

Rotary 2055: Strategic Foresight for Service Clubs in 2055

Rotary International has stood the test of time for more than 100 years – uniting leaders to serve their communities, cultivate peace, and build goodwill across the globe. Yet even the most resilient institutions must evolve. Service clubs in the USA (and in some other countries) face a convergence of forces that will define their future: demographic shifts, digital disruption, AI transformation, and changing volunteer expectations. For Rotary to thrive in the decades ahead, we must stop treating the future as something distant – and start shaping it now.

This paper presents a forward-looking strategic analysis of Rotary’s next 30 years, grounded in evidence-based megatrends (Appendix A) and explored through scenario planning (Appendix B). Our goal is not only to raise awareness, but to equip clubs with the mindset and tools needed to lead confidently in a world that is changing fast – and accelerating. Appendix C addresses what a “Smart Club of the Future” might look like including the best uses of tools and Generative AI (GenAI).

The future of planning for Rotary and similar organizations will rely on systems that are dynamic, measurable, and adaptive. The term *SmartGenAI* is used here to describe this emerging approach, what might be more formally called the Augmented Strategy Cycle (ASC). Unlike one-time plans that are often set aside, SmartGenAI emphasizes self-assessment, rapid planning, and launching initiatives with built-in feedback and regeneration. This approach ensures that strategy is not a static document, but a living cycle that compounds results over time.

Major Forces Shaping Rotary’s Future

Strategic planning must begin with clear-eyed recognition of the external forces at play in the USA. Rotary is not exempt from broader societal trends. The reality is uneven: in the United States and parts of Western Europe, Rotary membership has been shrinking steadily, with many clubs losing 2% annually. Younger generations in these regions are less engaged with traditional civic institutions. Yet worldwide, Rotary continues to grow – especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America – showing that the model remains relevant when it adapts to local culture, leadership pipelines, and community needs.

AI is reshaping how people learn, connect, and contribute. Even our concept of “community” is being redefined. Table 1 summarizes seven major megatrends that will shape the environment in which Rotary operates to 2055 and beyond. These are discussed in more depth in Appendix A, which also includes extended projections and sources.

Each of these forces is compounding over time – quietly but inexorably. Many clubs are feeling the pressure already. Others may feel stable but risk becoming obsolete if they fail to adapt. Understanding the compounding nature of these trends is critical.

The Power of Compounding: Why Small Declines (or Gains) Matter

A -2% annual membership decline (the current approximate decline in the U.S.) may not sound alarming. But over time, that rate creates significant erosion. Let’s apply CAGR (Compound

Annual Growth Rate) math: A club with 100 members losing +2% annually would shrink to 55 members over 30 years. A club gaining +2% per year would grow to 181 members over the same period. That’s a 3.3x difference between slight growth and slight decline – just from compounding. Even modest gains or losses compound to major differences over time. The same compounding concept holds true for other indicators: grant activity, community partnerships, leadership pipelines. Seemingly small yearly changes create vastly different futures. That’s why early adaptation matters.

Table 1: Strategic Megatrends Affecting Rotary (2025–2055)

Trend	Current Status	30-Year Trajectory	Risk/Opportunity for Rotary
1. Membership Decline	-2% CAGR	Aging base, fewer new members	Urgent need for innovation & retention
2. Virtual Engagement	25–40% of club events now hybrid or virtual	Increasingly expected	Opportunity to expand reach, reduce costs
3. AI & GenAI Adoption	Widespread use in business, minimal use in clubs	90% of orgs using Large Language Models (LLMs like GenAI) by 2030	Huge potential to augment planning, create action plans, and manage routine club functions including communications, events, PR, and engagement.
4. Tech Fluency Gaps	Older leaders less tech-savvy	Growing divide	Training required to stay relevant
5. Time-Constrained Volunteering	<15% of adults in regular service	Value-focused engagement wins	Need to demonstrate high ROI for time invested
6. Intergenerational Leadership	Minimal succession planning	Boomers aging out	Opportunity for mentorship & young leader pipelines
7. Civic & Local Trust Shifts	High local trust vs national orgs	Growing emphasis on impact	Rotary well-positioned if it adapts locally

Notes: Generated using ChatGPT 5 (2025, Aug-Oct) with prompt engineering, editing and review by Elmer Hall. Sources in Appendix A and References.

Bigger Isn’t Always Better: Compounding Impact Through Smarter Technology

Let’s explore two examples that show how small improvements in club productivity and technology use can offset declining membership – or even drive overall net impact growth.

