

Meeting Functionary Roles & Responsibilities

Prepared by Carl Duivenvoorden
Toastmasters District 45 Governor 2004-05

TOASTMASTER

The Toastmaster is one of the most important meeting functionaries. He/she presides over the educational portion of the meeting in a positive and professional manner, smoothly bridging gaps between agenda items. The Toastmaster helps set the tone of the meeting, creating an atmosphere of interest, learning and enjoyment. Since much of a meeting's success is dependent on the Toastmaster, he/she needs to be well prepared. The role is both a challenge and an excellent learning opportunity.

Before the meeting, the Toastmaster:

Checks with the Vice President of Education to confirm the agenda and the names of all speakers and functionaries

Plans opening remarks

Plans to arrive early to deal with any last minute problems

Upon arrival at the meeting, the Toastmaster:

Ensures all meeting participants are present and ready

Sits near the front of the room for quick and easy access to the lectern

During the meeting, the Toastmaster:

Leads the applause before and after the individual's participation

Provides brief opening remarks about the Toastmasters educational program

Presides over the educational portion of the meeting in accordance with the agenda

Welcomes all presenters to the lectern with a handshake before stepping aside

Returns to the lectern promptly when presenters finish, thanking them with a handshake and ensuring that the lectern is not left unattended

Returns control of meeting to the Chairperson at the appropriate time

CHAIRPERSON

In many clubs, the Chairperson presides over the meeting opening, business and closing segments. He/she sets the tone of the meeting with smooth flow and smooth transitions, using proper etiquette and Parliamentary Procedure. In some clubs, the club President or most senior executive member present serves as Chairperson.

Before the meeting, the Chairperson:

Checks with the Vice President of Education and Toastmaster to confirm the agenda and the names of all speakers and functionaries *

Plans opening remarks

Plans to arrive early to deal with any last minute problems

Upon arrival at the meeting, the Chairperson:

Ensures all meeting participants are present and ready *

Sits near the front of the room for quick and easy access to the lectern

During the meeting, the Chairperson:

Welcomes everyone to the meeting

Provides brief opening remarks about the meeting, the club or Toastmasters in general

Presides over assigned portion of the meeting in accordance with the agenda

At the appropriate point, introduces the Toastmaster and welcomes him/her to the lectern with a handshake

Reassumes control of the meeting at the appropriate point of the agenda

Presides over closing elements of the meeting in accordance with the agenda

(in accordance with an individual club's own procedures and traditions)*

SPEAKER

Prepared speeches are an important part of every Toastmasters meeting. Having booked speaking slots in advance with the VP of Education, members present prepared speeches based on projects from the basic Communication and Leadership Program or Advanced manuals. Thorough preparation, with attention to project goals, is essential to speaking success and maximized learning.

Before the meeting, the Speaker:

Confirms his/her speaking slot with the VP of Education

Prepares and practices the speech. (Note: all speeches should be manual speeches or Toastmasters speaker/club/leadership presentations. If possible, projects in the Communication and Leadership manual should be completed in order as each builds on skills learned in previous projects.)

Contacts the evaluator to discuss the speech, the project goals and any additional personal objectives

Plans to arrive early and bring his/her manual to the meeting

Upon arrival at the meeting, the Speaker:

Checks that the room is set up suitably (lectern, lighting, amplification, etc.) before everyone arrives

Gives the manual to the evaluator; reviews objectives and discusses any other last minute issues

Sits near the front of the room for quick and easy access to the lectern

During the meeting, the Speaker:

(Hopefully) pays full attention to other speakers and avoids studying speech notes

Walks smoothly to the lectern when introduced

Acknowledges the Toastmaster and the audience at or near the beginning of the speech

After the speech, waits at lectern for the Toastmaster, then returns to his/her seat. (Note: speakers need not thank the audience; the audience thanks the speaker with applause!)

Listens attentively to the evaluation for helpful hints that can be used in future speeches

After the meeting, the Speaker:

Retrieves the manual from the Evaluator and discusses any questions about the evaluation

Receives written evaluations from members and guests

Has the VP of Education initial the Record of Assignments in the back of his/her manual

EVALUATOR

Evaluation is a critical part of the Toastmasters educational program, giving members valuable feedback. After each prepared speech, an Evaluator will present a short oral report, plus complete a written evaluation in the Speaker's manual. Effective evaluations are the best way of enabling members to improve their speaking skills. To successfully nurture growth and progress, evaluations should be positive, constructive, specific and sensitive to the Speaker's skill level and needs.

