

Elements of a Successful Club Open House – Best Practice

1. Getting started.
 - a. Identify Club Goal for open house: number of new or lapsed individuals to become members.
 - b. When to have the event: Date and Time
 - c. Budget: How much money will be set aside for the event
 - d. Will there be a theme for the meeting, for example: April Showers, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, etc.
 - e. Recognition – incentive for members for bringing a guest who actually convert to a member. Member who brings the most guests who join the club within three (3) meetings following open house.
 - f. Member Assignments for the event, e.g., Chair of the event.
 - g. Invite the District's Key 3 officers and other DEC members.

2. Public Relations
 - a. Flier includes contact name, phone and email address. Following Branding Guidelines: (see example)
<https://www.toastmasters.org/Resources/Resource-Library?t=marketing+template>
 - b. Distribution:
 - i. When to send out information
 - ii. Who is your target audience: new & lapsed members
 - iii. Send to club members for personal invites
 - iv. Hard copy posted on community boards
 - v. Community newspaper, e.g., Midweek, if possible
 - vi. Public service announcement on radio and television, if possible
 - c. Post on club Website, send to District Webmaster
 - d. Post on Club Social Media, send to District social media contact person

3. Membership Packets – When will you hand the packets out?
 - a. BEFORE Meeting especially if your goal is for them to focus on the meeting and observe what goes on, then an introduction to the club which would include the following along with a Member taking the guest to seat with them to explain what is going on:
 - i. Name Tag
 - ii. Welcome letter
 - iii. Application Form
 - iv. Agenda
 - v. Meeting Role descriptions
 - vi. Member introduction card with name and contact information
 - b. AFTER Meeting when guest walks out with the packet to review at their leisure
 - i. Toastmasters benefit table
 - ii. **Toastmasters Magazine** with club label containing meeting times and location.

4. Room set up for the event
 - a. Sign up Sheet with contact information/ Member to staff Registration Desk
 - b. Agenda development (see example of the Agenda)

- i. One speaker whose topic is “What I got out of Toastmasters?” “Why I joined Toastmasters” “How Toastmasters transformed my life”
 - ii. One Speaker Evaluator
 - iii. Table Topics Master: Call upon a member first to demonstrate how to answer the question and then “ask” if a guest would like to participate. No more than 2 speakers
 - iv. Functionaries: Explain their role thoroughly
 - v. At the end, have a Question and Answer session include membership fee structure, club dues, if applicable, and most important as a new member there will be someone who will be supporting them through the introduction of Pathways as well as their first couple of speeches.
 - c. Refreshments depending on how much time you have may be either before the meeting or after the meeting to provide networking.
 - i. Suggestion for meetings who meet during lunch to have the guest and assigned member get a plate in order to continue their conversation as well as provide a friendlier environment for the guest.
 - ii. For evening meetings, may have either before or after and really a choice for the club to have an extended network opportunity after the meeting.
5. Follow up after the Open House
- a. Who and when to follow up with the guest
 - b. Thank you letter or email to the guest
 - c. Prepared script for the member containing the following:
 - i. Thank them for attending the open house
 - ii. Ask if there are any questions about the meeting and any aspect of Toastmasters
 - iii. Should they decide not to join, gently ask “is there something we can do the help them join?” Identify any barriers to determine their hesitancy to join.
 - iv. Sell them the idea of the values they will receive; guest may be assigned someone to assist them through the program as well as they may work at their own pace.
 - v. Invite them to the next meeting.
6. Club Open House Debrief: What went well and areas for improvement.
7. District Reimbursement Guidelines:
- a. Notify and work with Club Growth Director; usually it is \$50 reimbursement for the first 10 clubs of the quarter.
 - i. Complete a reimbursement form
 - ii. Attach receipt acceptable items are food, printing of flier, Toastmaster items from the bookstore.
 - iii. Attach open house flier
 - b. Depending on when the open house is conducted, there maybe additional support for radio announcements as well as special outreach events.
8. Resources for the Open House: District Officers, District Website: www.district49.org and Toastmaster International Website www.toastmasters.org .