



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

**SERVING CLUBS THROUGH VISITS:
A GUIDE FOR AREA DIRECTORS**



**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL



SERVING CLUBS THROUGH VISITS: A GUIDE FOR AREA DIRECTORS

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**

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MISSIONS, VALUES, AND ENVISIONED FUTURE

Toastmasters International Mission

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.

District Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

Club Mission

We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.

Toastmasters International Values

- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Service
- ▶ Excellence

Toastmasters International Envisioned Future

To be the first-choice provider of dynamic, high-value, experiential communication and leadership skills development.

A Toastmaster's Promise

As a member of Toastmasters International and my club, I promise

- ▶ To attend club meetings regularly
- ▶ To prepare all of my projects to the best of my ability, basing them on the Toastmasters education program
- ▶ To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments
- ▶ To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations
- ▶ To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow
- ▶ To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so
- ▶ To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy
- ▶ To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers
- ▶ To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters education and recognition programs
- ▶ To act within Toastmasters' core values of integrity, respect, service and excellence during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities

THE AREA DIRECTOR ROLE

As area director, you serve a vital role in Toastmasters. Of all district leaders, you are the closest to clubs and members and are a direct link between them and the division and district. It's a rewarding role with many responsibilities. During your term you will do the following:

- ▶ Visit every club in your area at least twice a year and more frequently if possible
- ▶ Maintain regular contact with club presidents
- ▶ Encourage ideas and cooperation from clubs and members
- ▶ Ensure that every club in your area is of the highest quality so that members benefit from the Toastmasters education program
- ▶ Identify opportunities for club enhancement that help bring about positive change
- ▶ Support and motivate clubs to provide the best possible member experience, enhancing member retention and building membership
- ▶ Assist your area and the clubs in it to earn Distinguished recognition, thereby contributing to division and district recognition

In your role as area director, you enhance your own communication and leadership skills while giving back to your community of Toastmasters. The invaluable experience you gain during your time as area director can prepare you for additional responsibility in Toastmasters leadership.

A GUIDE FOR AREA DIRECTORS

This guide is designed to help you navigate through the varied environments you'll encounter when visiting clubs. It is categorized by the six standards of club quality described in *Moments of Truth* (Item 290). Each section, representing one of the Moments of Truth, includes a club visit scenario followed by relevant resources. These scenarios are meant to evoke your own ideas and help you empower club officers to use all resources available to meet their unique club needs. Keep in mind that every club is different, so what works for one may not work for another.

Interspersed throughout this guide you'll find tips for before, during, and after the club visit. At the end of this guide, these tips are compiled into a comprehensive list that includes additional advice.

CLUB VISITS

Club visits are opportunities for the district, through the area director, to support club officers and enhance club quality. To help them thrive, visit each club in your area at least twice during the year. If possible, go more frequently. It's most helpful to visit clubs early in the term so that challenges can be addressed sooner rather than later. Your recommendations and support make a tremendous impact on the future of the clubs in your area, empowering club officers to help members learn, grow, and achieve.

Observe each club's strengths and challenges. Rather than telling club officers how to "fix a problem," assist them in using available resources to create unique solutions for their clubs, thereby benefiting current and future members.

Clubs are the heart of Toastmasters International. As a district leader, you strive to ensure that clubs create a supportive learning environment for members by establishing the best possible experience from the very beginning. Among the ways to do this is by evaluating clubs based on the six Moments of Truth, standards of club quality.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

- ▶ **First Impressions:** Clubs ensure that guests' experiences and observations become first impressions that encourage them to return.
- ▶ **Membership Orientation:** Clubs acquaint new members with the Toastmasters education and recognition programs, their responsibility to the club, and the club's responsibility to the member.
- ▶ **Fellowship, Variety, and Communication:** Clubs offer a warm, friendly, and supportive environment that encourages enjoyable learning.
- ▶ **Program Planning and Meeting Organization:** Club meetings are carefully planned, with well-prepared speakers and useful evaluations.
- ▶ **Membership Strength:** Clubs have sufficient numbers of members to provide leadership and fill meeting and committee assignments. Clubs participate in membership-building and retention practices.
- ▶ **Achievement Recognition:** Clubs monitor members' progress toward goals, submit completed award applications immediately, and consistently recognize member achievement.

USING THE AREA DIRECTOR'S CLUB VISIT REPORT

The **Area Director's Club Visit Report** (Item 1471) is the tool used to assess the overall quality of clubs. It is also a valuable resource for the district because, once completed, the report identifies how district leaders can best support the club. A copy of the report is sent to the district director, program quality director, club growth director, division director, area director, and club president.

