



Ruritan National Playbook

These Guidelines are a living document intended to provide information in a quick reference format to help enrich and grow Ruritan.

We welcome suggestions and corrections.



Ruritan Playbook

Version History

Version Number	Section	Date of Change	Individual Making Change	Description of Change
1		06/25/2024	GDMR	Original



Ruritan Playbook

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Ruritan – America’s Leading Community Service Organization - Overview of What we do and Why we do it.....	4
Chapter 2 - Identifying Needs in a Community.....	5
Chapter 3 - Understand the Value of Fellowship – Share the Fellowship	6
Chapter 4 - Starting a New Club (Adult).....	7
Chapter 5 - Starting a New Club (Ruri-Teen).....	9
Chapter 6 - Recruiting New Members	10
Chapter 7 - Involving New Members	11
Chapter 8 - Retaining Members	13
Chapter 9 - Communication	15
Chapter 10 - Advertising Ruritan – Doing good in the neighborhood.	17
Chapter 11 – Setting Goals & Develop a Plan	19
Chapter 12 – Youth Events.....	21
INDEX.....	23



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 1 - Ruritan – America’s Leading Community Service Organization - Overview of What we do and Why we do it

Ruritan was created on the principle that fellowship was vital in smaller communities to join farmers, educators, and business people to discuss subjects related to agriculture, education, churches, and youth. The needs of the local community were extremely important to the founders of Ruritan. Through their goodwill and vision, they endeavored to help those who might not have anywhere else to turn to for assistance.

Ruritan's purpose is to create a better understanding among people and, through volunteer community service, make America's communities better places to live and work. The slogan of Ruritan is "Fellowship, Goodwill, and Community Service." Club membership represents a cross-section of the community in which the club serves and is not restrictive with regard to occupation, social position, or any other specific criteria.

Other community organizations’ objectives often center around higher-level objectives or their members' services. In contrast, each ***Ruritan club surveys the needs of its community and endeavors to satisfy those needs.*** This distinguishes us as “America’s Leading Community Service Organization!”

The first Ruritan Club was chartered in Holland, Virginia, on May 21, 1928.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 2 - Identifying Needs in a Community

Every small community has unique needs that often go unnoticed unless someone within the community brings those needs to the attention of others who can help. Some people are too proud to ask for help, and others might not know where to look. Existing clubs and members should be aware as much as possible of those in our community who might need assistance. Being aware of other needs that could impact many community members should be identified as well.

In communities where there is not yet a local Ruritan Club, it is important to contact community leaders and/or people who just want to help others to start a club. Putting the Ruritan name out there, who we are, and letting people know we are here to help is vital. Eventually, having more people involved in a club will help show the value of having a club in their community.

Helping in the local community requires local people to be involved. People from outside the community might join in once a need is realized, but neighbors and friends are more apt to give their time, money, and energy when a community member requires assistance.

That is why a grassroots organization such as Ruritan is so vitally important. It's neighbors helping neighbors and friends helping friends. These groups need to be organized at the local level. It's much easier to help someone in the local community because someone in the group likely knows the person(s) in need or will become acquainted with them by helping them. Many lasting friendships are developed while helping those in their time of need.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 3 - Understand the Value of Fellowship – Share the Fellowship

Man is a social creature. How we relate with others has much to do with the group we engage with. Each role is dynamic, and we interact with others. From the time we are born, we are part of a group. Our family is typically the first group we are associated with. Within the family, we may be a sibling, cousin, parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent, etc.

Over time, while remaining part of the family group, we become members of other groups such as schools, athletic teams, churches, clubs, etc. Within these groups, we may take on the role of leader, follower, or both.

The common thread is that we are social beings and have a strong desire to belong. Simply put, we congregate and hang out with (groups) people we like or with whom we have a lot in common. How we interact with others and make them feel welcome is of the utmost importance. This sense of acceptance and belonging is Ruritan fellowship.

There are many ways people share in fellowship. When our club members are engaged in providing some form of community service, the sense of satisfaction in helping others is irreplaceable. Fundraising activities, especially, are another great place to share in fellowship. Remember, keeping volunteers and club members happily involved adds to the FUN, which is the critical element in FUNdraising.

