



MESSAGING GUIDELINES



JOIN LEADERS | EXCHANGE IDEAS | TAKE ACTION: www.rotary.org

Why we're strengthening our image

For more than 100 years, Rotary has united leaders committed to applying their expertise to better their communities. Despite over a century of impact in communities around the world, Rotary does not get the recognition it deserves. We need to rethink how we tell our story so people everywhere understand what Rotary stands for, how we're different, and why it matters.

In 2011, Rotary embarked on a multiyear initiative of unprecedented scale to strengthen our image. In addition to expanding public understanding of what Rotary does, we want to motivate, engage, and inspire current and prospective members, donors, partners, and staff.

What we've done

To tell our story better, we first need to define it. Based on extensive global research, we:

**Defined our essence
to identify how Rotary is different
from other organizations**

**Brought our values to life
to ensure our actions support
our words**

**Established our voice
to reflect our distinct character**

**Clarified how we present
our offerings so people
understand what we do and
how they can engage**

**Refreshed our visual identity
to energize our look and feel
while celebrating our heritage**

What we need to do

Bringing our story to life is our next charge — and one that requires champions across levels, groups, and functions.

We are Rotary, and we have a great story to tell.

**It's up to all of us to protect,
promote, and deliver on that story
in all our interactions.**

This guide will help you apply our new look and voice. More resources will be available online in the coming months. Look for new tools and templates that will help you apply our new look to your brochures, PowerPoints, and other print and digital communications.

Through a unified Rotary image and message, we're not just enhancing our reputation, we're elevating the entire Rotary experience.

AN UNPRECEDENTED EVALUATION OF OUR IMAGE

Our global research revealed three insights.

Rotarians are responsible leaders — both socially and ethically

Connecting has and always will be the driving force behind Rotary

It's not just about global impact — we impact communities on a global scale

FRAMING OUR STRENGTHS FOR CLARITY AND IMPACT

Our research insights define who we are (responsible leaders) what we do (connect), and why it matters (community impact). Validation research revealed how to articulate these strengths in a compelling way.



Define leadership by mindset and approach, not labels or titles



Highlight connections and communities, not the individual



Clarify the type of impact Rotary makes (i.e., community impact scaled globally; lasting change)

What are "values?"

Values drive our behavior. They represent our beliefs, what we do, and how we act.

How did we define our values?

Our values are rooted in guiding principles that have always defined Rotary. Now, we want to bring our values to life by showing how we demonstrate them in communities around the world.

OUR VALUES

**Fellowship and
Global Understanding**



**We build lifelong
relationships**

Ethics and Integrity



**We honor our
commitments**

Diversity



**We connect diverse
perspectives**

**Vocational Expertise,
Service, and Leadership**



**We apply our leadership
and expertise to solve
social issues**

What is our voice?

Our voice is the unique tone and style in which we communicate.

Why is a distinctive voice important for Rotary?

There is no organization quite like Rotary. By using a unified voice in all our interactions, we ensure our communications capture our distinct character — and how people experience Rotary. By speaking, writing, and designing in one voice, our communications will look, feel, and sound unmistakably like Rotary.

How should we use our voice?

Our voice attributes serve as a guide for how we speak, write, and design. Use them as criteria to evaluate your communications. A variety of visual and verbal tools (e.g., copy, imagery, information graphics, etc.) can help us infuse our voice into all of our communications. For details about how to apply visual identity elements, see pages 12-30.

OUR VOICE IS...

Smart

THIS MEANS...

We look at problems from different angles and apply our expertise to address social issues in ways others cannot. We are insightful and discerning.

OUR COMMUNICATIONS ARE...

Knowledgeable
Perceptive
Confident

Compassionate

Tackling the world's toughest challenges requires empathy. We champion real people and stories that are relatable and universal.

Thoughtful
Sincere
Engaging

Persevering

We find lasting solutions to systemic problems at home and abroad. We speak with clarity and conviction.

Bold
Purposeful
Courageous

Inspiring

Motivated by the enduring connections and positive change we bring to communities and the world, we encourage others to take action. We convey hope, enthusiasm, and passion.

Upbeat
Hopeful
Visionary

Here are a couple of examples to demonstrate how our voice strengthens our message:

EXAMPLES	BEFORE (without Rotary's voice)	AFTER (in Rotary's voice)	WHY IT'S EFFECTIVE
<p>Invitation to prospective members to visit a local club</p>	<p>Rotary is ordinary people around the world working together to clean the environment, end polio, improve our communities, and accomplish other extraordinary things.</p> <p>Learn more at rotary.org.</p>	<p>It's amazing what we can accomplish when hearts and minds work together. See how leaders from countries, cultures, and occupations around the world are taking action — to enhance health, empower youth, promote peace, and improve their community.</p> <p>Join leaders at a Rotary club near you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is active, inspiring, and inviting • Balances compassion (hearts) and intelligence (minds) • Defines leadership by mindset (diverse perspectives) and action • Clarifies our impact • Includes a clear call-to-action
<p>Excerpt from Rotary.org</p>	<p>Rotary's Anniversary</p> <p>Rotary's 108th anniversary marks a year of both achievements in the fight to eradicate polio and a stepped-up commitment to finish the job. You can help by learning how to use advocacy to encourage governments to fund the vital work of polio eradication.</p>	<p>Another year, another chance to make history</p> <p>We're closer than ever to eradicating polio. But even as we celebrate our 108th year of community impact, we're reminded that there is much to do. Become an effective advocate for government funding so together we can finish the job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline is inspiring versus descriptive • Highlights Rotary's persevering spirit • Is more compassionate and human (i.e., uses the collective "we") • Has a clear call-to-action