A blank report is included in this manual and is available online in District Central at www.toastmasters.org/1471. It reflects the Moments of Truth. It's recommended that you review the report before you visit clubs. In addition to helping resolve current issues, it's important that you help clubs plan for the future. When you conduct your club visits, consider the following:

- ▶ **Strengths:** Recognize and praise positive aspects of the club.
- ▶ **Challenges:** Mention one or two challenges and the resources available to address them.
- ▶ **Support:** Ask how you and other district leaders can assist the club. Make a note of these requests, and take them back to your fellow district leaders. In particular, the program quality director can direct club officers to specific Toastmasters programming materials and supplies.

Submit a completed **Area Director's Club Visit Report** (Item 1471) online in District Central for each of your two visits per club per year. The reports are due by November 30 for the first visit and May 31 for the second visit. Your area meets a qualifying requirement of the Distinguished Area Program when you submit a report for 75 percent of your area's clubs by each deadline.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Creating a positive first impression ensures that what guests experience when visiting clubs encourages them to return and become members. Something as simple as the way the meeting room is set up or how a guest is greeted may not seem that important. However, if you consider possible outcomes—such as a club not meeting its membership goals due to a lack of new members—you'll see these details may have far-reaching consequences. Healthy, growing clubs are the basis for success at the area, division, and district levels.

SCENARIO 1: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Tonight you are scheduled to visit the Flapping Forum Club. The club meeting is held in the Red Room of the local library. You arrive 10 minutes

Tip for Area Directors: Before the Visit

Build rapport with the club president before your visit by asking about his or her Toastmasters experience and the club history.

early to chat with members before the meeting, but the door is locked. While you wonder what to do, a woman arrives. You introduce yourself and learn her name is Farah, a first-time visitor to the Flapping Forum Club. The two of you wander around the building until you find the group in the Blue Room, the library's other public meeting room.

Sergeant at Arms Finley greets you both. He asks Farah to sign the club guest book, gives her a name badge, and introduces both of you to members and officers. You're invited to take a seat as the meeting starts.

Tip for Area Directors: During the Visit

Dress professionally and wear your Toastmasters name badge and pin.

The speakers are interesting, and the meeting is well-planned. Seated next to you, Farah appears to be enjoying her first Toastmasters experience.

Immediately after the meeting, you are scheduled to talk with club officers. Vice President Membership Francine hurries over to Farah, who is standing by herself near

the door. Francine thrusts some membership materials into Farah's hand, telling her, "Go to our website for more information," and turns away.

As you sit down to meet with club officers, you see Farah leave the membership materials on a table before she walks out the door. It looks as if the Flapping Forum Club just lost a potential member.

You start your meeting with club officers by accentuating the positive. You commend club President Fletcher and the other officers for creating a supportive learning environment in which members deliver well-prepared speeches from the manuals.

Next, you share your experience searching for the meeting location when you arrived at the library. You learn membership has grown so much that tonight's meeting was moved to the library's larger meeting room. To resolve this issue, you recommend that Vice President Public Relations Fiona update meeting location information on the club website and social media sites. It would also be helpful to post a sign on the door directing visitors to the new meeting location.

You inquire of Vice President Membership Francine if she asked first-time visitor Farah to join the club or invited her back for the next meeting. Francine says she didn't, but she

“gave Farah information so she could look at it when she had time.” You explain that by not asking Farah to apply for membership and by acting indifferently toward her, Francine may have made a poor first impression that negatively impacted Farah’s beliefs about Toastmasters.

You recommend that a club officer or member present **Moments of Truth** (Item 290), which addresses club quality and the member experience. Club President Fletcher agrees to contact you within the month to confirm when

the presentation is scheduled.

You conclude your meeting by asking club officers how you and other district leaders can support them in their efforts. President Fletcher asks you for information, which you know the division director can help you attain. You agree to call President Fletcher within the next week with this information.

**Tip for Area Directors:
After the Visit**

Submit your **Area Director’s Club Visit Report** (Item 1471) by November 30 for the first visit and May 31 for the second visit.

Resources for First Impressions

Moments of Truth (Item 290)

www.toastmasters.org/290

MEMBERSHIP ORIENTATION

To offer members the greatest benefit, clubs must acquaint them with Toastmasters fundamentals such as the education and recognition programs. Just as clubs have a responsibility to deliver quality programs to members and guests, members have a responsibility to arrive at club meetings prepared to do their part, whether it's to deliver a speech or fulfill a meeting role. Clubs that provide strong member orientation and mentoring help individuals be successful from the start, which encourages club retention and contributes to club quality.

SCENARIO 2: MEMBERSHIP ORIENTATION

You arrive early to your visit with the Babble Club so you can talk to members. One of them mentions that new members are joining regularly, but they are “short-timers”—they stop attending within a month or two. You make a note to ask club officers about this after the meeting.

During the meeting, club President Ban conducts a new member induction ceremony. The new member, Benicio, beams when he receives his membership pin and certificate. It's obviously a proud moment for him.

