

# MESSAGING GUIDE



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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This messaging guide provides simple advice for telling Rotary's story in a clear, compelling, and consistent way. It:

- Demonstrates how to use our brand voice to choose words that set the right tone
- Shows how to tailor brand messages to your audience
- Offers talking points about Rotary that you can adapt and build upon
- Provides a framework for evaluating content

## BRINGING ROTARY'S BRAND STORY TO LIFE

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### ESSENCE



#### REINFORCE OUR REASON FOR BEING

Rotary brings together leaders from all continents, cultures, and occupations to exchange ideas and take action for communities around the world.

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### VALUES



#### REFLECT OUR BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOR

- We build lifelong relationships
  - We honor our commitments
  - We connect diverse perspectives
  - We apply our leadership and expertise to solve social issues
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### VOICE



#### COMMUNICATE IN OUR VOICE

- Smart
  - Compassionate
  - Persevering
  - Inspiring
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## WHAT IS MESSAGING?

Our messaging is everything we convey about Rotary, through images, in writing, and by speaking. Using a unified set of messages can ensure that no matter who's communicating and who's listening, we always tell a clear, cohesive version of Rotary's powerful story.

This guide doesn't provide wording to be used verbatim in all circumstances. Instead, it offers a starting point for your communications, with examples that can easily be adapted for various contexts and audiences.



## ROTARY'S BRAND VOICE

When we talk about the Rotary brand, we're talking about the basic qualities and goals that unite all Rotary clubs and districts — what we offer to those who work with us, join a club, or participate in our programs and projects. Rotary's brand voice is the particular way we convey those qualities and goals — the tone we use when we talk about Rotary, and what we emphasize. Whether Rotary communications are produced by clubs, districts, or Rotary International, they will look, feel, and sound unmistakably like Rotary if we all use a consistent voice. How we speak, write, and design is guided by the attributes of our voice.

## ROTARY'S BRAND VOICE

**OUR VOICE IS...**

**THIS MEANS...**

**WE ARE...**

**BUT NOT...**

**SMART**



We look at problems from different angles and apply our expertise to solve social issues in ways that others cannot. Our communications are insightful.

**Knowledgeable**  
**Perceptive**  
**Confident**

**Obscure**  
**Disconnected**  
**Arrogant**

**COMPASSIONATE**



Tackling tough challenges in communities worldwide requires empathy. Our communications champion real people, with stories and experiences that are relatable and universal.

**Thoughtful**  
**Sincere**  
**Engaging**

**Lofty**  
**Sentimental**  
**Weak**

**PERSEVERING**



We find lasting solutions to systemic problems at home and abroad. Our communications express our commitment when we speak with clarity and conviction.

**Bold**  
**Purposeful**  
**Courageous**

**Reckless**  
**Close-minded**  
**Stubborn**

**INSPIRING**



Motivated by the enduring connections and positive change we bring to communities and the world, we encourage others to take action. Our communications convey hope, enthusiasm, and passion.

**Upbeat**  
**Hopeful**  
**Visionary**

**Hyper**  
**Zealous**  
**Impractical**



## KEEPING YOUR PARTICULAR AUDIENCE IN MIND WHEN YOU CRAFT MESSAGES CAN HELP YOU:

- Translate Rotary's story into key points that will resonate with the audience
- Include the motivators that compel audiences to action
- Address the barriers that hold them back
- Guide communications development



## EFFECTIVE MESSAGING INCLUDES:

- **A primary message** that is simple, is tailored for the audience, and calls on the audience to take some action
- **A supporting message** that reinforces the primary message and adds depth
- **Proof**, or tangible evidence that gives the audience a reason to believe what you say and be inspired by it

## TALKING TO THE PUBLIC: BUILD RECOGNITION

### AUDIENCE PROFILE

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#### WHO THEY ARE

- The public, including people who have little or no knowledge of Rotary or whose knowledge is shaped by misconceptions or incorrect information
- The media

