

Gyro International

Membership Strategy for Gyro Sustainability

April 22, 2014

Introduction:

Membership in Gyro International has been in decline for at least the past 10 years and a proactive strategy is needed to curb the decline, stabilize the current status of membership and to grow the organization for the next generation of Gyros.

During the recent past, several membership committees have made valiant efforts to create stability in the organizations global membership numbers, but for a variety of factors, limited progress was achieved.

This year a concerted effort has been made to try and stem the tide and grow our numbers but more initiative is needed from Gyros in each Club to make this happen. The following is a result of the latest membership committee efforts and all Gyros are respectfully requested to make a sincere effort to do their part to help make this initiative a success.

The reality of the situation is the average age throughout Gyro International is approximately 70 years and this limits the options and recruitment pool available to our various Clubs. Where energy and enthusiasm were once the hallmark of each Club, moderation and quiet enjoyment seem to be more representative of the tempo today. Solutions for resurrecting Club membership numbers seems to center around everyone getting involved and all of us targeting friends and acquaintances in the 55-70 age category to join the ranks of Gyro and enjoy an opportunity for FUN, friendship, networking and socializing in a friendly and relaxed environment. Eventually, as newer members from this age bracket join Gyro, the average age in Gyro will hopefully migrate downwards and our numbers will stabilize.

The future of our clubs lies in our ability to attract and retain new members. With the introduction of new members on a regular basis, we will grow the numbers of each club and inject new life into Gyro International. Some of the key advantages of new members in a club are:

- New members create enthusiasm and provide new interest and perspective.
- Since most costs are fixed, more members will help share the costs.
- Increased numbers help keep dues to a minimum.
- More members will help share in the workload and the organizing of events.
- Newer members will keep the average age of Club members down and will help replenish our numbers.

In preparing the new ***GYRO MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY***, the Membership Committee developed a motto that reflects change and ensures that our Gyros will enjoy a sustainable version of Gyro.

*~Encourage all Gyros to focus on improving and marketing
the quality of our Gyro Product~*

With this in mind, the following PLAN is in 2 parts:

- I. Introducing prospective members to Gyro
- II. Ensuring high levels of satisfaction among our members.

INTRODUCING PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS TO GYRO

First Steps:

- The Club Executive should review the proposed Membership Strategy and if in agreement, advise the Club of their endorsement and review it with the members so everyone has an opportunity to fully understand it. The Club should then officially adopt it. During this session, it can be stressed that all members are expected to participate as fully as their time, energy and opportunity will permit.
- Since this program is of prime importance to all gyros, the Club Executive should designate the *membership chair* as the point person to ensure implementation of this new Membership Strategy. If another member is more suited to the task, then it would be wise to designate that person. It would be a good practice for the membership chair to update the members several times a year on the progress of this membership recruitment program. At that time, he can remind the members of their responsibility to try and do their share to make the program a success. If possible, he should have someone to assist with these duties.
- Clubs shall prepare an up-to-date information recruitment brochure for hand out to prospective members, as well as an electronic version for promotion and distribution to those electronically connected.

How it happens:

- The membership chair should work closely with the Club Secretary to ensure that promotional information, membership kits, new member pins and other key information are available in good supply for distribution to prospective members.
- As part of the planning strategy, it would be a good practice for the membership chair to set reasonable membership goals for the year and track their progress.
- At least one member of the Club shall invite a guest to a meeting or social event each month. To kick-start the process, the executive or some of the more outgoing members of the Club should lead the way by being the first to invite guests to some Club meetings.
- During the course of the year, all members shall endeavour to invite a guest to a meeting or social function at least once. This is really a very modest approach and shouldn't be a burden to anyone.

Considerations for the Guest:

- If the guest is a potential Gyro, the member should consider picking up the cost of his meal and the Club should consider financial reimbursement of all or a portion of this cost. If the effort results in a new member, then \$40 per member in some Districts is recoverable by the Club from the District Betterment Fund. All Districts should consider offering this incentive. Good recruiters shouldn't bear this financial burden on behalf of the Club.
- It would be a good strategy to invite the prospective member to a meeting of interest, perhaps one with a guest speaker, or a popular social or recreational event.
- When inviting a guest to a Gyro function, arrange to pick him (them) up or arrive early so you are there waiting for them when they arrive.

