

# Gyro Membership Recruitment, Engagement, and Retention Discussion Paper for Reno Nevada Convention - June 5, 2019

## INTRODUCTION

*This paper was distributed to attendees in advance of the Reno Convention. At the convention a workshop discussion was stimulated, the results of which are documented in the Appendix.*

- 1948 Annual Meeting identified complaints about declining membership.....
- There are many theories on decline in club members and lack of increase in new members.
- All levels of the organization point to other levels as not being fully responsive to the issue.
- 2016 Red Lake – Larry Duba, Membership Chair, began an active campaign of information via Gyroscope, email and membership sessions.
- 2017 Vancouver - Peter Evans, Membership Chair, convened an Affirmative inquiry and authored several perspectives on membership
- 2018 Lake Geneva - Ross Davis described Metro Club membership “contest” and member booklet
- So – Lets focus on positive approaches such as innovation and strategic options that address the three legs of healthy membership: Recruitment, Engagement and Retention.

## WHY BELONGING TO A GYRO CLUB IS GOOD FOR YOU

- You are healthier (see below)
- You have a community of like-minded people who are friends, but more importantly, among the friends are persons who you have an affinity for and who can be confidants – people you can lean on and be leaned on
- You indirectly belong to a travel club
- You have a social network that continues to expand as you participate



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### IS ANY OF THIS WORKING?

- Common thread in Gyroscopes – how to attract new members from many angles.
- Just invite a friend – are your friends compatible to meet your Gyro friends?
- Tradition and comfort lead to complacency of an individual, club and leadership.
- Wanting value for dues at Gyro International.
- Maintaining current organization governance – what would change to innovate and attract?
- 2014 Survey of 18 Gyro Growth Club Officers - weighted averages of choices says.....:

○ Bring a Friend	4.40	○ Member Reputation	2.69
○ President’s Leadership	3.93	○ Bylaws	2.67
○ Few Active Recruiters	3.82	○ Membership Chairman	2.42
○ Ladies Involvement		○ Member Service Club	2.36
3.71		○ Community Service	
○ Couples Events	3.69	2.20	
○ Getting Organized	3.11	○ Website	2.04
○ Special Event	2.77	○ Advertising/PR/Mail	1.86
		○ Social Media	1.77

### RECRUITMENT

- **Prospect in your own backyard.** The easiest way to recruit is through your own events, publications, and member referrals; people who already engage with you are already buying into your organization even if they haven’t yet converted.
- **Focus on the effectiveness of the individual at the club level.** A member inviting a friend is a proven effective tool, but the invite needs to be specific for an event and the event must be interesting – preferably of interest to the prospective member. It is enhanced if you can invite 2 or more persons who are each-other’s friends.
- **Frequently review the path to join.** Regardless of how great your recruitment messages are, if prospects can’t figure out how to navigate your website, they’re likely to give up out of frustration.
- **Create an association in a box.** Members need applications, FAQs about the organization, and generic “info” business cards. This makes everyone a membership expert and helps them get members.
- **Exploit the organization’s virtues.** Extol benefits without criticizing other organization’s rules.
- **Do not let a failure deter you.** There are many reasons why your friends and others do not join Gyro starting with life stage timing and ending with they do not join any organization.
- **Walk the Talk.** Leaders must not only put a strategy in place, set objectives and encourage members; they must do what they are asking others to do.

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### ENGAGEMENT

- **Membership Engagement is an emotional commitment.** This means engaged members actually care about their involvement and the association's work. They don't join just for networking opportunities. They join and participate because they believe in and want to support the association's mission
- **Create volunteer opportunities for members at all stages.** Create and publicize volunteer opportunities for members at all stages of their growth in Gyro. Most organizations have the same opportunities year-over-year, which draws in the same members. Create publicized volunteer opportunities for ad-hoc and virtual task forces and consider audiences such as young professionals, senior executives, and specialty-specific opportunities.
- **Understand why members join and welcome them properly.** This might seem like a recruitment tactic, but retention begins the day the member joins. The best way to keep members after the initial year is to make certain that they feel that, in addition to the programs of the organization, there is a place for them to participate and provide input. Send a welcome letter to each member (from Club, District and GI), also have your membership committee do outreach to tell them you're happy they joined or came back to the organization. Ask them what they're looking to gain from their membership and tell them how they can get started right away.
- **Be consistent with your activities.** Member engagement is a year-round activity. You do not need to literally communicate with your members all year long but communicating with them consistently—so they get the perception that you are communicating with them all year long—goes a long way toward making them feel part of the association. Target communication from all levels and be careful to limit emails.
- **Determine resources needed.** Before you implement an engagement plan, make sure that you have the volunteers, the money, and the technology to implement your plan. Great ideas are great but if you can't implement them, they will remain ideas and nothing more.
- **Engage at every level of the organization.** Gyro International must engage District officers, District Officers must engage Clubs and Clubs must engage members. Club to Club engagement is also essential within and between Districts. A club in isolation is a club that will dissolve or leave the organization.

