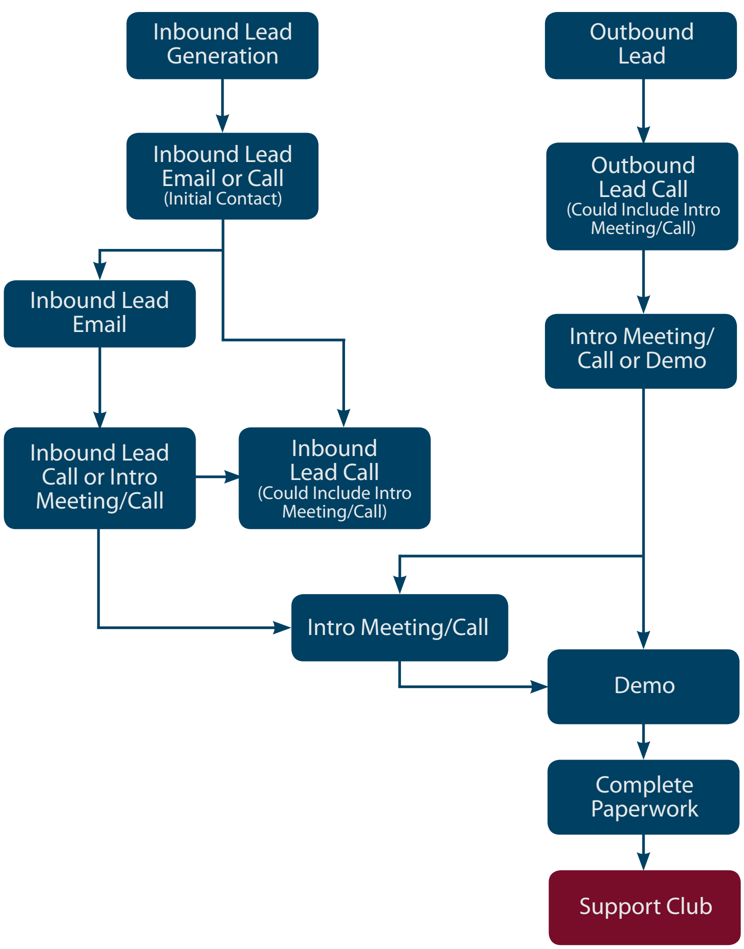
TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

Toastmasters Club-Building Communications Guide

Guiding Principles

Keep the following guiding principles in mind throughout the club-building process.

- Club building is about helping people discover how Toastmasters will bring them value. The goal is to help solve their challenges and meet their communication and leadership skills development needs. It is not about convincing or pressuring people to start a club. Club building is not about you; it is about them.
- The club-building process is not always going to flow directly from lead generation to initial contact to the introduction meeting. Sometimes you will combine steps or come back to previous steps, depending on your experience with the lead/prospect. Be comfortable moving between all the steps. The graphic below shows a few different ways the club-building process may flow.



- All steps offer an opportunity to gather more information or do additional research on the lead/prospect. Take advantage of these steps.
- Listen more, and talk less, especially at the beginning of the process. Your job is to understand the needs of the lead or prospect.
- Expect that some people will say "No." That is OK. The club-building process is a numbers game. If you have 100 leads that become 10 prospects, you may get two people who attend the introduction meeting.
- Be selective about what information and resources you send to a lead or prospect; consider the relevance to the receiver (i.e., Don't send a variety of generic marketing materials in hopes one of them will lead to a club visit.)
- Club building is a team effort. Find resources for all the steps in the process from throughout the district.
- Take advantage of the expertise offered through your international director and region advisor. They are some of your greatest assets in the club-building process.
  - Schedule meetings with leads and prospects during the time your international director and region advisor visit your district.
  - Be sure to work with your region advisor for guidance on developing club-building strategies.
- Verify that you have the right people in the room (e.g., Don't rush to deliver a demonstration meeting; you will have more success when you ensure key stakeholders are in attendance.)
- If you choose to use the templates available on the Toastmasters website during the process, be sure to customize them and use them only as reference. Remember, your goal is to engage the leads and prospects and build rapport through conversations, not presentations.
- If you're building a corporate club, consider the culture of the organization and the terminology you use (e.g., talk about tuition rather than dues; talk about enrollment in a program, rather than membership in a club).