Interpretation of Example 1: Even if a club continues to shrink slightly over time, consistent improvements in tools, systems, and engagement (+2% per year per member) can fully offset the net loss of members, keeping the club’s overall impact stable. This reinforces the value of smart, ongoing innovation – even in legacy clubs.

Example 1: Modest Membership Decline Offset by Modest Productivity Gains (-2% Membership CAGR with +2% Impact Index per Member CAGR)

Year	Membership (-2%)	Impact Index per Member (+2%)	Total Club Impact
0	100.0	100.0	100.0
10	81.7	121.9	99.7
20	66.8	147.7	98.7
30	54.9	179.6	98.7

Example 2: Slower Membership Decline with Stronger Productivity Gains (-1% Membership CAGR with +3% Impact Index per Member CAGR)

Year	Membership (-1%)	Impact Index per Member (+3%)	Total Club Impact
0	100.0	100.0	100.0
10	90.4	134.4	121.5
20	81.4	179.6	146.3
30	72.8	238.0	173.3

Interpretation of Example 2: With only a small annual membership decline (-1%) and moderate but consistent productivity gains (+3% per member), a club can increase its overall impact by more than 70% over 30 years – even while gradually shrinking in size. This kind of growth is possible through the effective use of smart tools, flexible service models, and Large Language Models (LLMs like GenAI).

Takeaway: These examples challenge the assumption that “more members” is the only path to more impact. In reality, a small, smart, tech-enabled club can outperform a larger but less agile one. The strategic use of digital tools, generative AI, and regenerative models of engagement can produce meaningful compounding improvements in how clubs serve, lead, and thrive – regardless of size. For extended projections, see Appendix A.

Introducing Four Scenarios for Rotary’s Future (2055)

To help clubs and districts visualize possible paths forward, this white paper presents four strategic scenarios for the year 2055, based on how Rotary responds to these major trends. The

scenario framework is detailed in Appendix B, including a 2x2 scenario matrix and development rationale. Table 2 is a brief summary of each scenario, as described in more detail in Appendix B.

Table 2: Four Rotary Scenarios for 2055 (Overview)

Scenario	Description
A: Rust & Ritual	Traditional culture, Low Tech Adoption: Clubs cling to tradition, struggle with aging membership, and gradually decline.
B: Brand-Lite	Adaptive culture, Low Tech Adoption: Clubs innovate socially and culturally but under-leverage technology. Impact is high but hard to scale.
C: Agile Alliance	Traditional culture, High Tech Adoption: Clubs use technology but without adaptive governance or inclusive leadership. May feel efficient but alienating.
D: Smart Rotary Club Ecosystem	Adaptive culture, High Tech Adoption: Clubs blend rdAI, hybrid engagement, mentoring, and adaptive planning. Legacy preserved, future embraced.

While all four scenarios are plausible, this paper focuses on the two boundary cases: **Scenario A: Rust & Ritual** – the default future if current trends continue unaddressed. **Scenario D: Smart Rotary Club Ecosystem** – a positive, attainable vision if clubs act strategically now. The rest of this paper – and the associated appendices – are designed to help clubs understand what it will take to avoid Scenario A and work with intentionality toward Scenario D.

Scenario A: Rust & Ritual

In this world, Rotary is respected but increasingly irrelevant. Leadership remains tied to yearly cycles, with few systems in place to transfer knowledge or track progress. Membership continues to decline, driven by cultural mismatch and a lack of meaningful digital engagement. Many clubs are reduced to a small group of legacy members performing the same fundraisers and rituals year after year. The organization’s past accomplishments become its most talked-about asset. Without sustained innovation, clubs slowly fade, and new leaders opt out of the burden of keeping them alive. This outcome is not dramatic – it is quiet decline. And it is already happening in many places. See Appendix B for scenario framework.

Scenario D: Smart Rotary Club Ecosystem

At the heart of Scenario D is the use of Smart Planning Tools combined with the best use of Large Language Models (LLMs), maybe called *SmartGenAI*. These tools don’t replace human leaders – they strengthen and empower them. Recent books by Hall outline how organizations can use GenAI tools for rapid planning and continuous improvement, an approach Hall terms *regenerative dynamic AI (rdAI)* (Hall, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2025). This *rdAI* methodology is the technology-augmented core of the Perpetual Innovation™ continuous improvement process. This approach shows how any organization, especially small businesses, local charities and

service clubs can build self-assessments that determine a club's current state, help identify initiatives and strategic direction, and monitor progress; strategic plans aligned with mission, resources, and goals; and GenAI (possibly custom GPT-powered assistants) tailored to the club's own content and plans.