Before the meeting, the Evaluator:

Reviews the "Effective Speech Evaluation" manual included in the New Member Kit

Communicates with the Speaker to discuss the speech, the project goals and any additional personal goals the Speaker wishes to achieve; plans for a positive evaluation experience for the Speaker

If possible, obtains Speaker's manual and reviews project objectives

Upon arrival at the meeting, the Evaluator:

Meets briefly with the Speaker to obtain his/her manual, review objectives and discuss any other last minute issues

During the meeting, the Evaluator:

Records impressions of the speech in the manual, along with answers to the evaluation questions. (Note: A good evaluation can give a new life to a discouraged member, and a poor evaluation can dishearten any member. It is critical for an Evaluator to be sensitive to a Speaker's goals and progress to date when preparing his/her evaluation.)

When called upon, stands and gives the oral evaluation. (Tips: begin and end with positive comments or encouragement; recognize progress; focus on two or three key points only; point out Speaker's greatest assets; advise of serious faults (privately if necessary); be specific with suggestions for improvement; assume a supportive manner.)

After the meeting, the Evaluator:

Returns the manual to the Speaker and answers any questions the Speaker may have.

TABLE TOPICS MASTER

Table Topics offer members the chance to speak at every meeting and develop impromptu speaking skills. The Table Topics Master prepares a selection of topics in advance, and at the meeting invites members to speak for 1-2 minutes on a topic without advance preparation.

Before the meeting, the Table Topics Master:

Chooses an approach, subject or theme, taking care that topics from previous sessions are not repeated

Prepares a sufficient number of topics that are simple, clearly phrased and easy to understand

During the meeting, the Table Topics Master:

Briefly states the purpose of Table Topics

States the Table Topic theme, if there is one, and explains it

Encourages the Speakers to use the word of the day

Keeps his/her comments before and after Speakers brief to allow more members the chance to speak

Carries out Table Topics, inviting participation first from members not assuming other roles at the meeting (Note: Different clubs have different traditions of carrying out Table Topics. The ultimate challenge is when the Table Topics Master states the Table Topics question, then calls upon a respondent - this holds everyone's attention and starts them thinking about a response.)

Watches the time, and adjusts the total number of Table Topics to ensure they finish on time

Returns control of the meeting

GENERAL EVALUATOR

Just as every speech is evaluated to help the speaker improve, every meeting is evaluated to help the club improve. The General Evaluator notes everything that takes place during a meeting, and presents a brief oral report near the end, noting things that went well and offering suggestions for improvement. *

Before the meeting, the General Evaluator:

Reviews the key elements of a successful meeting, and the purpose, techniques and benefits of evaluation

Upon arrival at the meeting, the General Evaluator:

Selects a seat from which he/she can best observe the meeting and its participants

During the meeting, the General Evaluator:

Takes notes on everything that happens or doesn't happen but should (For example: did the meeting and each part of it begin and end on time; was the club's property – banners, etc. – properly displayed; were guests welcomed; were functionaries well prepared and organized; were evaluations positive and helpful?)

When called upon, presents a brief oral report based on notes taken. *

Acknowledges strong points of meeting, such as energy, enthusiasm and any exemplary performance of duties. Offers constructive suggestions for improvement. Doesn't reevaluate Speakers, but may offer something missed by an Evaluator.

(in accordance with an individual club's own procedures and traditions. In some clubs, the General Evaluator presides over some of the educational portion of the meeting.)*

TIMER

Toastmasters teaches people to express thoughts concisely and clearly by providing specific target times for speakers, evaluators and functionaries. The Timer is responsible for timing various meeting elements and giving presenters visual signals relating to their allocated time. The timer also delivers a brief report near the end of the meeting.

