

Ethics & Vocational Service

I am ethical. I recognize and promote ethics in others and seek opportunities to serve through my vocation.



Session Goals:

- Examine the concept of Vocational Service and why it is important to Rotary Clubs
- Reflect on whether Rotarians can affect business ethics and how.
- Discuss how Rotary's Guiding Principles relate to our clubs and our lives

Resources

- The Four Way Test Means Business
<http://rlifiles.com/files/resource/>
- Applying the Four Way Test
[http://rlifiles.com/files/resource/Applying the Four Way Test.pdf](http://rlifiles.com/files/resource/Applying_the_Four_Way_Test.pdf)
- Organizing a Four Way Test Essay <http://www.4waytest.org>
- Guiding Principles of Rotary PDF
- Vocational Service Ideas PDF
- Rotary DEI Code of Conduct (2021) PDF
- *A Century of Service*, David Forward, published by Rotary International 2003 (book, can be purchased at Amazon & other locations)

All PDF materials are available at www.rlifiles.com

Session Activities

1. Why is vocational service important? Or is it?
2. What role did vocational service play in the founding of Rotary?
3. Why do we have classifications?
4. Why are ethics important? Or are they?
5. How does being a Rotarian affect your business practices? Or does it?
6. How do ethics impact diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)?
7. Can Rotarians impact the ethics of their community? How?

Summary:

- Vocational Service is one of the major motivations for the founding of Rotary – to use our vocational and professional skills to benefit society.
- Clubs should make a point of utilizing the individual skills of its members in planning and executing its projects.
- Rotarians should be proactive in promoting and exercising the principles of the Object of Rotary and the guiding principles.

Guiding Principles of Rotary

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.

Rotary 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.
5. Help maintain a harassment-free environment in Rotary meetings, events, and activities; report any suspected harassment; and help ensure non-retaliation to those individuals that report harassment.

The Four-Way Test

From the earliest days of the organization, Rotarians were concerned with promoting high ethical standards in their professional lives. One of the world's most widely printed and quoted statements of business ethics is The Four-Way Test, which was created in 1932 by Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor (who later served as RI president) when he was asked to take charge of a company that was facing bankruptcy.

This 24-word test for employees to follow in their business and professional lives became the guide for sales, production, advertising, and all relations with dealers and customers, and the survival of the company is credited to this simple philosophy. Adopted by Rotary in 1943, The Four-Way Test has been translated into more than a hundred languages and published in thousands of ways. It asks the following four questions:

"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?"**

Note: the 4 Way Test is not part of the RI Bylaws

The Five Avenues of Service

Based on the Object of Rotary, Rotary's Philosophical cornerstone and foundation of club activity:

Club Service focuses on making clubs strong. A thriving club is anchored by strong relationships and an active membership development plan.

Vocational Service calls on every Rotarian to work with integrity and contribute their expertise to the problems and needs of society.

Community Service encourages every Rotarian to find ways to improve the quality of life for people in their communities and to serve the public interest

International Service exemplifies our global reach in promoting peace and understanding. We support this service avenue by sponsoring or volunteering on international projects, seeking partners abroad, and more.

Youth Service recognizes the importance of empowering youth and young professionals through leadership development programs such as Interact, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, and Rotary Youth Exchange.

Rotary Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) code of conduct (2021)

Rotary International's Board approved a new [DEI code of conduct](#) that reflects our core values. It provides a supportive framework for how Rotary members can create and maintain an environment that is collaborative, positive, and healthy for everyone.

The DEI code of conduct asks Rotary members to:

- Use respectful language
- Be supportive
- Foster a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Celebrate diversity

Although free expression is important, what we say and how we behave matter. Rotary does not tolerate speech or behavior that promotes bias, discrimination, prejudice, or hatred because of age, ethnicity, race, color, disabilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

All Rotary leaders, from club presidents and district governors to directors and trustees, are expected to apply the DEI code of conduct uniformly by taking responsibility for how their words and actions may affect others.

Vocational Service Ideas

1. Advancing high ethical standards in the workplace
 - a. In hiring, training, and review procedures, include discussion and emphasis of honesty, accountability, fairness, and respect.
 - b. In internal communications, praise and encourage exemplary behavior on and off the job.
 - c. In relations with customers, vendors, and business associates, communicate and demonstrate your personal commitment to high ethical standards.
2. The classification principle
 - a. Classification talks to promote vocational awareness in your club.
 - b. Classification talks may also serve as a starting point for initiating club projects that help young people and the unemployed develop marketable skills.
 - c. Organizing tours of members' workplaces is another way to recognize the value of each member's vocation.
 - d. Schedule an occasional meeting in a member's place of employment.
 - e. Invite young people to special vocational meetings.
3. Promote Rotary's commitment to high ethical standards
 - a. Post The Four-Way Test on a prominent billboard in your community.
 - b. Display The Four-Way Test and/or the Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions in your office or work space and talk about it.
 - c. "Walk the talk" by ensuring that your actions in the workplace, community, and family demonstrate a personal commitment to high ethical standards.
 - d. Sponsor a Four Way Test essay contest.
 - e. Sponsor a joint "character literacy" project for young children.
 - f. Conduct a RYLA event with special emphasis on ethics.
 - g. Organize a discussion or group workshop on maintaining high ethical standards in the workplace and consider inviting local non-Rotarian business leaders to attend.
4. Recognize and promote the value of all useful occupations
 - a. Make classification talks and business tours part of your club's program.
 - b. Join or form a Rotary Fellowship related to your vocation.
 - c. Sponsor a career day for Rotarians to bring young people to their businesses.
 - d. Support professional development
 - e. Encourage members to take leadership roles in business associations.
 - f. Sponsor a seminar for small business entrepreneurs.
 - g. Hold informal professional networking events where members can meet other local professionals and introduce them to Rotary.
 - h. Start a career counseling program geared towards equipping unemployed or underemployed adults with the skills they need to compete in the job market.
5. Volunteer your vocation
 - a. Mentor a young person.
 - b. Use Rotary Showcase to identify a project in need of your specialized vocational skills.