The utility of these tools is clear. The core capabilities of GenAI are already being used in the wider nonprofit and small business sectors to automate routine tasks, draft communications, and summarize complex reports. This proven capability demonstrates a clear path for Rotary clubs to implement the **rdAI** planning and knowledge management framework, leading to less busywork, better continuity, and greater member engagement.

More importantly, these tools are used collaboratively across clubs and districts. Peer clubs share GPT templates. Club presidents leave behind digital handbooks for successors. A new kind of institutional memory forms – enhancing continuity and amplifying innovation. And the culture shifts. Leadership is no longer a one-year burnout role. It becomes a supported, strategic experience. Young professionals are invited into real planning roles. Retired professionals find meaningful ways to mentor. Rotary claims a place as a leadership incubator – not just a service club. This is not science fiction. The tools already exist in various ways; it's simply a process to start using them. See Appendix C for specific use how clubs of the future might use *SmartGenAI*.

The Smart Rotary Club Ecosystem represents an attainable and ideal future. In this scenario, clubs become case studies in adaptive civic innovation by leveraging *GenAI (Regenerative Dynamic AI, rdAI)* to enable rapid strategic planning, real-time decision-making, and continuity. Each club builds and evolves a strategic plan annually, ensuring core vision and metrics are retained over time. *SmartGenAI-based assistants* provide immediate support, allowing clubs to instantly generate event promotions, grant drafts, training guides, and partnership proposals based on their mission, goals, and recent activity.

(See the Oct. 20, 2025 blog article on Perpetualinnovation.org about [Pi-rdAI framework and the more general concept of SmartGenAI-ASC.](#))

Leadership Development as a Rotary Superpower

Rotary has always been a training ground for leadership. Members grow through experience – running projects, leading committees, speaking publicly, and managing budgets. But what if we deliberately expanded this role? In an environment where ongoing education is crucial, on-demand training emerges as the preferred modality. Rotary can serve as a dynamic platform for professional development, offering opportunities in strategic planning, AI literacy, community engagement, grant writing and more. Officers, directors, and even general members could receive training not just for Rotary work, but for leadership in their businesses, churches, schools, and other civic groups. If GenAI tools and strategic methods became core to club operations, this training would spread beyond Rotary – impacting communities at scale. In this way, Scenario D becomes more than a club strategy. It becomes a social and economic multiplier – fueling smarter, more sustainable communities.

Planning, GenAI, and the Role of Custom GPTs (Agents)

At the heart of Scenario D is the use of Smart Generative AI Tools (*SmartGenAI*) by clubs. These tools do not replace human leaders – they strengthen and empower them. Recent books by Hall outline how organizations can use GenAI tools for rapid planning and continuous improvement, an approach referred to as *regenerative dynamic AI* (rdAI) (Hall, 2024a, 2024b, 2025b; Hall & Lentz, 2024). This approach demonstrates how any organization – especially small businesses, local charities, and service clubs – can build self-assessments to determine the current state, identify initiatives and strategic direction, and monitor progress. The resulting strategic plans are aligned with mission, resources, and goals, supported by SmartGenAI (including custom GPT-powered assistants) tailored to the organization’s own content and priorities.

These tools are no longer theoretical. Early pilot clubs are already using private GPTs to generate meeting scripts, project summaries, and event checklists. One club even developed a GPT that trains new officers based on local history, Rotary best practices, and its own bylaws. The results have been clear: less administrative burden, greater continuity, stronger engagement, and a renewed sense of momentum.

A Legacy to Protect, A Future to Build

Rotary is uniquely positioned to thrive in this new landscape. It has the heart to serve, the structure to scale, and the reputation to lead. But legacy alone is not a strategy. To avoid the quiet erosion of Scenario A, clubs must act now – guided by long-term vision, collaborative tools, and a willingness to evolve. The future is already happening. Rotary has the tools, the heart, and the reach to shape it for good – and for all concerned.