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#### WHAT MOTIVATES THEM

- They want to understand what Rotary is, who Rotarians are, and how our approach to community needs is distinctive
- They want to feel a personal connection
- They want to be invited to contribute or participate
- They want to see clear, compelling demonstrations of impact

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#### WHAT HOLDS THEM BACK

- Stretched attention and other demands on their time, money, and engagement in their community
- Lack of information: 35% globally are unaware of any Rotary program, and only 41% are familiar with Rotary's clubs
- Those with limited knowledge may think Rotary is for people not like them — different educational or professional level, older, and male
- View of Rotary as "exclusive"

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#### OUR GOALS

- Help them understand who we are, how we're different, and why it matters
  - Spark their interest and inspire them to learn more about Rotary
  - Convince them that we're worthy of their support, whether in time, money, or attention
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## MESSAGES FOR THE PUBLIC: LEARN ABOUT AND SUPPORT ROTARY

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### INTRODUCTORY PRIMARY MESSAGES

- Every day, in our communities and around the world, our neighbors face tough challenges — conflict, disease, and lack of clean water, health care, education, and economic opportunity.

### SUPPORTING MESSAGES

- Rotarians have a vision of what's possible for their neighbors. They mobilize other leaders and experts to take action and see it through.
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### ABOUT ROTARY — PRIMARY MESSAGES

- Rotarians are people of action, driven by a desire to create opportunities, strengthen communities, and find solutions to the tough challenges that affect people around the world.
- Rotary is a community of 1.2 million men and women from all continents, cultures, professions, and experiences who connect through our local clubs.
- Rotary clubs tackle projects of every scale and inspire fellow Rotarians, friends, neighbors, and partners to share their vision, exchange ideas for lasting solutions, and take action to bring those ideas to life.

### SUPPORTING MESSAGES

- Together with our partners, neighbors, and friends, we're:
    - Promoting peace, encouraging dialogue to foster understanding within and across cultures
    - Fighting disease, educating and equipping communities to stop the spread of life-threatening or preventable diseases
    - Providing clean water, building local solutions to bring clean water and sanitation services to more people every day
    - Saving mothers and children, expanding access to quality care, so mothers and children can live and grow stronger
    - Supporting education, expanding access to education and empowering educators to inspire more children and adults to learn
    - Growing local economies, creating opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive financially and socially
    - Eradicating polio, uniting the world to end polio, once and for all
  - Rotary is a trusted partner and resource. With members and projects in almost every part of the globe, there's no limit to the good we can do.
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## MESSAGES FOR THE PUBLIC: LEARN ABOUT AND SUPPORT ROTARY

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### CALLS TO ACTION

- With Rotary, you'll find countless opportunities to create meaningful change in your community and around the world. [Get involved today] at [Rotary.org](http://Rotary.org).

### OPTIONS TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR CALLS TO ACTION

- Share an idea for your community.
  - Volunteer for a project in your community.
  - Support a cause that you care about.
  - Learn more about how you can join people of action and strengthen your community through Rotary.
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## TALKING TO PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS: AIM TO ATTRACT AUDIENCE PROFILE

### WHO THEY ARE

- Business and community leaders of all ages and professions who want to use their expertise, connections, and influence to make a difference locally and globally
- Rotarians' friends, family, and colleagues, who may base their opinions on personal interactions

### WHAT MOTIVATES THEM

#### To join Rotary:

- Rotary's positive impact on their community
- A sense of purpose
- Friendship and fellowship
- Networking opportunities

#### To support Rotary:

- Our distinctive and effective approach
- Feeling part of something meaningful and having it reflect positively on them
- Seeing clear, compelling improvement and a way to make an impact of their own

### WHAT HOLDS THEM BACK

- Lack of understanding about Rotary and our impact
- Belief that Rotarians are not like them (different educational or professional level, older, and male)
- View of Rotary as "exclusive"
- Not knowing any members or how to become involved; not having been invited to join
- Not having received a prompt response when they have demonstrated interest
- Not having time
- Financial constraints

### OUR GOALS

- Help them understand who we are, how we're different, and why it matters
- Counter misconceptions
- Explain how and why they should engage
- Inspire and invite them to learn more, contribute, or participate and, ultimately, join

## TALKING TO PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS: MESSAGES TO ATTRACT

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### INTRODUCTORY PRIMARY MESSAGES

- Every day, in our communities and around the world, our neighbors face tough challenges — conflict, disease, and lack of clean water, health care, education, and economic opportunity.