When you talk with club officers following the meeting, Vice President Membership Boyko shares with you that the club has increased membership-building activities and been successful in bringing in visitors, many of whom join the club. He provides them with **Toastmasters and You** (Item 1167) and gives them an overview of Toastmasters. It's at the

next step, finding mentors for the new members, that the Babble Club has difficulty. Boyko is concerned that if new member Benicio doesn't have a mentor to help him prepare for his first speech, he may quit the club within a month or two as others have.

First, you congratulate Babble Club officers for their successful membership-building activities and for conducting induction ceremonies such as the one for Benicio. This is a great way to make new members feel welcome and valued. You encourage the officers to sustain this experience for members beyond the first month or two. Encourage them to brainstorm retention strategies that will work for their club.

To address Vice President Membership Boyko's concern about finding mentors for new members, you ask Vice President Education Bernice if she's used the **Mentor Interest Survey** (Item 1163A) within the past year to discover which club members would like to serve as mentors. It's more effective than repeatedly asking the same experienced club members to take on this responsibility. Tell Bernice that when she distributes the survey to members,

Tip for Area Directors: Before the Visit

Email the club president a link to the **Area Director's Club Visit Report** (Item 1471) so that he or she is familiar with its content and structure.

Tip for Area Directors: During the Visit

If you've requested time on the meeting agenda, set an example for club members by delivering a speech from a **Toastmasters manual**.

to stress that mentoring provides credit toward the Competent Leader award. You refer to Project 9 in *Competent Leadership* (Item 265).

You recommend that a club member conduct the presentation *Mentoring* (Item 296) about the importance of providing one-on-one assistance to new members. It's part of *The Successful Club Series* (Item 289).

You ask club officers how you and other district leaders can support them in their efforts.

President Ban says he'll send you an email within two or three days outlining the assistance his club needs.

**Tip for Area Directors:
After the Visit**

Address club questions, needs, and concerns.

Resources for Member Orientation

Competent Leadership (Item 265)

The Successful Club Series (Item 289)

Moments of Truth (Item 290)

Mentoring (Item 296)

New Member Orientation Kit for Clubs (Item 1162)

Mentor Interest Survey (Item 1163A)

www.toastmasters.org/265

www.toastmasters.org/289

www.toastmasters.org/290

www.toastmasters.org/296

www.toastmasters.org/1162

www.toastmasters.org/1163A

FELLOWSHIP, VARIETY, AND COMMUNICATION

Clubs retain members by offering a warm, friendly, and supportive environment that encourages enjoyable learning. This Moment of Truth begins with the first club visit and continues throughout members' experiences in Toastmasters. Meetings that are enjoyable contribute to retention, individual member success, and strong clubs.

SCENARIO 3: FELLOWSHIP, VARIETY, AND COMMUNICATION

Before your first visit to Club Chit Chat, you run into last year's area director, Chandra. She

tells you that when she visited Club Chit Chat, it was a strong club with growing membership. However, she's heard from a dual club member that meetings have grown "stale" recently, and membership is no longer increasing. You thank her for the information and do all the research you can to learn more about Club Chit Chat and its accomplishments.

You discover that the club has achieved Distinguished recognition in the past, but it has not met many of its goals so far this year.

When you arrive at the Club Chit Chat meeting, members are friendly and tell you how much they appreciate your visit. The meeting progresses according to the agenda, which you notice is written in green and orange letters.

Two speeches are delivered, and the Table Topics™ session is moderately interesting. You

understand why Chandra was told that meetings were stale. You know that even successful clubs can't become complacent; meetings must be kept fresh and fun to attract new members, who replace those lost through natural attrition.

As arranged, you meet the next day with Club Chit Chat's President Chad, Vice President Education Chen, Vice President Membership Charlie, and Vice President Public Relations Chi. Each one reports what he or she is doing to bring fellowship, variety, and communication to meetings. They're all experienced Toastmasters who have been in the club for years. You sense that their shared commitment, combined with your support and encouragement, may be all that's required to lift them out of the doldrums the club is experiencing.

You recommend that club officers and members participate in speech contests, district conferences, and inter-club events in order to discover new ideas to bring back to Club Chit Chat. Meeting socially and having fun outside the club environment are great ways for members to get to know and appreciate each other more, which will likely increase camaraderie and fellowship at club meetings.

To ensure meeting variety, you encourage Vice President Membership Charlie to plan

Tip for Area Directors: Before the Visit

Contact the club president at least one month before you plan to visit, and request time on the meeting agenda. Ask if club officers will be available immediately after the meeting for a brief discussion with you.

Tip for Area Directors: During the Visit

Stick to your allotted time. Be concise and remember that your visit is part of the overall meeting agenda.

occasional special event meetings, such as inviting a guest speaker. You recommend the *Toastmaster* magazine as a good source of inspiration, and you encourage Charlie to brainstorm other ideas that Club Chit Chat might enjoy. Charlie asks for suggestions from the other officers and immediately starts formulating a list of possible ideas.