References

- Edelman. (2024). *2024 Edelman Trust Barometer*. <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>
- EdTech Digest. (2024). *Top 100 EdTech growth trends*. <https://www.edtechdigest.com>
- Fidelity Charitable. (2024). *The future of philanthropy: Donor expectations in a data-driven age*. <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org>
- Forrester. (2023). *The state of hybrid work and digital engagement*. <https://www.forrester.com>
- GuideStar. (2023). *Nonprofit strategy and transparency report*. <https://www.guidestar.org>
- Hall, E. B. (2023). *Perpetual Innovation™: Club management workbook focusing on the most impactful giving*. Strategic Business Planning Company.
- Hall, E. B. (2024a). *Perpetual Innovation™: Rapid strategic planning and regenerative AI* (2nd ed.). Strategic Business Planning Company.
- Hall, E. B. (2024b). *Perpetual Innovation™: Workshop-workbook on rapid strategic planning and regenerative AI* (2nd ed.). Strategic Business Planning Company.
- Hall, E. B. (2025a). *Perpetual Innovation™: Perpetual sustainability by leveraging regenerative dynamic AI (rdAI)*. Strategic Business Planning Company.
- Hall, E. B. (2025b). *Perpetual Innovation™: Real-Time Foresight with Delphi Method Research and Scenario Planning*. Strategic Business Planning Company. ISBN: 979-8286030880
- Hall, E. B., & Hinkelman, R. M. (2022). *Perpetual Innovation™: Strategic planning for nonprofits and the art of impactful giving: The gift of giving, the art of caring*. Strategic Business Planning Company.
- Hall, E. B., & Lentz, C. A. (2024). Synergy of human + artificial intelligence: Delphi and the genius of crowds. In C. A. Lentz (Ed.), *The Refractive Thinker: Vol. 25. Artificial intelligence: The new frontier of the digital age* (pp. 27–68). The Refractive Thinker® Press.
- Harvard Business Review. (2023). *Bridging the generational leadership gap*. <https://hbr.org>
- IBM. (2023). *AI Adoption Index 2023*. <https://www.ibm.com>
- Independent Sector. (2023). *2023 Volunteering in America*. <https://independentsector.org>
- KPMG. (2023). *The future of service clubs: Technology, purpose, and next-generation engagement*. <https://home.kpmg/>
- LinkedIn Learning. (2023). *Workplace learning report: Upskilling with AI*. <https://learning.linkedin.com>
- McKinsey & Company. (2023). *Diversity wins: How inclusion matters*. <https://www.mckinsey.com>
- McKinsey Global Institute. (2023). *The state of AI in 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/>
- OpenAI. (2023). *GPT-4 technical report*. <https://openai.com/research/gpt-4>
- Pew Research Center. (2024). *Faith and community life in the U.S.* <https://www.pewresearch.org>
- PwC. (2023). *Global AI adoption and productivity survey*. <https://www.pwc.com>
- Rotary International. (2024). *Strategic Plan 2022–2025*. <https://www.rotary.org/en/strategic-plan>
- Smith, J., & Tan, L. (2023). AI and civic engagement: The role of large language models in local leadership. *Journal of Digital Governance*, 18(3), 45–62.
- Stanford Digital Society Lab. (2023). *Digital civic engagement and hybrid participation*. <https://digitalsocietylab.stanford.edu>
- Stanford Social Innovation Review. (2024). *Next-gen philanthropy and impact measurement*. <https://ssir.org>
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023). *Volunteering and civic life*. <https://www.bls.gov>
- Wilson, T. (2023). Generative AI in nonprofits and local government. *Tech for Good Quarterly*, 11(2), 10–17.
- World Economic Forum. (2023). *Foresight and future readiness: Planning for 2050*. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/>

Appendix A: Demographic, Technological, and Organizational Trends Impacting Rotary Clubs to 2055

Table 1 in the paper introduced seven foundational trends affecting Rotary’s future – ranging from membership decline to rising expectations for transparency and inclusion. These trends represent forces of change that will shape Rotary’s viability over the next 30 years. While membership decline is a pressing issue in the United States and some parts of Western Europe, Rotary is growing worldwide, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This demonstrates that Rotary’s model of service and fellowship remains highly relevant where cultural adaptation and strong leadership pipelines exist.

Table 2 builds on that foundation with a more detailed exploration. It expands the list of key indicators to include related demographic, technological, cultural, and philanthropic shifts. Each entry includes directionality, strategic implications for Rotary, and trusted sources drawn from global research institutes, nonprofit strategy publications, and leadership analyses. These indicators support long-range foresight efforts by Rotary districts and clubs seeking to prepare for 2055 and beyond.

