

THE TOASTMASTER

The main duty of the Toastmaster is to act as a genial host and conduct the entire program, including introducing participants. If the Toastmaster does not perform the duties well, an entire meeting can end in failure. For obvious reasons, this task is not usually assigned to a member until he or she is quite familiar with the club and its procedures. Program participants should be introduced in a way that excites the audience and motivates them to listen. The Toastmaster creates an atmosphere of interest, expectation, and receptivity.

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

- Check with the VP of Education to find out if a special theme has been set for the meeting and if there are any program changes.
- Call the table topics master to discuss his or her duties. Also, provide the table topics master with a list of program participants to insure these people will not be called on for responses.
- Call all speakers in advance to remind them they are speaking. Interview them to find out their speech title, manual project number, purpose to be achieved, time requested, and something interesting which you can use when introducing them (job, family, hobbies, education, why this topic for this audience, etc.).
- Call the general evaluator to confirm the assignment. Ask the general evaluator to call the other members of the evaluation team (speech evaluators, topic master, timer, grammarian, ah counter, etc.) and remind them of their responsibilities.
- Prepare remarks which can be used to bridge the gaps between program segments. You may never use them, but you should be prepared to avoid possibly awkward periods of silence.
- Remember that performing as Toastmaster is one of the most valuable experiences in your club work. The assignment requires careful preparation in order to have a smoothly run meeting.

AT THE MEETING

- Arrive early in order to finish any last-minute details.
- Check with the speakers for any last-minute changes.
- Sit near the front of the room and have your speakers do likewise for quick and easy access to the lectern.

DURING THE MEETING

- Preside with sincerity, energy, and decisiveness. Take your audience on a pleasant journey and make them feel that all is going well.
- Always lead the applause before and after the topics session, each prepared speaker, and the general evaluator.
- Remain standing near the lectern after your introduction until the speaker has acknowledged you and assumed control of the meeting; then be seated. The lectern should never be left unattended.
- Introduce the general evaluator as you would any speaker; the general evaluator then will introduce the other members of the evaluation team.
- Introduce the table topics master as you would any speaker. If the table topics master forgets to call for the timer's report and vote for "Best Table Topics Speaker," you do it.
- Introduce each speaker in turn.
- At the conclusion of the speaking program, request the timer's report and vote for "Best Speaker."
- Briefly reintroduce the general evaluator. If the general evaluator forgets to call for the timer's report and vote for "Best Speaker," you do it.
- While votes are being tallied, invite comments from guests and announcements (such as verification of next week's program).
- Award ribbons if your club does so.
- Request the "Thought for the Day" if your club has one.
- Adjourn the meeting, or if appropriate, return control to the presiding officer.

The Toastmaster: In-Depth Discussion

One of the most stimulating educational experiences you'll have as a Toastmaster takes place when you assume the chair as Toastmaster and conduct a meeting program. This assignment should not be given until you've made at least three manual speeches.

The primary duty of the Toastmaster is to act as a genial host, introducing the speakers in such a way that the audience will listen with attention and anticipation. An effective Toastmaster creates an atmosphere of interest, expectation and receptivity.

To do this, avoid long introductions, and seek variety in form.

Don't include lots of biographical details about the speaker, and don't make the speech for him or her. Don't tell a story that might embarrass the speaker. Just be friendly and enthusiastic, and help the speaker get off to a good start.

Don't use the same formula for all introductions. Vary your format. "We have with us today..." may be acceptable once. The same goes for "I take pleasure in introducing..." Don't use the same set of words more than once during the meeting. Be complimentary in a dignified way. Don't be "flowery" in your praise. Be brief. Treat every speaker as you would like a Toastmaster to treat you.

When you are presented as Toastmaster, begin with "Mr. President" or "Madam President," and after briefly thanking the presiding officer, begin by speaking a few words on the nature of the program. Whet the appetites of the members for what is to come. Then introduce the first speaker, making sure of three things.

1. Announce the subject clearly. If it's a manual speech, be sure to let the audience know which assignment will be presented by the speaker, and the goals of that particular presentation.
2. Announce the speaker's name.
3. Remain standing until the speaker has taken his or her place behind the lectern.

When the speaker has concluded, refrain from making extensive comments on what was said. A brief word of appreciate is appropriate, but a lengthy review is not. Proceed with your introduction of the next speaker. If possible, try to build up a feeling of continuity for the speeches.

At the conclusion of the program, briefly thank the speakers, and then return control of the meeting to the presiding officer. When doing this, avoid saying "I now turn the meeting over" because it isn't upside down. You can "yield control," "return control," or "surrender the gavel" without an "overturning." A simple "Mr. President" or "Madam President"

Before the meeting: Check with each speaker well in advance. Obtain the title of the speech and the manual assignment, and agree upon the time to be allotted. Then, line up your agenda and prepare the introductions. It's your responsibility to see that the speakers are on hand, and that the program is conducted as planned in the best possible way.

Prepare for presiding as carefully as you would when making a speech. Remember, it's your responsibility to make the meeting a success.