To have a consistent online presence and readily identify all club communication, you recommend that Vice President Public Relations Chi visit the Logos, Images and Templates under Leadership Central and begin using the

Toastmasters branded materials available there.

You ask Club Chit Chat officers if they have any questions for you about what you've discussed. They don't at this time, but you encourage them to contact you if they do. Already you see that Chad, Chen, Charlie, and Chi are more animated and engaged than they were at the beginning of the meeting. In fact, they are so engrossed in their plans that they continue discussing after you leave.

**Tip for Area Directors:
After the Visit**

**Send a thank-you note,
and encourage the club
president to contact you.**

Resources for Fellowship, Variety, and Communication

Toastmaster magazine

www.toastmasters.org/magazine

Logos, Images and Templates

www.toastmasters.org/Leadership-Central/Logos-Images-and-Templates

PROGRAM PLANNING AND MEETING ORGANIZATION

When club meetings are carefully planned and organized, members are more likely to meet their goals. Well-planned meetings begin and end on time. They feature prepared speakers, constructive evaluations, and Table Topics sessions that give priority to those not scheduled for major meeting roles. Clubs with these characteristics create positive member experiences.

SCENARIO 4: PROGRAM PLANNING AND MEETING ORGANIZATION

You look forward to visiting the Cumberland College Colloquy Club, which meets on the college campus. You arrive early and talk to members already there. For the most part, they are new college faculty who are taking the opportunity to get to know others on campus and present speeches on topics of interest to fellow academics.

It's time for the meeting to start, but President Costa still hasn't arrived. Another member calls his mobile phone, and he

arrives about five minutes later, red-faced and out of breath from rushing to the meeting.

Despite starting late, President Costa talks at length, introducing and welcoming you. By the time the first speaker, Connor, is introduced, the meeting is running 15 minutes behind schedule.

Connor's presentation also goes long, and you notice that it isn't a speech from a manual. Instead, it's a high-level, far-reaching overview of philosophy that he describes as Part One of a series that will continue at next week's meeting. The next speaker's presentation is not

recognizable as a speech from a Toastmasters manual either. It's a long, rambling talk with no beginning, middle, or end. You're confused, but the other members appear to take it all in stride—those who are still present, that is. You turn around to see vacant seats in the back of the room because members have left during the second speech.

The meeting finally ends nearly 25 minutes late. Several of the officers excuse themselves from attending the post-meeting discussion with you, saying that they have to be in class.

You want to start the talk with club officers on a sincere and positive note, so you thank them for taking time to meet with you and allowing you to participate in the meeting.

Next, you ask President Costa if meetings typically start and end so late. He admits that, yes, he is very busy and is often late. You mention some of the negative consequences of poor time management, and point out that nearly 50 percent of members left the meeting today because it lasted almost 90 minutes instead of an hour.

You brainstorm with the group and come up with several options. They could choose to extend the meeting time to 90 minutes and meet twice a month instead of weekly. Another option is to change the meeting time from the current mid-afternoon schedule to the early morning or early afternoon. Club officers agree

Tip for Area Directors: Before the Visit

Familiarize yourself with club officers' names. As volunteer leaders, they should be appreciated for their efforts.

Tip for Area Directors: During the Visit

Mention the following topics in your presentation to members at the club meeting: the club mission; characteristics of successful clubs; the Distinguished Club Program; and any upcoming training, contests, or other Toastmasters events that they're invited to attend.

to present these questions at the next meeting and make a decision in the near future.

Next, you ask why members don't give speeches from Toastmasters manuals. Vice President Education Cooper says that members have the academic freedom to use manuals or not. Most people don't use them, and the club doesn't enforce strict time limits on speakers. You explain the benefits of using *Competent Communication* (Item 225) and *Competent Leadership* (Item 265) to build communication and leadership skills and to gain recognition for the club, but President Costa remains unconvinced.

Then you remember that there is another academic club in your district. You point out that they are on track to earn President's Distinguished recognition for the third year in a row. Suddenly, the Cumberland College Colloquy Club officers are paying attention, and President Costa agrees to review the *Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan* (Item 1111). You've discovered a way to motivate these club officers—through competition.

You agree to meet with club officers again soon to review Distinguished Club Program goals and complete their Club Success Plan. You recommend that all club officers attend the next scheduled club officer training so that each knows what responsibilities he or she has to help achieve Distinguished Club Program goals. In the meantime, they can refer to the *Club Leadership Handbook* (Item 1310) for guidance.

You suggest that members conduct two presentations from *The Successful Club Series* (Item 289). This will provide some basic, yet valuable information to enhance club quality. Whoever presents two projects from the series fulfills a requirement for the Advanced Leader Bronze or Advanced Communicator Silver awards.

