



Running a Successful Hybrid Club Meeting

Learn how your club can find success while having participants online and in person.

For nearly 100 years, in-person meetings have been at the heart of Toastmasters. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many clubs have been unable to continue with in-person meetings. A hybrid club meeting combines online and in-person attendance. In this document, you will find helpful advice to ensure your club is equipped to hold successful hybrid meetings.

Safety First

Before hosting a hybrid club meeting, please ensure that you are following your local guidelines on in-person gatherings. Remember—the safety of your club members should always be your first priority!

Meeting Location

Your hybrid meeting location should:

- Be able to fit in-person members and guests while following local safety guidelines
- Allow for access to a strong internet connection
- Fit any technology needed to integrate online participation

Technology Requirements

To run hybrid meetings, your club will need:

- An online meeting platform that allows for online participation (some examples include: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Hangout)
- Webcam(s) – ensure online participants can view the speaker's area. If possible, multiple webcams can be used to also share the rest of the meeting space with virtual attendants
- Microphone – determine what type of microphone will be used and whether that microphone will remain in the speaker's area or be passed along by members and guests
- Speakers – have speakers and computers positioned to avoid microphone feedback
- Projector/screen/television – find a strategic way to show online participants in the meeting space
- Phone/tablet/laptop – a device will be needed for a club officer or member to monitor chat and provide support to remote members

Practice and Preparation

Before you start your meetings, it's a good idea to prepare for the meeting. You might find holding practice meetings beneficial as well. Before a meeting starts, club officers should:

- Test technology and ensure it is working as intended
- Allow virtual attendees to join early to test their equipment
- Have any documents, including agendas, open and ready to share
- Be ready to help members troubleshoot technology issues
- Find a solution to collect guests' contact information

Meeting Adjustments

When adjusting meetings to conform to an online setting, you may need to make adjustments to accommodate both online and in-person attendees. Some of these adjustments can include:

- Designating a member or club officer to monitor the chat feature
 - Some clubs have made this a permanent role in meetings moving forward. This person, another club officer, or another meeting role, should ensure all members and guests are engaged during the meeting
- Monitoring the performance of the online meeting platform
 - If the meeting experiences lag or delay, you may need to ask attendees to turn off their webcams when not speaking
- Ensuring online attendees have their microphones muted when not speaking
 - If possible, attempt to reach out to individuals who do not mute their microphones directly to avoid making them feel embarrassed. Some online meeting platforms also allow the host to mute participants
- Determining how to count votes for any awards your club hands out
 - Your club may want to use online voting platforms or create their own voting form that is distributed at the beginning of the meeting
- Establishing a procedure for how to choose participants in Table Topics®
 - The Topicsmaster should work to ensure members and guests who are online have an equal opportunity to participate as in-person attendees

As you hold hybrid meetings, continually evaluate how your meetings are going. Look for opportunities to improve and seek feedback from members and guests. Encourage virtual attendees to give speeches and continue along their educational path(s). Remember to work as a team and, if needed, reach out to other clubs to find tips to run successful hybrid club meetings.