

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



JANUARY IS FINALLY HERE. AS we look forward to 2021, our thinking doesn't have to stop at the end of these 365 days. Are you thinking ahead about what you will be doing in 2022, 2023, and beyond?

We cannot foresee the future, but we can steer ourselves where we want to go. I think it is important that every Rotary club hold a strategic meeting at least once a year. Past RI Director Greg Yank, who has a lot of experience working with clubs on their plans, shares his viewpoint.

A famous aphorism states, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Planning is essential to achieving success in all areas of life, including Rotary, and we're getting better at it every year.

Strategic planning for Rotary clubs works. I have helped many clubs find that pathway by working with them to build what I call a blueprint, a multiyear plan that answers the fundamental question: "What is our vision for our club?" The best plans I have seen are those that are focused, when a club concentrates its resources on the best opportunities it has. Your Rotary club cannot be all things to its members and to the community it serves; it has limited human, financial, and time resources. A successful plan factors in assets and limitations to chart the desired pathway for your members.

Begin building a multiyear strategic plan by brainstorming with your club, asking, "What are our initiatives and priorities for the next two to three years?" Document your answers using action-oriented language that is specific, concrete, and measurable about the goals you want to achieve.

Next, narrow down your initiatives to a core set of three to five priorities. Your club will then develop specific

objectives for each initiative, outlining who will be involved, key milestones of achievement, how progress will be tracked, and a timeline for completion. Keep your plan short and simple.

Then go out and do it. Review the progress you make toward accomplishing the initiatives, and revise as needed at least once a year. Rotary has a solid template to assist clubs in their planning, which you can find at my.rotary.org/document/strategic-planning-guide.

We want to enrich and enliven our clubs with new discussions and ideas. But how do we attract the diverse professionals, from different backgrounds, ages, and experiences, who are all driven by as strong a sense of integrity as we are?

Through strategic planning, we explore this question to define the very nature of our club and the value it offers to its members and to the community. Each club is different, and each club's value will be unique. During the planning process, clubs may also find that some of the activities they used to do are no longer relevant or attractive.

Once your club makes a strategic plan, it's time to take action and carry out the necessary changes. When we do that — as we engage members in vibrant and active clubs that not only have fun but also serve their communities with projects that have real and lasting impact — our clubs grow stronger. And when we discover what makes our own clubs unique and build upon those core values in all our efforts, *Rotary Opens Opportunities* to enrich the lives of everyone.

HOLGER KNAACK

President, Rotary International



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2017-19 Rotary
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