Recognizing people for their achievements and activities is a powerful way to fine-tune fellowship. Recognition at club, zone, district, and national meetings and conventions can be the glue that holds a club together.

The cohesiveness within each group helps us to further our aims of continuous and sustained growth and the long-term viability of Ruritan. If we are going to invite people, we need to be inviting.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 4 - Starting a New Club (Adult)

Ruritan Members should always consider not only who will make a good Ruritan member but also what communities would benefit from having their own Ruritan Club. There are different ways to approach people in these communities to sow the Ruritan seed.

One method is to identify a particular need in that community which an active Ruritan club could address and then seek out people interested in taking on the challenge of the need by starting a Ruritan club.

Another method to identify a community which has no Ruritan presence is to find out who the local leaders or key people are and approach them about starting a Ruritan club there. Arrange to have a community-wide meeting and advertise in some method to reach as many people as possible. Speak to local people about what Ruritan is and how it can help their community. Let them know of date/time/location of the planned meeting where they can get more detailed information.

Detailed information can be found in the “General Charter Information” document on the Ruritan National Web site. This document will give you some specific details of this process, what to cover during this meeting, and what documents to have on hand. Other documents can also be found on the Ruritan National web site:

Under the ‘Growth’ icon on the Member Resources Page, this list of documents helps explain Ruritan and the beginning steps to organizing a Ruritan club.

- Community Member Survey Postcard
- Growth Brochure
- Ruritan Branding – PowerPoint presentation on advertising Ruritan
- Ads Color - Four Week Campaign Option
- Ruritan Is.... Pocket Card
- Charter General Ruritan Brochure
- General Charter Information - Organizing a Ruritan Club (also in Club and District Officers’ Handbook)
- Charter Application

Remember, you are never alone when creating a new Ruritan Club. If you desire, seek help from other clubs, Zones, Districts, and National. There are plenty of people happy to help.

A new club is officially recognized and added to the list of clubs upon receipt of the Charter Application and \$50 charter fee. Once the Charter application and \$50 charter fee is sent to National, the club can start recruiting members. The members’ names will be added to the charter at the charter night meeting. Each newly chartered club shall close its charter list within 90 days of the charter meeting and the secretary of the new club shall immediately forward to Ruritan National the completed charter list.



Ruritan Playbook

Once you have a group of community members ready to start a club you can follow the general guidelines in the Club and District Officers' Handbook. The following documents will help assist in keeping the ball rolling.

- Charter List in Excel – For documenting new member info (can use other formats as desired)
- Charter Press Release – Announcement example for local newspaper, etc.

Recommendations for the Sponsoring Club

- Have a qualified member from the sponsoring club attend the new club's meetings for the first few months to answer questions and provide mentorship to the officers. This mentor should also assist for 1-2 years to help the club understand the many aspects of Ruritan.
- Provide an overview of the role of each level of Ruritan from club, zone, district, and national.
- Provide an overview of the *Ruritan Foundation* and *Project FOCUS*.
- Encourage officers to use the Club and District Officers' Handbook and point out its many useful tools, such as the dates when reporting is due and to whom.
- Ensure quarterly reporting and reporting of new club officers. Ensure new officers receive training.
- Ensure financial obligations are met such as dues paid quarterly and submitting appropriate tax forms.
- Encourage and assist with award submissions, including Community Service Awards, Officer Awards, Blue Ribbon, and Rudy Youth & Ruritan of the Year submissions.
- Encourage attendance to relevant conventions (zone, district, and national), Summer Leadership Conferences, and other important meetings.
- Help establish goals to meet Community Needs. Clearly define Goals; Your mission, vision, and objectives to provide direction for your growth.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 5 - Starting a New Club (Ruri-Teen)

Note: Ruri-Teen clubs are not strictly school-based, they can also be home-based.

If you'd like to organize a Ruri-Teen Club, the following items should be followed for the best chance at success. Obviously, not all items apply to non-school based Ruri-Teen Clubs.

