

10 Tips for Turning Guests into Members

1. Assume that they want to join!

After all, why else would they be there? Unless they have been dragged kicking and screaming by an insistent spouse/partner because they have to go somewhere together after the meeting, every Guest at a TM meeting is probably someone who has been thinking about Toastmasters for a while, and is there because he/she is considering joining.

2. Ask Them!

This sounds pretty silly. But I am sure that, like me, you have been at many meetings where a Guest came and went.... and no one also them if they would like to become a member. Besides, in some organisations, you have to be asked or invited to join. Your guest might think that Toastmasters is like that, and be waiting for an invitation.

3. Have Great Meetings!!!

Our Club meetings are our product. Our guest decides to “buy” the product or not, for the next 6 months or a year. Add variety and interesting themes to your meetings so that no one gets bored. At every meeting of your club, ask yourself, “If I were a guest here today, would I be impressed by this meeting? Would I join?”

4) Give each guest an information pack

Make sure that each guest receives some written materials to help him/her understand about TM and your Club. What could be in it? Lots! Include material from TMI, and material developed by your own club. Start with a copy of “Benefits of Membership” and an Application for Membership. Include a welcome letter from the President of the club, with contact information – name, telephone number and email address, an overview of the roles on your Club’s agenda, information about upcoming events or a copy of your latest Club Newsletter. Further, if they decide to fill in the Application for Membership, be sure to tell them how/where to pay your club fee.

5) Introduce the guests at each meeting

Make the guest feel important and recognised when they attend the meeting. Either ask them to introduce themselves, or ask the member who invited them to introduce their guest. Give them a big round of applause.

6) Collect Contact Information from every guest.

Make sure that you have a way (guest book?) to collect name, phone numbers, and email address from each guest who attends a meeting at your club. If you have a guest book, your president will know the person’s name to introduce him/her (see above)

7) Use that information to follow up

Call the guest. Send a note. Write an email. Invite the guest back to your next meeting. Be sure he/she knows when/where the next meeting is. An extra suggestion – offer to pick up the guest and bring him/her with you to the meeting.

8) Find out about their needs and goals

In a one-to-one conversation, ask the guest about his/her career, future goals, communication and leadership skills and needs. Then talk with her about the specific aspects of Toastmasters that would address those needs.

9. Ask for their comments about the meeting... BUT

Ask specific questions. Rather than “How did you enjoy our meeting?”, ask a question which will help the guest see for him/herself the benefits of attending. Base your question of what you learned from your conversation in Tip 8. For example, you might ask, “Now that you have seen Table Topics, how do you think that could help you in your sales career?” Ask each guest a different question.

Maybe you could have a team of “**Guest buddies**” assigned for each Club Meeting. Each buddy is responsible for one guest to do three things:

- a) sit with the guest and explain things as needed
- b) to talk with the guest about his/her career and goals, and match them with C&L skills.
- c) be the one to ask the specific question at the end of the meeting – specific to the guest’s needs.

10. Be prepared with information about other clubs in the community

I know that you want this guest to join your club. The reality is that sometimes your day of the week, time, or location is not the most convenient for this new person. She came to the meeting, your meeting, because she is interested in joining, and maybe this was the only club she knew about. But if you hear that they can not return or join because of a time conflict, be sure to provide info about other clubs in the community – where and when they meet, and the name and phone number of a contact person.