in our country in achieving this goal and increasing the membership figure beyond 1,10,000 within the next few months.



*Rtn. Ashok Mahajan
Director, Rotary International*