Our Essence and Organizing Principles

Our essence provides clarity

Three core ideas provide the clarity and focus to help every Rotary member answer the question, “What is Rotary?”

- 1 Rotary **joins leaders** from all continents, cultures, and occupations.
- 2 We **exchange ideas**, bringing our expertise and diverse perspectives to help solve some of the world’s toughest problems.
- 3 And we **take action** to bring lasting change to our communities around the world.

By centering our communications on our three core ideas, we reinforce what Rotary stands for, how we’re different from other organizations and why it matters today. This approach enables us, as individuals, to construct a powerful elevator speech — and collectively to tell a compelling and cohesive story.

What are Rotary’s organizing principles?

Our essence also provides a system for how we organize and present ourselves to the outside world. By mirroring the way people experience Rotary, these principles clarify why and how people should engage with us and drive understanding.

Organizing Principle	JOIN LEADERS		EXCHANGE IDEAS			TAKE ACTION	
Sub-categories	Emerging Leaders	Leaders	Shared Interests	Cultural Exchange	Global Understanding	Local	Global
Definitio	Connect with leaders from all continents, cultures and occupations		Discover and celebrate diverse perspectives			Create positive change in our communities	
Engagement Level	JOIN LEADERS is the entry point. This is where Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs live.		EXCHANGE IDEAS is the next level of engagement. It encompasses events and programs where people come together to discover shared interests, connect diverse perspectives, and foster global understanding.			TAKE ACTION encompasses service-related activities for highly engaged Rotarians, partners, and volunteers at both the local and global levels.	
Key Examples	Rotary Clubs Rotaract Clubs Interact Clubs RYLA		International Convention Youth Exchanges Shared Interest Fellowships Peace Fellowships			Club-level service projects PolioPlus Rotary Action Groups Rotary Community Corp	

Signature System

Organizing Principles

Calls-to-Action

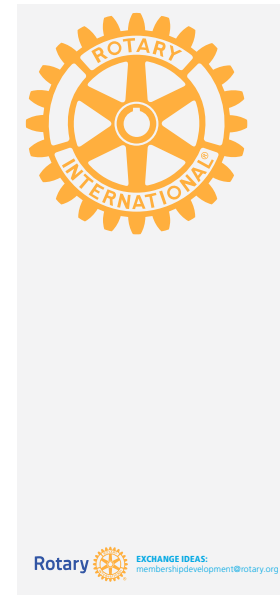
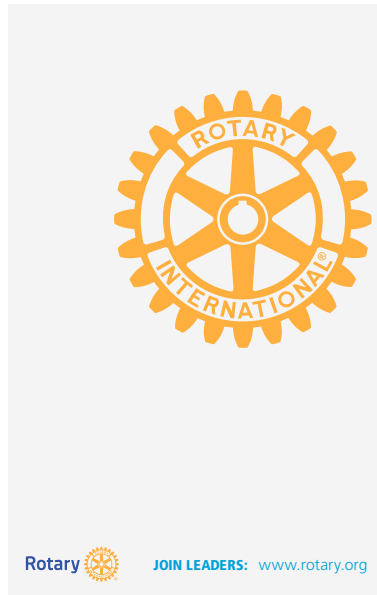
Together, our organizing principles communicate what Rotary does. Individually, they are also calls-to-action. In other words, they communicate that, through Rotary, you can “Join Leaders,” “Exchange Ideas,” and “Take Action.” They are intended to supplement, and not serve as, primary headlines and messages.

When developing communications, think about whom we’re targeting and what we’re asking them to do. Here are some simple things to keep in mind when applying our organizing principles as **calls-to-action** or a **Rotary-wide sign-off**.

Construction for Calls-to-Action



Examples



What we call ourselves

We are Rotary

“Rotary” is the connective thread that binds Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation. Rotarians naturally refer to our organization as “Rotary.” Embracing “Rotary” as our communicative name is a simple, yet critical, step to unify our organization and strengthen our message.

ROTARY	ROTARY INTERNATIONAL	ROTARY FOUNDATION
OUR COMMUNICATIVE NAME	OUR LEGAL NAME AND SUPPORT ARM	OUR CHARITABLE ARM
What we call ourselves when referring to the enterprise as a whole in all communications	How we refer to our global association of 34,000 clubs and the governance and offices that support them	What we use when referring to Rotary’s fundraising and grant-making arm, when appropriate and/or legally required