

Successful Clubs

How Do They Do It?

Inside

Successful District 10 clubs share their secrets

- 6 clubs that have earned President's Distinguished for the past 4 years or more
- 3 clubs that have successfully boosted their membership numbers



Toastmasters International | **District 10**

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Twinspirations

President's Distinguished Club, Past 4 Years

How do you stay President's Distinguished, year after year?

There are several keys to Twinpiration's thriving culture. **There is no automatic pilot directing traffic at our club. We manage our success by design.** We have good leaders and guests can see the results.

Ralph Smedley was right when he established the magic number 20 as his standard for club certification. I have learned from experience you absolutely need 20 active members to have a dynamic meeting. When you have three speakers and three evaluations, you have an exciting show. This keeps everyone coming back. Guests cannot resist joining when the speeches are interesting, evaluations are insightful and supportive, and humor makes a regular appearance at the meeting. Members are not afraid to let their humor come out at night. Different speakers mean variety. Variety is truly the spice of life and Toastmasters. Nothing is worse than a boring Toastmasters meeting. You cannot have a thriving club culture until you surpass the 20-active-member threshold. On paper we have 41 paid members on Club Central. This means we have a regular flow of 18-20 different members attending club meetings. We also have a flow of new members adding charm, talent, and human interest to the mix. Our goal is to add one new member per month as a minimum.

Based upon my experience, our club success is a direct function of:

- Guests are greeted warmly, sign a classy guest book, are asked for their impressions of the meeting, are sent a prompt thank-you email for visiting. We use a "soft sell" approach with guests, based upon their verbal cues. We "ask for the order" when they seem ready.
- The regular growth in new members (one new member per month).
- The number of members that participate actively at our meetings.
- The new-member orientation program (90-day boot camp).
- An effective mentor program that we are looking to improve.
- Regular monthly officer meetings.
- Regular club visibility on Facebook, winners announced weekly.
- Easy Speak on line, club organization and role sign up.
- Consistent publicity in our local newspaper; recognize achievers.
- Professional meetings; structure, focus on manual speeches.
- Assistance from District leaders at officer induction ceremonies.
- Our Club Success Plan is tied to achieving President's Distinguished status.
- Our attractive club venue cannot be underestimated. The Cleveland Clinic Community Room is one of the most attractive in District 10.
- We nurture our relationship with the Cleveland Clinic so we never take their support for granted.
- We have a friendly atmosphere. I think the people who join appreciate the quality of members we attract. We attract a motivated new member. The cycle continues. When you have people-persons as members, you attract similar people. The pattern repeats over and over.
- We are putting on our fifth Speech Craft class in cooperation with our award-winning library. This class converts attendees into members. We currently have six active members who came from a Speech Craft class.

Dennis James Deegan DTM

Swagelok Impact

President's Distinguished Club, Past 5 Years

How do you stay President's Distinguished, year after year?

Here is a list of why we feel we are successful.

1. We're organized. When someone visits, it looks like we know what we're doing. We have a tight, structured meeting.
2. We have fun!
3. We always have a printed agenda. We have a sign-up sheet several weeks out.
4. Guests receive a membership packet, including a name tent and membership application. Guests are not forced to participate in their first meeting, but they are invited to do so. When guests return, we ask them to join, and assist them in filling out an application.
5. ALL members have mentors, regardless of how long they've been in Toastmasters.
6. We identify people who can complete awards early in the year, and make sure they get on the schedule to deliver speeches (or other activities).
7. We have name tents that track speech progress.
8. Senior members stick around to give back and help.
9. New members are empowered to take roles and offices, to take ownership of the club. Senior members step back to let others fill in.
10. We use the official Toastmasters ballots for voting on best speaker, evaluator, and table topics speaker.

Melissa Lattanzi, CC, CL

How do you stay President's Distinguished, year after year?

It doesn't seem like we do anything other than what T/I recommends, but we've learned that if we focus on helping our members attain their personal goals, that keeps our club goals on track as well.

