

PROFILE OF ROTARY CLUB TYPES

SMALL ONE-CELL, LARGE ONE-CELL, AND MULTIPLE-CELL

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INTRODUCTION

This document presents three types of clubs within Rotary. The types are – Small One-Cell Clubs (up to 30 members), Large One-Cell Clubs (31-70 members), and Multiple-Cell Clubs (71-unlimited). In anthropology, these forms would be classified as – clans, villages, and incorporated towns, respectively. In business, these forms would be classified as – mom and pop stores, local department stores, and corporate chain stores, respectively. While terms often carry unique impressions for each reader, one should not assume any pejorative or antiquated connotations with any of the terms from anthropology or business, nor should the term “corporate” carry any special impressions of superiority or modernity. The terms – small one-cell, large one-cell, and multiple-cell – are three club designations around which this paper forms profiles for each club designation within five areas. These five areas are: (1) Overview; (2) Leadership; (3) Growth; (4) New Member Assimilation; and (5) Club Meetings. Since each club designation forms a systemic unity across these five areas – they by their nature then form a club type.

While the purpose of this paper is not to characterize any type as being the “ideal” type, by knowing the strengths, weaknesses, and profile of each club type, the membership of each club can become much more proactive in determining what club type they want to be or become – with excellence. The reader should be cautioned that no club exists in a vacuum or an ideal world. The reality is that all clubs have parts of all types. However, it is the position of this research that the majority of clubs function within the one club type as a predominate designation. As noted above, the paper addresses three club types.

Finally, it is the fundamental premise of this paper that if the membership of a club understand the nature of clubs (groups) from an anthropological and sociological perspective, they can be empowered to be much more intentional in shaping the mission, vision, and master plan of their club. It is through the lens of this practical application that this paper is committed as the Overview, Leadership, Growth, New Member Assimilation, Club Meetings are examined within each club type.

OVERVIEW

SMALL ONE-CELL CLUBS	LARGE ONE-CELL CLUBS	MULTIPLE-CELL CLUBS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically a Small One-Cell Club is one that has been in existence for at least 20 years (and often much longer), and not just a new club with fewer members. • Even though the club has tried many growth tactics over the years, the club has found a consistent ceiling under thirty active members. • It is not uncommon for the club to have been larger than thirty members at one time. • It is common for a club's greatest sense of group self-worth to be in the outstanding deeds of past leaders and club events of the past. • In anthropology, this type of club resembles more the nature of a clan. • When a club rises consistently above thirty active members, the personality of the club as a close knit and highly informal club begins to change, and without significant democratization of the club and shifting toward the profile of a medium-size club, maintaining the "above 30+ growth" becomes a virtual impossibility. • Preservation and survival of the club has often come to be a major priority for the club. • Generational heritage is honored and traditions are often raised to a near sacred level. • The club is usually more cautious and avoids taking risks, and change does not come easily. • New ideas can be resisted since any new idea has the potential of being a bad idea and endangering the club. • The club tends to be more homogenous. • Community service is often focused on defining and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically a Large One-Cell Club has been in existence several years as a medium-size club, even though some may at one point may have been larger. • While the size has fluctuated over the years, it seems to have a medium-size club "personality" in its DNA. • Over its life time, it has found an active membership range generally no less than thirty and generally no more than seventy. • In anthropology, this type of club resembles more the nature of a village. • When a club falls below thirty active members, the resources and organization needed for a medium-size club are difficult to create, and when a club begins to average consistently above seventy members, successfully sustaining the +70 membership (and growing) and managing the club as one large cell (village) becomes virtually impossible. • While the club may take pride in its past, it generally lives very much in the present and celebrates the dynamics of a "larger-but-not-too-large" club. • The club is large enough to have some great fund-raisers, service projects, and fellowship times – but still small enough so that everyone "seems" to know everyone. • From an anthropological perspective, this size of group may be the most rewarding for humans to associate – although this type of <i>ethos</i> in a Large One-Cell Clubs is often more of a romantic ideal than an actual reality. • Protecting the welfare and unity of the club is of great importance. • It is also very common for the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically the Multiple-Cell Club has been in existence many years (perhaps even decades). It could still be growing or may have grown to over 100 members, but has generally leveled out at a maximum of 150. • Over the past 5 to 100 years the membership typically has fluctuated between 100 and 150 members. • In the business field, this club resembles more the nature of a corporation, and in anthropology, it resembles the nature of a small incorporated town. • To grow into a Multiple-Cell Club, the club has had to break the Large One-Cell Club ceiling of "one primary cell" club type, and clearly cross into a decentralized, committee driven environment. • The first ceiling the corporate type club hits is at around 125 members. The more complex organizational demands typically become too much for volunteers, and clubs who break the 125 ceiling generally staff for administrative and bookkeeping duties, thereby, opening up the greater possibilities of a continued growth cycle. If this ceiling is not broken, decline is almost inevitable since plateaus cannot be maintained over a long period. • The next ceiling a Multiple-Cell Club hits is at around 150. To break this ceiling, a club must transition to a large Multiple-Cell Clubs type, but this club type is beyond the comparisons in this paper. • The life then in a Multiple-Cell Club typically has plateaus, declines, and new grow cycles ranging between 100-140.