Table 3: Summary of Key Trends and Indicators

Trend / Indicator	Direction / Growth Rate	Potential Rotary Impact	Sources
Rotary Club Membership (U.S.)	-2% CAGR	Continued long-term decline unless new models adopted	Rotary International (2024); Pew Research Center (2024)
Median Age of Members	Increasing	Aging membership base, succession planning critical	Rotary International (2024); Pew Research Center (2024)
AI & GenAI Adoption	+20 to +40% Growth Short-term	Clubs must adopt or fall behind; huge potential for planning, action plans, and routine club tasks (marketing, PR, communications)	PwC (2023); IBM (2023); OpenAI (2023)
Technology Literacy Gaps	+8% CAGR (gap widening)	Risk of excluding older or less-connected members; training needed	KPMG (2023); Stanford Digital Society Lab (2023)
Digital Engagement (Zoom, hybrid)	Upward trend	Expands participation, requires infrastructure	Forrester (2023); Stanford Digital Society Lab (2023)
Volunteerism (General)	Slight decline	Need for more flexible, high-impact volunteering	Independent Sector (2023); BLS (2023)

Trust in Institutions	Declining	Rotary’s credibility is an asset – but must be defended	Edelman <i>Trust Barometer</i> (2024)
Diversity and Inclusion	Increasing expectation	Opportunities for clubs to modernize and grow	McKinsey & Company (2023); Harvard Business Review (2023)
Strategic Planning Culture	Growing in nonprofits	Clubs with plans retain more members and funding	Hall (2023, 2024a, 2024b); GuideStar (2023)
Virtual & AI-Augmented Training	+15% to +30% Growth Short-term	Leverage for onboarding, officer training, continuity	EdTech Digest (2024); LinkedIn Learning (2023)
Foundation & Donor Expectations	More strategic, data-driven	Clubs need impact metrics and transparency	Fidelity Charitable (2024); Stanford Social Innovation Review (2024)
Intergenerational Collaboration	High need, low success	Rotary can model shared leadership and mentorship	Harvard Business Review (2023)
Club Purpose & Relevance	Re-evaluated by new members	Rising expectations to connect service to deeper purpose + community impact	KPMG (2023); Wilson (2023)

Notes: Generated using ChatGPT 5 (2025, Aug-Oct) with prompt engineering, editing and review by Elmer Hall.

Discussion of Trend Implications

These trends do not exist in isolation – they interact and compound. For example, a club facing a +2% annual decline in membership in the U.S. may expect to lose almost half its base by 2055 if no corrective action is taken. This long-term erosion, coupled with aging membership and difficulty recruiting young leaders, suggests that clubs without innovation plans are vulnerable to slow organizational failure. However, this picture is not uniform. Rotary International reports that overall global membership remains positive, as growing clubs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America offset U.S. and European declines. The lesson is not that Rotary is doomed, but that adaptation is uneven – and where adaptation is embraced, growth follows.

Technological transformation is a game-changer. The rapid adoption of generative AI – growing at +20% to +40% CAGR for several years – presents a powerful opportunity to reverse these trends. Clubs can now build continuity through digital knowledge systems, train leaders with AI-assisted onboarding, and deliver hybrid meetings that include remote participants of all ages and backgrounds.

Digital engagement continues to evolve. Clubs that embrace hybrid or asynchronous participation models can dramatically improve retention of younger and mid-career members who struggle to attend traditional in-person meetings. These members are often deeply motivated to serve but need more flexible, technology-enabled avenues to contribute meaningfully.

Rotary's credibility in a time of declining trust is one of its strongest assets (Edelman, 2024). As one of the few international organizations that bridges generations, cultures, and political divides, Rotary is uniquely positioned to serve as a model of civil society leadership. However, to maintain that trust, clubs must be willing to modernize operations, embrace DEI principles, and demonstrate measurable impact.

Donors – both large and small – are raising the bar. Foundations increasingly prioritize strategic alignment, measurable outcomes, and data transparency. Volunteers want assurance that their time and energy are making a tangible impact. By adopting strategic planning tools, digital scorecards, and intelligent communication strategies powered by generative AI, clubs can become more transparent, results-driven, and compelling to funders, partners, and prospective members alike.

Intergenerational collaboration may be the single most under-leveraged strength of Rotary. The average age gap between presidents and young professionals in clubs is often 25–40 years. Rather than seeing that as a problem, Rotary can become a testing ground for reverse mentoring, co-leadership, and shared visioning. These models not only retain youth but can reinvigorate elder leadership by providing relevance and continuity.

