



# VOCATIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



## THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- First** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- Second** High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- Third** The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;
- Fourth** The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

# THE CONCEPT OF VOCATIONAL SERVICE

The Object of Rotary (see previous page) is a philosophical statement of Rotary's purpose and the responsibilities of Rotarians. The concept of vocational service is rooted in the second object, which calls on Rotarians to encourage and foster:

- High ethical standards in business and professions
- The recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations
- The dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society

As a Rotarian, how can you put these ideals into action? Consider these suggestions:

- Talk about your profession in your club, and take time to learn about fellow members' occupations.
- Use your skills and expertise to serve a community.
- Practice your profession with integrity, and inspire others to behave ethically through your words and actions.
- Help young people achieve their career goals.
- Guide and encourage others in their professional development.

By undertaking these activities, you bring vocational service to life. Vocational service is the essence of Rotary and serves as the foundation from which we serve our communities around the world.

## VOCATIONAL SERVICE



## PEACE

## TAKE ACTION

Find inspiring examples of ways to take action through vocational service. Consider doing some of the described activities or introducing similar ones in your club. Alternately, you may want to expand on current efforts.

# INTEGRITY AND ETHICS

Rotary emphasizes integrity and high ethical standards. Two standards developed by Rotarians — The Four-Way Test and the Rotarian Code of Conduct — provide a road map for ethical behavior in the workplace and other areas of life.

## THE HISTORY OF THE FOUR-WAY TEST

The Four-Way Test was conceived in 1932 by businessman Herbert J. Taylor, a member of the Rotary Club of Chicago, Illinois, USA, who served as Rotary International president in 1954-55. Having taken on the task of saving a company from bankruptcy, Taylor developed the test as an ethical guide to follow in all business matters. The company's survival was credited to this simple philosophy. Adopted by Rotary International in 1934, The Four-Way Test remains an essential standard against which Rotarians measure ethical behavior. It has been translated into dozens of languages and promoted by Rotarians worldwide.

## ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

The Rotarian Code of Conduct provides a framework for ethical behavior that all Rotarians can use, together with The Four-Way Test, in their business and professional activities.

As part of Rotary's guiding principles and the Avenues of Service, Vocational Service calls on Rotarians to empower others by using their unique skills and expertise to address community needs and help others discover new professional opportunities and interests. This handbook can help you gain a better understanding of vocational service and provide you with ideas to practice it through your service activities, in your personal life, and in your career.

## THE FOUR-WAY TEST

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?

## ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Rotarian, I will

1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in my personal and professional life
2. Deal fairly with others and treat them and their occupations with respect
3. Use my professional skills through Rotary to mentor young people, help those with special needs, and improve people's quality of life in my community and in the world
4. Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotarians

## SKILLS OR OCCUPATIONS

By including men and women from diverse professions and backgrounds, Rotary recognizes the importance of all skills and occupations. A vibrant Rotary club reflects the businesses, organizations, and professions in its community, embracing diversity in experiences and perspectives. Your professional life and vocational service go together. Rotarians have a dual responsibility: to represent their occupations within their club and to exemplify the ideals of Rotary in their places of work.

### TAKE ACTION

**Join a Rotarian Action Group**, and support service projects around the world. These independent groups include Rotarians, family members, and Rotary program participants and alumni who have expertise in a particular field. Members advise clubs and districts and collaborate with them on service projects. Learn more at [rotary.org/actiongroups](https://rotary.org/actiongroups).

**Join or form a Rotary Fellowship** that's related to your vocation. Rotary Fellowships are international groups of Rotarians, family members, and program participants and alumni who share a vocational or recreational interest. Many fellowships are related to professions, such as Editors and Publishers, Health Professionals, Lawyers, Photographers, and Police and Law Enforcement. See more at [rotary.org/fellowships](https://rotary.org/fellowships).

**Volunteer to work on a service project**, and use your vocational skills to serve others. Think about the skills that make you successful in your profession: Maybe you have training in some branch of science or medicine, are handy with tools or machinery, know how to start a business, have expertise managing finances, or can influence others through public speaking or writing. Use your unique set of talents to make a difference in your community.

**Share your expertise through your district resource network**. If you have technical expertise in one of Rotary's six areas of focus — or with project planning and implementation; community assessment, measurement, and evaluation; or other important aspects of large-scale project grants — let your district international service chair know. Lend your skills to local clubs, and help develop projects with greater impact.

**Participate in a vocation-related Rotary Friendship Exchange**. Work with your district Rotary Friendship Exchange chair to organize an international, reciprocal exchange between two districts interested in exploring a professional field in a new cultural context. Involve young professionals, and organize activities allowing exchange participants to experience cultural immersion while exploring their field in a new environment.

