

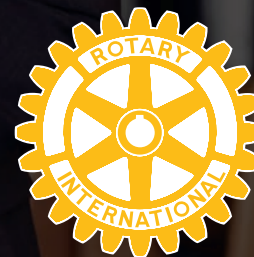


"Actuation Consulting brought the expertise, and it wasn't off-the-shelf in any way, shape, or form."

**TOM THORFINNSON, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER**

## CASE STUDY:

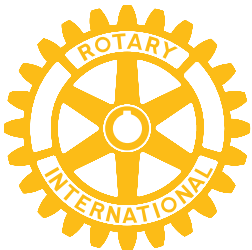
# **Rotary International Transitions from a Project-Driven Model to a Product Management Led Model with Actuation Consulting**





“Under the project model, we were launching products, literally walking away and literally coming back four or five years later with almost no improvement in the product in the interim. We’d have to re-launch version 2.0 at massive expense, rather than going through over the course of that four-year time frame, doing a 1.1 and a 1.2...”

**TOM THORFINNSON, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER**



## About Rotary International

Chicago attorney Paul Harris founded Rotary International in 1905. His vision of an organization where individuals of diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas, form meaningful friendships, and give back to their communities has grown worldwide and today is 1.2 million members strong.

To effectively pursue the Rotary goal of bringing lasting positive change to communities and the world, Rotary International is structured in three parts. These include local Rotary clubs; Rotary International, which support Rotary clubs worldwide and coordinates global programs and initiatives; and The Rotary Foundation, which garners funds in support of Rotary initiatives.

“There’s a lot more emphasis on user experience and what our customer wants, and narrowing the market so that we can have a successful initial launch, and then can iterate on the product as time passes.”

**TOM THORFINNSON, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER**

## The Challenge

Rotary International prides itself in providing a wide range of offerings to its vast worldwide membership. However, as the organization continues to grow, management is discovering that its project-driven model is not satisfactorily meeting the needs of members or the organization as a whole.

Project-driven initiatives begin with a charter and end when the offering is released to the membership. In contrast, a product-driven approach starts with an idea followed by a process of screening and planning, development, testing, and launch. From there the product-driven approach continues to manage the product in market and provide ongoing support both internally and externally with the membership. Ultimately, the product is retired. There is complete coverage for the product both before and after launch, something that was significantly lacking at Rotary.

Rotary found that their project-driven model was holding the organization back with high cost overruns (the result of long delays in launch), the rise of technical debt (when the technical team has to move on to another project before being able to complete the work on a current one), and a lack of product support and support for members participating in its initiatives. Understandably, Rotary was interested in moving from its project-driven mindset to the more comprehensive and effective product-driven methodology.

## How Actuation Consulting Helped Rotary Transition to a Product-Driven Model

### Unique Challenges Demand Individualized Solutions

Actuation Consulting does NOT believe one solution fits all organizations. That's why when we met with Rotary International's employees and stakeholders, our first job was to listen and learn about the challenges from each person's viewpoint. In addition to the strong belief that the project-driven service model was preventing Rotary employees from delivering and supporting fully formed initiatives, there were also concerns about other areas such as organizational culture, the decision-making process, and lagging technology.

Once the situation was fully mapped out by our team, Actuation Consulting set to work devising a completely customized solution to meeting the organization's diverse needs. For one, there was a scarcity of highly trained product management staff. Additionally, the organization needed to realign and refocus their approach and follow-through. There was also a need to update the organization's technology and deal with the burden of technical debt.

### A Fresh Approach

Rotary was committed to making the transition from a project-based approach to one that is product-based. Actuation Consulting worked closely with management and stakeholders to step by step bring that vision to reality. The transition required Actuation Consulting to make a significant time investment on site and also be available for one-on-one consultation and follow-up as the employees and management navigated their way toward a smooth running product-based system. By the end of the engagement, Actuation Consulting received a customer satisfaction rating in excess of 90% (on a 100 point scale).

"I think one of the things that's different about Actuation Consulting is they definitely focus on the specific needs of the organization. So, it's not like we've got this Actuation model and we're going to bring that model to your organization."

**MIKE FIORITTO, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT**



## Outcomes

Actuation Consulting helped Rotary take a broad look at how they can most effectively serve their internal and external customers. While still in the early stages of full implementation, the organization is already beginning to see positive results and envisions a time when more products will be launched to the membership and fully supported through their lifecycle, greatly strengthening the bond between local Rotary clubs, members, and the organization.

### Clear Focus on Product Management

By bringing in a few highly trained and experienced product managers, Rotary now has a team that's ready to handle the heavy lifting involved in the major shift away from the project-driven model and into a comprehensive product management led approach. Armed with new tools and methodologies customized to Rotary's unique needs, the organization is moving forward confidently toward a full transition to the product management model. The team has been trained to identify and work to overcome any change management issues that arise, something that is inherent in any significant transition.

### Programs Aligned With Key Objectives

Today, Rotary product managers take ownership of each new initiative. Product Managers plan product initiatives that are closely aligned with key organizational objectives. Meeting member needs is now the primary consideration from the start and planning for follow-through and member support is built into each initiative.

### Ending Technical Debt

Rotary is committed to making technical debt a thing of the past. Going forward, when an initiative is launched its full technical development and support must be factored in and executed before it is introduced to members. This step alone will build members' confidence in the organization and encourage greater member participation.

"Actuation Consulting was very hands-on, very collaborative. They also were very open to working with product managers as our product managers started running into challenges..."

**MIKE FIORITTO, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT**

### ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

- A product-driven focus that puts members first
- Product initiatives that are all tightly aligned with corporate objectives
- Product led vision and a growing sense of ownership of product success
- Continuous improvement/enhancement to key product lines
- Growing recognition of value derived from product management within organization
- Reduction and ultimate elimination of technical debt

"Actuation Consulting offered expertise in the field generally, but also an outside perspective to analyze some of the issues that commonly come into play when you're dealing with change management. [They helped identify] the particular nuances the teams need developed based on the culture of our organization."

**TOM THORFINNSEN, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER**

A full-page background image showing two men in business suits shaking hands in front of a large, multi-paned window. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a high-rise office environment. The men are silhouetted against the light coming from the window. One man is on the left, facing right, and the other is on the right, facing left. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The window frames are visible, creating a grid pattern across the background.

## **Want to Improve the Performance of Your Product Management Team?**

Actuation Consulting is the world's leading product management consulting and training organization. We provide product management consulting, training and advisory services to many of the world's most well-known organizations. Find out more about our solutions at [actuationconsulting.com](http://actuationconsulting.com).

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ActuationConsulting.com](mailto:info@ActuationConsulting.com).**