In short, the forces shaping the future are already in motion – and compounding annually. But within every challenge lies the opportunity to rethink, restructure, and regenerate. The most successful Rotary clubs in 2055 will be those that recognize these shifts early, embrace planning/technology tools like regenerative dynamic AI (rdAI), and embed foresight into everyday planning and culture.

Appendix B: Scenario Planning for Rotary Clubs to 2055

Scenario planning provides a structured way to explore the plausible futures that Rotary Clubs may face over the next 30 years. While forecasts can be helpful, they often rely on linear thinking. Scenario planning, by contrast, embraces uncertainty. It explores multiple pathways shaped by intersecting social, technological, demographic, and organizational forces – many of which are already in motion. This appendix offers a practical framework for U.S.-based Rotary Clubs to engage in scenario thinking and long-term planning, informed by the megatrends in Appendix A. The scenarios below are not predictions – they are planning tools that challenge clubs to test their strategies, adapt early, and make investments that will matter in any future.

Scenario Framework

The following 2 x 2 matrix frames four contrasting futures for Rotary Clubs. The axes were selected based on two of the most impactful – and uncertain – drivers of Rotary’s future:

- **X-Axis: Technology Adoption (Low to High)** – Ranges from clubs that resist or delay adoption of digital and GenAI tools, to those that embrace rdAI for planning, engagement, and continuity.
- **Y-Axis: Club Culture (Traditional to Adaptive)** – Ranges from clubs that maintain status quo models (e.g., in-person only, one-year plans), to those that adapt culture, structure, and planning systems.

Table 4: Scenario Matrix of Rotary Club Futures 2055

	Traditional Culture	Adaptive Culture
Low Tech Adoption	Scenario A: Rust & Ritual – Clubs cling to tradition, struggle with aging membership, and gradually decline.	Scenario B: Brand-Lite – Clubs innovate socially and culturally but under-leverage technology. Impact is high but hard to scale.
High Tech Adoption	Scenario C: Agile Alliance – Clubs use technology but without adaptive governance or inclusive leadership. May feel efficient but alienating.	Scenario D: Smart Rotary Club Ecosystem – Clubs blend rdAI, hybrid engagement, mentoring, and adaptive planning. Legacy preserved, future embraced.

Scenario Descriptions

The future of Rotary Club is shaped by the interplay between cultural adaptability and technology adoption. To help guide strategic thinking, a scenario matrix has been developed outlining four distinct paths the Rotary Club could take by 2055. Each scenario highlights different challenges and opportunities based on traditional versus adaptive cultures, and low versus high engagement with technology. The following sections describe these possible futures and pose strategic questions to spark discussion and proactive planning.

Scenario A: Rust & Ritual

This future is shaped by low technology adoption and an inflexible culture. Meetings follow the same format year after year. Leadership changes annually with little strategic continuity. Younger members drift away, and digital tools are underused or ignored. Grant opportunities decline as reporting lags. Membership drops –2% per year. By 2055, only a handful of aging members remain. The club exists on paper but not in action.

Signals to Watch: Rising median age of members; declining average meeting attendance; missed or late grant reports.

Moves to Make Now: Begin a basic club self-assessment; introduce hybrid meetings; launch a mentorship program linking older and younger members.

Risk if Ignored: The club quietly fades, leaving behind a legacy but no living impact.

Scenario B: Brand-Lite

Here, clubs retain a deeply human-centered approach and actively foster inclusive leadership, service innovation, and local partnerships. However, technology use is inconsistent. Club websites are outdated. Strategic plans are offline and forgotten. GenAI is seen as untrustworthy. Despite strong heart and values, these clubs struggle to scale efforts or onboard new leaders effectively.

Signals to Watch: High member satisfaction but low recruitment of younger professionals; outdated or unused club websites; sporadic reporting of outcomes.

Moves to Make Now: Pilot one AI-assisted tool (e.g., agenda drafting); digitize continuity binders; share success stories to build trust in new approaches.

Risk if Ignored: Clubs lose continuity and scale, remaining active but increasingly isolated.

Scenario C: Agile Alliance

In this scenario, clubs adopt AI tools for planning, communication, and data analysis, but without addressing culture. Meetings become transactional. Decision-making is centralized. Some members feel left behind or excluded by the rapid digital shift. The club becomes efficient, but not warm. Community trust erodes. Service becomes performative.

Signals to Watch: Strong digital output but weak member participation; widening tech-literacy gaps; growing complaints of disengagement.

Moves to Make Now: Pair tech initiatives with cultural adaptation; train members in AI basics; design inclusive participation models.

