

Membership Building Ideas

from Lark Doley, DTM

CORPORATE CLUBS

- Implement Toastmasters programs at the highest level possible within a corporation by using the top down approach in contacting the company. This creates corporate buy-in at the highest level of the company. Where is the company headquartered? Discuss a corporate-wide program with your contacts. Integrate Toastmasters into the employee's Personal Development Plan.
- Make Toastmasters an integral part of the corporate new hire orientation process. Present the Toastmaster program and hand out Toastmaster information at every new hire orientation meeting.
- Select a month as "Communication" month and another month as "Leadership" month. Conduct a campaign to create awareness about the benefits of Communication and Leadership through the Toastmasters educational programs with special flyers, posters, and table tents in the cafeteria, lobby, and snack food/coffee break areas. During the "Leadership" month, conduct the Leadership Excellence Series during the club meetings.
- Promote Toastmasters at a career fair/employment fair. Emphasize the business communication skills that are learned and practiced in Toastmasters.
- Conduct Speechcrafts on a regular basis.
- Brown Bag lunch with a 20-minute Toastmasters demonstration meeting and then time for questions.
- Have a sign that announces your meeting location, date and time. For example: "Toastmasters meet here, Wednesdays at noon. Visitors Welcome." You can purchase these through the Toastmaster supply catalog.
- Have a regular Toastmasters display in the lobby/cafeteria/human resources/training department
- Have a continuous running Toastmasters video.
- Design a corporate club brochure and leave copies in the lobby, in the company cafeteria, in the snack food/coffee break areas, and in the human resources and training department areas.
- Create a payroll insert that can be included with payroll checks.
- Place an ad on the company intranet.
- Write an article for the company newsletter.
- List Toastmasters as a benefit on the company's website.
- On Bosses Day serve snacks and hand out Toastmaster brochures and information on the company clubs.
- Create a holiday invitation (Halloween, Thanksgiving, etc.) and ask each member to hand out to co-workers. Plan meeting agenda around that theme.
- Wear your Toastmasters pin every day. Trade off wearing different pins - the Membership Recruitment pins, International Convention pins, your Toastmaster officer pin, or your Toastmaster membership pin with your educational designation.
- Wear Toastmaster T-shirt on casual day.
- Use a Toastmasters coffee mug at work.
- Designate time during the meeting when members can announce job promotions or special awards they attribute to their Toastmaster membership.
- A pot luck lunch in the cafeteria followed by a demonstration meeting.

COMMUNITY PROMOTIONS

- Contact your local Chamber of Commerce. Ask to be included in their list of nonprofit organizations in the community. Ask for a place to display information and distribute brochures.
- Honor a community leader with a Club Communication and Leadership award. Send out a press release and invite the press.
- Ask to display Toastmasters information at community events.
- Send press releases to local media on all special events, awards and honors.
- Place your meeting information in the weekly calendar of events section of your local newspaper. This is a free service.
- Place an ad in your community newspaper and in your association newsletters.
- Ask for opportunities to speak at association/community meetings.
- Take your show on the road. Look for special ways to showcase your club at places other than your typical meeting location, i.e. library, retirement community, bookstore, etc.
- Set up a Toastmaster display at a local business, bookstore, library, hotel, welcome center.
- Put Toastmasters information in your community welcome packet for new residents.
- Post club flyers at local business schools, vocational schools, and employment offices.
- Publicize and conduct Speechcrafts and charge enough to cover the first six months of dues.
- Advertise in your neighborhood newsletter, or a leaflet at apartments/condos.
- Consider a booth at a fair, trade show, career fair, etc., and follow up!
- Place club flyers and Toastmaster magazines with a club business card everywhere.
- Start a Speakers Bureau.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Approach the college/university leadership about Toastmasters and the benefits to the students. Present to the faculty.
- Offer to present a talk on communication to the speech classes and hand out bookmarks.
- Advertise in the campus newspaper.
- Advertise on the campus web site.
- Advertise on the campus cable channel.
- Create bookmarks with the Toastmasters club information and have them distributed at the campus bookstore.
- Publicize Open House and invite teachers/professors - serve snacks.
- Create Toastmaster displays and place in the student union, bookstore, student cafeterias.
- Play a Toastmaster video in the student union and bookstore.
- Place flyers on campus bulletin boards and message boards.
- Buy Toastmaster pencils with club contact information printed on them. Hand out.
- Put up a sign stating, "Toastmasters meet here, Wednesdays at noon. Visitors Welcome."
- Send letters to sororities/fraternities.
- Send letters to professors, inviting them to a meeting, and asking them to encourage membership.
- Conduct Speechcrafts and charge enough to cover the costs of the first six months of dues.