1. Talk to the principal of the school to get their approval to organize the Ruri-Teen Club.
2. Talk to an adult at the school who will be the advisor from the school.
3. Your core group of students in the new club are high-profile (most popular, best athletes, academically gifted, etc.) students. These core students will automatically make the club attractive and market it to the largest number of students, as teens are very driven by what their peers are doing.
4. Working with the advisor, publish an advertisement in the school newsletter or display posters in the school about an informational meeting and/or the creation of a Ruri-Teen Club.
5. Have a Ruritan representative make a brief presentation and invite and encourage the attendees to become a part of the Ruri-Teen club.
6. Receive a commitment from the individuals at the informational meeting to sign the charter application and contact other individuals to meet with them next week to sign it.
7. Select enthusiastic club officers for the new club. An interim president and interim secretary will be needed at the charter night.
8. Plan for the charter meeting within the next two weeks and invite district cabinet members and other interested individuals. Remember, if this is done in the school, they may have limitations on how many guests attend.
9. The sponsoring club should be willing to take on the Ruri-Teen Club as a service project and pay the club's annual affiliation fee if they can't pay it themselves. Obtain a written commitment from the sponsoring club, which will work with the new Ruri-Teen Club for the life of the club.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 6 - Recruiting New Members

The number one rule in recruiting new members is to understand why we need them and keep this ever-present in our minds when we meet people. Ruritan National's main role is to support Ruritan Clubs, Zones, and Districts. Its only income is through membership dues; therefore, with more members, National can better accomplish this role.

Never underestimate the Power of One. Keep your eyes open for prospective members at all times. You or someone you bring to Ruritan, could become a future Ruritan National President or fundamentally impact Ruritan in a very positive way and improve Ruritan beyond our wildest dreams.

Why not you, and why not now? Go forth, light a fuse, and pass the torch. Regularly assess progress, gather feedback, and adapt strategies as needed to ensure continuous growth.

Who to Ask: Virtually anyone of good moral character and has the desire and willingness to help others. Some people will be favorable to our ideals of Community Service, Goodwill, or Fellowship. Others will not. That's ok. We need people who are. Don't overlook your friends or someone you'd like to know better. Other people to ask are those with common interests, work colleagues, and those who participate in other organizations we are involved in. Make up your own list. Knowing things like this will help us find good long-term Ruritans and help in member retention.

Seek out those who may be new to the community. They will be looking for friends, networking opportunities, and learning more about their community. They may have new ideas and skills to bring to your club.

How to Ask: Once you've connected with someone or discovered shared interests, it's important to share your "Why" story. One of the most effective methods for inviting someone to join Ruritan is to ask the right questions. This helps determine their desire and suitability to become a member.

Ask them what they think is needed in their community and whether a Ruritan club could potentially address it. This approach not only motivates them to get involved but also mirrors how we gather ideas from our existing members.

When to Ask: After talking with them for a while, and if you feel they'd be a viable candidate, invite them to a meeting or an event.

Don't be too quick to ask them to join and appear desperate. It must be a good fit for the club and the member. Otherwise, there's the risk that they aren't happy, they aren't helpful, and will probably drop out after a short period of time.

Where to Ask: Wherever you might be at any given time and are among people. Promotional events, social media campaigns, sporting events, collaboration with other organizations, churches, schools, etc.



Ruritan Playbook

Clubs and/or Districts can host informational sessions or membership drives to help the community understand more about Ruritan. Utilize the newspaper and public tv ads advertising your growth campaign and/or events.