## ROTARY NAME

The name "Rotary" came from the practice of rotating meeting sites among members' places of business. That tradition remains an excellent way for Rotarians to share their occupations with their club. Invite each member of your club to briefly share about his or her profession, an area of specialty, or a particular skill set during club meetings throughout the year.

## VOCATIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

The Rotary Club of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., USA, launched partnerships with a half-dozen local nonprofits. Members acted as strategic consultants, offering their expertise to their partners free of charge. The partnerships brought four benefits:

1. Improved service opportunities for club members, which resulted in greater local impact
2. Increased visibility for the club and its partners
3. Attracted new members
4. Strengthened Rotarian/non-Rotarian service teams

## ADVANCING HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS IN THE WORKPLACE

As leaders in their businesses and professions, Rotarians can advance high ethical standards by setting a positive example among colleagues and in their community. Here are a few specific ways Rotarians integrate ethics into their daily work life:

- Discuss and emphasize honesty, accountability, fairness, integrity, and respect when hiring, training, and supervising employees
- Praise and encourage the exemplary behavior of colleagues
- Demonstrate personal commitment to high ethical standards in relations with customers, vendors, and business associates, treating each business interaction with care and consideration
- Promote socially and environmentally responsible practices in your businesses and organizations

### TAKE ACTION

**Educate current and new club members.** Dedicate time to discussing the importance of The Four-Way Test and the Rotarian Code of Conduct.

**Discuss ethical dilemmas.** Organize a workshop or interactive activity to discuss ethical resolutions to challenging scenarios.

**Recognize those who do good.** Honor businesses or professionals that demonstrate high ethical standards.

**Engage young people.** Mentorship opportunities allow you to share your knowledge and guide youth in building a successful future. Consider conducting workshops or hosting professional development seminars.

## EXAMPLES OF ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE

- The Rotary Club of Islamabad (Metropolitan) in Pakistan sponsored a speech competition on The Four-Way Test. In English and Urdu, students expressed their understanding of The Four-Way Test, along with creative approaches to practicing the test at work, at school, and in daily interactions. A four-member panel of Rotarian and faculty judges awarded winners with prizes.
- The Rotary Clubs of Edina and New Ulm, both in Minnesota, USA, hosted an ethics program for students from three local high schools. Students were assigned to the executive team of a hypothetical company. Each team was asked to come up with the best responses to complex ethical issues facing their companies.
- The Rotary Club of Santa Cruz in the Philippines used vocational awards to honor community members who exemplified service in the workplace. Award recipients showed excellent job performance while serving the community.

# VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Founded as a business networking organization, Rotary emphasizes the importance of bringing together business and professional leaders for the purposes of exchanging ideas, developing relationships, and improving communities. Rotary members are committed to professional development and advancing their skills. Rotarians can pursue this commitment through activities that increase their knowledge, and by guiding and training others to find gainful, fulfilling employment.

## TAKE ACTION

### Host an event for business networking and professional development in your community

- The Rotary Club of Bentonville, Arkansas, USA, recognized that students and employees of small- and medium-sized businesses lacked access to inspiring professional development events such as International Women's Day celebrations. With the support of local women leaders and Past Rotary International Directors Jennifer Jones and Mary Beth Growney Selene, the club organized its first International Women's Day symposium. More than 300 students and both women and men from the community got to hear how accomplished women advance in their careers and balance their personal lives.
- To provide training, tools, and networking opportunities in business, Rotary clubs in California, USA, sponsored a Young Professionals Conference, which connected experienced professionals with youth at the start of their careers. The one-day conference featured entrepreneurs and philanthropists discussing issues and ideas related to advancing a career and developing personally and professionally.

### Offer career counseling and guidance

- The Rotaract Club of Cape Munyonyo in Uganda carries out a project in secondary schools every year to mentor Interactors in professional development, career guidance, and service.
- The Rotary Club of Birmingham, Alabama, USA, partners with their Rotaract club on a mentoring program. Rotaractors are paired with Rotarians to foster stronger vocational, civic, and personal relationships. Rotaractors learn from Rotarians, especially in areas related to their future careers and industry sectors, and Rotarians have the chance to share vocational expertise with youth.

### Inspire the next generation

- The Rotary E-Club of Tamar Hong Kong, Hong Kong, organized seminars for youth in its community aimed at teaching balance between everyday life and a career. Members of the club shared insights on different industries such as travel, jewelry, entertainment, and entrepreneurship. Youth also learned how to write a résumé and cover letter, and they received suggestions on how to interview successfully.
- The Rotary Club of Madras Industrial City, Tamil Nadu, India conducted a career guidance workshop for its Interact club to help students discover their interests. The district vocational service chair arranged a half-day interactive session for students to form career goals and plan for their future vocations. A special workshop was conducted for girls, and more than 200 students benefited from the project.