GOLD NUGGETS FOR MEETING LOCATION PROMOTIONS

- List your meeting on the location's daily meeting agenda or marquee.
- Put up a sign that says, "Toastmasters meet here, Wednesdays at noon. Visitors Welcome."
- Leave your club brochures in the lobby or brochure rack.
- Set up a Toastmasters display.
- Play a Toastmasters video.
- Periodically hold your meeting in a public area at your location.
- Ask to be regularly included in the location's events calendar.
- Send invitations to employees of your meeting location for a special meeting. Give them a token of appreciation as special recognition for the use of their facilities.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP GOLD NUGGETS

- Have at least one meeting each quarter where the speakers and educational program focus on membership and club building topics.
- Have a placard or sign that announces your meeting location, date and time. For example: "Toastmasters meet here, Wednesdays at noon. Visitors Welcome."
- Challenge other clubs in your area to a membership contest.
- Make a contact list. Have members jot down 5 names and have secretary send invitation or invite them one at a time.
- Create and hand out Business Cards.
- Wear your Toastmaster pin. Order a Toastmasters bumper sticker for your car.
- Order a Toastmasters T-shirt and wear it everywhere.
- Develop club talking points (short list of positive statements) that can be used when talking to prospective members.
- Create a holiday invitation (Halloween, Thanksgiving, etc.), ask each member to invite friends and plan your agenda around that holiday theme. Advertise in newspaper.
- Conduct a Speechcraft. Charge enough to cover the first 6 months of membership dues.
- Design a club brochure and keep it current.
- Periodically make one of your meetings a special "Guest Night". Each member should bring at least one guest.
- If you own your own business, make sure that membership in Toastmasters is one of the employee benefits that you provide for your employees.
- Use a Toastmasters coffee mug at work.
- Develop Club, Area, Division, and District web sites.
- Invite your boss to a club meeting.
- Have a Table Topics session based on membership ideas. Write them down and follow up.
- Contact your Human Resources department at work. Ask for a 20-minute appointment to explain the benefits of the TM program and how it can help the company's training efforts.
- Promote and thank guests for attending by listing them in your club's newsletter and emails.
- Conduct special showcase, special topic, contest meetings and invite guests. Close each meeting with, "Bring a friend!" Put it on your agenda and in your emails.
- Develop a new member orientation packet and hold monthly new member orientation meetings.

CLUB MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN GOLD NUGGETS

- Toastmasters International conducts Individual and Club Membership Contests throughout the year. Go to the TI web site at www.toastmasters.org for information on these membership contests. Participate and win individual and club recognition! Order Membership Programs Flyer (Catalog #1620), A Simple Membership Building Program (Catalog #1621), and Membership Building 101 (Catalog #1622) that outline membership contests promoted by TI. Try them!
- Membership GOLD Contest - Have Membership GOLD as your membership drive theme for a month. Ask each member to give the VP Membership at least five names and contact information on each. Have the VP Membership and his/her Marketing Team write letters of invitation to each person and then call each person. Plan a month of special meetings with information on the Toastmaster program presented at each meeting, such as the Communication and Leadership Program, a Better Speaker Series module, a Successful Club Series module, and a Leadership Excellence Series module. Prepare special membership packets with a flyer on your club, a Toastmaster brochure, the Communication and Leadership program description, a membership application (with your club's information already filled in), a dues information sheet, an Icebreaker summary sheet, and a small bag of Hershey's gold nugget chocolates. Let the guests know that you are having a membership drive and that the name of each person who joins that month and the member who invited them will be a part of a door prize drawing at the end of the month. Give away door prizes such as movie tickets or dinner for two at a local restaurant as the prizes.
- "My favorite VP Membership idea is one that goes back to my birth Club, Get Up 'N Go - Members accrued points by bringing prospective members to Club meetings whether the prospective member eventually joined or not. Results were presented in the form of a table flyer the following week with the previous week's member point totals. The "prize" at the end of the four to six weeks contest was full registration paid for the winner to the next District 55 Conference with the understanding that the Club member would make a "trip report" in the form of a speech upon their return. I especially liked the incentive, the "prize!!" What a "win-win" process for the Club, the Club member, the membership of the Club, and the promotion of District 55 Conference attendance and participation." Clark Lyman ATM-G CL, Division L Governor, Armadillo Avenue Toastmasters and Morrow Street Irregulars Toastmasters
- "Our club (T4) entered everyone's name into a drawing for the month if the member brought a guest. Our drawing prize was movie passes. This has helped our club because we have had some of the guests join just by visiting." Lynette P. Correia, Member Relations Network
- Membership Drive from SmoothTalkers@AMD - The member who brings the most guests to club meetings during the drive wins a prize. The member who brings in the second most guests wins second prize. Those who bring in any guests get a KUDOS bar... fun and easy.
- District 50's Recipe for Membership Growth is a five-step process:
 - Step 1 = Select two responsible, enthusiastic Team Captains, choose team names, and select a prize or "payoff" of some kind for the winning team (party hosted by the losing team in honor of the winning team, dinner prepared by the losing team for the winning team, "pie in the face," etc.).
 - Step 2 = Allow Team Captains to "draft" their team members from the club roster. Put every club member on a team.
 - Step 3 = Team Captains will telephone every team member every week to remind them to bring a visitor to the club meeting.
 - Step 4 = Record each week's efforts on a scoreboard which contains every club member's name and the team they are on. Use silver and gold stars to mark the number of guests brought in each week by every members and update the poster weekly. Assign points based on the following: Guest = 1 point (silver star) and New Member = 3 points (gold star).
 - Step 5 = Complete the contest in 6 weeks. Keep it short and simple, but be prepared to begin another drive immediately if the club still needs new members. Reward members with prizes and recognition

