



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

Division C and Division E - District 42

Toastmasters Club

Best Practices

Embrace Changes in the Virtual World

Tools, Tips and Tricks

2021-2022

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a tool to help clubs adapt to the changes of the virtual world. The best practices in this document are gathered from President Distinguished Clubs 2020-2021 in District 42. All the tips and tricks have been verified to work for a successful club. However, it may work in one club but not in another club. You may try one or more things in your club.

1. How to run an effective meeting online?

You may try one or more best practice as outlined below to improve club meeting efficiency.

- a. Have all attendees rename themselves with meeting roles in front of their name. It helps the Toastmasters and attendees to know who is next quickly with the absence of physical agendas. The abbreviation for each role is recommended as:
 - Toastmasters: TM
 - Table Topic Masters: TTM
 - General Evaluator: GE
 - Table Topic Evaluator: TTE
 - Speaker #1: SP1
 - Prepared Speech evaluator #1: SPE1 or SE1
 - AH Counter: Ah
 - Grammarian: GRM
- b. Call 3 attendees in order for self-introduction to avoid waiting time or mute/unmute. It helps run the self-introduction more effectively.
- c. Alternatively, all members start unmuted and mute after they have completed the self-introduction. They call on the next person to speak before muting.
- d. All meeting roles are assigned in advance. It will save about 5-10 minutes at the beginning of each meeting. More details are in the section of "How to ensure meeting roles sign up in advance".
- e. Members taking meeting roles should be prepared before the meeting, especially the Toastmasters, Speaker, Speech Evaluator and Table Topic Master.
- f. We run the self-introduction session with 3 breakout rooms. 3-4 members are in each room to introduce or chat for 5 minutes. It saves about 10 minutes compared to round table introductions. It also helps members build more personal connection with a smaller group conversation.

2. How do you invite guest speaker(s)?

- a. We identify the potential guest speaker first. By attending other club meetings, we know the best speaker for our club meeting and send an invitation.
- b. We can make friends with peer Toastmasters by supporting their events. It is easy to ask a friend to help with club meetings.
- c. We can find speeches on YouTube. There are many great speeches online that we can learn from.
- d. We ask the Area Director, or Division Director, to help with guest speakers.

- e. Create an event with a theme to attract the guest speakers. You may promote it on the D42 website and send the promotion flyer to the targeted audience.

3. How to encourage existing members?

- a. Provide help or encouragement from a mentor to existing members working on Pathways. It is essential to focus on the completion of level 1. But encourage all members to complete a level each year.
- b. Recognize our members throughout the year for educational goals and at the annual year-end party with our club awards.
- c. Our new and energetic VP of Public Relations came up with a brilliant idea of conducting member interviews every month. This resulted in every member being more confident and comfortable in sharing their stories, and we all got to know each other better both inside and outside their Toastmaster's involvements.
- d. Contests were an excellent opportunity to energize our members and to learn at all levels including District. Judges, officials, and newer members stepped up to compete. The contests stimulate members participation. It generates an impact to the existing members' level of energy.
- e. A mentoring team includes several members to help new members on one or two subjects such as website access, Pathway selection or enrollment, icebreaker speech, etc.
- f. Shifts the focus from DCP points to wanting to make a difference for their members. Who wouldn't want to be known as being a member of a club that has more humanness and fun factor? Clubs are tired of DCP but at the same time, if they lead with humanness & fun the DCP points will follow i.e. members will want to join their club, members will want to meet more often, and members will want to help each other, and members will want to advance through Pathways.
- g. The first step towards proper planning was of course having a good team. We had some very enthusiastic and new members joining our executive team who needed proper direction to ensure Toastmaster protocols were followed and the goals achieved. Our team contains experienced seasoned members and vigorous new ones. We came together to form a Club Success Plan and then moved ahead. Each one of us contributed to making a smart plan for the 2020-21 Toastmaster Year. Our VP of Education presented Moments of Truth to all our members to reflect and help us plan our year.
- h. We made the DCP Goals a priority as these are goals that lead to club growth, club health and member development. In addition to this, we also focused on achieving as many of the Club Incentives as we could and by the end of September, we had achieved the Smedley Award, the DCP Go Getter Award, the Open House and Sunshine Club awards, the Club Fitness Award and the 7 out of 7 Club Officers Trained. We were in very good shape for the rest of the year.

4. How to ensure meeting roles sign up in advance?

Our weekly meeting goal is to have 2 prepared speakers per week in a one-hour meeting without burning out our members. Anyone of these actions can help members to sign up meeting roles in advance.

