

GUIDE TO CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP



Do you know a local professional who wants to be part of Rotary, but is worried about having enough time? Do you want to establish a connection or partnership with an area business or corporation? If the answer is yes, corporate memberships might be an option for your club.

WHAT IS A CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP?

A corporate membership allows Rotary clubs to involve a corporation — or any business, nonprofit, or government entity — in Rotary by offering an alternative membership package to some of its employees. Having corporate members increases the club’s membership while expanding its network and visibility in the community. Members gain access to the fellowship and service opportunities of Rotary with the possibility of a much smaller time commitment.

WHY OFFER CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP?

Offering this membership type may provide advantages for both clubs and the local corporations or businesses involved. Here are some benefits of corporate membership:

WHAT’S THE ADVANTAGE TO YOUR CLUB?	WHAT’S THE ADVANTAGE TO THE CORPORATION?
Attracts new members who might otherwise be unable or reluctant to join	Reduces the time commitment of any one member by allowing employees to attend meetings or events on each other’s behalf
Boosts your club’s profile by attracting new corporate leaders	Elevates the corporation’s image in the community as a partner in service and a business committed to corporate social responsibility
Diversifies your club’s skills and expertise, expanding its potential for doing good, and brings in new ideas to keep current members engaged	Offers workers the chance to develop and apply leadership and professional skills such as project management, training, and public speaking
Creates new partnerships in the community that can be used to address big challenges	Gives corporate members access to Rotary’s global network of 1.2 million volunteers and the opportunity to network while traveling
Increases the resources and capacity for service, which raises awareness in the community	Emphasizes a commitment to serving others as part of the corporate culture, something workers will appreciate

Offering corporate memberships is not a quick fix to gain more members. If your club isn’t attracting local professionals, or you’ve gotten feedback that your club experience isn’t relevant to prospective members, update your club practices and program before inviting guests. The **Rotary Club Health Check** can help you identify problem areas and find solutions.

HOW DOES CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP WORK?

Your club can define corporate membership however it chooses, as long as you document in your club bylaws how the expectations and benefits of this membership type differs from traditional membership. Corporate membership involves an agreement with a business, which then pays for or subsidizes the dues for employees who have this kind of membership. Remember that the corporation itself cannot be a club member — only people can be members of a Rotary club. The club offers corporate membership to individuals based on their employment at a corporation or other entity. Appendix 1, **Corporate Membership: Making the Offer**, can help you present the opportunity to business leaders in your community.

Two examples of how clubs can implement corporate membership are shown below. Refer to the **Sample Corporate Membership Bylaws** in appendix 2 to see how each of these models can be documented in your club bylaws. Your club can use one of these models or adapt them to fit your club and community's needs.

	MODEL A	MODEL B
Who pays the corporate members' dues?	A company pays or subsidizes dues for the primary member. Dues are not charged for alternate members (often 1-3 others) who can attend club meetings in place of the primary member.	The club charges a company a flat rate for a certain number of corporate members (often 3-5) and all may regularly attend the club's meetings.
Who is counted in the club's membership data?	Since the primary corporate member is charged RI dues, that person is reported as the active member and listed on the club's membership roster in Rotary's database. The alternate members aren't charged RI dues and are therefore not listed on the club's membership roster in Rotary's database.	RI dues for all corporate members are included in the flat rate. All corporate members are full, active members of the club and are listed on the club's membership roster in Rotary's database.
How are corporate members chosen?	Many clubs ask for the corporate members to be named and approved by the club before they can attend, but some don't.	The number of corporate members is discussed and approved, and wrapped into the flat rate.
What's the benefit to this model?	It provides more flexibility to the primary member because that person isn't required to attend every club meeting or event. Alternate members are exposed to Rotary but aren't expected to attend all events.	Club membership grows more significantly, the flatter structure simplifies the change, and all corporate members receive the same benefits.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CORPORATE MEMBER LEAVES THE CORPORATION?

If the individual isn't leaving the community, the club is encouraged to offer him/her an individual membership.

Making changes to long-held traditions can be hard in the short term, but beneficial in the long run. To learn more about adapting to change, take the **Leading Change** course in the **Learning Center**.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CORPORATE AND TRADITIONAL MEMBERS?

