



Re-Launching Mentorship in Your Club

District 61 believes in a mentorship approach that is based on an experienced person (mentor) working with a less experienced person (mentee) as peers – including mutual respect. Our objective is to provide an environment where members learn directly from each other and develop stronger relationships with each other. In each case, the member is learning – the mentee is learning a skill, while the mentor is demonstrating and learning through leadership. Members will get much more out of Toastmasters in an environment where they can achieve their specific goals with the help of others and have strong inter-personal bonds.

Why Re-launch Mentorship in your club?

Mentorship is a tool that can help you raise the bar for your club's personal development. It provides a unique opportunity for the club to develop stronger bonds and tailor the learning to the needs of each individual. It also enables faster integration of new members. In a nutshell, mentorship improves learning, participation, confidence, satisfaction, and member retention.

Toastmasters encourages clubs to implement mentorship primarily through Project #9 in the Competent Leadership (CL) manual. This is the most common reason clubs initially set up mentorship. Well run mentorship programs deliver to the club an ability to scale effectively with highly satisfied and involved members!



Considerations for Launching your Program

To have an effective and easily administered program, you need to do a little pre-planning before launching.

1. Communicating the Mentoring Mindset

Often, members feel that they are quite familiar with the concept of mentoring and have not necessarily had a positive experience with it. Pre-planning your messaging about mentoring is crucial.

1. Toastmasters' mentorship is based on mutual respect, caring, and equality

Often the term "mentorship" has been used in place of teaching or to assign someone the role of monitoring & assisting a junior employee. This is not the Toastmasters' approach.

2. Everyone does mentorship

In order to accelerate the learning in the club, encourage participation, build confidence, and strengthen bonds, broad participation is required. Care needs to be taken to ensure mentoring doesn't look like just something that is done for junior members or that mentorship is used to "fix" people's weaknesses. In reality, it can be used to build strengths and add skills to very skilled Toastmasters.

3. Both the mentor and mentee benefit

Often mentees are reluctant to pursue mentorship because they see themselves as a burden to their mentor. Ensure that they understand that they are contributing to the development of their mentor, enabling the completion of CL #9 and helping with the mentor's leadership development. It is a win-win for both.

2. Pairing is Critical

Nothing can shutdown the benefits of mentorship more than if two people who cannot effectively communicate or build a relationship together are paired up. Understanding up front how your club will pair people is critical. Items to consider are: Mentee's preference, desire to be a Mentor/Mentee, nervousness, the mentee's need vs. the experience the mentor has had, similarities in personality & interests, potential cultural implications of a match, and accessibility (can they meet face to face frequently?). Tools like club surveys and personality matching can be valuable.

3. Get Club Executive to Buy-In to Mentoring

Your executive committee is critical to helping you promote mentoring. You will need the support of membership to get new members on board. You will need PR to help you get your messages out. Your president will be crucial in backing up your messaging and re-enforcing it as a key part of your clubs direction forward.

In addition, you need to understand how you will administer mentorship and how it could affect the executive and/or the roles within the club. Administering mentorship, particularly in large clubs, can

be time consuming. Vice Presidents of Education may find themselves overwhelmed doing their other duties while trying to get momentum behind mentorship. Consider a new role on either the executive or, if you have an education committee, add a role that is responsible for mentorship. This role would be responsible for pairing, tools, tracking, training, and checking in with all mentorship relationships in the club. Ultimately, the VP Education, much sign off on the successful completion of all mentorship relationships for credit against a project.

How to Launch (or Re-Launch) Your Program

Launching can be done effectively by simply announcing that you are launching mentoring in the club and pairing a few people up, but to achieve maximum velocity for your launch we recommend:

1. Pre-identifying a few pairs of mentors and mentees. Preferably a mix of experienced mentorships and new member mentorships.
2. Preparing a mentorship themed meeting
 1. Introductions
 - Ask all members to come to the meeting with an idea of something they would like to be mentored on. These ideas do not have to be Toastmaster's related. However, often members will select Toastmaster's related items.
 - During the introductions have the Toastmaster ask them to offer up what they want to be mentored on
 - Make note of the Toastmasters related items and follow up after the meeting on the ones that other members of the club could help with.
 2. Prepared Speech

Encourage a member who is passionate about mentoring to present to your club. They could leverage the successful club series presentation on mentoring and earn credit towards an ALB or ACS or do their own presentation for credit on an appropriate Communication manual project. If you don't have someone passionate about mentoring in your club, look at nearby club's speaker's bureaus or contact your area governor or the LGET.
 3. Table Topics

Try something a little different for table topics. Randomly pair up those participating into mentor and mentee. Assign each team a skill to be mentored. Ask them to engage in a 2 minute discussion that is to be their first meeting to discuss mentoring on that topic. Best table topic awards could be awarded to the best pair or to the best individual speaker.

After the Launch Meeting

1. Establish Mentor/Mentee Pairs

Once you have generated some excitement about mentoring, it is time to establish mentorship pairs. Initially, you should target approximately 1/3rd of your club as either a mentor or mentee. This will help you get critical mass behind the program in a manageable fashion. Be careful not to overly push the program as some personalities will want to see evidence of success prior to joining in. Pushing mentoring on these personalities may make them reject mentoring outright instead of letting the proof points convince them.

2. Keep the Momentum! Ensure All Your Tools are in Place!

Toastmasters bookstore sells mentor/mentee survey forms, mentee assignment notices, mentor assignment notices, mentor certificates, mentor pins, mentor ribbons, CL #9 ribbons, new member profile sheets, and the Mentoring Successful Club Presentation. You may wish to use an assortment of these products to help your club.

District 61 is providing its clubs with guidelines on mentorship including duties of care for mentoring new members and experienced members, recommendations for mentees, and mentorship tracking sheets. As the district continues to develop its mentorship program, we expect more and more tools to become available. Consider integrating much of these new tools into what you already do today. For example, include a description on mentorship, an application for mentorship, and a new member survey in your new member's package.

3. Consider Mentor Training to Accelerate the Mentorship

When you have several members who are new to being mentors, pull together a session on mentorship for the club. Talk to them about what mentorship is, what is expected, and what resources they can access. Both Toastmasters International and District 61 have a variety of material you can use for this purpose.

Once Mentorship is Established in Your Club

Keep checking in with your clubs' executive and your mentees and mentors. Find out what is working and what isn't. Where are you seeing the benefits? What do you need to adjust? Look for signs of strong bonds between mentor and mentee. Ensure each mentee feels that their learning has been tailored to meet their needs.

Soon you will experience faster integration of new members and greater satisfaction from experienced members. The end result is that mentorship in your club improves learning, participation, confidence, satisfaction, and member retention.

Please provide any feedback on this document to the [District Chair of Mentorship](#) and/or the [LGET](#).