

Six Steps to Club Newsletter Success

1. How a Club Newsletter helps achieve success.
2. Where to find material for your Newsletter.
3. Effective ways to use your Newsletter.
4. Five key elements of an award-winning Newsletter.
5. Producing the Newsletter.

How a Club Newsletter Helps Achieve Success

The Primary Function of a Club Newsletter is to educate, motivate and inform its Toastmaster readers and anyone else reading the newsletter.

- The newsletter should always include specific information to enable members to achieve their goals and become better speakers and leaders.
- It sets the tone for the Club Mission of 'providing a mutually supportive and positive learning environment'.
- By keeping members informed on a variety of topics their enthusiasm will be expanded and will give them more reasons to keep coming back to their Club meetings.
- An effective, well written Newsletter helps maintain communication between members both active and inactive.

Where to find Material for your Newsletter?

Just about everywhere!

Promote your Club Activities. Write about Club procedures, speechmaking and evaluation tips for new members. Mention guests and send a copy to the guests. List upcoming Club, Area, Division and District Events. Read all Toastmasters publications including 'The Toastmaster', The District Newsletter and 'The Leader' newsletter. Report the results of contests. Search the Internet and other Toastmaster District websites. You never know where the next idea will come from.

Effective ways to use your Newsletter

- Attract new members.
- Get existing members to renew.
- Ensure members understand the benefits of membership.
- Recognise members' achievements.
- Encourage more participation by inactive members.
- Get members' ideas for new projects.
- Attract candidates for elected offices at all levels.
- Increase motivation to achieve goals.
- Educate members regarding Toastmasters programmes, modules and education leadership track requirements.
- Find out what members think the organisation represents.

Five Key Elements of Award Winning Club Newsletters

1. Membership Recruitment and Retention

Emphasise the importance of maintaining charter strength i.e. 20 members.

Print the names of visitors who attended recent meetings (and watch for their reaction!)

Encourage experienced members to write articles on a Toastmaster magic moment or a Toastmaster event they may have attended.

Suggest that members invite their friends and co-workers to the meetings.

Include an invitation to future Club meetings.

Reprint membership ideas from 'The Toastmaster' magazine.

2. Educational Material

Explain Club Officer roles.

History of Toastmasters, the District and the Club.

Identify areas for improvement in Club performance and make suggestions.

Generate articles on "How To" sessions from experienced members.

Any information, hints, tips etc which will assist members improve their communication and leadership skills.

Encourage experienced members to write articles on educationals from the Successful Club Series/Better Speaker Series.

3. Recognition of Members' Achievements

Recognise the efforts of outstanding individuals and try to stimulate others to follow their example.

Introduce new members - perhaps a standard Q & A session: interests, hobbies etc 'Why I joined the Club'.

Announce members' accomplishments in the Toastmasters programme.
Success stories on personal growth - influence on career, share interview techniques.

4. Administrative Information

Report progress on achieving the 'Distinguished Club Plan' goals.

Decisions made by the Executive committee.

Area and District activities including Speech Contests, Seminars and Conferences.

Member activities, job changes, weddings, births, etc.

5. Schedule of Events

A brief summary of the past meeting to give members an idea of what they missed!

Special announcements.

Special events, Speech Contests, Club Officer Elections.

Future dates of meetings and themes.

Producing the Newsletter

Publisher The Club President serves as the publisher and is responsible for the Newsletter's content.

Editor's Role Supports goals of the Club by publishing articles, which reflect and focus on not just the Club Executive but also the membership as a whole.

Frequency Of Publication

Depends on available resources; time, help from club members, publishing and distribution costs. It is important to remember that the Newsletter should maintain the high standard of the Club. Determine a workable schedule and stick to it.

Circulation

Email the newsletter to anyone who might find it interesting and beneficial. Consider guests, other Clubs, Area and Division Governors, District Public Relation Officer, Community libraries and local relevant businesses who may be encouraged to use the Club as a training ground.

Attracting Readers

Unique and interesting articles use large clever headlines to attract attention. Use a lot of names – people love to see their names in print! Keep articles brief, simple and clear and ensure text is distinct and easily read. Place articles according to importance.

Design and layout

Incorporate graphics but do not clutter the page. Make each page look interesting and inviting to read. Leave white space between copy – break up with boxes, borders and artwork. Use coloured paper – pastels work best. Use a masthead for permanent information.

Production

Most newsletters are distributed by email. Some are saved on a club website, with the link to the specific newsletter emailed to members. Of late, newsletters are being submitted in an Ezine format with the content in the email body. Newsletters should be converted to PDF if there are graphics, pictures or clipart. Simple newsletters can be sent from Word as an RTF file. Keep within a budget, if hardcopies are being distributed. Minimise use of internet stories as these can be accessed directly. Have some hard copies at your meetings for visitors, or for members who don't have easy web/email access.

Editing

Proof read for grammar, factual errors and spelling by at least one other person. Use simple words rather than long convoluted unintelligible words.