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Inbound Lead Generation

Inbound leads are people who seek you out. They may come from a variety of sources.

Possible inbound lead sources:

- Start a Club inquiries via Toastmasters Website/TLM
- Responses to district marketing and PR efforts
- Events (e.g., trade shows, expos, conferences, etc.)

When you are contacted by an individual who is interested in starting a club, you will need to conduct research and prepare to work with them. Gather information (online or otherwise) about the organization or group to help define what their needs may be.

For a community group, focus on individual development needs. For a corporate group, focus on business needs, including the company's or organization's ROI (return on investment), core values, key initiatives.

For tips on conducting research, go to page 6: Tips for Conducting Research.

When you are working with an inbound lead, you will either call or email them, using the contact information they provided. Email them only if they request specific resources. If not, call them.

If you are emailing your inbound lead, go to page 2: Inbound Lead Email (Initial Contact). If you are calling your inbound lead, go to page 2: Inbound Lead Call (Initial Contact).

Outbound Lead Generation

Outbound leads are people that you identify or pursue who may be interested in starting a club.

You will need to conduct research and actively seek opportunities for new clubs.

Possible outbound lead sources:

- District Marketing Plan (market and industry analyses, current prospects)
- Trade shows/local events
- Existing corporate clubs in other districts (Talk to officers in existing clubs to find out more about the organization, club success, and contact information for other locations.)
- Plot the clubs currently in the district and look for areas with few clubs and identify existing members that live there to work with.
- Referrals/networking contacts (Ask people at district events if they know of opportunities in the area.)

When you identify an outbound lead, you will need to conduct research and prepare to contact them. Gather information (online or otherwise) about the organization or group to help define what their needs may be.

For a community group, focus on individual development needs. For a corporate group, focus on business needs, including ROI (return on investment), core values and key initiatives.

For tips on conducting research, go to page 6: Tips for Conducting Research.

When you have an outbound lead, you will call them. Go to page 3: Outbound Lead Call (Initial Contact).

Inbound Lead Email (Initial Contact)

Whenever possible, call your lead (rather than sending an email). You can choose to email your inbound lead if the person has requested specific resources (otherwise, you should call.) The goal of emailing the inbound lead is to provide requested resources and share information on how Toastmasters might meet their needs, and to request a call or meeting.

Send the inbound lead specific, pertinent resources that share how our organization meets their needs. Personalize the email to the person you're contacting. You may include the Features Benefits Value chart (Item FBV100) and Develop Your Leaders From Within brochure (Item 103).

In the email, ask to schedule a conversation. This can be on the phone or in person.

When the lead responds to your email, schedule the conversation. If you schedule an in-person conversation, ask to include other key stakeholders or decision makers.

If they agree to a phone conversation, go to page 2: Inbound Lead Call (Initial Contact).
If they agree to an in-person conversation, go to page 4: The Introduction Meeting.

If the lead does not respond to your email within three to five business days, follow up with a phone call. If they did not provide a phone number, email them. If you do not receive a response after three attempts, do not continue to pursue this lead.

Inbound Lead Call (Initial Contact)

Whenever possible, call your lead (rather than sending an email). The goal of calling the inbound lead is to share some information about how Toastmasters might meet their needs and to request a meeting.

