

A Toastmaster Club Coaching Experience

Presented by Becky Divinski

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Scenario:

I joined as club coach in April 2005. Club didn't make Distinguished by June 30, 2005, so I remained club coach for another year.

Club Challenges

1. Met at noon – not long enough lunchtime for some to attend
2. Only one member was an employee with the organization that owned the building. Unfortunately, this member wasn't located at this location.
3. Most of the existing members had been members of Toastmasters less than one year
4. One of the veteran members had a negative attitude
5. Averaged 4-5 members at meetings

Club Positives

1. Besides the one "negative" member, the other members were friendly and positive
2. The "positive" veteran member of the group was a source of support
3. Had a good meeting location

Strategy:

1. Become familiar with club culture first and then work with members to implement change
2. Get all club officers to use the Distinguished Club Program to strengthen and grow the club
3. Help hold professional quality meetings, whether 4 or 10 members at a meeting
4. Work with the "negative" member to become more positive, so potential and existing members wouldn't leave the club

What worked:

1. Remained a guest (about 1 month) and then became a member
2. Attended every club officer meeting and would ask for updates on the Distinguished Club Program
3. Mantra for myself – role model, role model, role model (Prepare for meeting roles, give effective evaluations, so the less experienced members could learn from me)
4. Maintained a positive and enthusiastic attitude at meetings
5. Did not become an officer – wanted the club to do the work and I remain a coach
6. Became a committee member on the membership committee
7. Greeted guests and introduced them to other club members – especially officers
8. Held Open Houses – advertised on District 4's web page and on company intranet

What did not work:

1. Waiting too long to hold Open Houses (held in March and June)
2. Not training all members on new member applications before Open Houses

What I would do next time:

1. Readjust my strategy sooner for growing membership when it wasn't working
2. Help club conduct "How to be a Distinguished Club" from the Success/Club series
3. Help club conduct "Moments of Truth" module
4. Do training speeches, asking one member each time to co-train with me (so the member would receive the Toastmaster credit and experience)

Benefits received from club coaching experience:

1. An incredible learning experience in leadership
2. New Toastmaster friends
3. Additional opportunities to deliver speeches and practice other communication skills
4. Credit towards my AL