

Classification Talk Guidelines

Rotary Club of Fairhope

Thank you for agreeing to give a classification talk to the club. Following is some information to help you understand the concept of classifications and classification talks, along with some suggestions to help you prepare the talk, which should be just **5–7 minutes long**.

The Classification Principle

The following selection from *The ABCs of Rotary* explains the classification principle.

Virtually all membership in Rotary is based upon a “classification.” Basically a classification describes the distinct and recognized business or professional service which the Rotarian renders to society.

The principle of Rotary classification is somewhat more specific and precise. In determining the classification of a Rotarian it is necessary to look at the “principal or recognized business or professional activity of the firm, company or institution” with which an active member is connected or “that which covers his principal and recognized business or professional activity.”

It should be clearly understood that classifications are determined by activities or services to society rather than by the position held by a particular individual. In other words, if a person is the president of a bank, he or she is not classified as “bank president” but under the classification “banking.”

It is the principal and recognized activity of a business or professional establishment or the individual’s principal and recognized business or professional activity that determines the classification to be established and loaned to a qualified person. For example, the permanently employed electrical engineer, insurance adjuster, or business manager of a railroad company, mining company, manufacturing concern, hospital, clinic, etc., may be considered for membership as a representative of the particular work he or she may be doing personally or as a representative of the firm, company, or institution for which the professional service is being done.

The classification principle also permits business and industries to be separated into distinct functions such as manufacturing, distributing, retailing and servicing. Classifications may also be specified as distinct and independent divisions of a large corporation or university within the club’s territory, such as a school of business or a school of engineering.

The classification principle is a necessary concept in assuring that each Rotary club represents a cross section of the business and professional service of the community.

The Classification Talk

When you give a “classification talk,” strictly speaking you are not talking about yourself or your job or business but about the industry in which you are employed, the “principal or recognized business or professional activity of [your] firm, company or institution.” For our purposes, we’re going to take a slightly broader view. We want to learn something about your vocation or classification but also about your specific job and you personally. The following list is a hodge-podge assembled from the classification talk guidelines of many other Rotary clubs. You may not be able to include all of the bullet points in your talk, but perhaps they will give you an idea of what to talk about. Feel free to add other information that will help us get to know you.

Vocational

- What it is exactly that you do: if you are not self-employed, the company you work for and your position in it, as well as what the company as a whole does
- Why you chose your particular business or profession (if you previously had a different job or career, why you changed career paths)
- Parts of your job you find most rewarding and most difficult
- Forecast employment opportunities in your field for the coming decade
- What kind of education and experience are required to get into your vocation
- Advice you would give persons entering your career field
- How your profession is being impacted by technology, government regulations, and environmental factors

Personal

- What brought you to this area if you were not born here
- Your family—if applicable, your spouse's name, where you met, how long you've been married, number and ages of children, etc.
- Your hobbies and special interests
- Interesting travel (for business or pleasure) or any other experiences that might be of interest to fellow Rotarians

Rotary

- Other Rotary clubs you've belonged to, if any
- Why you joined this club