Chapter 7 - Involving New Members

1. **Welcoming new members:** An initiation ceremony symbolizes the beginning of a member's service. If new members do not have a preference, assign them to a committee and introduce the committee's chair. Ensure the new member has a club handbook and/or contact list of other members so they may reach out with questions.
2. **Orientation:** Orientation provides a foundation for your new members by helping them understand how your club functions, what their roles will be, and the big picture of the zone, district, and National. Informed members are more likely to feel comfortable with your club and to become actively involved right away. A current well 'seasoned' member is suggested to be assigned as a mentor to help them become familiar with Ruritan.
3. **Mentoring:** Mentoring helps every member achieve the goal of serving their community. New members must feel welcome and develop a sense of belonging in their club, so connecting them to other members and properly orienting them is important to their success as a Ruritan and your success as a club. Some of their duties would include the following:
 - A. Provide an overview of your club's objectives and community projects. Tie in how your club's fundraisers help achieve those objectives.
 - B. Allow the new members to change committees if they desire.
 - C. Explain the meeting structure (agenda) and encourage participation.
 - D. Ensure they have a calendar of events for clubs, zones, and district.
 - E. Ensure they have links and/or access to Ruritan social media. Help them attain a login to the Ruritan National Member Management System (MMS).
 - F. Show members where they can find training and Ruritan materials (Ruritan website & conventions).
 - G. Contact everyone ahead of meetings to remind them and follow up if they miss a meeting. Never be critical for missing a meeting/event. Be genuine in your concern for their well-being and health and for their family.
 - H. Listen attentively to any feedback openly, without passing judgment, and share it with club leadership to improve the club. Document their 'why story' (why they joined Ruritan). What is most important to them? Listening and acting on feedback from your members can help your membership be even more appealing to prospective members and help ensure member retention.



Ruritan Playbook

4. ***Sharing Ideas:*** This step encourages open discussion with members on any given topic. It is critical for one's ideas or suggestions never to be shut down. Being shut down can be direct (verbal), indirect (moans/groans or mumbling), and even with non-verbal gestures (facial expressions, head shaking, flinging arms, etc.). These can be discouraging and may cause people to withdraw from the conversation and, worse yet, quit the Ruritans. New members are more sensitive to this.

Encourage honest and open discussion on every topic, from meeting conduct to fundraisers to objective updates. Never shut down any idea; openly discuss the pros and cons or send it to a committee for a detailed analysis/review.

- A. The ideas from new members provide a fresh perspective into something a club has probably done for many years and could provide a better approach.
- B. Consider every idea as circumstances change with something previously attempted and failed may actually work now.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 8 - Retaining Members

While growing our clubs is very important, retaining our current members and working in harmony is healthy for the club and beneficial to the communities we serve.

1. **Involvement:** Getting and keeping members involved in Ruritan activities is critical for maintaining their interest in Ruritan, the club, and the club's objectives.
 - A. Ensure members are informed about the club's activities well in advance.
 - B. Respect an individual's priorities and whether or not they participate in activities. **Never** criticize them for their decision to participate in an activity. ***We are all volunteers, and this kind of criticism is destructive to creating a welcoming environment and building a cohesive team and might lead to members quitting.***
 - C. Help with details of our Ruritan work, but DO NOT micro-manage their work. One of the biggest turn-offs is being micro-managed and scrutinized for every detail. There are many ways to accomplish the task at hand, so as long as the result is a success, let them work on their own. They may even know how to do it better.

2. **Be open to and try new ideas/projects:** This topic was covered similarly under 'Involving New Members – Sharing Ideas' but is just as important with members who have been in the club for some time.
 - A. This step encourages open discussion with all members on any given topic. One's ideas or suggestions must never be shut down. Being shut down can be direct (verbal), indirect (moans/groans or mumbling), and even with non-verbal gestures (facial expressions, head shaking, flinging arms, etc.). These can be discouraging and may cause people to withdraw from the conversation and worst yet, quit Ruritans.
 - B. Encourage honest and open discussion on every topic, from meeting conduct to fundraisers to objective updates. Never shut down any idea; openly discuss the pros and cons or send it to a committee for a detailed analysis/review.
 - C. Consider every idea. Circumstances change, and something previously attempted may work now.

3. **Be Personable:** Treat others as you wish to be treated. Your genuine concern for your fellow Ruritans and their families is part of our fellowship.
 - A. Always treat others with respect. ***We are all volunteers and can always find something else to do. Being treated like a child, ignored, micro-managed, or disrespected is certain to push a member away.***
 - B. Call members if they miss a meeting to check their welfare or if they need anything.