Upon arrival at the meeting, the Timer:

Confirms the time required for each prepared speech with the Speakers

Obtains timing equipment (stopwatch, flash cards / timing light), sits where clearly visible to all presenters, and tests equipment

During the meeting, the Timer:

When called upon, explains his/her role and demonstrates the signals

Throughout the meeting, signals each program participant as indicated:

Table topics:	GREEN 1:00	YELLOW 1:30	RED 2:00
Ice Breaker Speech:	GREEN 4:00	YELLOW 5:00	RED 6:00
C&L Speeches 2-9:	GREEN 5:00	YELLOW 6:00	RED 7:00
C&L Speech 10:	GREEN 8:00	YELLOW 9:00	RED 10:00
Advanced Speeches ❖:	GREEN 8:00	YELLOW 9:00	RED 10:00
Advanced Speeches ❖:	GREEN 10:00	YELLOW 11:00	RED 12:00
Evaluators:	GREEN 2:00	YELLOW 2:30	RED 3:00
Functionary Explanations and Reports:		RED 0:30	

(❖ Note: Target times for Advanced speeches vary greatly. Two common targets are provided, but it is important to check with each Speaker to verify their target times.)

Records each Speaker's name and the time used

When called upon, delivers summary report of Speakers' times

After the meeting, the Timer:

Returns timing equipment

GRAMMARIAN

The Grammarian helps members expand their vocabulary and improve their language skills. He/she introduces a new word to members and listens for its use. He/she also monitors the meeting for proper use of language throughout. A brief oral report is given near the end of the meeting.

Before the meeting, the Grammarian:

Selects a “Word of the Day” that is challenging yet usable in the club setting

Prepares a legible visual aid with the word of the day, its place in language (IE verb, noun, adjective, etc.), its definition(s) and examples of its use

Prepares a brief explanation of the Grammarian’s duties

Upon arrival at the meeting, the Grammarian:

Places the visual aid at the front of the room where it can be seen by all

During the meeting, the Grammarian:

When called upon, provides brief explanation of the role of Grammarian and announces “Word of the Day”, inviting all members to use it

Listens for the word of the day throughout the meeting, noting who used it and whether it was used correctly

Listens to everyone’s language usage during the meeting, noting outstanding usage as well as less than perfect usage (IE incomplete sentences, incorrect grammar, etc.)

When called upon, gives short report on language usage and usage of the word of the day. Recognizes exceptionally good or creative language, and offers correct usage in instances where incorrect usage was noted.

QUIZ MASTER

Listening is the all-important “reception end” of communication; even the best-presented message is meaningless if it is not heard. The Quiz Master helps members hone their listening skills by noting snippets of information mentioned during the meeting, and then quizzing members near the end to see how well they have been listening.

During the meeting, the Quiz Master:

Records tidbits of information heard during the meeting

When called upon, uses notes to quiz members (usually collectively) and test their listening skills

AH COUNTER

Crutch and filler words are distractions to clear communication, yet many speakers unconsciously use them frequently. The Ah Counter helps members become aware of such speaking transgressions, so that they can improve. He/she takes notes of all “ahs”, “ums” and other verbal slips uttered throughout the meeting, and provides a brief report near the end. Acting diligently and appropriately, the Ah Counter can often help a new member make their first tangible progress in Toastmasters.

During the meeting, the AH Counter:

Listens to everyone throughout the meeting, and notes all usage of “ah”, “um”, “you know”, “well”, and any other crutch words or distractions

When called upon, gives a brief report, referring to notes taken during the meeting (Note: much like an Evaluator, the Ah Counter should be sensitive to the needs of members and present results in a positive, helpful way. In some clubs, the Ah Counter delivers only a general report. However, since awareness is the key to improvement, it is preferable to advise individual members of their slip-ups. This can be done in many ways, such as through the report, creatively with an “award”, or privately if necessary.)

JOKES MASTER

Most people learn best when they are having fun. In many clubs, the Jokes Master provides levity by telling a joke or amusing story near the beginning of the meeting, to help set a fun tone for the meeting.

Before the meeting the Jokes Master:

Selects a joke or story, writing and rehearsing it if necessary

During the meeting the Jokes Master:

Delivers his/her joke or story when called upon

FINES MASTER

Many clubs assign a Fines Master to provide some light-heartedness to the meeting. The Fines Master notes fun and frivolous member transgressions, real or imagined. He/she presents a report near the end of the meeting indicating perpetrators, offences and “fines”. Fines may be imaginary, or at most token amounts to help fund club expenses such as refreshment breaks. Guests are usually exempt!!

During the meeting, the Fines Master:

Records any items he/she deems “fine worthy” during the meeting (such as heckling, not wearing a name tag, arriving late, not wearing green on St. Patrick’s Day, or anything fun and frivolous)

When called upon, announces perpetrators, offences and fines to the meeting