



OCTOBER IS VOCATIONAL SERVICE MONTH

Opportunities in Vocational Service



When professionals join a Rotary club, they do so as a representative of their particular business or profession. This gives Rotarians the dual responsibility of representing their vocation within the club and of exemplifying the ideals of Rotary within the workplace.

Vocational service focuses on:

- Adherence to, and promotion of, the highest ethical standards in all occupations, including fair treatment of employers, employees, associates, competitors, and the public.
- The recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, not just your own or those that are pursued by Rotarians.
- The contribution of your vocational talents to the problems and needs of society.
- The values expressed in The 4-Way Test and the Declaration for Rotarians in Business and Professions, which promote high ethical standards in the workplace, a central theme of Rotary throughout its history.

History

Rotary's emphasis on vocational service has its roots in the founding of the organization in 1905. And the use of the classification principle — the guideline by which nearly all Rotary membership is determined — assures that each club has among its members a cross-section of a community's business and professional population.

The second part of the Object of Rotary calls for Rotarians to apply high ethical standards in their businesses and professions, recognize the worthiness of all useful occupations, and to consider their own occupations as opportunities to serve society.

In 1943, Rotarians were provided with a tool to help them achieve their vocational service goals when the RI Board of Directors voted to make The 4-Way Test an official component of the vocational service ideal. The test gave Rotarians a way to assess whether their personal and business dealings were being conducted with truth, fairness, goodwill, and decency.

For the first 80-plus years of Rotary's history, the second Avenue of Service — vocational service — was an area that focused on personal contributions that Rotarians could make within their own workplaces. Increasingly, however, clubs began to expand the definition of vocational service by organizing events such as career seminars and vocational training workshops.

The Four-Way Test

From the earliest days of the organization, Rotarians were concerned with promoting high ethical standards in their professional lives. One of the world's most widely printed and quoted statements of business ethics is The Four-Way Test, which was created in 1932 by Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor (who later served as RI president) when he was asked to take charge of a company that was facing bankruptcy.

This 24-word test for employees to follow in their business and professional lives became the guide for sales, production, advertising, and all relations with dealers and customers, and the survival of the company is credited to this simple philosophy. Adopted by Rotary in 1943, The Four-Way Test has been translated into more than a hundred languages and published in thousands of ways. It asks the following four questions:

"Of the things we think, say or do:

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?"

So, in 1987, the RI Vocational Service Committee was called together — for the first time in 40 years — to redefine the second Avenue of Service. The committee created, and the RI Board adopted, new committee structures and determined that vocational service was now the responsibility of individual Rotarians and clubs within the workplace and the community.

In 1989, the Council on Legislation adopted the Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions. This declaration spelled out the high ethical standards referred to in the Object of Rotary, and it gave Rotarians another tool for gauging their own professional ethics as well as the ethical standards they hoped to encourage through vocational service projects.

Vocational service evolved further in the 1990s with two new opportunities for Rotarians to share their professional skills. In 1992, the Rotary Volunteers program was brought under the umbrella of vocational service. And in 1993, the International Vocational Contact Groups program was merged with World Fellowship Activities to form a new program called Rotary Fellowships. As of 1 July 2005, the Rotary Fellowships program belongs to a new parent entity known as Global Networking Groups.

Project Areas

The focus of vocational service has expanded from individual vocational excellence to providing service within the workplace and to the community.

Vocational service can be accomplished in various areas:

- *Vocational awareness*
Give classification talks and conduct tours of members' businesses.
- *Vocational awards*
Recognize vocational excellence and high ethical standards in the community.
- *Career development*
Use members' professional experience to advance employment; develop and support apprenticeship programs; organize career-planning programs in schools; and retrain adults for new vocations.
- *Vocation at work*
Generate new jobs within the community; work with retirees; address drug, alcohol, and literacy problems in the workplace; create vocational opportunities for the disabled; develop and implement HIV/AIDS education and policy; and promote high ethical standards.