This table shows some of the ways corporate membership differs from traditional membership.

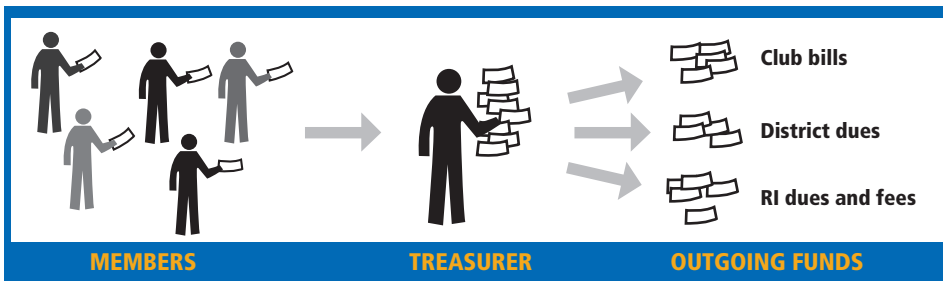
	CORPORATE MEMBERS (PRIMARY OR ALTERNATES)	TRADITIONAL MEMBERS
Selecting and approving members	Corporate candidates should meet the same membership requirements as any prospective club member. Your club can determine additional criteria, such as working for a particular corporation or business that your club has an agreement with.	To be a Rotarian, you must be an adult who demonstrates good character, integrity, and leadership; has a good reputation within your business or profession or community; and wants to do good in your own community or have an impact elsewhere in the world.
Eligible to serve as club officer	Only members for whom RI dues are paid are reported to RI as active members and can be club officers.	Yes
Expected to follow attendance rules	Determined by the club	Determined by the club
Dues	May be charged a different amount for club and district dues (as determined by clubs and districts). Depending on the model, one or more corporate members is charged RI dues. Alternate corporate members may not be charged dues, as determined by the club.	Pay club, district, and RI dues
Counts in RI's database and toward club's membership goals in the citation	Only those for whom RI dues are paid are reported to RI as active members and count in RI's database and toward the club's membership goals in the citation.	Yes
Eligible to vote	Only those for whom RI dues are paid are reported to RI as active members and may vote.	Yes

Once you have corporate members, your traditional members may see a benefit to switching membership types. You can allow current members to convert to corporate membership, as long as they follow your club's bylaws. If attendance is the reason for the switch, you may want to consider relaxing your club's attendance requirements or meeting less frequently to create a club experience that better accommodates your members. Similarly, if corporate members leave the corporation, you are welcome to offer them traditional membership.

Make sure alternate members don't feel slighted or overlooked because of their membership status — otherwise they may leave. Encourage existing members to show gratitude for the extra help all members bring to projects and events.

WHAT IS THE DUES STRUCTURE?

Clubs can decide on the club dues they charge corporate members, and whether it's different from what it charges its other members. All reported active members pay club, district, and RI dues.



Depending on the model used, some clubs charge corporate members the same club dues as their traditional members, while others charge up to 50 percent more for the benefits the corporation receives. Some clubs may charge additional fees when both the primary and alternate members attend the same meeting, for example to cover the cost of meals.

However you structure your club dues and fees, make sure you document it in the club's bylaws and that all members understand the dues structure. Club leaders are encouraged to ask their district leaders if there is a different district dues structure for corporate members.

DOCUMENTING MEMBERSHIP TYPES IN YOUR CLUB BYLAWS

Club rules governing financial obligations (club and district dues, meal costs, etc.), attendance requirements, service expectations, and other aspects of corporate membership should be discussed and voted on by the club's members to ensure there's a consensus on how this membership type functions. Once approved, the rules and policies should be added to your club's bylaws. Refer to the [Sample Corporate Membership Bylaws](#) to see examples of how your club can specify how corporate membership will work in your club.

RESOURCES

Learn more about accommodating members on [rotary.org/flexibility](https://www.rotary.org/flexibility), where you can also find editable versions of the appendixes below.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP: MAKING THE OFFER

Use this resource to start the conversation about corporate membership with leaders of local businesses and corporations to explain the advantages of a Rotary membership. You can edit the template and send it, or use it for talking points when meeting with business leaders face to face.

