



Six Steps to Corporate Club Success

Pat Johnson, DTM – Past International President

Teresa Dukes, DTM – Past District Governor,

Erich Viedge, ACG, ALB – Past District Governor, Aletta Rochat, DTM – LGM

Overview of Corporate Clubs

A company's success depends partly on how well employees communicate – with each other as well as with customers. The effects of a poorly run meeting or an ineffective sales presentation are lasting and expensive.

How well do *your* employees convey their expertise to potential customers? Can they lead meetings efficiently? Can they offer constructive feedback and diplomatically deal with a wide range of people?

Employees who are good communicators tend to be good leaders as well. Every company needs employees with leadership potential and this is where Toastmasters can help. Think of it as an onsite training class for busy professionals - where your employees meet once a week to sharpen their communication and leadership skills in a supportive setting with their coworkers. The cost is minimal and the benefits long-lasting!

Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped millions of men and women become more confident in front of an audience. Our international network and learning-by-doing meetings are sure to help *your* employees become better speakers and leaders.

The effectiveness of Toastmasters' educational program is demonstrated by more than 6,000 organizations that sponsor in-house Toastmasters clubs as communication and leadership training for their employees.

The beauty of this program is that it is a joint venture between employer, employee and Toastmasters International. There is buy-in from all parties that ensure growth and success of the individual as well as the company.

The '**Six Steps to Corporate Club Success**' will help get you started. Follow these steps to ensure that *your* Company club will start off on the right track. In this way you will continue to develop and improve the communication and leadership skills of your employees.

Six Steps to Corporate Club Success

Corporate or company clubs have to be managed and run in a different way than community clubs due to the nature of the business world and the way in which companies have to meet deadlines and objectives. Follow the six steps below to ensure *your* club starts and continues on a successful path.

Pre-Planning

- Companies need to have at least 200+ employees in one location, primarily white-collar workers, as they tend to require these skills more than blue-collar workers.
- An experienced Toastmaster to meet with decision-maker to sell the programme.
- The decision-maker is often the President, Vice President, Learning & Development manager or HR manager.
- Meeting location needs to be on-site.
- Meetings during the day must have management agreement to allow time to travel.
- Stable core group of people to keep the club running (Admin)
- It is advised that chartering the club should happen within 2-3 meetings maximum. If it takes longer, then the club will more than likely struggle.

Initial meeting with Decision Maker

It should only take 15 - 30 minutes for an experienced Toastmaster to sell the programme.

- Set expectations
- Explain this is experiential learning – delegates must show up and engage in order to achieve
- Lay out the six steps below
- Let them know this is not for everyone
- Explain this is a collaboration – not a stand-alone programme
- Request to hold an in-house Demonstration Meeting

Demonstration meeting

This meeting should be run as a mini-Toastmasters meeting:

- Overall information on programme (including cost)
- 2 - 3 speeches (Showcase a beginner speaker, intermediate and advanced)
- 2 - 3 evaluations (2mins)
- Explanation of manuals
- Q&As
- Application forms to be given to each guest, plus a Toastmasters magazine
- Have available Information Induction pack explaining benefits, performance development, and recognition

Call to action

- If ready on the day then elect officers
- Set date for next meeting
- If required, go back for one further meeting to ensure they commit and elect officers.
- Meetings must be weekly especially in corporate environment – keeps continuity, momentum and achievement of goals.
- Expectations of employers need to be relevant to the number of members in club.

Step 1 - Membership and Payments

For a sustainable club the minimum number of members needs to be maintained at all times in the area of 25-30. When membership drops below 25 it has been shown that the club will start to falter and eventually fail. This number allows for those people unable to attend every meeting.

If the company insists on paying the subscription dues for their employees then the following must be adhered to:

- This is a partnership with members
- The meeting must be seen as part of their weekly responsibilities.
- Time must be allowed/approved for members to be active in the club

It may be an option that Senior Management pays only part of the subscription dues. This allows for 'ownership' of the club to be engrained with the members because they are taking responsibility for their own development.

It is vital that your **internal payment system**, (ERP system or similar), is set up for your Toastmasters Club. In this way members can make payments without having to raise purchase orders. Payments have to be made every 6 months – make sure that this is easy to do.