Service Opportunities

Participating in several RI programs can enhance a Rotary club's vocational service efforts.

- *Rotary Volunteers*

The Rotary Volunteers program seeks to promote international understanding and peace through three goals:

Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions

The Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions was adopted by the Rotary International Council on Legislation in 1989 to provide more specific guidelines for the high ethical standards called for in the Object of Rotary:

As a Rotarian engaged in a business or profession, I am expected to:

1. Consider my vocation to be another opportunity to serve;
2. Be faithful to the letter and to the spirit of the ethical codes of my vocation, to the laws of my country, and to the moral standards of my community;
3. Do all in my power to dignify my vocation and to promote the highest ethical standards in my chosen vocation;
4. Be fair to my employer, employees, associates, competitors, customers, the public, and all those with whom I have a business or professional relationship;
5. Recognize the honor and respect due to all occupations which are useful to society;
6. Offer my vocational talents: to provide opportunities for young people, to work for the relief of the special needs of others, and to improve the quality of life in my community;
7. Adhere to honesty in my advertising and in all representations to the public concerning my business or profession;
8. Neither seek from nor grant to a fellow Rotarian a privilege or advantage not normally accorded others in a business or professional relationship.

1. Increasing awareness among Rotarians and non-Rotarians of volunteer opportunities in their own and other communities;
2. Assisting clubs and districts in developing community service projects that address the critical needs of their communities; and
3. Fostering fellowship and goodwill between Rotarians and their communities initiated through volunteer activities.



- *Group Study Exchange*

The Group Study Exchange (GSE) program of The Rotary Foundation is a unique cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for young business and professional men and women between the ages of 25 and 40 and in the early years of their professional lives. The program provides travel grants for teams to exchange visits between paired areas in different countries. For four to six weeks, team members experience the host country's institutions and ways of life, observe their own vocations as practiced abroad, develop personal and professional relationships, and exchange ideas.

For each team member, The Rotary Foundation provides the most economical round-trip air ticket between the home and host countries. Local Rotarians in the host area provide for meals, lodging, and group travel within their district.

- *Humanitarian Programs*

Sponsored by The Rotary Foundation, these programs provide tools that Rotary clubs and districts can use to implement projects that help improve the lives of people worldwide.

- *Global Networking Groups*

Global Networking Groups bring together Rotarians with common recreational and vocational interests for fellowship and service opportunities.

This new entity (as of 1 July 2005) includes groups of individual Rotarians organized to focus on shared topics of interest on an international basis. Effective 1 July 2006, all existing and future fellowship groups with a service-oriented focus will be reclassified under a new category called Rotarian Action Groups, while existing and future fellowship groups focusing on fellowship of a recreational or vocational nature will remain under the designation of Rotary Fellowships.

Global Networking Groups currently comprise more than 90 independent Rotary Fellowships and Rotarian Action Groups. Join the growing number of Rotarians who are sharing their favourite activities and professional interests through organized recreational and vocational groups in Rotary Fellowships, or explore new opportunities for international partnership in service in Rotarian Action Groups. Whether you are interested in bird watching, motorcycling, volunteer dentistry, or the fight against AIDS, Rotary's Global Networking Groups are fantastic resources for all Rotarians to develop new friendships and to advance opportunities for service.

Links

All about Vocational Service

http://www.rotary.org/programs/voc_act/index.html

Opportunities in Vocational Service Handbook

<http://www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/509en.pdf>

Subscribe to the Vocational Service e-Newsletter

<http://lb.bcentral.com/ex/manage/subscriberprefs.aspx?customerid=48129>

The Vocational Service
Action Calendar

http://www.rotary.org/programs/voc_act/district/calendar.html

View the entire list of
Rotary Fellowships

http://www.rotary.org/cgi-bin/fellowships.cgi?template=fellowships_list.html&dbname=fellowships.txt&action=searchdbdisplay

