With so many exciting challenges on the horizon for Rotary International clubs and Districts, it is time to take stock of ALL Rotary resources.

What is the most wasted resource in Rotary? Past District Governors!

In almost every Rotary District, one of the most popular light-hearted past times is to make fun of the much maligned Past District Governors.

Every Past Governor knows the frustration of finding “the right job” ...

Having completed the BEST Rotary year on record, Past District Governors are usually very well informed on Rotary matters. Many look around for the next challenge but find they need to be very careful NOT to intrude into the domain of their successor!

Well, the news is positive for those PDGs who are “tired of sitting at the back of the bus” waiting for opportunity to knock.

With general acceptance of President Ray Klinginsmith’s “bigger, bolder, better” philosophy, we are looking at the prospect of tremendous change in Rotary administration within the next decade.

The current RI Board is looking at multiple mergers of small Rotary Districts around the world. The prospect of larger Districts will ultimately mean fewer District Governors and larger areas of administration. Changing technology will assist the process. Rotary International is already locked into the process of Webinars to complement the training of senior leaders.

District Governors appreciate the need to work “smarter”. Apart from skilful use of his/her Assistant Governors, Governors will realise the knowledge and expertise of Past Governors will be invaluable as all Districts strive to “value add” service above self and lift the profile of Rotary in their respective areas.

Similarly, Past District Governors need to be mindful of the authority of the incumbent Governor at all times. Respect, cooperation and involvement on the part of PDGs will play a major part in building bigger, better, stronger clubs and Districts!

Past Governors need to be realists. Accept the fact that one cannot move directly to the RI Board of Directors after that “best ever” gubernatorial year. In fact, there are only limited jobs on RI, national and regional committees. The right place to start is in one’s own District.

A street smart District Governor will look at every member of his/her District Council and strive to appoint members to specific roles to suit their talents. The openings are prolific:

• Organisation and planning of District Leadership Institute and seminars;
• District Governor identification/training committee;
• Chair or mentor committees at District and zone level;
• Paul Harris Society, fundraising teams or committees (bequest society, major donor identification, etc);  
• Advisers, special team leaders working with District extension committee, clubs in distress committee;
• Information chairman in their own clubs – responsible for a structured weekly information segment;
• Public relations committees – Districts and clubs.

Obviously, the options are numerous. It is really a matter of Past Governors choosing their favoured area of interest, rolling their sleeves up and getting involved.

Success at club and District level will lead to opportunities regionally, nationally and sometimes internationally.

Districts in turn need to lift the profile of Past District Governors. Perhaps an Outstanding PDG Award each year – presented at the District Conference or District Changeover – would be beneficial.

Every District Governor can add to the strength of the situation by convening regular meetings of the District Council of Governors. Three to six times a year will guarantee a happy, informed District.

Bigger, better bolder Rotary clubs and Districts will become a fact of Rotary life in the not too distant future. Don’t miss the bus! •