In addition to meeting again soon to discuss the Distinguished Club Program, you ask club officers how you and other district leaders can support them in their efforts.

Tip for Area Directors: After the Visit

Communicate with club presidents at least once a month, and respond to phone calls or emails in a timely manner.

Resources for Program Planning and Meeting Organization

Competent Communication (Item 225)

www.toastmasters.org/225

Competent Leadership (Item 265)

www.toastmasters.org/265

Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan (Item 1111)

www.toastmasters.org/1111

Club Leadership Handbook (Item 1310)

www.toastmasters.org/1310

MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH

When a club has enough members to provide leadership and fill meeting roles and committee assignments, the experience is better for everyone. To keep meetings interesting and avoid members growing weary from a lack of variety, clubs should always work toward maintaining at least 20 active members. Otherwise, members are likely to feel overburdened. Meetings with the same small group of people tend to become stale. A larger audience is more challenging and stimulating to speakers, and provides a variety of speaker evaluations. Having sufficient members means that everyone in the club is able to work on their individual goals while supporting the club as a whole.

SCENARIO 5: MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH

The Parlance Park Club has been a part of your district for several years. It's been in decline and membership is dropping. The club is in an area

where several large local companies have closed, and people are cutting expenses (including Toastmasters membership dues and fees).

On the evening that you visit the club meeting, there are 13 people in attendance.

President Pricilla keeps the meeting lively and everyone seems to enjoy themselves. But you know that eventually the few club members will grow tired of having too much responsibility and may decide to leave.

When you meet with club officers to discuss your visit, you explain the impact of lower membership on club quality.

In addition to overburdening existing members, the club won't be eligible to participate in the Distinguished Club Program without a net growth of five members or 20 paid members by June 30. You review the Parlance Park Club success plan together.

You remind club officers that when people in the community are unemployed, Toastmasters is a valuable investment in their future. They gain communication and leadership skills through Toastmasters' cost-effective education program and build their self-confidence at the same time.

You ask club officers to brainstorm with you ways to increase membership in their club. Together, you decide on several strategies, including increased publicity, a membership drive, and conducting a Speechcraft. You offer to assist with these projects if the club needs help.

Vice President Education Paloma says that she'll schedule club officers to present projects from *The Successful Club Series* (Item 289), especially *Moments of Truth* (Item 290), *Finding New Members for Your Club* (Item 291), *Closing the Sale* (Item 293), and *How to be a Distinguished Club* (Item 299). You tell her that this is a great idea because these presentations are excellent tools for helping clubs succeed and enhancing club quality. They also fulfill a requirement toward Advanced Communicator Silver and Advanced Leader Bronze awards.

Bringing in new members is important for strong clubs, and so is retaining existing

Tip for Area Directors: Before the Visit

Ask the club president if he or she has any concerns or has already identified challenges. Plan to address these during your club visit.

Tip for Area Directors: During the Visit

Listen and observe so you can complete your report accurately and provide guidance to the club.

members. The club resolves to increase its efforts to appreciate all its members and recognize them for their achievements.

Treasurer Perry agrees to continue to submit membership-renewal dues on time. This ensures that members receive the benefits of membership; it's also one of the goals for the Distinguished Club Program.

You tell club officers that if membership drops to 12 or fewer, you will ask the district director for a club coach to be assigned. The

coach works with club officers (usually for one year) to build membership. The club coach may receive credit toward the Advanced Leader Silver award.

You confirm that you will talk with the club growth director about other membership-building ideas, and you ask what else you and other district leaders can do to support club officers in their efforts.

**Tip for Area Directors:
After the Visit**

Make extra club visits if you can, especially early in the program year when it may be most helpful to clubs.

Resources for Membership Strength

Speechcraft Starter Kit (Item 205)

www.toastmasters.org/205

The Successful Club Series (Item 289)

www.toastmasters.org/289

Moments of Truth (Item 290)

www.toastmasters.org/290

Finding New Members for Your Club (Item 291)

www.toastmasters.org/291

Closing the Sale (Item 293)

www.toastmasters.org/293

How to be a Distinguished Club (Item 299)

www.toastmasters.org/299

Success 101 (Item 1622)

www.toastmasters.org/1622

Membership building

www.toastmasters.org/membershipbuilding

ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

Achievement is fundamental to the Toastmasters program. One way that the club motivates members to stay active is by monitoring progress toward goals, submitting completed award applications immediately, and consistently recognizing member achievement. This is a measure of club quality that leads to Distinguished Club Program honors. Members' achievements also build toward recognition at the area, division, and district levels.

SCENARIO 6: ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

Before you visit the Lingo Lovers Club for the first time, you log in to District Central on the Toastmasters website to check the club's progress toward its Distinguished Club Program goals. You notice that the club is not on target

to meet the five goals required to be a Distinguished club.