Ruritan Playbook

4. **Elect Officers and Train Officers:** Ensure you elect the right person for the job they are being elected for. Ensure those selected have been Ruritan members long enough to understand the roles they will fill. Only select those members willing to serve in a role, and do not corner them into accepting a role. Make sure officers receive annual training online, at conventions, or through other arrangements.
5. **Be FLEXIBLE:** Doing something because that's the way it's always been done can be detrimental to both members' buying into an activity and its success. Having all members involved in evaluating an issue may bring up a different perspective, which can lead to better outcomes. When the dynamics of members change, the objectives and projects may change as well. Embrace these changes.
6. **Don't be afraid to fail:** Most successful organizations and people have had plenty of failures which they learned from. Should something not go as planned, determine what went wrong, make any necessary changes, and move on.
7. **Resolve Conflicts:** Allowing unresolved conflicts to go unchecked can be detrimental to the club. Conflicts can include, but not be limited to, rumor spreading, name calling, downplaying ideas, bullying, or having "cliques" within our clubs. Every club should have some kind of system in place to deal with these issues should they arise. While resolving conflicts is usually a leadership issue, it is possible that leadership could be implicated. Once aware of a conflict, consider having the membership committee or an ad hoc committee identify the underlying issue and offer suggestions at your Director's meetings before feelings are hurt or members decide to leave.

Even while keeping all members involved and having a willingness to try new ideas in an effort to retain members, it is inevitable that Ruritan and most organizations will always lose members due to death, moving, etc. This attrition is a change in action and is the most compelling reason why recruiting new members is so critically important to Ruritan and all organizations. We still want to retain our fellow Ruritans, and remembering those members in some fashion shows the caring and commitment of our existing members.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 9 - Communication

1. There are many forms of communication that Ruritan uses to get our information shared. Establishing and maintaining these lines of communication is critical at every level, from individuals discussing a meeting time to Ruritan National sharing a policy change. Within a communication chain, determining which method to communicate is the first step.
2. Here are some current methods being used, with a few examples; most are self-explanatory. The urgency and preference of those communicating determine which one is used.
 - A. Traditional Mail – US Mail, UPS, FedEx, etc. - Ruritan magazines, reports, awards, etc.
 - B. Email – Reports, award applications, notices, newsletters, etc.
 - C. Video Conferencing - Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, GoTo, etc.
 - D. Social Media – Such as FACEBOOK, Instagram, Reels, X, Websites, etc.
 - E. Text - Quick, easy, common.
 - F. Newspaper - Share information with the general public.
 - G. Publications - Ruritan Club and District Officers' Handbook, club handbooks, magazines, etc.
 - H. Radio/Television - Share information with the general public.
 - I. Telephone/Cell Phone - Quick, easy, common.
 - J. In-person – Is the best for in-depth, detailed conversations.
3. The method of communication may be different within the club than within the zone, district, or national. Knowing which form of communication is being used and when helps to cut down on frustration and keep members well-informed. It is critical to use multiple methods of communication (electronic and mail), especially for those members who do not utilize electronic means in any form.
 - A. **Clubs** – Handbooks provide each member's contact information and can list the club's objectives and planned events. It is also a great idea to list the contact information of the Zone and District Governors.

Clubs sharing information about events via social media have proven extremely valuable in reaching targeted audiences. Newspapers, TV, and radio also remain great means of sharing information but usually have a cost associated with them.

- B. **Zones** – Many clubs exchange their handbooks with the club presidents of other clubs. This information can be handy when clubs unite for a combined community effort or share ideas. Zones usually communicate via email and occasionally telephone.
- C. **Districts**—Usually, districts provide a directory or roster (paper or electronic) to their cabinet members. This directory provides contact information for the current cabinet, which includes district officers, zone governors, past three district governors, and committee chairs. Some



Ruritan Playbook

districts produce and provide this information in an abbreviated form for distribution to all the district's Ruritan members.