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- Call the inbound lead (after completing research about the organization).
- Introduce yourself.
- Explain why you have their information. ("I received your contact information from a trade show.")
- Ask permission to have the conversation. ("Would it be OK if I ask you a few questions?")
- Be respectful of their time. ("How much time do we have?")
- Explain the purpose of the conversation. ("The purpose of my call today is to determine your needs and challenges and if Toastmasters is a fit for your organization.")
- Create an up-front agreement. ("If we find that Toastmasters does meet your needs, the next step would be to schedule a meeting to demonstrate how we meet your needs. Would you be open to that?")
- Once you have created an agreement with your lead, the next step is to conduct a needs assessment. If they have time to continue the conversation, do so now. Otherwise, schedule an introduction meeting/call.

To conduct the Needs Assessment, go to page 3: Needs Assessment.
To conduct the introduction meeting call, go to page 4: The Introduction Meeting/Call.

If the lead is unsure, try to quickly gain an understanding of their hesitation. If they are truly not interested, do not pressure them. If they are not ready, leave the door open ("It sounds like you are not at a decision point yet. I want to be respectful of your time. Feel free to contact me if your needs change in the future.")

Outbound Lead Call (Initial Contact)

Whenever possible, call your lead (rather than sending an email). The goal of calling the outbound lead is to share some information about how Toastmasters might meet their needs and to request an in-person meeting.

Outbound leads are people that you identify or pursue who may be interested in starting a club. This means conducting research and actively seeking opportunities for new clubs.
Possible outbound lead sources:

- Call the outbound lead (after completing research about the organization).
- Introduce yourself.
- Build rapport by mentioning or asking about something you discovered during your research (e.g., Congratulate them on an award they received; ask about an initiative you read about in the news, etc.)
- Explain why you are calling and relate it to the above, if possible. ("Toastmasters specializes in helping organizations like yours with ____________. Would you be interested in talking about how we could benefit your company?")
  - If you were referred by someone they know, or by someone affiliated with their organization, tell them. ("Your organization's ____________ branch has been seeing great results through their Toastmasters club, and __________ suggested I call you. Would you be interested in talking about how we could benefit your employees?")

If they are not interested, thank them for their time and offer to give them your contact information should they wish to explore the opportunity with you in the future (Or ask if it would be OK to follow up with them at a future time.)
If they are interested, continue following the steps below.

- Ask permission to continue the conversation. ("Would it be OK if I ask you a few questions to determine what your needs and challenges are and if Toastmasters is a fit for your organization?")
- Be respectful of their time. ("How much time do we have?")
- Create an up-front agreement. ("If we find that Toastmasters does meet your needs, the next step would be to schedule a meeting to demonstrate how we meet your needs. Would you be open to that?")
- Once you have created an agreement with your lead, the next step is to conduct a needs assessment. If they have time to continue the conversation, do so now. Otherwise, schedule an introduction meeting/call.

To conduct the Needs Assessment, go to page 3: Needs Assessment.
To conduct the Introduction Meeting/Call, go to page 4: The Introduction Meeting/Call.

Needs Assessment

The goal of the needs assessment is to understand the needs and challenges of the lead. This conversation may occur during your initial contact or at the introduction meeting/call.

- Ask if there are other key stakeholders or decision makers who should be involved in the conversation.
- Identify the needs of the lead. ("I noticed that one of your core values is communication. What are some of the improvements you'd like to see related to this?" "What are the biggest challenges your organization faces?" "What are the top skills you'd like to see your employees develop? What solutions have you tried in the past? What kept you from continuing with those solutions?")
- Listen for understanding. (You should be talking less than the lead.)

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If there is not enough time or other key stakeholders or decision makers were not able to attend, ask to schedule an in-person meeting (which is preferred) or a phone conversation (the introduction meeting/call). If they agree to an in-person meeting (or another phone call), go to page 4: The Introduction Meeting/Call.
If there are no additional key stakeholders or decision makers and there is enough time, continue with the questions below.

