



District 35 Spring Business Meeting

District Director Report - Theresa Flynn DTM

Toastmasters is more than just filling in the membership application. There are people out there who claim membership, and yet they do not make use of any of the benefits. Toastmasters is a place to develop new skills, practice professional interpersonal skills, build self confidence, to meet people you wouldn't have met, and develop communication skills to work with them.

Toastmasters as I see it is incredibly necessary in Today's world. In today's world we have people who need to be prompted to put their phones down and acknowledge other people in the room, we have personal conflicts with seemingly half of society against the other half. We have increasing layoffs and precarious employment. All of these make Toastmasters necessary.

There are some who think the minimum effort Toastmasters require is paying dues, and yet on April 1, we realized over 200 people didn't even do that. Reach out to former members, and gain their renewals.

When we signed the Toastmasters membership form, we promised to participate in meetings, prepare projects, support other members. Are you signing up for roles? Are you giving a speech every three or four months, hearing the evaluation, and checking it off in Pathways? Are you mentoring new members?

We also pledged to serve as a club officer when called upon. It's election season. Is your club bringing in those new members for new officer opportunities?

Most importantly is the promise to act within Toastmasters core values. Are you living the values of respect, service, integrity and excellence?

Many Toastmasters benefits are gained outside the club. Today you're attending the first business meeting of two in the next few weeks. Look around. All of you have something in common: You want to improve your skills, and you want to help others do the same. That's a pretty solid basis to start a conversation. Meeting people outside your chapter is a great way to build your professional network.

One way to meet many people outside your club is to serve at the District level, whether it's volunteering at the conference, supporting an event, or working more in depth as an area director, club coach or club mentor. Practicing new leadership skills outside your club helps you learn to improve those skills in real time. You just don't get that from a book. And on top of it, you're meeting more people for your network.

If you're interested in any of these opportunities, let's talk.

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

Communicate Confidently®

Now let's get more into the numbers. I mentioned that over 200 people didn't renew at the beginning of the month. That's an average of about three per club.

Three per club is the growth metric for a well-oiled machine of a club. Reach out to people who haven't paid dues.

Another number is two: so far this year we've had two members from District 35 who earned their Distinguished Toastmasters award. They've completed two paths, they've recruited new groups, they've supported existing groups, they've served at the District level, and they've completed a leadership project. At its heart, that's the commitment of the DTM. It shows you've put in a lot of effort into helping others, but it also means you've invested in yourself. Let us invest in you when you pursue the Distinguished Toastmaster award.

Two is also the number of new clubs nearing the finish line of chartering. Let's welcome new clubs as they start up – More people working toward personal growth mean more people in your network, and more people we can work with.

One thing about that cross-club communication and support is that over the past years District 35 has lost up to half of its clubs. Area contests are farther and farther away. Fewer clubs can simply get together and visit one another. And the number of people working toward supporting and building the district is smaller and smaller. And that's why we're broadening our geography with district 212.

That increase in membership is going to broaden our recruitment for people supporting clubs, and in turn, that's going to increase the resources to build more clubs. By expanding District coverage, we should also be more able to increase the number of clubs and the density of clubs.

To achieve that, we will be closing the books on District 35.

Next month's conference is the last for District 35. There's an event in Pewaukee in June, please check the web site, and we can celebrate 74 years of supporting great leaders and communicators.

The most positive part is that none of us are going away. We are all still here to support our club members as they reach their goals. We will just see additional new faces from the new geography. And we'll see new faces as you bring in three or five new members who want to develop their skills in communication and leadership.

It has been my honor to serve and support the members of District 35.

We're not done. Let's invite some guests and support one another in integrity, respect, service and excellence.

Respectfully Submitted,
Theresa Flynn, DTM
District 35 Director