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# MEMBERSHIP BUILDING 101

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## *...Your Club's Pattern for Success*

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**B**uilding membership to a comfortable level is important – and challenging – for all Toastmasters Clubs.

20 members – that's the requirement for new Toastmasters Clubs when they charter, and the number of members a Club should have to function effectively. Members join a Club for various reasons, and leave for various reasons. Every year the average Club loses 40% of its members, and most gain slightly more than that.

This flier outlines the successful membership building efforts of the CalCompetents Toastmasters Club of Anaheim, California. The CalCompetents Club is an in-house group, sponsored by CalComp, Inc. You will find many helpful ideas that can assist you in ensuring that your Club has enough members to function effectively. Adjust these ideas to meet your Club's needs and culture.

up to 40% – and you'll need to replace them to keep your Club going. For your membership drive to be successful, all of your Club members need to participate. You may choose to divide the group into teams, or award points individually. Either way, choose awards that will encourage all of the Club's members to participate. Sometimes, team pride is enough. In some Clubs, the second place team treats the winners to a meal. Individual awards can range from speaking related books to a special trophy or plaque. Make sure that income from the new members will be sufficient to cover the cost of the awards.

### ***Track Your Program***

Take a moment to look at the last two pages of this flier. You may use these sheets to track the progress of your contest. Use Option #1 when tracking individual efforts and option #2 when you have divided your club into teams.

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## **PART I**

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### **Implement A Membership Building Program**

#### ***Conduct a Membership Drive***

Recent research shows that Toastmasters members want more people in their Clubs! More people means more variety, more ideas, more input, and better learning. In addition, many of the members of your Club will leave this year –

#### ***Recruit from All Available Sources***

Many community organizations and companies conduct seminars on subjects such as self improvement, communication enhancement, etc. If the sponsoring organization permits, you may use this to your advantage by distributing promotional material or by giving a short talk about Toastmasters. Asking the participants to join Toastmasters during or immediately after a motivating workshop is perfect timing!

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## Conduct Speechcraft

Speechcraft is an eight session program designed to teach non-Toastmasters public speaking skills. Experienced members of your Club present the fundamentals of public speaking in the atmosphere of a Toastmasters Club meeting. Speechcraft has several benefits. Participants become a part of your Club's meetings; they come to know and enjoy the Club's fellowship while gaining confidence and training in their communication skills. Many of our members indicate they joined their Club because they participated in a Speechcraft program. Clubs that conduct a Speechcraft program at least once each year have few membership problems.

## Participate in Toastmasters International's Contests

Toastmasters International conducts several membership building contests during the year, providing recognition for both individuals and Clubs.

- The *Smedley Award* is presented to Clubs that add at least five new members between September 1 and October 31.
- By meeting the requirements of the *Annual Membership Program*, Clubs earn 300 Distinguished Club Program points and a distinctive banner ribbon. To qualify, a Club must increase its total membership by 5 or reach 20 members during the Club year (July 1 to June 30).
- The *Annual Membership Program* recognizes individuals who sponsor 5, 10 and/or 15 members during the Club year with special individual prizes.
- The *Top Five Membership Campaigns* contest recognizes Clubs who conduct innovative, organized and successful membership building contests.

The *Membership Programs Flier* (Catalog No. 1620) contains detailed descriptions of all Toastmasters International's membership building programs.

## Publicize Your Club

Print a bulletin or memo that can be distributed to local businesses, the members of your local Chamber of Commerce, or the employees of your company. Send press releases announcing your Club's meeting time and location to local newspapers. If your Club is company sponsored, post notices inviting employees to attend your meetings and publicize your activities in your company's official newsletter. Many corporations sponsor various types of training programs. Toastmasters can be promoted to each of these as a method of skill enhancement. Receiving a paycheck is every employee's favorite work related activity. A message can usually be easily printed on pay stubs or a flier can be inserted in pay envelopes.

Posters and displays can also be an effective promotion tool. Placed in strategic locations, posters, fliers and sample copies of *The Toastmaster* can generate interest and publicize your Club's meeting time and location. Donate copies of *The Toastmaster* to your Doctor's office or public library. List your Club's meeting place and time and a contact phone number for potential members.

The *Membership Growth Manual* (Catalog No. 1159) contains many ideas for building and maintaining membership in your Club.

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## PART II

## Establish a Guest Follow-up Program

### Develop a Standard Guest Letter

Effective follow-up with guests is just as important as making a great first impression during their initial visit to your Club. A follow-up letter after a guest's visit to your Club could contain the following types of information:

- Thanks for attendance
  - Benefits of participation
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- Brief explanation of the basic manual and first ten speeches
  - Components of the New Member Kit
  - Cost of membership
  - Time and location of next meeting
  - Who to contact for more details
  - An invitation to return and apply for membership in the Club. Additional follow-up should occur every time the guest visits until she/he joins.

