

Presentation by Tom Thorfinnson – Bangkok Institute

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Greetings my Rotarian friends it is an honor to be here and to be amongst so many tremendous leaders. Thank you to Past Director Jackson for extending to me the invitation to be at your institute. The event is impressive in so many ways! Well done to all involved. This presentation is intended to give you a brief update on the RI Strategic Plan and also ask for your help in promoting the benefits of planning to your clubs and districts. In addition, we will highlight some key resources you can use to help your club conduct long-range planning and align your efforts with applicable components of the revised RI Strategic Plan.

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Let's pause for a minute and ponder Rotary's core essence. What are we all about? How do we tell Rotary's story to our friends and communities?

Let me read this Core Essence statement to you - **A worldwide network of inspired individuals translating their passions into relevant social causes to change lives in communities**

We feel this phrase translates our purpose and meaning more powerfully. Will the next generation of leaders view Rotary as a more relevant organization when they hear this statement?

Does this paint a clearer picture of what we are all about? Would this resonate in your community?

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Our core values are truly essential to what we are all about

In 2007, the Board formally adopted the five core values that define us.

- DIVERSITY
- FELLOWSHIP
- INTEGRITY
- LEADERSHIP
- SERVICE

Which core value differentiates us and our product?

How do we take greater advantage of our values in promoting Rotary's image?

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Taking into consideration our core values, feedback from Rotarians and from young up and coming leaders, last year's Board simplified the plan to just three priorities.

- Support and strengthen our clubs
- Focus and increase our impact through humanitarian service, and
- Enhance our public image.

No one priority is more important than the other. They are all key to our future success.

We need your help in communicating and supporting this plan.

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One of our priorities is enhancing our public image. It is at the top of the list among Rotarians in the world today. No longer are Rotarians satisfied to let our good deeds speak for themselves. We now want to be recognized for the great good we do and the impact we have on the future.

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From a marketing perspective we need to improve the branding of our name and mark. Take a look at just a few of our logos for some of our current programs. How often do you see the word "Rotary" in these images? Does our Rotary wheel appear in each mark in a fashion so that outsiders will see the mark, recognize it and realize our programs are part of our "brand"? Think of Coca Cola and Sony. In each case the name is well known and the brand is easy to identify. Does that apply to Rotary today all around the world?

From the club perspective a club can become better recognized in its own community if it makes certain to use and display the Rotary Wheel and the Rotary name in a predominant fashion in every activity the club engages in.

From the RI perspective we are beginning the process of properly analyzing our branding.

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The board heard Rotarians loudly last year. Clubs and Rotarians do not want Rotary International to come up with new programs and do not want us to ask clubs to do more and more. The board recognized this and identified only three general areas to serve:

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1. Polio eradication

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2. Youth and new generations

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3. The Rotary Foundations six areas of focus.

We realize and understand that for a club to become bigger, better and bolder the club must be empowered to do what the Rotarians at the club level feel is most appropriate for their own communities.

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The third priority for Rotary International is to support and strengthen clubs. Please take a minute and focus on some of the key words listed under the goals that are listed under this priority. Some of those words are innovation, flexibility and strategic planning at the club level. We want to empower the club leaders to adapt their clubs to meet the needs of their members and to attract the next generation of leaders to join their club.

You should also notice that we are going to support the clubs in being balanced in their service among all five avenues of service.

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We've all heard President Klingensmith focus on bigger, better, and bolder clubs. This represents a change in attitude.

When you make a club better, you often will find that it grows bigger and does bolder things. A club will be better if it is balanced in its service between all five avenues of service. Service with youth will re-energize a club. Community service will meet local needs and enhance the image of a club in its own community, thereby attracting new members. Vocational service will improve the image of the members in the community and attract young professional who want to connect and learn from more senior professionals. International service will open the eyes of the club membership to world needs and cultural differences, making us all more responsive to those in need. Finally, club service assures good stewardship of our resources.

Rotarians are looking for change and opportunities to reinvent the club while preserving our core values. We need to question the status quo to make our clubs more attractive – a product we can take pride in.

Our public image must be a priority. We need to promote the great work we do and tell our story better: to promote our brand and make others aware of what we are all about.

We need to assist clubs in promoting our values, our action-oriented service efforts, and our valuable network of local and international business and community leaders.

To be effective, RI will focus its support of clubs and districts in key areas of humanitarian service in their local and international neighborhoods. This local focus with global reach will result in a more significant impact

However, job #1 for all of us here—Help our clubs succeed!

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Let me talk for a moment on the Board's progress with regards to helping the clubs become bigger, better and bolder.

The Board is actively communicating the new priorities and our focus on empowering the club leaders to be bold. We are encouraging the club leadership to plan for the future and to begin the process of making the necessary changes to improve the clubs. We want to help the clubs so that every club is attractive to the next generation of leaders.

A key part of supporting our clubs to be better is the creation of the new Rotary Coordinator program. The Rotary Coordinators are intended to mirror the very successful Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator program. The RRFCs do not just work on fund development: They talk about the programs of The Rotary Foundation. The programs are the sizzle that sells our Foundation.

Similarly the Rotary Coordinators have been asked to help the clubs and districts tell the stories that are Rotary. Our youth programs, our community service, fellowship and vocational service. Each of us have a few very good stories about our experience in our clubs; Support and friendship from fellow members, or possibly local service that has impacted children in need.

In addition to telling the stories and selling the sizzle of Rotary our Rotary Coordinators will communicate to the clubs on the tools available to help the clubs improve.

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RI offers many tools specifically designed to help clubs and districts plan for their future and strive to be bigger, better and bolder.

The Strategic Planning guide provides a general framework for strategic planning in any environment. It helps with definition of mission and vision, goal setting, and is adaptable for clubs, districts or individuals.

The Club Leadership Plan is comprehensive, flexible and supports the individual planning needs of clubs around the world. Those that use the Club Leadership Plan have reported that the plan contributes to their club's effectiveness. Encouraging clubs to adopt the Club Leadership Plan will result in more effective clubs and a stronger organization worldwide.

The Planning Guide for Effective Clubs is a tool to help clubs assess their current state and establish goals for a given year. It supplements the Club Leadership Plan.

balanced club will help its members become better friends, better professionals and better citizens of the world.

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As Rotarians, we need your help to shape Rotary's future. With your knowledge and experience, we ask you to act as ambassadors for RI, promoting and engaging clubs to understand that they have a significant role in contributing to its future.

Rotary is at a crossroads. We must learn from our many years of experience and lead our organization in meeting the needs of our current and future members.

The revised RI Strategic Plan is a framework that emphasizes Rotary International's core purpose – to support the clubs and pursue the programs and activities that promote the Object of Rotary.

By encouraging club innovation while preserving our core values, Rotary will survive and thrive for many generations to come.

**In reality the magic that is Rotary empowers each member to become a better friend, to become a better professional and to become a better citizen of the world!**