



Grow your District, grow your strength

Connecting as Club Growth Director

As Club Growth Director, your goal is to retain clubs, start new clubs, and grow membership in all clubs. It is a challenging job given the softening growth trend during recent years. However, isn't it exciting to find the way out of this challenge? Isn't it exciting to help build your character as a positive, resilient, and a 'stick-to-it' person while driving for district success?

I fell in love with this job again in my District Director term 2019-2020, when our district lost 1000 members (20% base) during COVID outbreak started from our Wuhan division. I worked with team to turn our district around by having more than 1000 members rejoin us and 32 new clubs chartered by the end of the year!

Club Extension & Growth

- **Direction:** Set the new club growth direction by connecting with untapped needs in new markets (new geographic location, new consumer segment, new industry, new corporate subsidiaries) by doing market research, analyzing market potential, and leveraging synergy with existing strong clubs.
- **Alliance:** Build strategic alliances with large corporations to extend to more cities.
- **Process:** Build a new club pipeline tracking process with weekly follow-up by District club extension team. This will help prospective clubs move into the pipeline and help district to consistently grow each month.
- **Training:** Have District new club quality team provide quality trainings to new clubs on organizing quality demo meetings. Ask new club mentors to follow up. We need to set quality standards for every new club.
- **Momentum!** Online world definitely opened a new door for us to connect with the untapped needs from new geographic area and new consumer group! Online events such as online Open Day, online webinar and the "360 Toastmasters" in District online convention is a great momentum boost of spreading our Toastmasters love to more people!

Club Retention

- **Communicate:** Let the Area and Division Directors know we will not let any club go without good efforts. Identify clubs at risk and be proactive in finding club coaches and working with club leaders.
- **Connect:** Which clubs are low in membership or at risk of closing? Reach out to club leaders in these clubs to set up a meeting with the Area and Division Director. In the meeting, listen to club leaders on what challenges they face.
- **Support:** Brainstorm and discuss potential solutions and ways to help leaders strengthen their club. Develop an initial plan and add checkpoint meetings to discuss status/updates, together with the club and district officers.
- **Energize:** Have regular communication and personal visits with these clubs will let them know you care. Engage them in division/area events will let them feel they are an indispensable part of the family. That will energize the club team and will make a big difference.
- **Emphasize:** Stress the meaning and value of charter strength - having 20 plus members. We want to grow every club beyond 20 members. Division and Area Directors should pay attention to clubs below 20 members and determine the underlying reason. This will help us strengthen our training for club officers and district officer support.

Membership Growth

The usual way to increase payment growth is using incentives, awards and recognition programs. This should work well for the short term.

To achieve the sustainable growth in the long term, we need to shift our mindset paradigm by asking ourselves, why our members chose to join and stay?

- **Connect with targeted customer:** Tap into these 3 sources of membership growth: your current members, former members, and prospective members. Listen to your members' needs and aspirations and let them know how their needs will be met.
- **Strengthen club program:** Ensure the club meetings and experience work for our members! Ask for members' feedbacks frequently. Provide all possible opportunities of meeting the needs and personal goals of our members through an engaging club experience.
- **Find opportunities** by learning the current issues. Sit down with your team to find out the main issues and root causes. Use public relations campaign, social media, and the Moments-of-Truth program to improve user experience. Follow up with guests and lapsed members to improve membership growth.
- **Use membership-building tools.** The Speechcraft digital experience was created for experienced members to help others become best communicators. This will not only help club recruit new members but also reengage the experience members – use them!
- **Promote best practices.** Regularly promote best practices in club officer training, district officer training, district website and social media and the district conference. Use the Success 101 guide (see the link below) to grow and sustain membership over the long term!

Resource

Membership Growth Resource on Toastmasters International website:

www.toastmasters.org/Resource/Success-101
<https://www.toastmasters.org/education/speechcraft>
<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/moments-of-truth>

Club Growth Resource on Toastmasters International website:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine/Articles/From-One-Club-to-164>
<https://www.toastmasters.org/magazine/magazine-issues/2021/feb/organizing-a-successful-online-event>
<https://toastmasterscdn.azureedge.net/medias/files/department-documents/club-documents/toastmasters-club-building-guide.pdf>

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”
(Albert Einstein)