### **Provide a Guest Kit**

Provide guests with useful information about your Club and the Toastmasters program. A copy of your Club's bulletin, the fliers *Success Starts with Toastmasters* (Catalog No. 99), *Why Toastmasters is Smart Business* (Catalog No. 101), and/or *All About Toastmasters* (Catalog No. 124) are also appropriate. A copy of *The Toastmaster* magazine is a popular item with guests.

### **Welcome Guests Warmly**

Ensure that guests are greeted immediately upon entering the Club's meeting space. Remember, you're in a comfortable environment, but they are not – not yet anyway! Give them a name tag, a copy of the Guest Kit and request that they sign your guest book. Seat them next to a personable, experienced Toastmaster who will be able to answer questions and explain details during the meeting.

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## **PART III**

### **Formalize New Member Induction, Orientation, and a Mentor Program**

#### **Conduct a New Member Induction Ceremony**

Formally inducting new members into your Club gives them a sense of belonging and increases the level of commitment between the Club and the member. An induction script appears in the *Club President's* handbook (Catalog No. 1310-A), and in the *New Member Orientation Kit for Clubs*

(Catalog No. 1162). Present a membership pin to each inductee during the ceremony.

#### **Develop a New Member Orientation Guide**

Toastmaster, Table Topics Master, Grammarian, Ah-counter, etc. These familiar terms may sound like a foreign language to new members. A new member orientation guide can make all the difference during a member's first few meetings. You may wish to purchase copies of *Toastmasters & You* (Catalog No. 1167) for each new member. This guide contains a proposal for membership card, a card that explains the Toastmasters educational system, a membership certificate, a copy of *The Icebreaker* speech guide, the pamphlet *When You're the Introducer*, and a copy of *A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats*, an informational guide that explains the roles of a Club meeting's typical participants. You will also want to add information and details that are specific to your Club, along with a letter of welcome from your Club's Executive Committee.

#### **Implement a New Member Mentor Program**

Every successful Club has one thing in common – successful members. One way to help your new and experienced members get the most from their Toastmasters experience is by having a mentoring program in your Club. *Mentoring* (Catalog No. 296), part of the Successful Club Series, and the Club Mentor Program Kit (Catalog No. 1163) provide your Club with all the materials needed for a successful mentoring program.

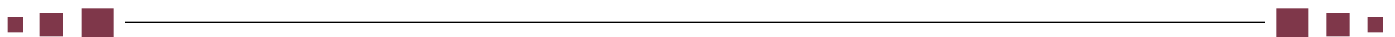
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## **PART IV**

### **Increase Member Retention**

#### **Conduct New Member Interest and Evaluation Surveys**

Meeting the needs of the members is the objective of any Toastmasters Club. Finding out what they



want and need is the first step in meeting those needs. The Member Interest Survey (Catalog No. 403) is a useful tool for helping members express their needs and goals. Base your Club's educational program on the results of your research.

### **Analyze Reasons Members Miss Meetings**

Members may miss meetings for a variety of reasons. Find out what they are and try to work around them. Change your meeting time or location if necessary. Try to ensure that everyone has a place in each program, whether speaking, timing, speaking in Table Topics, greeting guest, etc. Members will be more likely to attend if they have a specific responsibility.

### **Nurture Potential Non-renewals**

From time to time, the enthusiasm level in the members of your Club will decrease. This may be because they feel they have reached their goals – or are not reaching their goals, or they may be contributing too much time to the Club and are becoming “burned out.” Introduce them to the

advanced manuals or Club leadership opportunities, or lighten their load as appropriate.

## **PART V**

### **Start Achieving Now!**

#### **Plan to Succeed**

Plan your Club's year using the *Club Success Plan* (Catalog No. 1111), a guide based on the Distinguished Club Program. Keep track of your Club's achievements, and audit them quarterly using the *Distinguished Club Program Progress Report* that is sent to Club Presidents in October, January, April and July. Keep your Club informed of your progress on a monthly basis.

If your Club has a membership building success story, please send details to the Membership and Club Extension Department at Toastmasters International as an entry in the Top Five Membership Campaigns contest.

The catalog items listed in this flier can be obtained at minimal cost from the Orders Department at Toastmasters International. Consult your Club's copy of the *Toastmasters Supply Catalog* (Catalog No. 1205) or call or write to Toastmasters International.



## **Toastmasters International**

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