On the morning of your visit, you get a call from Toastmaster Lakeisha. You've worked with her on different committees in the past and look forward to meeting the other members of her club.

Lakeisha seems frustrated when she tells you that she completed all the requirements for her

Competent Communicator award and gave the application (from *Competent Communication* (Item 225)) to Vice President Education Ling several weeks ago. Lakeisha is looking forward to being recognized by the club for her

achievement and eager to get her two free manuals from the *Advanced Communication Series* (Item 226Z). She asked Ling about it but received no information on the status of her application. You assure Lakeisha that you'll bring

up the topic with Ling after your club visit later today.

When you arrive at the Founder's Room in the Community Center, you notice there aren't member achievement charts posted to track education goals. During the meeting, several members deliver speeches from manuals, so you know they're working toward completing award requirements. However, based on your conversation with Lakeisha, you wonder if they are receiving the recognition they deserve when they qualify for awards.

You and several club officers walk outside and find a table in the tea shop next to the Community Center. You ask them about tracking progress and recognizing members for achieving their education goals. Vice President Education Ling says that until recently, she maintained member achievement charts. She apologizes and says that she hasn't been able to keep up with some of her Toastmasters responsibilities because of an increased workload from her employer. She also admits that she had completely forgotten about submitting Lakeisha's application for the Competent Communicator award, but remembered and submitted it yesterday.

The other club officers are supportive of Ling and immediately agree to help her and also find a club member to volunteer his or her

Tip for Area Directors: Before the Visit

Check out the club's progress in the Distinguished Club Program by visiting www.toastmasters.org/distinguishedperformance reports.

Tip for Area Directors: During the Visit

Maintain an attitude of service, and respect differences in club cultures.

time—ideally, someone who is interested in holding a club officer role in the future.

Club officers agree to work with this volunteer to prepare a list of members for you who have committed to earning education awards. You ask that they also record estimated dates of award completion. You and President Lark agree to assess the club’s progress within the month.

Next, you discuss the club’s progress in the Distinguished Club Program. Club officers seem overwhelmed by the amount of work involved. You show them the *Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan* (Item 1111) and request their commitment to meet at least five goals by the end of the program year. They accept and schedule a follow-up meeting with you to help them establish goals and develop strategies to achieve them.

You encourage club officers to formally recognize members’ education awards as soon as possible.

Even if they simply present members with a Toastmasters badge or pin at a meeting on behalf of the club, their efforts will let members know that the club values their achievements.

You agree to help President Lark and the other officers work on several projects, and you ask them to discuss what you and other district leaders can do to support them in their efforts. Vice President Education Ling says she’ll call you within one week to discuss how the district can help the Lingo Lovers Club.

**Tip for Area Directors:
After the Visit**

Strengthen your relationship with clubs by attending officer installations and other special events when you are able.

Resources for Achievement Recognition

Competent Communication (Item 225) www.toastmasters.org/225

Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan (Item 1111) www.toastmasters.org/1111

Competent Communication Achievement Chart (Item 307) www.toastmasters.org/307

Competent Leadership Achievement Chart (Item 308) www.toastmasters.org/308

CLUB VISIT TIPS FOR AREA DIRECTORS

Tips for Area Directors: Before the Visit

- ▶ Contact the club president at least one month before you plan to visit, and request time on the meeting agenda. Ask if club officers will be available immediately after the meeting for a brief discussion with you.
- ▶ Build rapport with the club president before your visit by asking about his or her Toastmasters experience and the club history.
- ▶ Conduct research about the club.
- ▶ Email the club president a link to the **Area Director's Club Visit Report** (Item 1471) so that he or she is familiar with its content and structure.

Tips for Area Directors: During the Visit

- ▶ Dress professionally and wear your Toastmasters name badge and pin.
- ▶ Arrive about 10 minutes early so you can mingle with members.
- ▶ Maintain an attitude of service, and respect differences in club cultures.
- ▶ Remember that no two clubs are exactly alike, and strategies that work for one may not work for another.
- ▶ If you've requested time on the meeting agenda, set an example for club members by delivering a speech from a Toastmasters manual.
- ▶ Stick to your allotted time. Be concise and remember that your visit is part of the overall meeting agenda.
- ▶ Mention the following topics in your presentation to members at the club meeting: the club mission; characteristics of successful clubs; the Distinguished Club Program; and any upcoming training, contests, or other Toastmasters events that they're invited to attend.

Tips for Area Directors: After the Visit

- ▶ Submit your **Area Director's Club Visit Report** (Item 1471) by November 30 for the first visit and May 31 for the second visit.
- ▶ Address club questions, needs, and concerns.
- ▶ Send a thank-you note, and encourage the club president to contact you.
- ▶ Communicate with club presidents at least once a month, and respond to phone calls or emails in a timely manner.