- Introduce the guest around the room shortly after entering the meeting and have the meeting chair officially welcome him during the early part of the meeting.
- Members should wear their name tags to all meetings and social functions as a courtesy to the guests and newer members.
- Never leave a guest or new member alone at a meeting and make a special effort to hand-hold the new member for approximately the first six months until he reaches a satisfactory comfort level with the Club.
- Since spouses may be the determining factor as to whether or not the prospective member joins Gyro, it could be a good strategy to also invite his spouse to either the first or second meeting.

Follow-up:

- If the guest is a potential Gyro, ensure that he is provided with a copy of the Club's information brochure before he leaves and as a follow-up, make an effort to provide him with a copy of the Club's bulletin. You could also refer prospective members to the Club's or Gyro International's web site for an insight into Gyro.
- The member should make a follow-up contact with the guest within a month and if there is potential for the guest to join but hesitation to decide, invite the guest to another meeting of a different format, perhaps a social function, so he sees a broader perspective of Gyro. Second efforts do pay dividends.
- Ask newly initiated members what were their initial thoughts after being introduced to Gyro, and later on, what were their early impressions of Gyro after being a member for the first year.

Sources of new Members:

Friends and acquaintances have traditionally been the source of future Gyros but many Clubs have had great success in attracting new members from those who have been transferred in or recently moved to Town. Gyro is an excellent way for newcomers to be welcomed into a community, and instantly the new residents would have exposure to 20 ~ 40 or more new friends and a Club environment that promotes FUN, friendship, socializing and networking. The sources of these new prospective Gyros are all around us, at our recreation venues, churches, community initiatives and local businesses. All we have to do is stay mindful of these opportunities and take advantage of them when the situation presents itself. A follow-up list of suggestions/ideas for making contact with prospective members, will be developed as a first step of the new Membership Director and his committee.

ENSURING HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION AMONG OUR MEMBERS

As society has evolved and changed over the years, so it is with the world of Gyro, which has experienced considerable change since the organization was first formed in 1912. Today there is a huge array of interesting things to fill one's time, so the need or desire to have Gyro in one's life is considerably different in the 21st century than it was a hundred years ago. As society is in a constant state of flux, we should expect that our Gyro product will evolve and change in the years and decades ahead.

Gyro Club Executives have a very strategic and important role to play in the sustainability of their clubs. The executive of each Club should be cognizant of the ongoing need to monitor and evaluate the operation of its Club. They must stay vigilant with respect to the needs and desires of Club members and be constantly aware of the level of member satisfaction with regard to the product each Club offers. To quote a business analogy, it makes more sense to ensure current customers are happy and will continue supporting your business, than to be constantly seeking new customers. To assume everything is just fine, that others will step forward when needed, that change is unnecessary and disruptive and that everyone enjoys things as they are, is indeed a risky strategy.

Some key factors that ensure ongoing membership satisfaction are: a well organization executive and the smooth running of the Club, a varied and regular social program, a regular and interesting speaker program, good meals at a reasonable price, good communications with the membership, a user friendly Club web site and most importantly, an ongoing commitment to recruitment.

Club Functionality:

- The Club Executive should meet as soon as possible after the installation of officers and decide on the meeting, social and speaker programs for the year. To deal with this on an as-you-go basis, is too stressful for those in charge and too disconcerting for the others.
- Enhance friendships within the Club. Ensure all members, especially new ones, are included in any chat groups. This is especially true for quieter and reserved members. Random/assigned seat selection at meetings helps to enhance this. For committee activities, match up the more outgoing members with shy ones. Wearing Gyro name tags at all functions should be the norm and encouraged by the executive.
- Participation in club activities by all Gyros will ensure a sense of belonging and help members to “buy into and live” the Gyro concept. It should be expected that the level of contribution by each member will vary depending on the individual’s capability, interest and availability. The key is to try and ensure as much member participation as possible. We should never sacrifice participation in favour of perfection or efficiency. There are always members in each Club who can do things better and quicker than others but this should be avoided as much as possible, except possibly for executive positions and key committees. Clubs should ensure a proper mix of long term members and novices on most committees.
- The sharing of meeting duties by as many members as possible will serve to spread the organizational load, give members a sense of participation and belonging, and will provide experience and opportunity for everyone. The chairing of meetings should be shared among as many of the Club members as possible.
- The Club Executive could plan a special meeting or event each year for the purpose of having the Club members invite a friend or associate to the meeting or event. If organized in accordance with the Gyro International Betterment Fund, \$10 per candidate reimbursement is available.
- The Club should periodically examine the role of its Lady Gyros. In many instances, they are key participants in our Gyro functions and including their thoughts and opinions in the running of the Club is just a smart business practice. It goes without saying that if our Lady Gyro are happy, then our Gyros will be happy! Something akin to “Happy wife, happy life”.
- Clubs should contemplate the concept of adding additional purpose to the objects of their Club’s Constitution, so that the *raison d’être* (reason for being) of the Club is more than just experiencing friendship, networking and socializing. This holds true especially for our next generation of Gyros whose commitment to work, family and community puts added pressure on their discretionary time and leaves them seeking meaningful purpose in most of their “free time” activities. The key to making this work satisfactorily is to ensure that Club members aren’t pressed beyond their ability or time to contribute and that the members have FUN at whatever project the Club agrees to take on.