1. When a new member joins, we conduct a formal induction ceremony at the first meeting after they've signed on. However, before we induct them, the new member meets with a member of the VP Education team for an orientation into the club, explaining the how and why of what we do, meeting protocol, educational tracts, and answering questions. We also assign a mentor to every new member, and the mentor sits in on the orientation session, so they can start to build a working relationship from the very start.
2. We maintain and post the Toastmaster progress charts in our meeting room, charting everyone's progress towards earning their CC award, advanced manual accomplishments, and Competent Leader progress.
3. When a member earns the CC award, we present them with a plastic, magnetic-backed name badge with their CC status. After that meeting we bring refreshments, and then we socialize and congratulate the new CC.
4. At the beginning of every meeting when the presiding officer opens our meeting, he reads the Toastmasters' promise, and we all agree. That keeps fresh in our minds some of our obligations to the club.
5. At every executive committee meeting (held monthly) the VP Education gives an update on the club status towards the DCP award, showing what goals we've achieved, and listing who is close to earning another award that will earn the club more points.
6. We have complete agendas at every meeting so members and visitors alike can know exactly what will happen next in the meeting while sending the impression that we are a club that pays attention to details and does things "right."
7. We have visitor handbooks that we give to every visitor, as well as an information card we have them fill out so we have their email address to follow up on their visit and invite them to future meetings.
8. We try to have our VP PR issue a press release about something happening in our club every 4-6 weeks, as well as keeping our Facebook page and website up to date.

Nancy R. Temple, DTM

How do you stay President's Distinguished, year after year?

I believe there are at least six reasons why Stark State Toastmasters Club stays a President's Distinguished Club.

1. The officers insist on following the Club Success Plan to ensure our club's success.
2. The officers care about the members' development and recognize the members' educational achievements.
3. The officers lead by example in engaging members in service leadership.
4. The officers and members use their communication and leadership skills to serve each other and the college community.
5. The meetings are well-planned and enjoyable. Members and guests all have opportunities to participate.
6. The members take pride in their membership and they strive to maintain the club's tradition of excellence.

Tina Kung, club's first president

I believe that we reach the President's Distinguished level each year because we follow our "Club Success Plan," which outlines the required levels you must reach to achieve the President's Distinguished. The executive leadership team then evaluates the club performance and makes a personal outreach to club members to encourage them to reach their goal (completing a ALB or other award level) and tracking throughout the year on their progress.

Brenda Griffith, president, 2014-2015

The key to a successful club is the attitude of the members. Our core members have always displayed great attitudes and are willing to fill in roles as needed. Once our core members display great attitudes, it becomes contagious to the other members.

Travis Brown, president, 2015-2016

I think our success is largely due to the sense of community our members create by getting to know about each other through our speeches each week. There is also not a strong sense of competition between speakers but rather a desire to create a positive shared experience. I feel that most everyone who speaks, no matter how well they speak, is affirmed for having contributed. This may be a key factor in our success. In addition, our meeting size may vary but the quality of our meetings is very consistent. I feel we rarely have a disorganized or awkward meeting.

Eugene Starr, CC, president, 2017-2018

How do you stay President's Distinguished, year after year?

1. The expectation was set: Right after we earned our charter, Missy Moore wanted Stow to go for Distinguished. I thought she was crazy, and I wanted to stockpile for the following year. However, Missy had a plan and an argument we could not ignore. Setting the expectations high from the start helped the club understand that as a club we can't settle for mediocrity. That is what I think got us going.
2. A strong education program: We averaged 3 speakers a week and earned at least 10 awards a year since the charter year. Once again, it was the expectation we set.
3. Accountability: I think our long-term success is based on accountability. Missy, Bill Ferry, and I encouraged many people to lead, compete, and earn awards early on. Also, we promoted good habits such as finding replacements, having full agendas, and making sure everyone understood their (meeting) role.

Pete Punwani, DTM

4. Our VPE schedules three speakers and assigns roles for our meetings, and schedules six weeks out. We stress that members be accountable to find their own replacements by contacting a couple of attending members instead of sending out mass emails or texts to the whole club. We have a printed copy at meetings (the printed chart has been valuable). We use easySpeak for meeting management and some club emails.
5. Veteran members give Successful Club Series speeches to educate new members and share the bigger vision of Toastmasters. A valuable educational speech is the one on the education system. Many members are inspired to earn their next award after hearing this speech. Conferences and contests are promoted, which I believe instill vision, skills, and confidence.
6. Recognition of education awards earned by members (and other life successes).
7. Building a "family" within our club culture creates a supportive environment for members to stretch themselves, trying new manuals or techniques, and often entering contests.
8. Mentorship: New members really do have better growth with mentors. An example: One of our strong mentors desired to be present whenever the mentee spoke to provide feedback afterward. Informal mentoring also takes place—officers may follow up with new members to make sure they understand new roles and are aware of available resources.