Districts usually communicate via email and occasionally telephone. Some districts use social media to share events such as fundraisers, community projects, presentations, awards, etc. Some districts may occasionally conduct a cabinet meeting via videoconferencing.

D. **National** – Ruritan National utilizes many forms of communication. Obviously, which form depends on what is being communicated. We'll attempt to capture the majority of things here.

Note: While it is acceptable to contact the staff at the National Office, members are encouraged to first attempt to resolve their questions with their club officers, Zone Governors, and District Officers before contacting the staff.

- i. Web Site – Ruritan National's website is the best place to find just about everything there is for Ruritan. This is one's first stop to get information on a given topic. We suggest going to the site and navigating the tabs and links available.
- ii. Publications – Many Ruritan handbooks, guidelines, policies, magazines, newsletters, etc., can be found on the website, and many are mailed.
- iii. Email – This is the main method used to contact club members and officers throughout Ruritan. Many documents are attached and sent this way.
- iv. Videoconferencing—Many internal meetings are conducted via this method, which gets the job done and also saves board members' travel expenses.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 10 - Advertising Ruritan – Doing good in the neighborhood.

Ruritan was founded on the principles of Fellowship, Goodwill, and Community Service. When talking with our communities, we should always be 1) Positive, 2) Excited, and 3) Confident about what the mission of Ruritan is. Ruritan is a “feel good” organization to be part of because of our willingness to be aware of community needs. We assemble as volunteers to seek out needs and to address them with a servant’s heart. Supporting our youth is paramount to help them understand their value in our communities and to help them become active community supporters. We show what we do through our actions and love for our communities.

1. Tell Your Story

It is important that we let others know why we joined and why we continue to serve through Ruritan. If we remember why we first got involved in Ruritan and the benefits the community has seen through our good works, it has the opportunity to touch others’ lives the way it has touched ours. Never be too shy or humble to tell others of the wonderful work we’ve done in the community. That feeling of helping those in need and developing relationships within our communities is the true reward of belonging.

2. Wear Ruritan Apparel

Always advertise Ruritan by wearing hats, shirts, or other clothing displaying Ruritan insignias. Don’t be shy to let others know that you are proud to be part of this organization for the good work we’re doing. Nothing is a better conversation starter than to display the Ruritan name. Be ready to give your 30-second “elevator” speech when someone asks you what Ruritan is.

3. Newspaper and Radio

Though newspapers are somewhat outdated now there are still those who like to read a newspaper, either in hand or online. Share the news of what your club has done, is doing, or plans to do. With all the bad news today, good news is appreciated! Radio stations are often willing to support nonprofit groups like Ruritan at little or no cost. Don’t hesitate to share the good news!

4. Social Media

Social media is now the best platform to spread the good news of Ruritan. With the use of computers and especially cell phones the opportunities are endless. Make sure your club has a Facebook page. Stories are not only viewed on Facebook but shared with many others. Make your page interesting and keep it updated. Websites can be valuable as well, but they require the user to go there to see an article intentionally. Twitter and Instagram are other forms of social media people share and can get our good news out.

5. Local Online News Sources

If your community is one that has a local Chamber of Commerce, sharing through them can reach some not connected to other social media outlets.



Ruritan Playbook

Some smaller communities have a Community Bulletin Board where local news can be shared. If your community doesn't have a Community Bulletin Board, creating one to be shared can be a great Ruritan project. If you don't currently have a member who is computer savvy enough to create one, asking someone with the ability to help get it done just might add a member to your club at the same time!

Advertisers sometimes give spots on roadside digital billboards to allow nonprofit groups like Ruritan a venue to promote activity. Check with the companies that sell the advertising on them and see if they're willing to give time for your club on one of them.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 11 – Setting Goals & Develop a Plan

According to Wikipedia, a **goal** or objective is an idea of the future or desired result that a person or a group of people envision, plan, and commit to achieving. This needs to occur at every level within Ruritan, from Committees to clubs to zones to districts to National.

Each year, Ruritan clubs review their objectives to ensure they meet community needs and plan for the resources required to achieve them. Most Ruritan objectives pertain to community projects and fundraisers.