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### RETENTION

- **Instruct members regularly on friendship building.** Just because someone becomes a member does not mean instant friendship, e.g. you do not have friends when you join a gym. Building a friendship includes a) building rapport; b) develop a relationship; c) recognizing affinity (like-mindedness); d) identifying friends who are confidants.
- **Allow members to be who they are.** Men express themselves differently than women. Male friendships form around shared interests, careers, activities. They can be competitive and rivalrous while avoiding self-disclosure.
- **Coach members on leadership skills.** Everyone will benefit from knowing and practicing key leadership traits that stimulate an organization. These include: Have a compelling vision; inspire others by setting an example; be committed and passionate; challenge the process; hold people accountable; think creatively and be innovative; empower and delegate; continually improve.
- **Reconsider early renewal discounts.** We know, we know. Discounting membership is a no-no. And we don't disagree that it can reduce the value perception. But targeted early renewal discounts can help you for your budgeting and planning and keep renewal top-of-mind for busy members.
- **Consider conversion.** Almost always, first-year members are the least likely to renew. That's why the first year of membership is called the conversion year. Focus time, effort, and budget on these first-year members. This has a budget implication too: As long as you're not spending more to renew members than to acquire a new member, you're doing fine.
- **Examine payment options but think them through.** There are a number of ways that members can pay you for their membership. It is good to consider all of them, as your goal is to make it as easy as possible for members to renew their membership. Different payment options will have different impact on your association. Make sure to look at the options from all sides to make sure making things easier for your members does not make them too much more difficult for you.
- **Personalize the message.** Members want to feel like you know them and value them. If you do not personalize your message with accurate contact information, applicable benefits, appropriate pricing based on membership category, and so on, you will give members the message that their time is not as important as yours. Make sure to use your technology to personalize their renewals as much as makes sense for your organization.
- **Apply retention approaches at all levels.** Retention at the club level is most important since it is most frequent inter actions but it is also important at other governance levels.

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## YOUNGER GENERATION STRATEGY

- Younger generations want their memberships to provide them with ample opportunities to learn, lead and make a difference.
- Invite young professionals to meet over lunch or coffee for a frank examination of the flaws or weaknesses of your Club. Ask open-ended questions and set aside your assumptions. Empathize and let them know when you understand them; ask for examples when you don't. Listen and treat them with respect.
- Create solutions by making it your clubs' priority to generate new ideas and creative alternatives. Trust isn't built from trying to win personal victories.
- Clubs will benefit by being very transparent about what their mission is, what it means to individuals who join, and how their membership is valuable and beneficial. [Clubs need a purpose]
- There are two differentiators to keep in mind when targeting younger generations:
  - They trust their peers more than anyone else; and
  - They have grown up in an on-demand instant gratification world. These two differentiators combined demonstrate the need for onboarding in associations.
- "They want to be treated as equal partners and equal colleagues. They want to be heard. By the same token they want to take advantage of the learning opportunities and networking opportunities that those engagements offer." They want to be involved immediately.
- Younger generations are focused on technology to connect, engage and create an efficient path to better results. This is not to say they don't want face-to-face experiences; technology is simply the tool to get them there.
- To engage Youth, it will require a major shift to a different vision with a beneficial outcome to that demographic.

## GYRO INTERNATIONAL WEBSITE INFORMATION

Go to: <http://international.gyro.ws/index.htm>

Click on: **Funds, Training and Tools** in the Menu on the right side.

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## APPENDIX – RENO WORKSHOP FEEDBACK JUNE 5, 2019

### Younger Generation Recruiting

- This is a key direction Gyro needs to explore.
- Large Clubs can benefit from engaging businessmen of all ages
  - Networking opportunity during social interactions (not in meetings)
  - Need to be aware of addressing “what’s in it for me?” and “What can I do?”
- One size does not fit all when it comes to club recruitment.
- Father – Son Activities provide an opportunity to grow a club as well as develop mutual respect and learn from each other.

### What are Millennials Looking for?

- guidance;
- mentorship;
- knowledge;
- wisdom; and
- how to be a gentleman.

### How can we build upon our activities outside Gyro?

- We all have done interesting things in our life and we do other interesting things as individuals and as clubs. How about creating a club database of these to tap into for engaging and sharing?
- Step out of our comfort zone to be more inclusive and learn more about new members, older members and even friends that could become members.

### Outreach Ideas

- Friendship and fun have to be the focus of a Club.
- Cultivate circles of friendship within the bigger circle of your club and other clubs.
- Address the age spread by looking for common interests among varied interests.
- Change up the activities and always include a mix of social events.
- Follow through on visitor/guest attendance with a thank you and an invite to join if appropriate.

## **Gyro Membership Recruitment, Engagement, and Retention**

- Consider a cap on membership when a critical mass is achieved where growth could lead to a less inviting climate – sponsor a club if you have a growth opportunity but put a strong leader in charge.

### **What is a Healthy Club?**

- An assessment of “Healthy” will vary by club.
- There is a “Ladies Effect”
- There is good Leadership.
- Members travel to inter-club, District and International events to keep the club current.
- Members are aware that they are the solution to Club success.
- Leadership is analytical all the time about maintaining the pulse of the club.

### **More “Tools” to Consider**

- Evite for meetings has shortcomings – A telephone reminder is more personal
- Try a mix and even consider a balance of social events with stag events
- Sponsors can be leaned on to ensure new members are engaged
- Take a seminar like this to a club (District Executive or membership Chair for a District or Club)
- Expose members to leadership positions within their capability.