- a. VP of Education call (not email) a member to encourage them to take on a role they have taken on before.
- b. VP of Membership follows up with a member with a call or a 2-metre physically distanced (COVID Restriction) coffee meeting.

- c. We created a Google Sheet that members can sign up for meeting roles for 1 to 2 months in advance at one page. It is convenient to see the overall personal attendance and progress. Beside member sign up for roles, the VP Education also assigns roles to all members one month in advance. Individual member may confirm or modify it at any time. The Sergeant at Arms runs participation monthly reports based on the roles signed up in the Google sheet.
- d. Our club success plan is formulated at the beginning of the year and we are thankful that our members have devoted time and energy to the club outside of their busy professional lives and family.
- e. Our members demonstrate a commitment to the club that openly embraces and encourages all club members to grow in a safe and supportive environment.
- f. The weekly agenda is prepared monthly in advance.
- g. Invite guest speaker(s) if there is no prepared speech. The guest speaker may deliver either pathway speech or educational speech.
- h. I have seen members postponing giving more speeches because they do not have the time and/or motivation to write yet another new speech. Alternatively, some of them end up giving unprepared speeches anyway. It does not have to be like that. On the other hand, while not required, repeating a speech while addressing previous feedback can be a great way to improve at speaking.
- i. Were you so nervous while giving a speech that you did not use those relevant hand gestures that you planned in advance? Is your failure cast in stone? No, and it is not the end of the world either. You are free to focus on that when you give the speech a second time.

5. How to add fun to meeting to avoid members burning out?

- a. We could achieve this goal if we had two prepared speakers per meeting without burning out our members. It was a simple objective that each and every member could contribute by
 - learning something new (delivering a Pathways speech)
 - reaching out and helping another Toastmaster (taking on a meeting role)
 - inviting a colleague to join.
- b. Incorporating technology such as a poll in the Zoom, Kahoot to jazz up the quizmaster's role.
- c. Members continued to explore creative ways to deliver speeches and presentations, which resulted in meeting variety. Whether creating captivating visuals, recording and playing video, or using a shared screen with music to celebrate achievements—the members inspired one another to push the boundaries, learn new skills meant completing projects, education awards, and goals achieved.
- d. The Toastmasters of the day have the flexibility to manage meetings her/his way. Workshop, party, panel discussion, survey, etc. are all acceptable as Toastmasters meetings.

6. How to ensure club officers work together as a team?

- a. All officers attending training is important.
- b. All officers are open-minded and willing to change.

- c. Club Coach helps with passion, energy, and guidance. The coaching helped us see a better future vision and implement the actions necessary to take us there. Every Club Coach has a goal to help the club achieve Distinguished Club with minimum of 5 DPC points.
- d. We had a different executive chair each meeting during our executive meetings this year. We found it to be very useful especially for sharing and appreciating each other's ideas as they came during these brainstorming sessions.
- e. Relieve the workload of the VP Education:
 - adopt the Toastmasters Pathways mentoring program. This can really help the VP of Education; and/or
 - find ways to facilitate human connection e.g., VP Education or mentors or other members of the executive team would personally reach out to club members who haven't attended a meeting in a while and encourage them to take on a role.

7. How do you help new members onboard?

- a. Implement a club mentoring program to build human connection.
- b. Assign one or more mentors to guide new members with website access, meeting role's introduction, pathway selection, support to complete pathway-level 1.
- c. VP Education set up one on one meetings with new members to introduce suggestions of the Pathway enrollment and progress expectations. One speech each month is recommended.
- d. Our mentor program helps all new members complete the Pathway-Level 1.
- e. Division E is running Pathways Workshop every other month for curios guests, new members, or any member who is "Stuck" on Pathways. Any District member can register.

8. How mentorship program helps?

- a. There is the D42 Mentor Guide on D42 website. Please click [here](#).
- b. Club and members can take advantage of the Pathway Mentor program to become a Pathways Mentor. The details are on the D42 website: [Pathways Mentor Program - Toastmasters, District 42 \(d42tm.org\)](#)
- c. Mentoring is not only for new members. Existing members also appreciate being part of a Mentorship Program which helped tremendously in their personal growth, resulting in the overall growth of the club.
- d. Create a mentoring team for spreading mentoring tasks among existing members. i.e. one person shows how to use the club website, the D42 website and Toastmasters International website. Another person guides the path enrollment. One member may be tasked to introduce meeting roles to new member. Others may also mentor on particular speech techniques.
- e. Toastmasters are one community. You may ask anyone as a mentor for one project or for a period outside your home club. All you have to do is to ASK.
- f. You may find more information in **Appendix A: Mentoring: Grow Your Club-Practice Tips and Best Practices**