- Move from intellectual to emotional.
  - "Is solving this part of your professional/personal goals?"
  - "How committed are you personally to resolving the problem?"
  - "How committed is your boss or upper management?"
  - "Is there anything else I should know that would be helpful?")
- Determine if lead is qualified (Can Toastmasters address their needs/pain points?)
  - If no, thank them for their time, but keep the "door open."
    - "If something in the organization changes, please let me know and we can revisit the conversation about starting your own club."
    - "If starting a club isn't a good fit for you right now, do you think any of your staff/members would be interested in joining an existing club in the area?" (If yes, request permission to leave them with pertinent information and materials.).
- If yes, connect their needs/pain points to a few specific benefits and value gained from membership in a Toastmasters club. Once you have done so, ask to schedule the demonstration meeting.

If they agree to the demonstration meeting, go to page 5: The Demonstration Meeting.
If they do not agree to the demonstration meeting, go to page 6: Objections.

The Introduction Meeting/Call

Whenever possible, schedule an in-person meeting, rather than another phone call. The goal of this meeting (or call) is to continue uncovering the needs, challenges, and pain points of your prospect and to schedule a demonstration meeting. If you hadn't talked to key stakeholders or decision makers previously, you want to make sure they are included and that you build rapport with them. It is important to prepare for this meeting (or call) to ensure that you can clearly connect their specific needs and challenges to the benefits and value provided by Toastmasters.

- Make introductions, as needed.
- Briefly recap previous conversation(s) and confirm your understanding of their needs and challenges is accurate.
- Set expectations for the meeting (or call).
  - Explain your purpose and ask what their desired outcome is ("During this meeting (or call), I would like to ensure that I fully understand the needs and challenges your employees are facing; to jointly determine if Toastmasters is a fit for your organization; and make sure you get all of your questions answered. Does that sound good to you? What would you like to accomplish?")
  - Confirm how much time you have for the meeting (or call).
  - Create an up-front agreement. ("If we find that Toastmasters does meet your needs, the next step would be to schedule a meeting to demonstrate how we meet your needs. Would you be open to that?")
- Ask if there are any immediate questions.
  - Continue uncovering needs and challenges ("In addition to what we already discussed, are there any additional needs or problems that would be helpful for me to know about?")
- Move from intellectual to emotional. ("Is solving _________ part of your professional/personal goals?" "How committed are you personally to resolving the problem?" "How committed is your boss or upper management?" "What else is important for me to know?")
- Listen for understanding (You should be talking less than the lead or prospect.)
- Connect their needs to a few specific benefits gained from Toastmasters membership.
- Ask if they feel that Toastmasters can solve the needs and challenges you have been discussing.

If no, try to determine what barriers exist ("Help me understand what your concerns or hesitations are.") Then repeat the last three steps. If they continue to say no, go to page 6: Objections.
If yes, continue with process below.

- Discuss organizational resources and commitment: ("It sounds like you are ready to move forward. Let's talk about what is needed to start and support a club in your organization.")
  - Meeting space: Do have you meeting space available?
  - Contribution: Will the members contribute?

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    - Funds: Do you have a budget set aside for a club?
    - Timing: Are those funds/resources available now?
    - Commitment: Are you authorized to make this financial decision/commitment? If not, who else should be involved in this conversation?
    - Challenges: Do you foresee any financial issues or other challenges that would prevent you from moving forward?
- Address any final concerns they may have.
- Ask to schedule the demonstration meeting (and explain the purpose of it). Be sure to ask them to invite key stakeholders, including potential club members.

If they agree to the demonstration meeting, go to page 5: The Demonstration Meeting.
If they do not agree to the demonstration meeting, go to page 6: Objections.

The Demonstration Meeting

The goal of the demonstration (demo) meeting is to provide the prospect with the experience of a Toastmasters club meeting that is relevant to their organization.

