

“SCRIPTING” A SERVICE ENCOUNTER

How To Effortlessly Turn Your Guests Into Members

Introduction

An exciting and powerful management tool is that of scripting the service encounter. The theory of scripting, a technique borrowed from Hollywood, was developed by Schank and Abelson (1977) as a means of encoding knowledge structures in computer programs. This tool has since been applied in management studies as a way of mapping knowledge and processes.

Scripting has been used successfully in hospitals, fast food outlets, retail stores, health and service providers and banks. So why not in Toastmasters? Scripting provides the framework for a successful service encounter, in this case how to look after a visitor to a Toastmasters Club.

Scripting offers specific steps to be followed in a service encounter. The example given below is a generic one. It is suggested that, if interested, your club should follow the frame work and adjust the steps for your specific climate and clientele.

Let us set the scenario.

- Your club has been contacted by a member of the public who wishes to visit your club and know more about our organisation. Details have been given and it has been confirmed that the visitor will attend the next meeting.
- What then happens when that visitor turns up? What do you do, who looks after the visitor, who is responsible for making sure that a potential member does not slip away?

When a “script” is followed, the visit can be smooth and the guest turned into a member.

Before the meeting

1. Guest arrives at meeting.
2. Guest is greeted by VPM.
3. VPM asks guest to sign the Visitors Book and gives the guest a name tag to wear.
4. VPM hands the guest a welcome package containing information on Toastmasters, the club, a copy of the “Toastmaster” magazine and most importantly a Form 400.
5. VPM introduces guest to President.
6. VPM seats guest with an experienced member who is introduced to the guest.

During the meeting

1. Experienced member explains the contents of the Welcome package to the guest.
2. The visitor is formally introduced and welcomed during the early part of the meeting.
3. During the meeting the experienced member quietly explains any terms, processes, procedures that may seem confusing to guest.
4. At coffee break, VPM touches base with guest to see if the guest has any questions.
5. At the conclusion of the meeting the guest is asked to stand and give his/her impressions of the meeting.

After the meeting

1. The President thanks the guest for attending and assures the guest that he/she is invited to join the club or is welcome to attend future meetings.
2. After the meeting VPM asks the guest if they have any questions.
3. VPM reconfirms that the guest is welcome to join or to attend future meetings.
4. VPM confirms the date of the next meeting and farewells the guest.
5. Club mailing between meetings is sent to the guest.

A script should help members begin an encounter, smooth a transition in a process and end an encounter.

Excellent service does not happen by chance – it happens by design. By designing a “script” for a service encounter with your club’s guests, you will find it much easier to turn those guests into members.