### SUPPORTING MESSAGES

- Rotarians have a vision of what's possible for their neighbors. They mobilize other leaders and experts to take action and see it through.
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### ABOUT ROTARY AND THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP — PRIMARY MESSAGES

- For over a century, Rotary has united leaders of all ages and experiences, cultures, and professions, to strengthen their communities.
- Through regular club programs, projects, and neighborhood activities, our members learn about the issues that face our communities and exchange ideas about how to take action to respond to them.
- Members also connect through club events, outings, and visits to other clubs around the globe, giving them unique opportunities to forge personal and professional connections.

### SUPPORTING MESSAGES

- Together with our partners, neighbors, and friends, we're:
    - Promoting peace, encouraging dialogue to foster understanding within and across cultures
    - Fighting disease, educating and equipping communities to stop the spread of life-threatening or preventable diseases
    - Providing clean water, building local solutions to bring clean water and sanitation services to more people every day
    - Saving mothers and children, expanding access to quality care, so mothers and children can live and grow stronger
    - Supporting education, expanding access to education and empowering educators to inspire more children and adults to learn
    - Growing local economies, creating opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive financially and socially
    - Eradicating polio, uniting the world to end polio, once and for all
  - Rotary is a trusted partner and resource. With members and projects in almost every part of the globe, there's no limit to the good we can do.
  - Rotary provides opportunities to grow personally and professionally — through mentorship, skill building, service projects, travel opportunities, networking, and more.
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## TALKING TO PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS: MESSAGES TO ATTRACT

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### **CALLS TO ACTION [CHOOSE ONE TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR MESSAGE]**

- Rotary is where leaders like you come together to move each other, our communities, and the world forward. Connect with other people of action today at [Rotary.org](http://Rotary.org).
  - Every Rotarian brings something distinct and valuable to our community, whether it's their perspective, personality, or passion. Share your talents with us at our next club program.
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## OFFERING PROOF

**GIVE YOUR AUDIENCE REASONS TO BELIEVE YOUR MESSAGE  
AND BE INSPIRED BY IT**

### EXAMPLES OF PROOF POINTS:

- Stories about people of action: Examples of local projects in which Rotarians identified community needs and mobilized their fellow members and neighbors to develop innovative solutions to solve them
- Clear, compelling facts that demonstrate Rotary's impact in each area of focus and our progress toward eradicating polio
- Stories of "Rotary moments," when members recognized the power of Rotary or how they have benefited from their Rotary experience personally or professionally
- Testimonials that show the benefits Rotary has brought to the community and its residents
- Notable programs, projects, press coverage, recognition, or partnerships that establish Rotary's credibility

## EVALUATING YOUR CONTENT: A COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

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### REINFORCE OUR ESSENCE

- Have you explained what Rotary is, who Rotarians are, and our distinctive approach to community challenges?

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### USE OUR VOICE

- Does the language capture Rotary's distinguishing characteristics (smart, compassionate, persevering, and inspiring)?

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### REFRAME MESSAGES FOR IMPACT

- Have you shifted the focus from what we do to why it matters?
- Have you shown Rotarians as people of action?
- Have you illustrated the impact Rotary makes? Have you mentioned Rotary's causes, or areas of focus (promoting peace, etc.)?

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### DEEPEN ENGAGEMENT AND DRIVE ACTION

- Have you addressed your audience's specific motivators and barriers?
  - Is it clear what you want them to do?
  - Have you given them a compelling reason to act?
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