Rachael Erickson, ACS, ALB

Talk of the Town

President's Distinguished Club, Past 4 Years

How do you stay President's Distinguished, year after year?

Membership Recruitment and Retention

- We are well-organized.
- Our website is impressive, is welcoming, and answers questions. Members look like they are having fun. It is not just posed pictures.
- Guests are made to feel welcome. At the beginning of the meeting, we have guests introduce themselves and tell us what brought them to a meeting. Then we go around the room, giving our names and saying why we each joined Toastmasters. At the end of the meeting, we present a guest ribbon.

Positive Environment

- We encourage guests to participate in Table Topics.
- We follow up with guests.
- We strive to keep reassignment of roles at the beginning of a meeting to a minimum so guests do not have to just sit there.
- When a member joins, we encourage him or her to get involved in some form of leadership by serving on a committee or leading a special project.
- We use name badges and Table Cards so that if a guest wants to talk to someone after the meeting, they will not be embarrassed if they do not remember the member's name.
- We explain roles so guests understand meeting flow.
- Members are kept well-informed of events through emails.

Friendliness of Members

- All members are willing to help new members.

Education Awards

- We continue to encourage members to give speeches.
- We encourage members to give a manual speech outside the club at events such as a speech contests, being a speaker for a smaller club that needs a speaker, or speaking at District events.
- We remind members to bring their Competent Leader manual with them to meetings to obtain credit for performing roles.
- We encourage members to be prepared to be a "fill-in" speaker if a planned speaker cannot attend.
- Members provide encouragement to new members as they present speeches.
- Experienced members are willing to help new members prepare for speeches or meeting roles.
- Evaluations are strong but encouraging.

Officers Trained

- Officers and non-officers are encouraged to attend officer training. We have a mixture of experienced members and new members in officer roles.

Administrative Functions

- We have strong officers who know their roles.

Bill Simpson, DTM, Michelle Abraham, Mark Porello, and members of Talk of the Town

Crossroads

From 7 members to 18 and President's Distinguished

How did you build your membership?

Goals

- We set a goal to reach distinguished. Having a goal to work toward makes a big difference!
- We work diligently on our awards, watching the calendar for deadlines.
- Our officers attend training. District events are beneficial to share ideas with other Toastmasters!

Guests

- We invite family members, friends, coworkers, and others who we associate with and assure them that Toastmasters will enhance and change their lives.
- We stay alert to those we encounter who want self-improvement. We boldly but warmly invite them to attend a meeting.
- Our club is active on Facebook, and members share posts to their personal page. This has led to a potential new member plus she brought her friend!
- We have a well-established and successful youth leadership program, which has sparked interest from the parents. Several have joined and others are considering becoming members.
- We just moved to a new location, KHM Travel. We plan on walking around the office and individually inviting the employees to our upcoming open house.

Turning Guests into Members

- We follow up on initial inquiries through Free Toast Host. We had one guest tell us that other clubs did not get back with her but we did so she joined our club!
- We have membership applications handy with several of our officers trained on what to do. We don't leave it up to the VP of Membership to do everything!
- We work as a team to grow our club.
- We welcome and follow up with guests and encourage them to visit as many times as they would like.
- We are intentional in explaining our plan to mentor them and walk alongside them. We have found that personal attention and mentoring is appealing to younger members in their early 20s.
- Several of our guests who joined said that they were inspired by our more advanced speakers. We even had one member say that Jacob (our Youth Leadership Program star) inspired her. Hard work and dedication that leads to progress is attractive to guests!

Annette Palmer, ACB, ALB and Sharon Stadul, ACB, ALB

Wings to Fly

From charter club to 22 members and President's Distinguished

How did you build your membership?

Club Success Plan

The first thing I did was involve the officers and empowered them by completing the Club Success Plan and made them perform and own their roles. I gave the officers each a voice; hence, I made it a part of that Club Success Plan to vote, by quorum, on all issues that would affect the club.

Make the Members Feel Important

I started and never failed to conduct the business section of the meeting and give the members each a voice. This really made them feel a sense of belonging.

Communication

Even though it is the VP Membership's role to follow up on membership, I always made it a point to talk to a struggling member to find out what help I could give.

Follow Toastmasters' Rule

As we always expect a "renegade" amongst the members, I implemented the voting in and voting out of members, including the officers, as we did not have that previously.