<p>concentrating on a service specialty which often is carried on from year to year, however as the club becomes smaller it can become inconsistent in community service programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members relate to one another much like as a close-knit family or a small one-unit cell. • In anthropology, this type of club resembles more the nature of a clan. • If the club is declining in membership or has an overbalance in aging membership, the club often develops a “dying club” reputation. • The club commonly becomes preoccupied with its smallness and loses some of its reputation, health, and vitality as a service club. When this occurs, the club can lose its passion and sense of purpose as a service club. 	<p>club to thoroughly enjoy the leadership of its presidents, who often appear to be more like “village chiefs.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the gatherings fun, the club membership energized, and the spirit of the club upbeat as a community of fellow Rotarians are a high priority. These are the keys that help breathe life into a medium-size club and fuel the members’ sense of unified purpose. • Appropriate “bantering” is a common way of demonstrating affirmation and affection among fellow Rotarians. • Community service is often approached as another opportunity for the club to get together and have fun while serving others. • The medium-size club generally is not focused on a family feel – but more like a close-knit neighborhood (village), and the good neighbor camaraderie is clearly evident as members fellowship and work together. • The organization of the club is usually low-key and flexible, with the ability to change as necessary. Attention is given, not to so much to organization, but more to building trust among members and getting things done effectively. • While there may be some small groups or committees functioning throughout the year, it is the club meeting as a whole that always remains central in the life of the club members. 	<p>Sometimes a growth cycle may take a Multiple-Cell Club to 150, but a Multiple-Cell Club that declines below 100 after having reached the 140-150 range is in serious decline – headed toward becoming a Large One-Cell, primary group club.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee structures and small group projects/activities, which are both entry and integrative points for new members, managed by a network of active volunteers are keys that have enabled a Multiple-Cell Club to move beyond a Large One-Cell Club type. • However, as the club ages, it typically struggles with managing the increasing amount of administrative duties and organizational demands required of this size and type of a volunteer organization. • The increasing organizational challenge is evidenced most apparently by the difficulty in engaging new members and lack of success in integrating them into the life of the club. • The retention rate for new members during the first 4 years is very low typically for the older Multiple-Cell Clubs. • The club takes pride in the past and lives in the present, but there is a group that longs for the good old days. • The club typically has one large signature fundraiser and service project. • Club direction is established generally by the president, who operates as a corporate manager. • Substantial work continues from year to year through the committee structure and small group projects and activities.
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LEADERSHIP

SMALL ONE-CELL CLUBS

- A few prominent members – who may have shaped or continued the *ethos* of the club – often have a major influence in the club.
- A few prominent members often hold the final veto, hold the club together during difficult times, and form the core and stability of the club.
- Because the club is so small and always seems to be in danger of getting “too” small, strong senior members can feel a need to serve as “protectors” of the club.
- Senior members often are watched and followed regarding change and new ideas.
- The decision making process and structure is very informal and generally always involves the senior members in some way.
- Presidents in Small One-Cell Clubs with strong senior members often are expected to be more like coordinators and seek advice from the senior members.
- From an anthropological view, presidents typically appear to be more of a figurehead or spokesperson for the clan.
- Strong presidents who introduce major changes and new ideas may find stiff resistance.
- Presidents who do not understand the nature of a small-size club, especially the role of senior members, can experience frustration and conflict.

LARGE ONE-CELL CLUBS

- While the Large One-Cell Club celebrates the holistic and synergistic nature of the club membership, it is the role of the club president that gives the medium-size club its greatest distinction.
- The membership looks to the president for direction, inspiration, and leadership. It is not uncommon for the president to be the central influence in the club.
- From an anthropological view, it would be common for a president to be seen as a “village chief.”
- The Board and past presidents must be aware of this dynamic in a medium-size club and fully support of the new village chief each year – giving advice and counsel as needed.
- This place of high honor for the president provides dangers and opportunities at the same time. The demand upon the president to serve as the village chief can become challenging, especially for individuals oriented more toward serving as managers and less as inspirational leaders. A stressed president will generally produce a stressed club, risking its harmony.
- Successful large one-cell clubs recognize this challenge and have developed the capacity for a small central core of leaders each year to form and serve as “extensions” of the president, the functional leadership circle of the president.
- This leadership circle can also protect the president from undue pressure, serving often as his/her “armor bearers,” making the role of the president in this type of club much more enjoyable.
- Presidents have to be willing to allow this unique kind of support,