When setting goals for your club, think about the most important asset we have: **our members!** Ensure their needs and desires are considered. We can have all the goals, plans, and hopes imaginable, but if we don't have a solid membership of community-minded people, we cannot be successful.

This is another reason why Ruritan National has established a goal of doubling membership by our 100th anniversary. There are many methods or formulas for reaching this goal, and the '5 & 1 gets it done' formula is the chosen formula to help guide clubs in reaching this high-level goal. When your club can fulfill its part in reaching this goal, it will also reach its own club's goals more easily.

Here are some other things to consider when setting or tweaking your **goals**.

- 1) Will it strengthen your community and bring people together?
- 2) Think about your club. How long has it been in existence? Appreciate all of the great things you have done in your community. If your club wasn't there would these things still get done?
- 3) What do we want to accomplish this year? What about next year? What about in 10 years? Long-term goals are easier to achieve when your short-term goals align with them. It's perfectly acceptable to tweak your goals at any time.

Every business or organization has goals that require a plan to achieve them. Hope is a wonderful thing, but it is not enough on its own, and it is not a strategy. We must have sound, manageable, and exciting goals and actions to achieve the desired results.

Here are the steps used when setting **S.M.A.R.T. goals** and developing a plan. These steps clarify your ideas, focus your effort, and increase your chances of achieving your goal.

- 1) **Specific**: Define exactly what you want to achieve. Goals should be clear and concise.
- 2) **Measurable**: Establish criteria for measuring progress.
- 3) **Achievable**: Aim high but be realistic, yet achievable, within capabilities and resources.
- 4) **Relevant**: What will best serve your community, now and into the future?
- 5) **Time Bound**: Set deadlines for completion to create a sense of urgency.



Ruritan Playbook

Tips for Goal Achievement:

1. Break goals into smaller, manageable tasks. “It’s a cinch by the inch but hard by the yard.”
2. Write them down. Helps hold us accountable.
2. Stay focused and prioritize activities that support our goals.
3. Celebrate milestones and stay motivated by acknowledging progress. Motivate others by praising their efforts and showing that they are appreciated.
4. Seek support from mentors, peers, or accountability partners.
5. Reflect on setbacks, stay flexible, and adjust your approach as necessary.

Goals are sometimes criticized as being too optimistic, but if we settle for “just good enough,” we’ll never know what heights we might have reached. Don’t let fear be a deterrent to achieving your dreams. Don’t be afraid to fail along the way. Failure can help make us even stronger and to find a direction that can work.

The Importance of Goals Cannot be Overstated.

They Provide:

- 1) **Motivation:** Well-defined goals give us a sense of purpose and incentive to act toward achieving them.
- 2) **Focus:** Well-defined goals help us concentrate our efforts and resources on high-impact activities that align with our objectives, reduce distractions, and enhance our productivity.
- 3) **Measurement of Progress:** Goals help us create benchmarks to measure our success and monitor our progress, allowing us to track our achievements and make necessary adjustments.
- 4) **Organizational and Personal Growth:** Challenging and achievable goals encourage us to step out of our comfort zones and foster continuous learning and development.



Ruritan Playbook

Chapter 12 – Youth Events

To hold a youth event in your district for Ruritan, follow these steps:

1. **Define Objectives and Goals:**
 - A. Identify the purpose of the event and specific goals you want to achieve (e.g., community service, educational activities, social interaction).
2. **Form a Planning Committee:**
 - A. Assemble a team of volunteers from your Ruritan club, including youth from your club or the surrounding clubs, who are interested in organizing the event. Assign roles such as event coordinator, treasurer, publicity manager, and activity leader.
3. **Choose a Date and Venue:**
 - A. Select a date that does not conflict with other major community events.
 - B. Choose a venue that is accessible, safe, and suitable for the planned activities. Consider local parks, community centers, or school facilities.
4. **Develop a Budget:**
 - A. Estimate the costs involved, including venue rental, equipment, supplies, food and beverages, and promotional materials.
 - B. Explore funding options such as sponsorships, donations, or club funds.
5. **Plan Activities:**
 - A. Design engaging, age-appropriate activities that align with your event goals. These could include games, workshops, sports, arts and crafts, or educational sessions. Youth should be asked to help with planning.
 - B. Ensure you have all necessary materials and equipment for the activities.
6. **Obtain Necessary Permits and Insurance:**
 - A. Check with local authorities about any permits required for holding an event in your chosen venue.
 - B. Ensure you have appropriate liability insurance coverage for the event.
7. **Promote the Event:**
 - A. Publicize the event using various channels, such as social media, local newspapers, community bulletin boards, and school newsletters.
 - B. Create flyers and posters to distribute in the community.
8. **Register Participants:**
 - A. Set up a registration process to estimate the number of attendees and gather necessary information.
 - B. Consider online registration forms, including the photo consent form, for convenience.



Ruritan Playbook

9. **Coordinate Volunteers and Staff:**

- A. Recruit and train volunteers to help with various tasks on the event day, such as setup, activity supervision, registration, and cleanup.
- B. Ensure all volunteers are briefed on their responsibilities, including having background checks, and the event schedule.

10. **Prepare for the Event Day:**

- A. Create a detailed schedule and checklist for the event day.
- B. Arrange for setup and cleanup crews.
- C. Have contingency plans for emergencies or unexpected issues.

11. **Execute the Event:**

- A. Ensure all activities run smoothly and on schedule.
- B. Monitor the event to address any issues that arise promptly.
- C. Engage with participants and ensure they have a positive experience.
- D. Provide a comment/suggestion box for attendees to share their feedback on the event. Be sure to ask for their name and email/phone number if they are interested in assisting with future events. This can be beneficial for recruiting new members and securing sponsorships.

12. **Post-Event Follow-Up:**

- A. Clean up the venue and ensure it is left in good condition.
- B. Send thank-you notes to volunteers, sponsors, and participants.
- C. Evaluate the event with the planning committee to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- D. Report the event outcomes to your Ruritan club and consider planning future events based on feedback.

By following these steps, you can organize a successful youth event that benefits your community and aligns with the mission of Ruritan.



Ruritan Playbook

INDEX

Ads Color - Four Week Campaign Option	7
Advertising Ruritan – Doing good in the neighborhood.....	17
Best Chances for Ruri-Teen Club Success	9
Charter Application.....	7
Charter General Ruritan Brochure.....	7
Chartering a Club: General Guidelines	8
Clubs - Communication.....	15
Communication	15
Community Member Survey Postcard	7
Districts - Communication	15
Email	14
Forms of Communication	15
General Charter Information	7
Growth Brochure	7
How to Ask, New Members	10
Identifying Needs in a Community	5
Involving New Members.....	11
Local Online News Sources	17
Methods of Communication.....	15
New Member Mentoring.....	11
New Member Orientation	11
New members, Sharing Ideas	12
Newspaper and Radio.....	17
Overview of Ruritan.....	4
Publications.....	14
Recommendations for the Sponsoring Club.....	8
Recruiting New Members	10
Retaining Members	13
Retention, Be FLEXIBLE	14
Retention, Be open to and try new ideas/projects	13
Retention, Be Personable	13
Retention, Don't be afraid to fail	14
Retention, Elect Officers and Train Officers	14
Retention, Involvement	13
Retention, Resolve Conflict	14
Ruritan Branding – PowerPoint presentation	7
Ruritan Is.... Pocket Card.....	7
Ruritan Purpose and History.....	4
Setting Goals & Develop a Plan	19
Social Media	17
Starting a New Club (Adult)	7
Starting a New Club (Ruri-Teen)	9



Ruritan Playbook

Tell Your Story.....	17
Understand the Value of Fellowship – Share the Fellowship	6
Video conferencing.....	14
Wear Ruritan Apparel	17
Web Site.....	14
Welcoming new members.....	11
When to Ask, New Members.....	10
Where to Ask, New Members	10
Who to Ask, New Members.....	10
Youth Events	21
Zones - Communication.....	15