

12 Tips to Starting a New Toastmasters Club

An article in the **March 2006 Toastmasters Magazine**, provided 12 tips for starting a Toastmasters Club. If you have participated in the start of a new Toastmasters Club as a member of the demonstration team, or served as a New Club Sponsor or Mentor, most likely you have practiced some of the tips suggested.

Identify your target: Are you planning for a community, corporate, advanced or other Club? Ideally, we strive to attain the 20 member target before submitting the Application to Organize.

Order a New Club Kit: Email your request for a Club kit via the Toastmasters website, “**Find a Club**” then “**Start a Club**” located at <http://www.toastmasters.org/startclub.asp> Ask them to send you the complete printed new club materials.

Build a team: Identify key motivated people willing to serve as *sponsors* and *mentors*, as both of these roles are critical to a new Club’s eventual success.

Plan your Demonstration Meeting: Demos are presented before a group of prospective members by one of more experienced Toastmasters. A demo will include an overview of the organization, the benefits of membership, and how to start and operate a Club (including information about fees).

Develop and implement a promotion strategy: Get the word out—use flyers, newspaper ads and phone calls to let the community know about the demo meeting—if the target Club is slated to be an open community Club. Email is effective and corporate newsletters for closed or corporate Club prospects.

Focus on what’s in it for them: Benefits sell—emphasize in the demo session why it is worthwhile to join. Involve your team members, and get their testimonials about what Toastmasters has done for them. Keep it upbeat, positive, interactive and not too technical.

Take a social break: Allow some time (if time is available) for socializing—get guests talking and interacting with one another.

Plan the next steps: It’s a good idea to develop options for next steps in advance of the demo meeting. Make provisions for the full range of possible outcomes (I.e., from slight interest to enthusiastic, “when-can we-start commitment.) Once commitment is confirmed by the attendees—be ready to suggest a suitable course of action.

Identify the future leaders: Gauge which attendees come across as likely leaders of the future Club and enlist their involvement as soon as possible for positions of President, Vice President Education, VP Membership, etc.

Get a financial commitment as soon as possible: Solidify the commitment of prospective members by having a “starting point” budget and collecting some level of dues at the first meeting.

Respect their time: Stay within the prescribed time limits of the meeting.

Follow up: Keep your newfound goodwill with the group intact by honoring your commitments.

Remember: They consider you to be the expert.

In short, the author of the Toastmaster’s article comments:

“The potential for new Clubs is all around us; in communities, corporations and government organizations. Toastmasters is such a time proven formula for development of communication and leadership skills that it just about sells itself.”

Energize Your Dreams For Success!

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