MULTIPLE-CELL CLUBS

- The Multiple-Cell Club, like the Large One-Cell Club, looks to its president for leadership and direction. Key committees and committee chairs also play a key leadership role.
- Large committees, leading the key projects, and fundraisers play an important and also most independent role for the club’s activities. The president sets the overall tone.
- A successful club president in a Multiple-Cell Clubs must provide both corporate governance and administration – and inspirational leadership.
- Day to day activities are carried out through committees. The Board provides overall policy direction.
- A challenge is for the president to not become overwhelmed by the magnitude of activities and administrative duties.
- Presidents in Multiple-Cell Clubs must have managerial skills sufficient for effective corporate governance, including such things as reporting to the District and Rotary International.
- While life in a Large One-Cell Club for a leader often has the “make it up on the fly” feel, life for a leader in a Multiple-Cell Club demands much more planning and organizational commitment.
- If a Large One-Cell Club president is a village chief, then the Multiple-Cell Club president is a combination of a city manager and a city mayor.
- The leadership circle within a Multiple-Cell Club is more complex and will change overtime, but a core group of members, mostly past presidents will stay

	<p>which is often more intuitive and relational rather than something planned and structured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With the president and the leadership circle in place, most members will respond with loyalty when give a reasonable level of attention and guidance from the president.• Because of transitions in leadership each year, the president must be skillful in accepting this conferred power from the group and then use it with wisdom and grace for the good of the club.• The president must always hold this conferred power “in trust” realizing it is a gift from the club and also realizing that next year another will be given the honor of holding this power in trust as the torch is passed to a new village chief.• Since the president is viewed like a village chief, he/she must be able to protect the welfare of the club and passionately care for its members – and be vulnerable enough to show this warmth consistently, even for members who may tend to annoy him/her.• To remain cool in response to a challenging member or to take good natured “roasting” through the year in good spirit only builds the respect and credibility of the president in the club.• When a large one-cell club is functioning healthy, the president each year can bring fresh ideas, change, and promote a forwarding looking vision for the club.	<p>engaged. Balancing their support with the direction desired by the president presents potential for conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With the president and the leadership circle in place, most members will respond with loyalty when give a reasonable level of attention and guidance from the president.• Like the Large One-Cell Clubs, because of transitions in leadership each year, the president must be skillful in accepting this conferred power from the group and then use it with wisdom and grace for the good of the club.• Also like a Large One-Cell Clubs, the president must always hold this conferred power “in trust” realizing it is a gift from the club and also realizing that next year another will be given the honor of holding this power in trust as the torch is passed to a new president.• When a Multiple-Cell Club is functioning healthy, the president each year can bring fresh ideas, change, and promote a forwarding looking vision for the club.
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GROWTH

SMALL ONE-CELL CLUBS

- A Small One-Cell Club will begin to feel “stretched” if it moves close to or beyond 30 members.
- Because the club is typically a close knit club with members feeling close to one another, “emotional room” can be limited for adding new members.
- New members are screened carefully to make sure they are a fit for the club.
- Membership outreach is mostly by reputation, invitation, and strong relational ties.
- There are usually two or three “gatekeepers” who serve the role as screening potential new members.
- A gatekeeper opens the door for new members, but the senior members sanction a place in the club for the new members.

LARGE ONE-CELL CLUBS

- A Large One-Cell Club begins to move from a small feel as it moves past 30 members.
- It begins to feel stretched as it moves beyond 70 members.
- Growth from 31-70 is an ideal growth opportunity a Rotary club. It is during this range that clubs often begin to find a greater diversity in membership.
- Membership outreach becomes more complex and proactive as a club grows into a Large One-Cell Club.
- Because of the central position the president has in a Large One-Cell Club, new members will expect special attention from the president.
- As a result, the president is central in membership growth. This places a great deal of pressure on the president, and for this reason presidents must focus on leadership and allow the board to assume more management of the club.
- Often members find great enjoyment in Large One-Cell Clubs, and because of this satisfaction may appear to be uninterested in new members – even though they perceive themselves as a friendly club. In reality, they are often friendly mainly to each other.
- While a Large One-Cell Club has more emotional room, it too will find a limit when the club becomes so large that it cannot meet with a “one village” feel.

