

Ways to achieve and maintain exciting meetings.

(Ideas from the educational at Nelson Conference. November 2003.)

Points covered in the Presentation.

Introduction:

*What are the **benefits** we are trying to create for ourselves/members? Keep the **Toastmasters Mission statement** in mind.

*Comparing the Toastmasters 'experience' to exercise ... it should generate **positive feelings**/a 'buzz'/i.e. Toastmasters is good for your health/well being!!

*A Toastmaster meeting should be a '**celebration**' as much as a learning/personal growth experience.

*Use the **diversity** of your Club membership cultures/age/experience/personalities ... here is the wealth you can draw on to generate the 'buzz' and excitement.

*Remember: **Be Positive**... work at generating this same feeling among your membership.

The Importance of:

Preparation:

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost: that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them. "

Henry David Thoreau

*The **role of the committee** is important ... focusing on the above aims. Committee need to be 'on board' and positive themselves committed to and involved in the process of making an 'exciting' club. Committee meetings should also be a **positive** experience!!

*Meeting preparation **organization** ... not a last minute effort. Meeting roles should be well notified and people willing and looking forward to these rolesit's all about **attitude**. Here, the role of Ed VP and other committee members is vital.

*Don't let things get you down ... those last minute hiccups can all be dealt with ... **every** meeting can be a great meeting!

***Plan to succeed** ... every time!

*Meeter Greeter ... make everyone **welcome** members and guests alike.

*Guests should have a meeting 'buddy' ... ensuring they learn about the meeting format use judgement when choosing a suitable buddy.

***Plan, Plan, Plan** ... and **enjoy** the process.

And the meetings themselves?

Exciting meeting ideas:

- *Use **Patterns in Programming** publication for suggestions to improve meetings.
- *Use the **talents** of members
- *Other ideas a potpourri of suggestions.... see Toastmasters' contributions below.
- *Different meeting ideas should not replace the standard Toastmasters meeting format, but rather compliment your Club's meeting programme.

Resources and Ideas used by different Clubs. (Contributed at the workshop.)

- Have a Meeter-Greeter. Make all attendees members and guests feel welcome.
- Remember the value of different Club meeting roles, whether it be the ever present Toastmaster, Timekeeper etc., or other variable roles such as
 - * Grammarian,
 - * HarkMaster(also known as Listening Post or Memory Master)
 - * Bard (entertainer with poetry, prose, song, music)
 - * Um and Ah counter.
 - *Jokemaster.
 - * Drinks Master!!!
- Use the wider Toastmasters community. Other Clubs offer opportunities for:
 - * Speaking/Guest speakers
 - * Guest evaluators (A fresh perspective on your club)
 - * Experience.
- Make sure your Club is regularly presenting Educational workshops.
- And there are the ways you can add a different flavour to your meetings from time to time. The following are a list of ways that different clubs have tried "Meetings with a Difference".
 - ***Reverse Agenda meeting** (Begin with the General evaluation and finish with the Presidents welcome.)
 - ***Theme meetings** (e.g. 'Hippy' theme, 'Guy Fawkes', 'Silly Hats', Music, Seasonal)
 - *Offer a '**Thought to take away**' at the end of the meeting ... to provide a 2 -3 minute speech at the beginning of the next meeting.
 - *"**Just a Minute**" quick speaking opportunities, "don't repeat, deviate or hesitate".
 - ***Utilise members workplaces** ...e.g. meet in a courtroom and have mock trial.
 - ***Repertory Toastmasters.** Do a Play.
 - ***Debating.** From Impromptu to Full debates. Perhaps with another club.
 - ***Word at a Time.** (Theatre sports.)
 - ***Point of View** sessions from the Soapbox.
 - ***Round Robin** Table Topics next speaker starts where the previous finished.

***Oral Reading** Contests. No longer contested at Area/District level, but still of great value and enjoyable.

***Poetry Night**. Perhaps with a guest poet.

***Impromptu Night** ... Roles given as members arrive.

***Pot Luck lunches/dinners**.

*Have a "**Bake Off**" .

*Have a "**Flying Gavel**" in your area.

*Try a **Mystery Auction** ... good fundraiser and fun. Each member auctions an iteman alternative to Table Topics.

*Try **meeting in a Park** or similar Public Place. One group tried the top of a double decker bus Be seen **enjoying** Toastmasters Great Publicity and **FUN**.

Other Resources:

Skill Building Programmes

Successful Club series

Leadership excellence series

educational Manuals and Pamphlets.

Reference books, tapes and videos ... see your Supply catalogue.

Geoffrey Moss handbooks

Inspirational writers.

Toastmaster website

Mentors

Fellow Toastmasters

Club Executive

Area Governor

Division Governor

District executive

Toastmasters International.

Add your own

You may find something here that you haven't tried ... share your own ideas with others. Thanks to all who contributed to this workshop.