

# Maintaining Member Engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic



A Guide for Rotary District 5930

*District 5930 developed this guide with ideas and strategies for Club Leaders to consider. Club Leaders are encouraged to consult with their boards to determine which strategies will be useful on the local level.*

*The most important strategy is to provide timely, transparent and regular communication with your members. Be sure that club leaders are consistent in messaging, and that communication roles are clearly defined. Leverage the weekly club bulletin, social media channels, and even old-fashioned phone trees to disseminate important club updates.*

## Quick Glance

Interim Virtual Meetings  
Engagement through Social Media  
Engagement through Service  
Creative Engagement Strategies  
Important Links & Resources

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## Virtual Meetings

*Please consider the creative use of technology to host “virtual meeting” experiences for your members until you can resume in-person meetings and events. Below are a few ideas and favorite tools for virtual meetings. Each suggestion includes links to helpful how-to guides and/or other information to assist you in navigating these tools.*

Highly Interactive Tools - There are many free and paid options for hosting virtual meetings. Chances are *someone* in your club already has a pro version of one of these for their business, but there are also lots of great no-cost options that include basic features. Many of these programs are offering reduced fees and no-cost extended trials during this time.

Zoom offers a free version which provides unlimited time for 1 on 1 meetings or 40 minutes limit for groups of up to 100 participants. There are other priced plans that allow larger groups more time. Rotary members and clubs receive a discount for paid Zoom memberships through [Rotary Global Rewards](#). (Also note other Rotarian discounts at this site, including Sam's Club, Fedex, hotels, rental cars)

Zoom Basic Free | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2pq4I1urXA>

GoTo Meeting Free | <https://support.goto.com/meeting>

Google Hangout Free | <https://support.google.com/hangouts/answer/3115553?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>

Less Interactive - There are other tools that are still incredibly useful and may be the perfect fit, but don't require that everyone log in at a specific time, which could be the perfect level of flexibility for your club. The suggestions below range from social media tools to project management and communication tools.

Facebook Live | <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-live-guide>

Instagram TV | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaRxcAW9mUY>

Basecamp | <https://basecamp.com/>

Slack | <https://slack.com/>

## Tips for hosting a Virtual Meeting

- o Do a test run to make sure everything works and you understand the best audio options and camera angles.
- o Follow a similar structure, but compact the time. Maintain what you would normally do during your regular club meetings, such as the pledge, 4-way test, happy bucks, announcements, updates from committee chairs, etc. Keep the same roles but convert their responsibility into the digital equivalent. For instance, the greeter can arrive early and break the ice with members as they join in. Remember, this interaction is just as important to maintain fellowship as the actual club meeting.
- o Turn video on. Dial up your meeting's engagement factor by asking all attendees to have video on (you might want to make this ask in the invitation email). This fosters a sense of connectedness, interest level, and allows everyone to benefit from visual cues.
- o Keep bringing great speakers. For those you've already booked, ask them to deliver their talk online. Think about new speakers with an added advantage of them not having to be local.
- o Make it a team effort. Consider several panelists to run the meeting: A moderator to watch the time and field questions at the end, a presenter or speaker who is delivering the content, and a member to take down meeting notes.
- o Remember, most of us are new to this. Don't just dive in, spend the first 2 minutes going over housekeeping tasks for your attendees, such as muting microphones, using chat, etc.
- o Engage your audience with visuals. Whether you have a Powerpoint presentation or are just showing some information online, use the screen sharing feature to add some interesting visual content to your meeting.
- o Keep it secure. Set a password for your meeting. Consider setting up registration for your meeting to allow the public to join.
- o Record your meetings and make them available online. Share them on your club's website so that those who couldn't attend live can watch later. Create a new page to list past meeting recordings, and feature the most recent video on your home page.
- o Check out Rotary resources on virtual meetings:  
<https://www.rotary.org/en/how-take-your-club-online>  
<https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/online-club-meetings>



## Engagement through Service (from Afar)

*Of course, the BEST way to engage members is the same in-person or on-line! Get creative with ways to keep the spirit of service alive with your members!*

### Donate

As always, you can ask members to donate to The Rotary Foundation (hint: use the array of Rotary assets including videos to promote; all available on My Rotary). Other considerations include initiating “friendly competitions” with other clubs to see which can raise the most money for a particular focus area or fund to earn “bragging rights” (or maybe the “losing” club has to provide the manual labor for the winning club’s future project). Get creative and use this opportunity to bolster promotion of opportunities for Rotarians to give.

### Spread Good Will

- Choose a local charity and ask all members to highlight it using their social channels. Choose a new charity each week! This is a great way to leverage the influence of Rotarian leaders to elevate causes that matter to your local community (and it might even sprout a future project collaboration!).
- Coordinate with local hospitals or nursing homes for members to send cards or letters to combat loneliness from isolation in facilities that have limited visitors.
- Ask members to make blankets for My Very Own Blanket or similar organizations
- Challenge members to look through their homes and sort items that can be donated to charity. Once it is safe to do so, hold a group donation day to a local charity thrift store (remember to take pictures!).
- Ask members to record themselves reading children’s books and post through your club’s social channels for parents to share with their children for “alt-tv time” during school closures.
- Start a gift card drive. Ask members to purchase gifts cards (bonus points if it’s a local small business) and then mail them along with a note from the Rotarian to organizations that would be able to put them to good use

## Creative Engagement Strategies

Chain Letters - Start a good old-fashioned-chain letter to engage members. See resources below for a template of an easy example to distribute via email.

Pen Pals - Develop a relationship with another club near or far to start “Rotary Pen Pals.” See the sample invitation letter. This is a great way to strike up a relationship with someone you’ve met at an International Convention or a District Conference. Invite the partnering club to share mailing addresses for their members and then assign each one to a member of your own club to start exchanging letters.

“Crash” an E-Club! - Share information about e-clubs with your members. Some e-clubs hold “virtual meetings” and some include online content. Anyone can peruse the websites of e-clubs and get inspired for other ways to maintain engagement without in-person meetings (they are the experts, after all!)

Board Buddies - Assign each of your board members (and possibly committee chairs) to 5-6 club members and ask them to maintain regular contact to foster engagement

# Important Links & Resources

## Useful Links [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

[www.rotary5930.org](http://www.rotary5930.org)

<https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/membership>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2pq4I1urXA>

<https://support.goto.com/meeting>

<https://support.google.com/hangouts/answer/3115553?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>

[www.rotaryclubone.org](http://www.rotaryclubone.org)

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-live-guide>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaRygAW9mUY>

<https://basecamp.com/>

<https://slack.com/>

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-takeovers/>

<https://www.rotary.org/en/how-take-your-club-online>

<https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/online-club-meetings>

## Attached Resources & Assets

- [Chain Letter Template](#)
- [Pen Pal Invitation Template](#)
- Social Media Prompts
  - [Sunrise challenge](#)
  - [What are you reading?](#)
  - [Be my pen pal](#)
  - [Act of kindness](#)
- Social Media “Happy Bucks” Assets
  - [“Happy Bucks”](#)
  - [“Are you happy?”](#)
  - [“Be Happy”](#)