MULTIPLE-CELL CLUBS

- As a Multiple-Cell Club moves past 70 members, the ability to operate as a single community grows more difficult and the complexity of management strains the volunteer function.
- This challenge even becomes more pronounced if a club has a membership surge beyond the 70’s without changing its organizational structure. To be effective it can no longer remain as an informal organism – it must move to much more formal organization.
- The president personally connecting with new members becomes difficult as the club moves into the corporate type.
- As with the Large One-Cell Club, making sure new members feel welcome and a part of the group is very important – but in the Multiple-Cell Club, this becomes much more focused on a strong membership committee who must serve as key connectors in the club drive membership.
- Special activities for membership recruitment are established by the membership committee, and publicity portraying the club as a leader in the community supports recruitment.
- While “entry” for new members in a Large One-Cell Club is generally through the club as a whole, “entry” for new members into a Multiple-Cell Club often comes through smaller groups.

NEW MEMBER ASSIMILATION

SMALL ONE-CELL CLUBS	LARGE ONE-CELL CLUBS	MULTIPLE-CELL CLUBS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership development is mostly intuitive through observing active members.• New members are assimilated into the club much like a family adopts a new member.• Because of the size of the club, members are expected to be very involved in the club.• New members are expected to be loyal to club traditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership development is more formal and proactive as the club moves into a Large One-Cell Club size.• Since the president is often a key factor in why a new member first joins, “ownership” of new member assimilation by the club membership is often a constant challenge for the club.• Membership will be granted easily, but actual inclusion in the fellowship circle is often more challenging and complex.• Because the club is expanding, new members may be more placed with their specialties.• Large One-Cell Clubs that can assess the talents and interests of new members and get them involved often have the best success in new member assimilation.• New members need a great deal of recognition and public assurance of their value to the club. It is critical that the president takes the lead publically and privately in this recognition and assurance.• Within the first year, new members need to form first-name basis relationships with at least 6 other members.• Instead of being loyal to club traditions that is common in Small One-Cell Clubs, new members in Large One-Cell Clubs are encouraged to develop an understanding and loyalty to the core values of Rotary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership development continues into an even more formal and proactive design.• Retention and successful member engagement become more difficult without adequate systems in place to track member involvement, as the group becomes too complex for the president to simply “know” everyone.• Membership will be granted easily, but actual inclusion into the club require it to be executed in an organized approach.• New member assimilation can no longer be informal, but must become much more intentional.• Furthermore, because of the club size, the new member’s sponsor may not be the best person to be the mentor for the new member.• Like the Large One-Cell Club, a Multiple-Cell Club that can assess the talents and interests of new members and get them involved often have the best success in new member assimilation.• Also like the Large One-Cell Club, new members need a great deal of recognition and public assurance of their value to the club. It is critical that the president takes the lead publically and privately in this recognition and assurance.• Within the first year, through a formal process, new members need to form first-name basis relationships with at least 6 members.• In the Multiple-Cell Club, members are bound together more by the vision and mission of the club and the ideals and values of Rotary – and not so much by club traditions.• Special activities and committees for retention/engagement are

CLUB MEETINGS

SMALL ONE-CELL CLUBS	LARGE ONE-CELL CLUBS	MULTIPLE-CELL CLUBS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings are more informal and have a family feel. • Often things which typically are board decisions are discussed and decided at weekly meetings. • It is easy for the club to become a “committee of the whole” in this informal decision making environment. • Much communication among the club is conducted at meetings, often verbally. • Programs may include outside guests, but generally programs are more informal and interactive. • Often the leaders are more cautious regarding speakers too far out of the “norm” for the club. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings have a formal informality. It is like a village meeting together to celebrate friendships as the village chief leads the meeting. • High energy, spirited meetings are the hallmarks of the village club. • Open dialogue and verbal announcements are still functional and give a community feel to the club. • The members expect and respond well to quality and orderly run meetings with great speakers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings have a formal structure and agenda. The meetings are lead and organized by the president. • Meetings are balanced to feature a high quality speaker, announcements, special activities, and featuring club accomplishments. • Care is taken to maintain a warm feel for the members and inclusion of new members. • Maintaining the proper tone of warmth, while functioning with appropriate professional decorum expected from a larger club require planning, presidential leadership, and engagement from committees.

CONCLUSION

As noted in the introduction, this paper about helping the membership of a club understand the nature of clubs (groups) from an anthropological and sociological perspective, so that they can be empowered to be much more intentional in shaping the mission, vision, and master plan of their club. While it is recognized that every descriptor in this paper does not necessary fit every club, taken in a composite, a club can generally identify itself more clearly with one of the designations outlined in this paper. As a result, this paper is not a “personality profile,” but more of a narrative which seeks to engage the membership of clubs in a conversation.

Through this process, clubs can choose a target type and then seek to become the very best club within that designation and grow by assimilation. Eventually, clubs who strive for excellence within a designation will reach the ceiling for that club type (or maybe have reached it now). When it does, it is hoped that clubs will sponsor a new club within their area (and grow Rotary by new club sponsorship) – or transition to the next club type and grow by transitional growth.

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