Membership Drive/Open House

We also conducted a membership drive with 2 motivational speakers and table topics. The topic for the 5-7 minute speeches was about the Toastmasters' journey leading to the positive outcome of becoming a member. The speakers must be compelling as motivational speakers! In between the speeches, we explained the meeting roles. Of course, food is always an attraction, and we made it a potluck.

Collaboration

We collaborated with our neighboring club in holding meetings and promoted District events—a way to enhance experience and expand knowledge. There is more to Toastmasters than what members can get from the club.

My advice to clubs that want to build their membership:

1. Be a leader with passion.
2. The success of the club begins with the club officers—you have to be the role model.
3. Make the members feel a sense of belonging—give them information, bad or good, during the business section of a meeting.
4. Encourage collaboration with other clubs and explore other benefits by getting involved with District events.
5. Maintain communication—with other officers and especially the members.

Rosita Turner, DTM

Westlake Unity

From charter club to 22 members and Select Distinguished

How did you build your membership?

“Get Your Club Name Out There, Get Your Club Name Out There, Get Your Club Name Out There”

Fellow Toastmasters, it doesn't matter if you are trying to get a club to charter level or trying to rebuild a club that has lost membership, you need to get your club name out there!

How can you do that?

1. Create a website on Toastmasters International.
2. Get your club put onto the District 10 MeetUp page (contact Christina McNutt at chrismmcnutt@gmail.com or (330)685-1309. There is no charge for this because it is umbrella-ed under District 10.
3. Word of mouth. Have members bring guests. Perhaps have a contest for members who bring the most visitors.
4. Place flyers about your club in coffeehouses, libraries, at the venue of your meeting, etc.
5. An open house can be very helpful (If possible, have a guest speaker who draws guests).
6. Have a raffle. Each time a person visits the club, they are given a ticket to put towards winning the prize.
7. Create a Facebook page for your club.
8. Have a Toastmaster table set up at the venue of your meeting location, local libraries, etc. Have Toastmaster materials and *Toastmaster* magazines available to pass out. Have a bowl of candy to draw people to the table. Be friendly and encouraging but not pushy. Explain the value of Toastmasters and what you have learned from being a Toastmaster.
9. Be friendly and welcoming to guests. Give the visitors a welcome packet with club information, a *Toastmaster* magazine, the benefits of Toastmasters, and a contact person. Always follow up with guests to thank them for attending the meeting, ask if they have any questions, invite them to the next meeting, and provide the date of the meeting.
10. Be consistent. Don't give up until you meet your goals. :))

Mary Anne Burrows, DTM2

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Club Quality Standards Evaluation



First Impressions

- ▶ Guests greeted warmly and introduced to officers and members
- ▶ Guest book and name tags provided
- ▶ Professionally arranged meeting room
- ▶ Convenient meeting location
- ▶ Guests invited to address the club
- ▶ Guests invited to join

Membership Orientation

- ▶ Formal induction, including presentation of membership pin and manuals
- ▶ Assignment of mentor
- ▶ Education programs and recognition system discussed
- ▶ Learning needs assessed
- ▶ Speaking role(s) assigned
- ▶ Member involved in all aspects of club activities

Fellowship, Variety, and Communication

- ▶ Guests greeted warmly and made welcome
- ▶ Enjoyable, educational meetings planned
- ▶ Regularly scheduled social events
- ▶ Members participate in area, district, and International events
- ▶ Inter-club events encouraged
- ▶ Club newsletter/website published and updated regularly

Program Planning and Meeting Organization

- ▶ Program and agenda publicized in advance
- ▶ Members know program responsibilities and are prepared to carry out all assignments
- ▶ All projects are manual projects
- ▶ Meetings begin and end on time
- ▶ Creative Table Topics™ and activities
- ▶ Positive and helpful evaluations

Membership Strength

- ▶ Club has 20 or more members
- ▶ Members are retained
- ▶ Promotion of club in the community or within its organization
- ▶ Club programs varied and exciting
- ▶ Toastmasters sponsoring new members recognized
- ▶ Regular membership-building programs

Achievement Recognition

- ▶ Award applications immediately submitted to World Headquarters
- ▶ Progress charts displayed and maintained
- ▶ Member achievements formally recognized with ceremony
- ▶ Club, district, and International leaders recognized
- ▶ Club and member achievements publicized
- ▶ DCP is used for planning and recognition

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