



## 10 Sure Fire- Ways to Retain Members

Do your club members stay for a short time or a long time? Are they satisfied with their club experience? Are they achieving their personal and educational goals with the support of their fellow club members? Retaining members is the third step in building your club. Improve the way your members are treated and your club will thrive. With help, your club can master the following sure- fire ways to retain their valuable members for a long and satisfying Toastmasters experience!

1. Orientate New Members Thoroughly. This is the difference between going on a Mystery Tour and a Guided Tour. Being able to see the bigger picture and the opportunities of the Toastmasters programs with the support of their fellow club members makes a huge difference to members knowing they can achieve their goals. Explain how to navigate through the 2 main manuals, the structure of the organisation, DCP, the tracks of communication and leadership and the 10 Toastmasters Promises.
2. Assign a Mentor. Knowing someone is there to help along the way ensures a supportive journey for members. This process helps older, existing members contribute to the well-being of newer members and forms bonds of friendship that are important. Give the mentoring relationship an important place in your club.
3. Greet Members Warmly. Toastmasters is a people business, and all people have feelings. All deserve courteous treatment. Say “hello”, “thank you” and “please” when appropriate. Call each member by name. Treat your fellow club members kindly and watch membership grow because your club cares.
4. Supportive Evaluations. The purpose of evaluations is to encourage members to speak again. One of the Toastmasters promises is to provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations. Members grow and learn from the feedback given to them in the positive, friendly environment established by your club. Ensure members are trained on how to give constructive evaluations. Ensure members receive constructive evaluations.



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5. Time on the program. We are all at different speaking levels in Toastmasters. Some are at the start of their journey. Others speak at a professional level. Every member should have the opportunity to speak at every meeting. Like a one-room laboratory, experienced members teach the new members. Advanced speeches, Warm-Ups, Table Topics and Debates give established members the opportunity to extend their communication and leadership skills.

6. Fun meetings. A varied and interesting meeting means that members are having fun. Dr Ralph Smedley is famously quoted that we learn best in moments of fun. Ensure your meetings have an element of playfulness, happiness and enjoyment. Members will keep coming back when they have a great time with their fellow Toastmasters having fun. Project an attitude of enjoyment.

7. Culture of Respect. Respect comes in the form of starting and ending your meetings on time, one person speaking at a time and listening to others. Members appreciate being treated respectfully.

8. Positive, supportive environment. Attitude is infectious. Members join to learn, grow and have fun in the process!! Inspire your audience and notice the difference it makes. Encourage new members to sign up for speaking roles early and often. Focus your evaluation on the speaker's strong points, the objectives of the project and how he or she can make the next presentation even better. Make your club a positive, safe environment for all Toastmasters, regardless of their experience and skill level.

9. Have-a-go Attitude. This is my favourite habit. Toastmasters is an unrivalled learning experience, and anything can happen at anytime– from fire alarms ( and this has happened to me), to power outages, and planned special events. Be ready to step up when there is an opportunity and your leadership skills will be extended.

10. Recognition. Effective Toastmasters stretch themselves and others. If you are new, reach for your Competent Communicator (CC) and your Competent Leader (CL) award. If you have a CC and CL, reach for Advanced Communicator (AC) or Advanced Leader (AL). Reach for Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM). If you have your DTM, earn another one. I know Toastmasters who are working on their third DTM. Each educational award will enhance your confidence and skills. As you grow, others will catch the excitement and grow along with you.

Treat your current members well and they will keep coming back!!