Social Programs:

- Member satisfaction depends largely on a well rounded and regular social program. Folks like variety in most aspects of their lives so the annual Gyro social calendar should reflect this.
- Start early in the Gyro year with the Club’s social planning and ensure the committee activities reflect a broad level of membership participation. Remember, not everyone enjoys or can participate in the same events.

- Communicate and promote the program schedule early and clearly, and keep good records. Consider doing follow-ups with participants to gather suggestions for improvement. This makes planning for future events much easier.
- The extent of the Club's social program should be organized to the level that the Club's numbers can manage.
- The Club should consider adding and deleting, if appropriate, to its social program periodically. Don't let the social program become predictable or stale as this will create a feeling of ambivalence

Speaker program:

- An interesting and varied speaker program is a key element in addressing membership satisfaction within most Clubs.
- The program committee should comprise several members of the Club who have numerous business and community contacts. Advanced planning is essential. However, recommending and arranging for speakers is a function for all members but should be coordinated through the committee.
- The appearance of guest speakers should be well advertized so as to ensure an excellent turnout. This will be a show of respect and gratitude for both the speaker and the organizers. Providing a token of appreciation for the speaker is a respectful gesture.
- When speakers aren't available from the community at large, consider asking members of your Club to speak on something of interest to them such as a hobby, unique vacation trip, or a business or personal interest topic.
- Speakers should be booked well in advance and confirmed so there will be no last minute surprises.

Communications:

- The Club Secretary should maintain a current membership contact list and make it available to the members on a regular basis.
- The Club should appoint a bulletin/newsletter editor early in each Gyro year and the publication should be distributed on a regular basis. The level of sophistication of the bulletin will depend on the size of the club, the willingness of a Gyro to be the editor and the availability of someone with the appropriate skills and tools. The essential requirement is to have at least a basic bulletin to ensure good communications.
- Having a telephone or e-mail contact list with one or more Gyros/Lady Gyro assigned to a contact committee, will ensure everyone is advised of all events and can be a useful measure to determine the attendance numbers for each function.
- The membership committee should be assigned the task of extending warm wishes to the sick and shut-ins and keeping the Club members advised appropriately.

Club web site:

- Each club is encouraged to create their own web site through the Gyro International web site. It's free. Even the web publishing software can be downloaded free (the purchased software may be easier to use). If you ask, the Gyro International web technicians will guide you through the set-up process.
- Visit other club sites to see how Gyro functions elsewhere. (visit gyro.ws and click on "Clubs").
- Once your web site is up and running, make it user friendly so the members will actually use it for uploading such things as new member forms, the club pamphlet, club bulletin/newsletter, list of members (without addresses), history of your club, list of meeting & social events. You could refer prospective members to the web site for an insight into the Club. Don't forget to inform your members to refer to it frequently.

A final word:

The Gyro concept that was conceived over 100 years ago is still as relevant today as it was back then but we are living and enjoying a different version of it in the 21st century. Simply put, ***"GYRO is a social club that offers the opportunity for Fun, Friendship, Networking and Socializing in a friendly & relaxed environment"***. We just need to be more vigilant in delivering our message.

Today, we need to put a stronger emphasis on FUN to offset the stereotypical image of being a senior's organization. As society evolves and changes, so must our Gyro organization. Our sustainability is tied to recruitment and membership satisfaction and this Membership Strategy is intended to build on what we currently have, as well as, focus on what we will need in the years ahead. Participation by the membership is paramount for the strategy to be successful, therefore, contributions from as many as possible, at whatever level of assistance the members can offer, will ensure the future sustainability of Gyro.

Please consider how you can contribute your support with the implementation of this [Membership Strategy for Gyro Sustainability](#) and, with your help and participation, we are confident that Gyro International will stay active and indeed grow in the years ahead.

KP AuCoin,
Governor District VI,
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