

# Making Rotary Simply Irresistible

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Tom Gump, aide to 2024-25 RI President Stephanie Urchick, addresses the opening session of the International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, USA, 8 January.

*By Tom Gump, Aide to the 2024-25 Rotary International President*

Since the 2024 Rotary International Assembly in early January, participants at Rotary's annual learning event for incoming leaders have been talking a lot about making our Rotary clubs "simply irresistible." This term was used as the title of a 1988 song and a 1999 movie. In terms of Rotary, it was first used by Past District Governor Louisa Horn and recently championed by Stephanie Urchick, 2024-25 Rotary International president.

So what does "simply irresistible" mean in terms of an organization? According to Deloitte's description of "[The Simply Irresistible Organization](#),"<sup>TM</sup> an irresistible organization has five elements: (i) meaningful work, (ii) supportive management, (iii) a positive work environment, (iv) growth opportunities, and (v) trust in

leadership. I truly believe that together, we can make Rotary an irresistible organization if our clubs provide these elements to our members.

- **Meaningful Work** – No one joins a club to do nothing. Our members join for various reasons, but they all join to do something meaningful. This is true whether it be a traditional or virtual club and whether it focuses on local and/or international projects. We need to give our members purposeful opportunities, and we should change up these opportunities somewhat regularly so our members don't get bored doing the same thing. How do you know which opportunities to provide? Give your members what **they** want by conducting a [member satisfaction survey](#).
- **Supportive Management** – Rotary International is improving in this area, with the Board of Directors just recently implementing three-year goals for its various paired zones. Goal setting and accountability are also happening at the district and club levels. Rotary also invests in its leaders through various learning opportunities. Our zone coordinators receive these opportunities at the Global Support/Global Philanthropy Seminars. District governors-elect receive them at the International Assembly. Club presidents-elect receive them at Presidents-elect Training Seminars. Members receive them at district seminars and in Rotary's [Learning Center](#).
- **Positive Work Environment** – Our organization's [Vision Statement](#) starts with the words "Together, we." Most people want to serve, but they want to serve with like-minded people with the same values. Of course, we have to ensure our members feel that they belong and that their opinions matter to other club members and leadership. Again, surveys would help here. If you implement some of the suggestions your surveys generate, people will feel that they're being heard. Rotary International does a good job of [recognizing its members](#) and other participants with awards of many types. But recognition also needs to happen at the club level. This recognition should not only be for financial giving, but also for things such as being a new member sponsor.
- **Growth Opportunities** – Our members want to be part of something that allows them to grow. Rotary's Vision Statement reads: "*Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.*" These

last three words are important. People want to be part of something that fosters self-improvement. Working with others to serve makes this happen, and studies show that the act of serving others makes us happy. Why? Because when we focus on others, we aren't thinking about ourselves. To quote Louisa Horne: "It's not about me, it's about M.E. – the Membership Experience." [Read more about Horne's Rotary Club of Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia](#)

- **Trust in Leadership** – I've spent the last decade getting to know our organization's leaders from the club level (serving on the Presidents-elect Training Seminar Alliance) up to our International Presidents' level (through serving as a president's aide, learning facilitator, and president's representative). These roles have taught me that our Rotary leaders are purpose-driven and inspiring – not only through their words, but also (and more importantly) through their actions. If we continue to have strong leaders, we will have strong clubs and a strong Rotary.

If we focus on helping our clubs improve these five areas, Rotary will become "simply irresistible!"