- ▶ Ask about the meeting you plan to attend.
- ▶ Make sure the meeting agenda accommodates time for you to address club members.
- ▶ Check out the club's progress in the Distinguished Club Program by visiting www.toastmasters.org/distinguishedperformancereports.
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with club officers' names. As volunteer leaders, they should be appreciated for their efforts.
- ▶ Ask the club president if he or she has any concerns or has already identified challenges. Plan to address these during your club visit.

- ▶ Listen and observe so you can complete your report accurately and provide guidance to the club.
- ▶ Meet with the executive committee if possible. This helps you address club needs and complete your report.
- ▶ Review the Club Success Plan and the club's performance in the Distinguished Club Program. If the club isn't pursuing Distinguished Club Program goals, discuss their importance.
- ▶ You may want to bring a copy of *Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan* (Item 1111) with you so officers can see that the goals are achievable and will enhance club quality.
- ▶ Remind the club president that he or she will be emailed a copy of your report after you submit it.

- ▶ Make extra club visits if you can, especially early in the program year when it may be most helpful to clubs.
- ▶ Strengthen your relationship with clubs by attending officer installations and other special events when you are able.

RESOURCES FOR AREA DIRECTORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Speechcraft Starter Kit (Item 205) | www.toastmasters.org/205 |
| <i>Put on a Good Show</i> (Item 220) | www.toastmasters.org/220 |
| <i>District Leadership Handbook</i> (Item 222) | www.toastmasters.org/222 |
| <i>Competent Communication</i> (Item 225) | www.toastmasters.org/225 |
| <i>Competent Leadership</i> (Item 265) | www.toastmasters.org/265 |
| <i>The Successful Club Series</i> (Item 289) | www.toastmasters.org/289 |
| <i>Moments of Truth</i> (Item 290) | www.toastmasters.org/290 |
| <i>Finding New Members for Your Club</i> (Item 291) | www.toastmasters.org/291 |
| <i>Closing the Sale</i> (Item 293) | www.toastmasters.org/293 |
| <i>Mentoring</i> (Item 296) | www.toastmasters.org/296 |
| <i>How to be a Distinguished Club</i> (Item 299) | www.toastmasters.org/299 |
| Competent Communication Achievement Chart (Item 307) | www.toastmasters.org/307 |
| Competent Leadership Achievement Chart (Item 308) | www.toastmasters.org/308 |
| <i>Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan</i> (Item 1111) | www.toastmasters.org/1111 |
| <i>Membership Growth</i> (Item 1159) | www.toastmasters.org/1159 |
| New Member Orientation Kit for Clubs (Item 1162) | www.toastmasters.org/1162 |
| Mentor Interest Survey (Item 1163A) | www.toastmasters.org/1163A |
| <i>Club Leadership Handbook</i> (Item 1310) | www.toastmasters.org/1310 |
| <i>Master Your Meetings</i> (Item 1312) | www.toastmasters.org/1312 |
| <i>Success 101</i> (Item 1622) | www.toastmasters.org/1622 |
| <i>Distinguished Recognition Program</i> (Item 1490) | www.toastmasters.org/1490 |
| Distinguished Performance Reports | www.toastmasters.org/ distinguishedperformancereports |
| District Leader E-toolkit | www.toastmasters.org/districtleadertoolkit |
| To ask questions about online reports | reports@toastmasters.org |
| Membership building | www.toastmasters.org/membershipbuilding |
| <i>Toastmaster</i> magazine | www.toastmasters.org/magazine |
| Logos, Images and Templates | www.toastmasters.org/brandportal |

| | | | | |
|----------|------------|------|----------|----------|
| CLUB NO. | VISIT DATE | AREA | DIVISION | DISTRICT |
|----------|------------|------|----------|----------|



AREA DIRECTOR'S CLUB VISIT REPORT

Club visits are opportunities for the district, through the area director, to support clubs and improve club quality. The Area Director's Club Visit Report guides area directors in evaluating club quality during these visits by assessing the club at each of the *Moments of Truth* (Item 290). Area directors identify opportunities for improvement and specify the support that clubs need from the district, helping clubs retain and build membership through positive member experiences. This important contribution on the part of area directors helps clubs earn Distinguished recognition.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First impressions are important to club success because guests' positive experiences and observations determine if they return and become members.

In this section, consider the questions as they relate to first impressions.

Describe the atmosphere of the meeting. (Consider meeting set-up, location, friendliness of members, etc.)

| | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Are guests warmly welcomed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are guests invited to address the club? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are guests given information? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are guests invited back? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are guests introduced to club members? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

What current branded material does the club use? (Consider the meeting agenda, signage, guest packets, banner, etc.)