9. How to add the human touch to the virtual world?

- a. Having a greeter that arrives to open the zoom meeting 10/15 minutes early. It may be someone appointed, or the Sergeant at Arm. The greeter is an important role for the Zoom meeting.
- b. Appointing someone to stay behind 10 minutes after the meeting closes to network. If there is a guest, you may introduce the club members and get to know the guest more during this after meeting session. (The parking lot meeting!)
- c. The Club President personally checks in with each member of their executive team once a quarter.
- d. Separate attendees to breakout room for self-introduction and socializing after the introduction of the Theme and Word of the day, instead of all staying in one room for one-by-one introduction for a longer time.
- e. We recognize hard-working members regularly. They are an inspiration. At the end of the day, it's about relationships. Learning and growing together made us a very successful year.

10. How to invite guests?

- a. We host a Career Event that was initiated and led by the VP of Public Relation. She coordinated a range of guest speakers including Calgary's top recruiter. That meeting alone attracted 75 guests, and we had over 100 new people attend meetings in the month. We attracted several members during "career month". The success of the event raised the energy and engagement of our club. The event boosted hope and helped us see that we could not only survive the pandemic but thrive as a club.
- b. Our first challenge was maintaining our culture of welcoming new members and encouraging everyone to be successful in this new online environment. While the VP Membership and VP Public Relations attracted new members, our well-organized meetings and engaged members ensured that our club grew during this difficult time.
- c. I post an event advertisement on our company internal website. It attracted coworkers to check out our club.
- d. Word-of-mouth is a very important resource for new members. All members take pride in what they have learned and improved. Others saw their improvement and asked. Then our Toastmasters members invited them to our club. Every member is a walking talking billboard for the club. Promote the upcoming meeting to your own club members and encourage them to invite their friends; every meeting can be an event.
- e. Organize a special event and make it as a selling point to attract guests.

11. How to promote club and membership?

- a. Speech Craft: It is a 6–8-week educational program to attract non-Toastmasters to learn and improve communication skills. Some successful clubs run 4 Speech Crafts every year.
- b. Open House: It is the most common way to attract guests.
- c. Summer Camp: It is an alternative to Speech Craft to attract guests. The theme is flexible depending on the coordinator.

- d. Special workshop: It is a great event selling point to promote your club. The theme of the workshop includes interviewing, career path, culture at working environment, Circle of Gold, speech structure, vocal variety, leadership,
- e. We apply flexibilities to add temporary members with non-Toastmaster attendees joining for educational workshop. Adding them as official members with membership until the closest due date of membership. For example, an attendee joined Speech Craft in January, the club charges \$50 which includes the new member fee and membership for February and March.
- f. Create marketing points with special events such as a workshop, guest speaker, open house. It can be posted on the D42 website, the D42 Facebook, the Eventbrite or the D42 Meetup, etc.
- g. VP of Membership used digital media to reach out to guests on the morning of the meeting to remind them of the Toastmaster meeting that day.

12. What incentives are available for clubs?

District 42 recognizes and values the hard work and effort by giving success club incentive(s).

For a complete list of D42 and TI incentives check the D42 website at: <https://d42tm.org/success-incentives/>

- a. Go-Getter Award: The Club achieves 5 Distinguished Club Program points by January 31, 2022. This year, a banner ribbon and an HD USB webcam and microphone are the prizes to help support future hybrid meeting endeavours. Earning these 5 DCP Points by January will allow Clubs to focus on the important goals of Membership growth and retention. Everyone will want to belong to a club that delivers on that mission of a positive environment that supports personal growth.
- b. Sunshine Club: The Club holds meetings during July and August.
- c. Open House Ribbon: The Club holds an Open House in January or February.
- d. The Club Fitness Award was designed to highlight the importance of:
 - Maintaining an accurate Club roster
 - Developing a Club Success Plan
 - Conducting a Moments of Truth workshop

Toastmasters International recognizes membership awards:

1. Smedley award
2. Talk up Toastmasters
3. Beat the Clock award

Distinguished Club: It is the most important award that every club should have set as a goal each year. Distinguished Club, Selective Distinguished Club and President Distinguished club for clubs that achieve more than 5, 7, or 9 DCP points and meet requirement of membership.

In addition, there is an annual award for individual in District 42.

Triple Crown Award: Triple Crown Pin will be awarded to the district leader who has 3 or more paths completed. If you have completed 3 or more paths but are not in the district leadership role, your name will be listed on the Triple Crown Award list on the report of Toastmasters International Dashboard.