Before approaching business leaders about the corporate membership, consider the following tips:

- Assess whether your club is diverse and appealing to local professionals. Make changes within your club first to ensure it's attractive to your local business leaders.
- Be sure your club members are open to including corporate members and that your club will make them feel welcome.
- Leverage the connections you have to present the opportunity to the right person.
- Research the business or organization's values and culture before approaching them so you can better appeal to them.
- Develop a corporate membership pricing model that may be mutually beneficial to the organization and your club.
- Decide which model you will use and complete your own dues table in the template with amounts that work for your club.

SAMPLE DUES STRUCTURE FOR MODEL A (In which only the primary member is assessed dues and reported to Rotary International as an active member):

Corporate Dues*	Cost
Primary member	\$1,250.00
Alternate member 1	
Alternate member 2	
Alternate member 3	
Total annual cost	\$1,250.00

*For the 20XX-XX fiscal year



SAMPLE DUES STRUCTURE FOR MODEL B (In which the club assesses a flat rate for a certain number of corporate members):

Corporate Dues*	For Two (2) Corporate Members	For Three (3) Corporate Members	For Four (4) Corporate Members
Annual cost for organization	\$1,450.00	\$1,600.00	\$1,775.00
Average cost per member	\$712.50	\$533.33	\$443.75.00

*For the 20XX-XX fiscal year

Sample pricing breakdown for Model B:

Corporate Dues*	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Primary member	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00
Alternate member 1	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$175.00
Alternate member 2		\$175.00	\$175.00
Alternate member 3			\$175.00
Total annual cost for organization	\$1,425.00	\$1,600.00	\$1,775.00
Average cost per member	\$712.50	\$533.33	\$443.75



OFFER LETTER TEMPLATE (Can also be used as talking points if making a verbal offer)

The Rotary Club of [INSERT CLUB NAME] invites [INSERT BUSINESS NAME] to participate in a new opportunity for club membership. Corporate memberships give local businesses, nonprofits, government entities, and corporations the chance to give back to the community while developing their employees' personal and professional skills through Rotary.

At many businesses, the CEO and other top executives will want to add Rotary membership to their resumes because they recognize Rotary's reputation for combining business networking with community service. A corporate membership will allow your busy executives the chance to learn about the needs of their community so they can serve it well, while experiencing the personal satisfaction of knowing they're helping others.

Younger professionals will enjoy the flexibility of our corporate membership, which is more affordable and requires a smaller time commitment. Membership in Rotary provides young executives invaluable opportunities for taking on leadership roles while providing networking opportunities and mentoring. By offering the perk of Rotary membership, you show young executives that your business cares about their personal and professional growth.

How corporate memberships work

As many as [INSERT NUMBER] employees can join together as members of Rotary. One will be considered the primary member, while the others will act as alternates with the option of attending meetings either for themselves or on behalf of the primary member.

Although the business entity isn't a Rotary member, it typically pays the dues for its employees' Rotary membership and may be eligible for a tax deduction where permissible by law. The dues for alternate members are significantly discounted.

Here are some other advantages of corporate membership:

- **Flexible schedule.** Any of the members who joined together can attend a meeting — or all are welcome at the same meeting — adding tremendous flexibility and reducing the time commitment of any one member.
- **Cost savings.** The price of membership is a fraction of the cost compared to all the executives paying the full membership dues.
- **Community awareness.** Executives can meet and socialize with other business leaders in the club, expanding their understanding of the community's needs and wants, and get an insight into how businesses are addressing common concerns.
- **Global connections.** Members of Rotary have instant access to our global network of 1.2 million members in 35,000 clubs around the world. Wherever you're traveling, there's likely a Rotary club with local business and community leaders who will welcome you.
- **Networking opportunities.** Through Rotary, business leaders can make important contacts that can result in profitable business ventures in the future.
- **Commitment to service.** Employees of the business recognize and appreciate the company's commitment to serving others. Even if employees don't join the Rotary club, service becomes part of the corporate culture.