- Create a customized demonstration (demo) meeting presentation.
    - Using the needs and pain points you identified previously, work with the sponsor to customize a demo meeting presentation for the prospect that will resonate with the audience.
- Select demo team to run the meeting.
    - Select individuals who are representative of the potential members and fit their culture (e.g., If their list of needs includes "improving technical presentations made by staff," have the speaker deliver a good technical presentation.)
- Rehearse the demo meeting with the sponsor and team.
- Ensure that the right people from the prospective club's organization attend the demo meeting (i.e., Be sure that potential members of the prospective club attend.)
- Deliver the demo meeting.
    - Focus on being relevant to the key decision makers and prospective club members who are in the room.
- Ask if they are ready to start a club.

If yes, go to page 5: The Charter Process.
If no, try to determine what barriers exist ("Help me understand what your concerns or hesitations are."). Address the barriers and ask again. If they continue to say no, go to page 6: Objections.

The Charter Process

The goal of the charter process is to form a prospective club.

- Obtain a completed Application to Organize (ATO) and initial fee ($125).
    - If necessary, meet with the key decision makers to assist with ATO.
    - Collect the fee right away if possible.
- Ensure support is provided to the prospective club.
    - The sponsor assists and supports prospective club in generating interest, building membership, and overcoming challenges.
        - Marketing
        - Conducting meetings
        - Understanding meeting roles
        - Meeting location
        - Finance/budget concerns
        - Selecting club officers
- Ensure that the prospective club is ready to complete the new-club process.
    - Provide support and encouragement to continue momentum.

When the club reaches the minimum number of members, go to page 5: New Club Support.

New Club Support

To ensure the prospective club completes the new-club process and is successful, you need to ensure ongoing support is provided.

- Assign a club mentor.
    - Select someone who understands the new club's industry, fits their culture and can best support their needs.
- Ensure remaining paperwork is completed accurately and submitted.
- Support the club in collecting membership fees and dues.
- Guide clubs to create a quality club experience.
- Celebrate the accomplishment with the new club.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
    - Club sponsor, mentor and area director work with the club to assess its needs, as well as provide resources.

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Tips for Conducting Research

- Gather information about the potential new club's host organization to define what its needs may be.
  - For a community group, focus on individual development needs.
  - For a corporate group, focus on business needs, including ROI (return on investment, core values, key initiatives, etc.
  - All steps are an opportunity to gather more information about the lead/prospect. For example, pay attention to the signs or posters you see in the building.
  - Notice what is in the key decision maker's office to help build rapport.
  - Make sure you know the core values and main initiatives of the company you are pursuing and speak to those.

Objections

When building a club, you may encounter objections. This is natural. When you experience objections, determine the most appropriate response.

- If this is early in the process and your prospects seem firm in their decision not to continue the conversation, thank them for their time and offer your contact information, should they wish to explore the opportunity with you in the future (Or ask to follow up with them at a future time.
  - Don't try to force the conversation at this point.
- If you've already invested some time with the lead and feel that you've proven that Toastmasters can solve the needs and challenges you have been discussing, but the lead is resisting, try to determine what barriers exist ("Help me understand what your concerns or hesitations are." or "When we spoke about ___________ earlier, this was not an issue. Help me understand what has changed.")
  - Listen for understanding. You should be talking less than the lead or prospect.
  - Again, try to connect their needs/pain points to the benefits and value gained from membership in a Toastmasters club.
  - Ask if this has helped to address their concerns
  - Repeat this process until all concerns have been addressed.

If the situation at the organization has changed, that is OK. Invite them to reach out to you when it is a better time to talk again.

- "If something in the organization changes, please let me know and we can revisit the conversation about starting your own club."

If some concerns cannot be addressed, thank the lead for their time but keep the "door open."

- "If starting a club isn't a good fit for you right now, do you think any of your staff/members would be interested in joining an existing club in the area?" If yes, request permission to leave them with pertinent information and materials.)
  If yes, go to page 5: The Charter Process.

Club Building Resources

Club Growth Director Handbook

How to Build a Toastmasters Club

All About Toastmasters

Develop Your Leaders From Within

Features, Benefits and Value Chart

Find Your Voice

Uncover Your Leadership Potential

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