Risk if Ignored: Clubs become alienating and lose their sense of fellowship, undermining trust in the Rotary brand.

Strategic Questions:

- Are we using AI to augment relationships – or replace them?
- How can we ensure every member feels seen and included?

Scenario D: Smart Rotary Club Ecosystem (Preferred Future)

This is the future of synergy between human wisdom and digital tools. Clubs use rdAI to retain institutional memory, train new leaders, develop 3–5 year strategic plans, and co-create real-time solutions. They welcome hybrid engagement, mentor across generations, and track impact. Service is high-touch and high-tech. These clubs grow 1–2% annually and are seen as anchors of civil society in their region.

Signals to Watch: Increased officer onboarding efficiency; measurable impact metrics in reports; steady inflow of younger leaders.

Moves to Make Now: Pilot rdAI-based assistants; develop a district-level shared GPT library; adopt hybrid mentoring programs.

Risk if Ignored: Clubs miss the opportunity to become leaders in civic innovation and allow inertia to drag them back toward decline.

Strategic Questions:

- What investments or pilots would help us begin this journey?
- Who can help us build a Smart Rotary Club together?

The Role of Scenario Planning in Club Strategy

Rotary Clubs that use scenarios as part of their planning process are better equipped to respond to change. Scenarios allow clubs to: recognize early warning signs or signals; test the robustness of current plans under different futures; identify opportunities to collaborate, digitize, or adapt leadership; train incoming officers in long-term thinking; and build culture that values continuity and innovation. GenAI tools (especially using an rdAI approach) make scenario planning more accessible than ever. With the right assistant, a club can document key assumptions, generate scenarios, visualize pathways, and create action steps tailored to each plausible future. Moreover, rdAI tools can store and re-engage past plans, making long-term thinking a living process – not just a binder on a shelf.

From Scenarios to Club Strategic Plans

While few Rotary clubs will conduct full scenario-planning exercises on their own, the value of this white paper (focused on US nationwide trends) is that it provides a ready-made external analysis to feed into existing planning tools. Clubs can treat the scenarios presented here as part of the “external” dimension of a SWOT analysis – using them to identify threats, opportunities, and long-term factors that may affect membership, culture, and impact for your club in your town.

Clubs can also load other relevant information into the process, such as any existing business plan, district priorities, or community-specific data. Adding a self-assessment or results from a membership survey provides the “internal” perspective, giving a balanced view of current strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. See tools available from *Rotary International* at Rotary.org, as well as, Hall’s books on Club Management (2023) and Rapid Strategic Planning using rdAI (2024a, 2024b).

For guidance on turning these inputs into a clear, actionable strategic plan (StratPlan), see Hall’s *Rapid Strategic Planning* guide (2024a) and *Workshop-Workbook* companion (2024b). Together, these resources demonstrate how Rotary clubs can quickly produce a practical, forward-looking plan that blends self-assessment with scenario awareness – without unnecessary complexity.

Appendix C: GenAI and Progressive Steps for the Club of the Future

Generative AI is already transforming how organizations learn, plan, and operate. For Rotary, the opportunity is to integrate these tools in ways that amplify fellowship and impact while preserving the human core of service.

GenAI: Your Smartest Intern Ever – Upgraded Every Six Months

Imagine having a personal assistant or intern who works 24/7, never gets tired, and can instantly summarize, draft, refine, or analyze anything you give it. That is the power of **Generative AI (GenAI)**. Still, it is only as good as the information available to it and the details of your instructions. Now imagine that intern getting smarter every six months – moving from beginner to expert, from assistant to strategic advisor. That is where we are today with GenAI.

GenAI isn't just a fancy chatbot – it's a force multiplier. It can help draft agendas, summarize surveys, analyze trends, write job descriptions, plan events, and generate draft budgets, impact reports, and public relations messages. Its real power is in decision support: helping leaders focus on what matters most, aligning with the 80/20 rule, and avoiding wasted effort. GenAI is not here to replace club leadership or intuition – it is here to amplify thinking, lighten workloads, and accelerate progress.

From GenAI to *SmartGenAI*: Regenerative, Data-Driven, Rotary-Aligned

While GenAI is powerful on its own, Hall's *Perpetual Innovation*TM (Pi) approach and *regenerative dynamic AI (rdAI)* take it further. Pi is a TQM-style process focused on continuous improvement and systematic growth. rdAI uses GenAI tools within the Pi framework – a structured, data-informed planning cycle that begins with a baseline, aligns with organizational goals, and regenerates better results as needed, when needed.