## VOCATIONAL TRAINING TEAMS

A vocational training team (VTT) offers a hands-on approach to vocational service. In VTTs, groups of professionals travel either to learn more about their vocation or to teach local professionals about a particular field. A VTT helps create sustainable change by strengthening the knowledge and skills of individuals and communities, thereby improving their capacity to serve. In addition to experiencing a new culture and fostering global connections, Rotarians participating in a vocational training team have the opportunity to make an impact long after their travels end.

Teams can qualify for a global grant through The Rotary Foundation so long as they address one of Rotary's six areas of focus and follow certain specific guidelines for scope, sustainability, and measurability. Funded teams must consist of at least one Rotarian team leader with general Rotary knowledge, leadership skills, international experience, and expertise in the area of focus; and at least two other participants (Rotarians or non-Rotarians) with two years of work experience in the area of focus. Learn more and see complete guidelines for global grant-funded VTTs at [rotary.org/grants](https://rotary.org/grants).

### EXAMPLES OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING TEAMS

- A district in the United States used district grant funds to partner with a district in Australia to exchange vocational training teams focused on the environmental impact of oil spills. The teams traveled to disaster sites to evaluate the effects and recovery efforts, then shared their analyses and ideas for ensuring access to clean water.
- A district in South Africa used district grant funds to send a vocational training team to a community in another part of the country to provide teacher training in mathematics, science, and classroom skills. With the help of teachers, parents, and the community, this training will help two high schools increase the number of students who pass university entrance exams.
- A team of medical professionals from the United States traveled to Uganda to teach surgeons at a Kampala hospital specialized pediatric heart surgery skills and techniques for postoperative care. This VTT qualified for a global grant through The Rotary Foundation, because its project related directly to maternal and child health — one of Rotary's six areas of focus — and met criteria to ensure that the training would have a significant, sustainable impact.

### ROTARIAN ACTION GROUPS WORKING WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING TEAMS

The Rotarian Action Group for Eliminating Clubfoot Disability links Rotarians with partners who can offer expertise on the Ponseti Method for correcting clubfoot. The action group helped Districts 4420 (Brazil) and 6000 (USA) on a global grant application for a two-year vocational training team to prepare 15 trainers to teach the Ponseti Method to 50 orthopedic surgeons. The group also organizes webinars for hosts and international sponsors of global grants that focus on applying for grants and the expectations of both partners throughout the grant process.

# VOCATIONAL SERVICE RESOURCES

Take advantage of these resources and opportunities, and start promoting vocational service in your club today!

## CONTACT YOUR DISTRICT SERVICE CHAIRS

District governors are encouraged to appoint district service chairs to provide guidance and project support to Rotarians. Consult your district directory or email [rotary.service@rotary.org](mailto:rotary.service@rotary.org) to obtain contact information for your district's chair.

## OBSERVE VOCATIONAL SERVICE MONTH

Designated as Vocational Service Month, January offers a great opportunity to reflect on how the concept of vocational service is implemented in your club and district. Consider using some of the project ideas in this guide as a starting point.

## SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THE ROTARY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

The Rotary Service newsletter, a free bi-monthly e-publication, keeps Rotarians informed about how they can offer their professional skills to Rotary projects, support the professional development of individuals and communities in need, and represent and promote Rotary values in the workplace. Subscribe at [rotary.org/newsletters](https://rotary.org/newsletters).

## READ THE ROTARY SERVICE BLOG

The Rotary Service blog features posts on service and engagement, including quarterly ethical dilemma discussions, resources, best practices, success stories, and lessons learned. Subscribe at [rotaryserviceblog.org](https://rotaryserviceblog.org).

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROJECT LIFECYCLE KIT

- Join or start a conversation in a **Rotary discussion group** on My Rotary. The **Vocational Service group** discusses project ideas, shares successes, and connects members to better serve their communities.
- Find support for a club vocational service project on **Rotary Ideas**.
- Share your vocational service project successes on **Rotary Showcase** to inspire others and promote collective efforts to improve communities around the world.

## QUESTIONS?

Contact Rotary Service and Engagement staff at [rotary.service@rotary.org](mailto:rotary.service@rotary.org).





Rotary International  
One Rotary Center  
1560 Sherman Avenue  
Evanston, IL 60201-3698  
USA  
[Rotary.org](http://Rotary.org)



255-EN—(1017)