- **One-stop source.** Rotary is a productive use of an executive’s time. Instead of joining a variety of boards, each with their own unique focus, time commitment, and cost, Rotary is a comprehensive source where members can learn about many of the social issues and concerns in the community.
- **Personal satisfaction.** Members experience the gratification of knowing that they’re helping people who may not have the means to help themselves.

How dues are divided

Annual dues for corporate members vary depending on how many employees join. Businesses have the option of proposing two to four members, with the following pricing structure: <[SAMPLE ONLY – INSERT THE AMOUNTS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR CLUB]>

Corporate Dues*	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Primary member			
Alternate member 1			
Alternate member 2			
Alternate member 3			
Total annual cost			
Average cost per member			

*For the 20XX-XX fiscal year

Join us

The Rotary Club of [NAME] meets on [DAY OF WEEK] at [INSERT LOCATION]. Join us as our guest to see if an individual or corporate membership is right for you. Or contact our membership chair, [NAME], at [EMAIL] or [PHONE NUMBER].

SAMPLE CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP BYLAWS

These guidelines serve solely as an example of what clubs may wish to adopt to meet their specific needs. Rotary International does not endorse specific requirements or obligations of membership for any alternative membership types.

An editable version of this document is available on [Rotary.org/flexibility](https://www.rotary.org/flexibility).

MODEL A (In which dues are paid for the primary member, but not alternates):

Recognizing the growing importance that businesses place on corporate social responsibility, the club has created a corporate membership option. Corporations can take part in projects that give back to the community through Rotary's well-organized structure.

The Rotary Club of _____ offers a corporate membership program for businesses, professional practices, government entities, educational institutions, and _____.

1. **Qualifications.** The employees of any business are eligible for corporate membership in the Rotary Club of _____.
2. **Members.** Subject to the approval of the club's board, the business designates employees to serve as members of the Rotary Club of _____ and may appoint up to _____ people to be primary members or alternates.
3. **Attendance.** Attendance and participation requirements of the club may be met by any of the members. All members (primary and alternates) are entitled to attend any regular meeting of the club or any other Rotary club as determined by the club.
4. **Dues.** Dues for the corporation are \$_____ per year (as of _____). Dues for each alternate to the Rotary Club of _____ and Rotary District _____ currently total \$_____ per year. Should more than one corporate member attend the same Rotary meeting, the additional members will be required to cover the cost of their meals.
5. **RI registration.** Primary corporate members for whom RI dues have been paid are registered as active members in Rotary's database. They will be listed as official members of the club and noted in the roster as primary corporate members of the named business. Alternate corporate members for whom RI dues have not been paid are not listed on the club roster in Rotary's database.
6. **Votes and quorum.** For the purpose of general meetings and club matters, the primary corporate member is eligible to vote. Since the corporation has one primary member that is reported as an active, RI dues-paying member, it will have only one vote which will be made by the designee attending the meeting at which the vote is taken.
7. **Holding office.** Any RI dues-paying member listed in Rotary's database, which includes the primary corporate member, is eligible to hold office. Alternates who do not pay RI dues are not eligible.



MODEL B (In which the club charges a flat rate for a certain number of corporate members):

The Rotary Club of _____ offers a corporate membership program for businesses and other large organizations, government entities, professional practices, educational institutions, and _____.

The corporate member will be an active, dues-paying member of the club and of Rotary. The Board of Directors will establish the dues for this membership type.

1. **Qualifications.** All _____ members must meet the regular requirements for membership in the club and in Rotary.
2. **Members.** Subject to the approval of the club's board, these organizations may designate a primary corporate member, who is the [circle one] president, chief executive, department head, general manager, or other role, and up to _____ alternate members, who must be employed by _____.
3. **Attendance.** The corporate member is required to attend in person only once per _____. The alternate members will meet the club's other attendance and participation requirements.
4. **Dues.** Dues for the corporation shall be \$ _____ per year (as of _____) which includes a primary corporate member and _____ alternate members. [Add other rates as needed]
5. **RI registration.** All corporate members are full, active members of the club and count in the club's and in Rotary's database.
6. **Votes and quorum.** All corporate members are active, dues-paying members and are eligible to vote on club matters.
7. **Holding office.** All corporate members are active, dues-paying members of the club and are eligible to hold office.