for the job they did. Make sure your Vice President Education is prepared to schedule all new members for their icebreakers.

- The Six-Point Plan of Scotts Valley Toastmasters Club #8203, District 4, prepared by Darin Smyth - How to Triple Your Membership from 8 to 24 Members. The goal was to achieve maximum results with minimal resources since the club was down to eight members. Six members committed to completing one project each. Each project involved two hours of work per month. The seventh member, Membership Vice President, oriented guests who came to the club. The eighth member coordinated the effort.
 - Project 1 = One of the new members posted flyers once a month in the community, targeting coffee houses and indoor bulletin boards.
 - Project 2 = Another newcomer submitted calendar listings once a month to local newspapers, targeting three papers - the main daily paper, the main weekly papers in the county, and the local Scotts Valley paper. The club listed specific events, such as an upcoming "Demonstration Meeting."
 - Project 3 = Another member, halfway through her CTM, put the "Demonstration Meeting" together and contacted every guest and former member of the club. The "Demonstration Meeting" was like any other meeting.... But there were 15 guests!
 - Project 4 = An experienced member offered the 4-week Speechcraft to educate new members and bring in guests using: (1) Introduction to Toastmasters and Toastmasters Roles, (2) Body Language and Gestures, (3) Vocal Variety, (4) Effective Evaluations and General Evaluations.
 - Project 5 = The President wrote a five part series on Toastmasters for a local health and fitness magazine. The articles were published over a five-month period. Since the magazine emphasized health and personal growth, each article emphasized a personal benefit of Toastmasters. (1) Communication Skills: Listening, Thinking, and Speaking, (2) Self-Expression: Voice, Gestures, Working with Words, (3) Building Self Confidence: Recognition, Encouragement and Feedback (4) Overcoming Fear: Identifying the Fear and Practicing in a Supportive, Structured Environment, (5) Leadership: Informing, Persuading, Inspiring, Teamwork
 - Project 6 = An experienced member planned monthly presentations for five local companies on "How Toastmasters Can Benefit Your Business." (Scotts Valley Toastmasters did not have to implement Project 6 because they were busy attending to the new members resulting from Projects 1 through 5.)
 - "Membership - play the numbers. Each member invites one new person each week. Don't chase, just invite; if refused, move on. Out of every ten invited, four or five will show some interest. Of those, two or three will eventually come to a meeting. Of these, one or two will join. And, one will stick. Multiply that one across the dozen or so regular members over a 6-month period (24 weeks), getting one new member per regular member, and we've doubled our attendance. This custom of invitation need not be restricted to a "membership drive." It needs to become every member's habit!" stated v/r CTM Ginn.
- Use special meetings like club contests for membership drives.

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION GOLD NUGGETS

- Does your club have a web site?
- Do you conduct quality club meetings?
- Do your club members give manual speeches?
- Do you assign mentors to each new member?
- Do your members set annual goals and do you follow their progress?
- Do you schedule members to ensure achievement of their educational goals?
- Do you encourage members to advance in leadership as well as communication?
- Do all members understand the requirements for the Toastmasters Communication and Leadership program?
The Communication track includes: Competent Toastmaster, Advanced Toastmaster-Bronze, Advanced Toastmaster-Silver, and Advanced Toastmaster-Gold. The Leadership track includes Competent Leader, Advanced Leader, and then the Distinguished Toastmaster designation after completing both the Communication and Leadership tracks.
- Do you recognize member achievements?
- Do you send out press releases for local achievements?
- Do you know why members have missed meetings? Do you follow up with personal notes to them?
- Do you invite every guest to join your club?
- Who contacts guests after the meetings? How do you follow up? How often do you follow up?
- Does every member of your club have a leadership role in the club? Are they on a committee?
- When was the last time you contacted former members of your club? Invite them back!