13. How HPL projects help club growth?

High Performance Leadership (HPL) is one of the Level 5 projects in Pathway. The purpose of the HPL project is to showcase each Toastmasters leadership skills. Rather than managing a project, it is about leading a project. The Toastmasters can practice and demonstrate the spirit of “Leading to Make a Difference”. A project mission and vision are created as goals. A committee is formed to work together for 2-3 months. Meanwhile, it provides the club with a helping hand to address an area in particular need. The project may include but is not limited to coaching, mentoring, workshop, campaign, event, etc.

For more details about HPL, please click [here](#).

14. How to communicate with guests and former members?

- a. Do not lose touch with previous guests and former members. Even if they are part of a big BCC invitation to an event, like a contest or open house. Two of our recent new members are former members. They can attend now that we are online.
- b. A personal invite is even better. If you have a specific reason to contact a former member, do so!
- c. Contact information for guests is vital! Hopefully, you will have this before the meeting. But if not, do not let a guest go without getting contact information from them. Retain a spreadsheet or other document of contact information for every guest. When guests are contacted soon (same day or following day) after the meeting and invited to a follow-up Zoom meeting with you "so I can learn about you and what you would like to gain from Toastmasters", they are more likely to return or join. Focus on them. The follow-up is to find out what they are looking for; show them how your club works; or how the program can give them what they want. But first, make that connection. Listen to them, ask questions find out why they are here?

15. What a secretary can do in the virtual world?

The Best Practice for Club Officer - Secretary include:

- a. Set up and maintain an online filing system
- b. Standardize club specific templates
- c. Think of what efficiencies future secretaries (and the club) would appreciate/benefit from
- d. Send timely, clear, and succinct executive meeting minutes with highlighted action items.
- e. Encourage new members to take on the role.
- f. Take opportunity to learn more about other Executive Roles and District activities

16. How club can receive DCP point from member's educational award?

The club won't receive an educational point for the DCP report unless the member's educational award is submitted to Club Central. The VP of Education, club president, and Secretary have access to submit the education award to Club Central. This is an extra step beyond approval of pathways level. Your club will receive credit only when you submit to Club Central.

- a. Member must submit the completion of level by completing the self-assessment after the prepared speech.
- b. Member's completion is approved within Pathway Base Camp.
- c. VP of Education, President or Sectary log in to Club Center and submit the education completion.



Now, you will see the educational achievement displayed in the Leadership Central in the Toastmasters International website within 1-2 days.

Appendix A: Mentoring: Grow Your Club-Practice Tips and Best Practices

Prepared by Darlene Davies, DTM and Ron McTavish, DTM

Mentoring, along with a stellar meeting agenda, is a crucial factor in establishing a strong, enduring distinguished club. It starts with the first impression a guest has of your club and continues whenever you and your club members connect with the new member. Here are some practical tips and best practices to establish a robust mentoring program in your club. Any club can do this.



A. Start with five basic steps:

1. Appoint two members to lead the mentoring initiative (not VP Ed)
2. VP Membership can focus on contact and connection with new members.

New member orientation right away: accessing club website, log in to Toastmasters International website, how to access Pathways, help in choosing a path, understanding the club meeting, the mentoring program.

3. VP Education can focus on building a compelling weekly agenda.
4. Teach timer, ah counter, grammarian roles within the first month.
Continue with more advanced meeting roles until every member can do all the meeting roles.
5. Encourage and support the new member to do the Icebreaker within 5 weeks.

B. Next steps:

6. Appoint two members to welcome each member and guest on Zoom before the meeting starts.
7. Treat your guests and new members like you would like to be treated when you join a new group. Let them know they are welcome, that they will have help when they try something new. Help them feel connected.
8. Make it a goal for every new member to complete Level 1 as soon as it fits into their schedule.
9. Establish a mentoring culture of sharing knowledge; friends helping friends succeed.
10. Visit a club with a mentoring program. Take away ideas that will work for you.

C. Resources:

- Pathways Mentor Program <https://d42tm.org/pathways-mentor-program/>
- D42 Mentoring Guide: How to establish club mentoring program <https://d42tm.org/club-mentoring/>

Appendix B: President Distinguish Clubs 2020-2021

All above Tips and Tricks have been from these President Distinguished clubs 2020-2021. You are welcome to attend meetings via Zoom for a first-hand experience of an excellent club meeting.

Clubs	Meeting Time
Literally Speaking	Tuesday 12:00-1:00pm
Dynamically Speaking	Thursday 6:45am - 8:00am
Calgary Pace Setters	Tuesday 7:15pm – 9:00pm
Igniters	Tuesday 7:00 pm-8:30pm
Canorators	Thursday 12:00-1:00pm
WeBA - District 99	Wednesday 12:00-1:00pm