

# The Search for District Leaders

## *~Tips to Find Prospective Leaders*

As districts begin their election process and appoint a nominating committee, questions will arise regarding what makes a good leader, about leadership succession planning and how to identify and cultivate future leaders.

Now is the best time to start thinking about the district's future leadership. District elections are not just about filling open officer positions. They involve identifying the district's long-term goals and selecting the best people for the available officer positions. Who can best help you meet your district's goals? Data available in the district performance reports will help you understand your district's growth.

District conferences, leadership institutes, area-governor club visits and other events are useful for identifying and cultivating the next group of leaders for your district. District council meetings offer another opportunity for district leaders to identify long-term strategies for continued district success. Perhaps your district has achieved Distinguished District status over the last three years, and your long-term goal is to achieve President's Distinguished District recognition?

Use district meetings to ask and answer questions:

- How will the district achieve the desired goal?
- What kinds of leaders are needed to move the district forward?
- How can the leadership group work together to meet the needs of clubs, areas and divisions?

Here are some additional strategies to ensure districts have a pool of good leaders in the future:

- Encourage club and district officers to move on to the next level.
- Sell the benefits of leadership.
- ***Share success stories.***
- Explain leaders' duties.
- ***Encourage use of the High Performance Leadership program and other Toastmasters International materials.***
- Identify strengths of current leaders.
- Recognize current leaders and give special attention to area governors.
- Use district conferences to promote leadership.
- Mentor members.
- Encourage a focus on quality-centered leadership responsibilities and elimination of activities not related to the critical-success factors.
- Encourage current area and division governors to acquire assistants and ask the assistants to consider serving as district officers.
- Ask current area and division governors to look for people to replace them next year.
- Look for potential future leaders at club-officer training.
- ***Promote achievement of Competent Leader and Advanced Leader awards in Toastmasters International's leadership track.***
- Ask former district leaders to be available as mentors to new district leaders.
- Encourage area governors to ***look for future leaders during club visits*** and list names on the Area Report of Club Visit forms. Follow-up and contact the people listed.
- Ask people to serve as district leaders and, if they are unable to serve, ask them to suggest someone else.

Beyond meeting the minimum requirements for each leadership position, districts can look for leaders who exhibit skills in global and strategic thinking, project/program management, fiscal management, effective communication, leading teams and/or effective training.

Most importantly, a district leader needs to have a core understanding of Toastmasters International, including the mission, vision and how clubs, areas, divisions and districts are interconnected.

***Every leader is unique***, with varying skills and contributions. If district members ask the right questions of potential candidates for officer and accurately identify the district's needs, the right people will inevitably fill the right officer positions to move the district forward.

Consider these suggestions as you weigh the answers to this question: What kind of leaders will best serve our district's needs? Successful district elections depend on your understanding of this. Please take the time to reflect carefully when considering potential leaders. ***Remember, today decides tomorrow.***