The two combined – *Perpetual Innovation*TM and *regenerative dynamic AI* – form the foundation of **Pi-rdAI**TM, the approach delivered by Strategic Business Planning Company (SBP). Yet not every organization will use this branded implementation. A similar system developed internally by a club, or by another consulting firm, can be understood within the broader framework of **SmartGenAI (ASC)**.

SmartGenAI is the strategy lens through which GenAI becomes truly transformational. For example, if a club completed a rough plan last year, that plan should not be discarded – it can be fed into a more advanced GenAI model this year, along with the club's current information (financials, priorities, board minutes, and self-assessment results). Supplementing with additional inputs such as membership surveys or reports creates an updated, stronger plan in a fraction of the time.

Living Plans and Committee Alignment

The *SmartGenAI* cycle creates living documents. A club's strategic plan can be actively used by incoming committees to brainstorm, develop targeted action plans, and monitor their initiatives and progress throughout the year. By leveraging the plan as a living document, committees can

regularly review and update their strategies, set measurable goals for each initiative, assign responsibilities, and track outcomes to ensure alignment with club objectives. This approach not only encourages creative problem-solving but also fosters accountability and continuous improvement, enabling committees to adapt to changing circumstances and maximize their impact.

In the future of a Smart club, committees will always have an up-to-the-minute status report for every committee meeting and board meeting. But SmartGenAI cycles always begin with a baseline. Just as in quality improvement or health checkups, it is essential to know the current state before planning the path forward. For Rotary clubs, this means using a **Club Self-Assessment** to capture a realistic starting point. This enables clubs to track progress year over year, align priorities, and build momentum at a pace that fits their capacity.

Equally important, SmartGenAI supports **tiered planning**: clubs start with a higher-level strategic plan and then drill down into specific strategies and initiatives. No club should attempt to tackle everything at once. A focused plan typically highlights just a few key initiatives at a time, ensuring that progress is achievable and success is measurable.

Long-Term Planning Advantage

Beyond annual updates, **SmartGenAI** tools offer a unique strength in keeping track of the many moving parts of a club over multiple years. Goals, bylaws, initiatives, and lessons learned can be captured and regenerated into a longer-term plan that extends beyond the one-year officer cycle. This allows Rotary clubs to memorialize their collective knowledge, ensure continuity across administrations, and set a trajectory that looks five to ten years ahead. By anchoring near-term actions within a broader strategic horizon, clubs can avoid the trap of short-termism and build a culture of foresight.

Progressive Steps for the Club of the Future

Not every club will move at the same pace, but every club can begin somewhere. These progressive steps help clubs build strategic capacity using **SmartGenAI (ASC)** or similar processes:

- **Baseline Self-Assessment**
Begin with a self-assessment to establish the current status and key opportunities.
- **Membership Pulse Survey**
Distribute a short companion survey to gather insight from members on satisfaction, interests, and perceptions of impact.
- **Create a Strategic Plan**
Start with a higher-level strategy before diving into tactics. Use SmartGenAI to generate a draft plan based on assessment results and member input.
- **Focus on One or Two Initiatives**
Apply the 80/20 principle to identify the most promising areas for action. Use SmartGenAI to generate mini-plans and track early wins.

- **Annual Regeneration**

Treat strategy as a living document. Refresh the self-assessment each year, combine with other metrics, re-run the plan through newer GenAI tools, and watch results improve.

- **Share and Multiply**

As the club improves, share what works. Support other clubs, contribute tools to the district, and help build a culture of innovation and continuous improvement across Rotary.

Guardrails and Integrity

While some may have concerns about the potential misuse of AI, it is important to remember that Rotarians are committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity and service. GenAI is a tool, like any other, that reflects the values of those who use it. By embracing transparency, responsibility, and a focus on positive impact, Rotary clubs can harness the power of AI while ensuring it is used ethically. Rather than fearing what could go wrong, clubs can lead by example, showing how technology can be a force for good when guided by principled people. Rotarians will use GenAI well, wisely, and with the utmost integrity.

By Dr. Elmer Hall, President, Strategic Business Planning Company.

GenAI Attribution. ChatGPT 5 (2025, Aug–Oct) was utilized in developing the scenarios, the trends and the white paper with prompt engineering, editing and review by Elmer Hall. Gemini 2.5 (2025, Oct) was used to help refine the final draft(s).