



Toastmasters International's 2013–2014 Board of Directors poses at the 2013 International Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Board of Directors shapes the organization's policies and represents it in a variety of capacities.

Is Board Leadership Your Calling?

Why international directors find service gratifying.

BY TOASTMASTER MAGAZINE STAFF

The 14 directors and five officers elected to serve on the Toastmasters International Board of Directors have an important role: They ensure the overall strength and growth of our organization, as well as shape its vision and policies.

“The skills I gained through the campaign process were phenomenal, and I will always cherish the opportunity I had to meet Toastmaster leaders from around the world.”

— Board member Karen Blake, DTM

The men and women serving on the Board of Directors have taken their leadership skills to the highest level in Toastmasters. Have you ever wondered what it takes to be a Board member?

International directors represent one of the 14 Toastmasters regions and are elected to two-year terms. Board members are working ambassadors for the organization and represent it in a variety of capacities. They reflect a global perspective in

policy discussions and incorporate member needs into organizational decisions. Among other responsibilities, they must:

- Participate in events such as Board meetings, committee meetings, and district visits and conferences
- Support the Strategic Plan and the organization's operations
- Approve and oversee the annual budget and financial matters
- Review and recommend administrative and education plans and programs
- Serve as an introducer, facilitator, presenter or contest official at the International Convention and Mid-year Training

Those who have served find the experience deeply rewarding. *Toastmaster* magazine recently talked with former Board member Christine Temblique, DTM, who served two terms (a rarity), and four 2013–2014 international directors, about what it's like to campaign for a director seat and to serve as a Board member. The four directors are Joseph Gomez, DTM; Patricia Hannan, DTM; Deepak Menon, DTM; and Karen Blake, DTM.

Witnessing Progress

Temblique says the most fulfilling aspect of serving on the Board was “the privilege of witnessing the progress and growth of our organization between my first term in 2001–2003 and my second term in 2011–2012.”

Gomez says the most fulfilling aspect of being a director is “making policy decisions and being able to contribute to the future of Toastmasters International.”

Hannan provides another perspective by sharing how she enjoys visiting other districts and serving as an ambassador for the organization. “I have also formed great

friendships with the region advisors and fellow Board members,” she says. “They enrich my life.”

The group also provided insight on the process of campaigning for a director seat. The costs of mailings, travel and accommodations (for visits to districts and the International Convention), and giveaways such as handouts and posters, are all part of the process. Asked how much they spent on their respective campaigns, the group gave answers ranging from \$4,000 to \$8,000.

“The biggest budget item for me was the giveaways,” says Blake, but she acknowledges, “I could have spent less on those.”

“The skills I gained through the campaign process were phenomenal,”

she adds, “and I will always cherish the opportunity I had to meet Toastmaster leaders from around the world.”

The directors also answered the following questions. (Answers have been edited for length and clarity.)

What motivated you to run for the Board of Directors?

Hannan: I wanted to pay forward to others the benefits I have received from Toastmasters. Being a Toastmaster has changed my life, and the lives of those around me, for the better.

Temblique: I wanted to contribute my personal learning and knowledge for the

welfare of members, especially since the districts outside North America—Asia, in particular—are expanding their composition in our total membership.

How do you balance your professional work with your responsibilities as a Board member? Is the time commitment required of a Board member more or less than you expected?

Blake: I balance my work with my Board member responsibilities by being extremely organized. I carefully block out my schedule to accommodate work, family and Toastmasters. The time commitment required of a Board member is less than I expected.

Menon: I spend an average of 10 hours a week fulfilling my Board responsibilities. This is very close to the time I expected and leaves me enough time to take care of my professional commitments.

Outside of Board meetings and teleconferences, on average how much time per month do you spend on Board-related matters?

Gomez: Outside the board meetings and conference calls, I spent a minimum of an hour a day on strategic matters for Toastmasters. The conference calls inspire my thinking.

Blake: On average, I probably spend about 10 hours per week on Board-related matters. Of course, the time commitment varies from week to week throughout the year. Much of the time is spent on phone calls, and on the computer, so I am home much more now, which my husband loves!

What advice would you give someone who is considering running for the Board of Directors?

Menon: My advice would be to plan carefully for the campaign and predict potential obstacles and pitfalls so they can be avoided. A good campaign team to support the campaign, drawn from regions around the world, is a prerequisite. ■

To better understand the roles, attributes and responsibilities of a Board member, read the organization's Leadership Roles document at toastmasters.org/LeadershipRoles.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

Members who serve as international directors must have a demonstrated understanding of Toastmasters International's direction and purpose. They must also have communication and leadership experience and achievement in and outside of Toastmasters.

Are you the right person for the job?

The International Leadership Committee (ILC) nominates director and officer candidates from the pool of applicants. To be a director candidate, you must meet specific qualifications:

- You must be an active member of a club in good standing. For the 12 months before you are nominated, that club must be in a district in the region you wish to serve.
- You must have served a full term as district governor *or* have served as the head of a non-district administrative unit during the entire administrative year before the unit became a district or provisional district.

If you're thinking about running for a director seat, ask yourself these questions:

- How will serving in this capacity enhance my leadership development?
- How will I balance family, work and Toastmasters?
- How will I offer support to the organization?
- What do I bring to the position?

Campaigning for Office

The cost of your campaign depends on you. If you use resources effectively, you can run for office with minimum expense. To help defray costs, you can set up a campaign website, and with social media you can create your own campaign page to promote yourself to a broader audience.

Toastmasters International recommends that the focus of your campaign be on your accomplishments—in Toastmasters, in your community and in your professional life. Voters are interested in how Toastmasters has contributed to your personal growth, and how you have helped other members. And you should have a thorough knowledge of Toastmasters, its programs and its governing documents.

To apply to be a candidate, visit toastmasters.org/candidateinformation.

“If you love our organization and want to serve on the Board of Directors,” says 2013-2014 Board member Joseph Gomez, “please pursue that Toastmasters vision.”