Support your club by giving the club a budget to help them support other clubs, attend Toastmasters conferences and training, and run contests, gala dinners and other events.

Step 2 – Performance Development Plan

For the programme to be successful there needs to be an agreement with management to ensure that members are achieving not only in the club but also within their work objectives. Therefore a 'Learning Agreement' needs to be put in place at the beginning. The employer/manager needs to understand what is expected and be clear on the agreement:

- Will pay for 6 months of subscription dues
- Will attend meetings regularly
- Must complete 2 manual speeches
- Must complete 3 Competent Leadership assignments

This can be extended to incorporate both Communication AND Leadership goals.

- Must serve as a member of the executive committee for 6 months
- Must lead programme on building membership

For this to be successful the goals will need to be regulated and reviewed with the employer/manager. They can be extended the longer the employee is a member.

It is important to make sure that new employees are introduced to your in-house Toastmasters Club as part of their **induction programme**. This demonstrates senior management support for the club.

Incentivise members to achieve Educational and Leadership awards with a monetary reward. This will motivate them. It will also demonstrate senior level support for the Toastmasters programme. The benefits the company will enjoy as a result of these achievements will far outweigh the costs involved!

Step 3 – Training

All executive committee members are required to attend **twice yearly Club Officer Training**. This training is MANDATORY and involves all clubs, which are geographically located in the same Area as outlined by the Toastmasters District boundaries.

The training ensures that all club officers are trained as leaders and are able to carry out their role and reach their objectives, which also feed into the overall objectives for the Club, Area, Division and District.

Step 4 – Attend Area level functions

To put into practice what is learned in the ‘safe lab’ of the club environment, it is imperative that members take their skills outside this comfort zone. They can then demonstrate their ability to use these at outside functions or events.

These events could include competitions, educational workshops, gala recognition, or even just socializing events. The club may even be asked to host one or more of these types of events.

Step 5 – Review & monitor the Club’s status

This is a partnership not only for the Employer and Employee, but also for the Company and Toastmasters International. Toastmasters needs to ensure that the club is following the programme effectively, showing progress and is sustainable. In order to monitor the progress and development of the club, it is necessary to monitor how the club is doing through the Toastmasters **Distinguished Club Programme**, (DCP). The DCP score shows progress with regard to educational awards, leadership awards, membership growth and administration. The Club executive, the Area, Division and District Governors, will do this review of the club’s status.

If it is seen that the club is struggling to meet the objectives of the Toastmasters programme, it is important that this is brought to the attention of all key role players as soon as possible so that corrections can be made. At all times, there is support available from Toastmasters International. Club mentors, (experienced Toastmasters), will be assigned to the club to assist them as they become familiar with the programme. Club mentors will work with the Club for a period of 6 – 12 months.

Remember that a Toastmaster Club requires a:

- Time commitment for all members and employers
- Money commitment for employers (and possibly members)
- “I need this” commitment by employers and employees

Step 6 - Support and Showcase your Club

Make sure that you use your intranet, conferences and newsletters to showcase your Toastmasters club. Let members tell their stories, explain how they have benefitted. Recognise those that achieve awards.

Advertise meeting times, venue and special events. This provides publicity for the Club and validation for the achievements of the members. It demonstrates institutional support for the programme, which will drive more people to want to become leaders in their workplace.

Have senior management demonstrate their support by attending meetings and special events – your support is vital for your club to thrive!

Conclusion

The **6 Steps to Corporate Club Success** will ensure that your Toastmasters Club will start off on the right track. Our goal is to ensure continuous development of communication and leadership skills of your employees.

If these steps are followed and all parties are kept abreast of the progress of the club then we will be guaranteed a successful and sustainable club! Then we will meet the objectives of your Company, your Employees, and Toastmasters International.

For more information please contact:

UK & Ireland District Governor

Freddie Daniells

Email: freddiedaniells@gmail.com

Tel: 07977 465983

Lieutenant Governor for Marketing (LGM)

Hilary Briggs

Email: hilary.briggs@clmail.co.uk

Tel: 07930 381827