

Outline Presentation for VP's of Membership

1. As VP of membership, your responsibility is to ensure that your club membership numbers remain **healthy. i.e. between 20 – 25**. Of course, there have been some very successful clubs with only 15 members. But when your membership numbers dip below that, your VP of Ed may experience some difficulty in filling all the allotted roles – speakers, evaluators, TM, TTM, Grammarian, Timer etc.
2. How do you ensure that your membership numbers remain healthy? The first thing to do is to survey **where you are**.
 - Some clubs with membership numbers already hitting 30, may want to consider pulling back on some of their publicity.
 - Other clubs with numbers dropping below 12 may want to advertise their presence more. I will not go into that in detail, as Louis Burns has covered this material in an earlier session for VP's of PR and you may want to get in touch with your club's VP of PR for this material.
 - Clubs with membership numbers of eight and below, may also want to schedule an appointment with their Area Governor to seek the appointment of a club Coach.
3. Remember that you are not alone. You are not the only one worrying about your membership numbers. Talk to your President. Talk to your other club officers. If they are not concerned regarding membership numbers, your club is obviously in a very enviable position.
 - Your role as VP of Membership, is to **generate enthusiasm** among club members.
 - Your VP of PR can help you step up your publicity efforts.
 - Your VP of Ed can help you by running more interesting programs.
 - But when it comes down to it, your role is to infuse enthusiasm among club members. What are you doing to infuse enthusiasm among your club members?

When all else fails, do something different.

- Invite a featured speaker to draw prospective new members into your club. Very early in my Toastmaster career, when Capital City was experiencing falling membership numbers, I invited David Brooks, 1990 World Champion (who, by the way, will not charge you anything, if it is for a Toastmaster cause) and membership numbers at Capital City have since just kept on rising. Did you know that there are already 3 World Champions in Texas? They will feel honored to put on some kind of dog and pony show for your club. BUT somebody has to first ask them.

- Conduct a Speaker's Forum and invite the Mayor to address the audience regarding some pet peeve of his

4. Do you use **new member packets** to give prospective new members? It does not have to be very elaborate. All you will need are some brochures explaining what Toastmasters will do for them, and particularly what your Toastmaster Club can

do for them; a membership application form and a list of club officers and their telephone numbers.

5. Do your **meetings generate enthusiasm**? How strongly do members feel in wanting to attend your next meeting? Do they want to earn a million dollars by listening to our silver tongued, orator, Corky Logue? Do your meetings start on-time? Do you have a printed agenda listing speakers and other assigned roles, such as Toastmaster, Table Topics Master, Timer, Grammarian etc.
6. Do your members **feel welcome** when attending meetings? When I was VP of Membership, I used to join the Sergeant-at-arms and stand at the entrance to the meeting room. He would stand on one side of the door and I would stand on the other side of the door. Between the two of us, we would personally welcome each and every guest, as well as many of the returning members. When greeting members, I would say things like, that was a great speech you made last week, or I liked that comment you made in Table Topics. Something short, but also something that the member felt that I had been paying attention to his speech. How many of you do that?
7. If it is a new guest you are welcoming and he/she has no member sponsor, appoint a member of your club to be his/her sponsor.
8. Get your President to acknowledge ALL guests at the beginning of your meeting and then at the end of the meeting **invite each guest to tell the membership in a few words, what he/she thought about the meeting** and how he/she heard about your club.
9. At many of the clubs of which I was a member, I found that our websites were a powerful tool in attracting new members. How many of your clubs have websites and dedicated webmasters? Or have a VP of PR who is a web geek and with some help can modify your website to attract new members?
10. Word of mouth is another great tool to attract new members. How many of you feel so invigorated by the club meeting and cannot help but talk about some of the highlights that you remember from the last meeting?
11. And lastly, do you “close” the sale? By that I mean, do you **ask** your prospect to join the club? You will be surprised at how few toastmasters are adept in closing the sale. Do you provide the prospective new member with a membership form? Do you get him/her to sign their check and hand it to you? It is so easy to assume that the Treasurer will do this and the President will do that, but if the important job of closing the sale falls between the cracks, and no one actually does it, it is your club that suffers and your club membership numbers that do not rise. This happens more often than you will think. The last three clubs I joined – Armadillo, TravTalk and State Talkers never formally “closed” the sale, even though I had expressed interest in joining their clubs. Finally when invited to say a few words, I had to wave my check in the air and pointedly ask the membership whether they wanted me as their member. It was only then that a membership application form was plunked in front of me.

So, do you as a matter of routine, “close” the sale?

12. I will conclude by telling you a success story. I want to make it quite clear that I had nothing to do with this success. I was not even an officer. I was only a witness to this amazing story of a phoenix rising from the ashes..
13. When I joined State Talkers TM club, we had seven members. We did not have a regular meeting room. We did not even have a speaker scheduled for every meeting. So you ask, how did we fill the time? Well, we had Table Topics and everyone participated. It was Round Robin and everyone participated. The meeting was over in thirty minutes.
14. The first thing the new officers did was to start the meetings “on time”. It was not at 12.00 p.m. sharp. But 12.05 p.m. was good enough.
15. The second thing was to schedule one prepared speech per meeting; insist on the Timer and the Grammarian making their reports and have formal evaluations.
16. The third thing was to conduct several well attended “open house” events. It took a lot of preparatory work and many members prepared short eats and brought soft drinks. I am convinced that there is nothing like the smell of hot food at lunchtime to attract people.
17. The fourth thing was that the officers were able to twist arms and secure for the club a fixed meeting room. We now meet in the same room every Tuesday.
18. Our membership began to climb slowly. It did not happen overnight. First one member joined. Then two others. Then another. By the end of June, we had our 20 members and the status of a Select Distinguished Club. Members have to now schedule their speeches well ahead. You can no longer walk into a meeting and say that you have a prepared speech, as I was able to do in early 2008. In July 2009, Toastmasters International through our District Governor recognized us as a “Select Distinguished” Club.
19. We are very lucky to have with us today, Jinling Kui, our last year’s President, who presided over State Talkers TM club on this historic rise from the ashes. Also, Kathryn Johnson who was her VP of Education and this year’s President. They **generated enthusiasm** in the membership and there is a lot of jockeying for slots to take on individual roles. I would like to take this opportunity of recognizing them and inviting them to say a few words and share their experiences with us. First, past President, Jinling Kui. Second, current President, Kathryn Johnson.
20. My closing words to all VP’s of membership:
“What are you doing to generate enthusiasm into your club?”