



You Have Been Appointed as Club Coach!

Congratulations! Serving as a coach may not be easy, but the experience can be greatly rewarding. By sharing your knowledge and leading by example, you will set a standard of excellence that persists even after your assignment is complete.

To receive credit in your assignment, the club must achieve Distinguished status or higher in the Distinguished Club Program (DCP)—the results of which are not final until after June 30. Once the results are final, you will be sent a congratulatory letter and certificate if you are successful. Refer to the **distinguished performance reports** to monitor progress in the DCP, and review the **dedicated resources** available to club coaches to help plan for success. As a club coach, you have two program years to help the club achieve a designation within the DCP.

As a club coach, you

- ▶ Build rapport with club leaders and members
- ▶ Observe and analyze the club environment, then assist the club in generating solutions
- ▶ Help the club develop a plan with goals for improvement
- ▶ Enable the club to achieve goals
- ▶ Instill enthusiasm, fidelity, and a sense of responsibility for the club's future

Coaching a struggling club back to health is your opportunity to

- ▶ Develop team-building and diplomacy skills
- ▶ Expand leadership experience
- ▶ Increase proficiency as a facilitator and negotiator
- ▶ Share expertise
- ▶ Invest in the future of Toastmasters
- ▶ Earn credit toward the path to Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM)

MAKING THE CLUB CONNECTION

Once you are ready to become a club coach, it is time to begin. Review **How to Rebuild a Toastmasters Club** (Item 1158). Observe the meetings and members to understand the club's dynamics during your first few visits with the clubs. Develop a personal rapport with the members. Gain their trust and respect by actively participating in the club and setting a good example. Use the **Club Coach Troubleshooting Guide** to identify challenges with the club. Foster a sense of ownership in the club with its challenges. Emphasize that only through teamwork the club will be restored. Let them know you are there to help them by facilitating discussion, promoting collaboration, and ensuring they have and know how to use the available resources. Encourage the club to use other successful, supportive clubs as models but also to support their desire to add their own unique style when appropriate.

STATUS CHECK

A club must meet specific standards to create a positive environment. A club coach's initial step is to have the club evaluate its own climate. Have the club conduct **Moments of Truth** (Item 290) from *The Successful Club Series* to help the club identify its strengths and challenges. At the next club meeting, facilitate a discussion of the strengths and challenges they have identified.

Keep the discussion as positive and objective as possible but also encourage members to be honest. Make it clear to members that such honesty is curative and will help restore their belief in the club. Congratulate members for their frankness and commend them for their desire to restore the club to health. So long as the club is moving forward, a club coach should recognize and praise even the smallest accomplishments. Ensure everyone in the club knows and applies these standards to current and new members.

CLUB MEETINGS

Good meetings are the cornerstone of a successful club. People join Toastmasters because they have a goal—they want to learn something. But if the learning environment is stale or routine, they'll go elsewhere to reach their goal. This is why club meetings need to be focused and fun. Teach the club (specifically the vice president education) how to plan and produce club meetings. Make sure the vice president education reviews the **Club Leadership Handbook** (Item 1310). Familiarize leaders with these other tools:

- ▶ **Master Your Meetings** (Item 1312)
- ▶ **The Better Speaker Series** (Item 269)
- ▶ **The Successful Club Series** (Item 289)
- ▶ **The Leadership Excellence Series** (Item 310)

All of these tools are available through the Toastmasters International online store in print and as digital files.

MEMBERSHIP

Quality clubs also build and then maintain a strong, healthy membership of at least 20 members. This is the ideal number of members necessary to effectively support a Toastmasters club and helps ensure club leader, committee, and meeting roles are filled. Fostering a membership-building culture within the club will help it combat natural attrition. Membership-building activities give clubs a stronger base of leaders and provide a continuous flow of original personalities and ideas.

Encourage the vice president membership to develop and implement a club membership contest to run the duration of the term. Show the vice president membership how to find the **free online membership-building resources**. This framework will help the vice president membership organize and track a club-based membership-building program.

Toastmasters International and the district also conduct several membership contests. Your club growth director will inform the vice president membership of membership contests.

RECOGNIZE ACHIEVEMENT

One way clubs can help retain members is to publicly recognize members' contributions and accomplishments. This acknowledges the achievers and will help encourage others to action.

Emphasize the importance of recognizing members who work toward their goals. Suggest to corporate clubs that they use the company's email, intranet, and newsletter to congratulate members who have earned education awards or won a speech contest. Publicize the club's achievement in the Distinguished Club Program. Include photos of award presentations for extra attention. This publicity will help bring the Toastmasters message to a wider audience and attract potential members to the club.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

People are motivated to perform when they have a clear understanding of the purpose and meaning of a task or activity. Having a vision and following the club's mission will help give a struggling club that focus and understanding. Explain that a vision is a mental image of what the club members would like to happen in the future—what they want their club to become. The vision that the club creates should generate excitement, interest, and energy, so every current and future member and guest wants to become involved. Help the members develop a vision for the club and get their agreement to fulfill the club mission.

Guide the club to set specific goals to make their vision a reality. Encourage every member to participate in setting goals for the club. By helping set goals, members will begin to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the club and will be more willing to work toward meeting the goals. They also are more likely to become enthusiastic about and committed to their work. Members will reestablish their faith in one another as a team as well as in the club when they agree on goals and then act to fulfill them together.

Teach the club how to use the Distinguished Club Program and the Club Success Plan to set realistic goals and develop coherent plans to achieve them. Make sure leaders know where to find the ***Distinguished Club Program/Club Success Plan*** (Item 1111) manual online. Also let them know that a hard copy is included with the club leadership mailing sent to all club presidents of record in late May or early June every year. Make sure the club knows how to use the Club Success Plan. Show the club how the plan

- ▶ Helps clubs determine how they will meet the 10 DCP goals
- ▶ Allows the club to establish additional goals
- ▶ Outlines strategies for achieving goals
- ▶ Identifies resources the club may use to accomplish goals
- ▶ Has room to write in assignments, develop timetables, and track accomplishments
- ▶ Show leaders how to check the club's DCP progress on Toastmasters International's website

CLOSING

In order for a coach to earn credit toward the path to DTM, the coached club must achieve Distinguished Club recognition. You must teach members to recognize threats to the club's stability and progress, as well as foster their fidelity and responsibility for the club's future. You should enable the clubs you coach to continue to grow and thrive. Only after you help the club to achieve Distinguished recognition, may you truly claim success.