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>What does the club do well?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px;"></div> | <p>How can the club improve? Please recommend specific actions.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px;"></div> | <p>What can the district and I do to help the club improve?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px;"></div> |
|---|--|--|

MEMBERSHIP ORIENTATION

In order to offer members the greatest benefit from the Toastmasters experience, the club must acquaint new members with the Toastmasters education and recognition programs and make members aware of their responsibility to the club and the club's responsibility to the member.

In this section, consider the questions as they relate to membership orientation.

How does the club orient new members? (Consider whether the club has a formal induction ceremony, assigns mentors to new members, discusses the education program, assesses the learning needs of new members, etc.)

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>What does the club do well?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px;"></div> | <p>How can the club improve? Please recommend specific actions.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px;"></div> | <p>What can the district and I do to help the club improve?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px;"></div> |
|---|--|--|

FELLOWSHIP, VARIETY AND COMMUNICATION

The club retains members by offering a warm, friendly and supportive environment that encourages enjoyable learning.

In this section, consider the questions as they relate to fellowship, variety and communication.

How are meetings made enjoyable? (Consider whether Table Topics™ are creative, how members are supportive of one another, etc.)

How does the club communicate? (Consider whether club members use email to communicate about club topics, if the club website is kept current, etc.)

How does the club use the Toastmasters International website? Do club members use the Logos, Images and Templates resources?

How do club members participate outside of club meetings? (Consider speech contests, district conferences, Speechcraft, etc.)

What does the club do well?

How can the club improve?
Please recommend specific actions.

What can the district and I do
to help the club improve?

PROGRAM PLANNING AND MEETING ORGANIZATION

When club meetings are carefully planned, with well-prepared speakers and useful evaluations, members are able to meet their education goals.

In this section, consider the questions as they relate to program planning and meeting organization.

| | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Is the meeting well-organized? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Has a club member recently conducted a module from <i>The Successful Club Series</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the meeting productive? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are evaluations effective? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are meetings held at least monthly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are evaluations verbal and written? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are agendas provided? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| Are all speeches from the manuals? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

How are meeting roles assigned and carried out?

What does the club do well?

How can the club improve?
Please recommend specific actions.

What can the district and I do
to help the club improve?

MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH

When the club has enough members to provide leadership and fill meeting and committee assignments, the member experience is heightened.

In this section, consider the questions as they relate to membership strength.

Yes No

Does the club have 20 or more members?

How does the club promote membership growth? (Consider whether new-member sponsors are recognized, if regular membership-building programs exist, etc.)

What does the club do to retain members?

List members interested in future leadership roles in the district.

What does the club do well?

How can the club improve?
Please recommend specific actions.

What can the district and I do
to help the club improve?

ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

The club motivates members to stay active by monitoring members' progress toward goals, submitting completed award applications immediately and consistently recognizing member achievement.

In this section, consider the questions as they relate to achievement recognition.

How are achievements tracked and recognized?

What is the process the club uses to submit award applications?

What does the club do well?

How can the club improve?
Please recommend specific actions.

What can the district and I do
to help the club improve?

Information about the club's progress in the Distinguished Club Program can be found at www.toastmasters.org/distinguishedperformancereports.

Does the club actively participate in the Distinguished Club Program? Yes No How many members does the club have at the time of the visit? _____

| DISTINGUISHED CLUB GOAL | What progress has the club made toward this goal? | What can the club do to meet this goal? | Name(s) | Target Date(s) | Has goal been met? |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1. Two CC awards | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Two more CC awards | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. One ACB, ACS or ACG award | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. One more ACB, ACS or ACG award | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. One CL, ALB, ALS or DTM award | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6. One more CL, ALB, ALS or DTM award | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Additional awards | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| P1. Four members complete Level 1 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| P2. Two members complete Level 2 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| P3. Two more members complete Level 2 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| P4. Two members complete Level 3 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| P5. One member completes Level 4 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| P6. One member completes Level 5 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| DISTINGUISHED CLUB GOAL | What progress has the club made toward this goal? | What can the club do to meet this goal? | Target Date | Has goal been met? | |
| 7. Four new members | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| 8. Four more new members | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| DISTINGUISHED CLUB GOAL | What progress has the club made toward this goal? | What can the club do to meet this goal? | How will club ensure officers are trained at next opportunity? | Has goal been met? | |
| 9. A minimum of four club officers trained during each of the two training periods* | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| DISTINGUISHED CLUB GOAL | What progress has the club made toward this goal? | What can the club do to meet this goal? | Target Date | Has goal been met? | |
| 10. On-time payment of membership dues accompanied by the names of eight members (at least three of whom must be renewing members) for one period and on-time submission of one club officer list* | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

*For important information about Goals 9 and 10, please see the **Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan** (Item 1111).

For credit in the Distinguished Area Program, submit this form online at District Central by November 30 (for the first visit) and by May 31 (for the second visit).



www.toastmasters.org