

## Toastmasters:

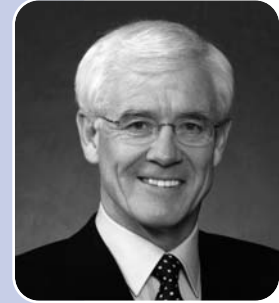


*The theme of the 2007-2008 President of Toastmasters International, Chris Ford, DTM, and outline of his program and goals.*

# Table of Contents

2	2007-2008 Presidential Theme
4	Club Quality and Educational Growth
5	Leadership Development
6	Membership Growth
7	Club Growth
8	District Operations

# Toastmasters: *Shaping Ourselves... Shaping Our World!*



It's another Toastmasters year, and it's time to get in shape! Before joining Toastmasters I thought I was in pretty good shape, thanks in large measure to the Canadian Army. I could run long distances with a pack on my back, deliver the requisite number push-ups and sit-ups, do my fair share of heavy lifting. I also thought I was in pretty good shape as a communicator and leader—that is until Russ McKeague, a friend and colleague, insisted I join him at a meeting that would “open new horizons” for me.

Pleasantly surprised with my first exposure to the world of Toastmasters at the Settlement on Sturgeon Toastmasters Club near Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, I soon discovered I had a lot more to learn about communication and leadership. Little did I realize that Russ' invitation would lead to a 25-year journey of self-development, replete with rich opportunities to shape myself and to help shape the world around me.

## *Shaping Ourselves...Shaping Our World!*

- ▶ **Shaping Ourselves.** Depending on where we are in our Toastmasters experience, our emphasis varies from shaping ourselves as individual members to shaping our organization in support of our fellow members. Those serving in club or district officer positions not only experience self-development as individuals, they also re-invest their benefits in the development of the organization as a whole.
- ▶ **Self.** There is no better place to improve our personal and professional shape than at Toastmasters. I urge you to become “selfish” about getting into great communication and leadership shape – without feeling guilty about it! Take advantage of the opportunities at your regular club meetings. From timer to Topicsmaster, from speaker to sergeant at arms, you improve your communication shape every single time you participate in your club meeting. And like any other form of exercise, the more often you do it, the easier it becomes and the better the results.  
Do you feel more confident now in your ability to communicate and to lead as a result of your experience

in Toastmasters? Aren't you glad you decided to take the plunge, even though every instinct told you to turn around and go the other way? You owe it to yourself to get as much out of your club as you can, to get into the best shape you can!

- ▶ **Club.** Next, what kind of shape is your club in? Healthy, energetic, efficient or...? Sure, it started life as a healthy club: 20-plus members, dynamic programming, and a supportive and positive learning environment. Some clubs turn this initial euphoria into a sustaining power that pervades and provides; other clubs regrettably lose focus, lose hope, lose members and fairly soon, lose shape. To find out what kind of shape your club is in, work through the “Moments of Truth” module from *The Successful Club Series*. This self-diagnostic tool will pinpoint areas of strength and areas for improvement. If you're a club officer (or a potential club officer) make sure you take advantage of the officer training organized by your district leaders. Trained club officers become better club shapers! Remember, whether you are a club officer or a member, it's *your* club, and the shape it's in depends directly on your efforts.
- ▶ **District.** Districts have one purpose in life: to support the clubs...period. Is your district in good shape? How does it fare in its annual Distinguished District check-up? Are its vital signs (critical success factors) in an acceptable range, or does the diagnosis indicate that shaping up is in order? District leaders shape the level of service that's delivered to the club while they refine skills that are directly applicable to the workplace. As Past District 61 Governor France Vezina, DTM, told me recently: “Where else will you find an organization that will give you a few thousand members, a budget, focused training, a leadership team, all the support and encouragement you could ever want, and a year (as district governor), to develop your leadership skills as best you possibly can!?” The leadership skills France acquired through Toastmasters helps her shape her world at the Canada Revenue Agency every day.

Serving as a district leader is an amazing opportunity to shape the district and your workplace, while concurrently shaping yourself!

▶ **Shaping Our Worlds.** We all have an impact on the world around us. Perhaps we're not individually or even collectively going to save the whole world, but we can make a difference in the *worlds* we live in: our personal world, our world of work and our world of community. The skills we develop in Toastmasters are of little value unless we export them outside the Toastmasters environment. When we use effective communication and leadership skills to make a difference in our various worlds; it's a way of paying our rent for the space we occupy in this world.

▶ **The Personal World.** How can your Toastmasters skills help shape your personal world? Just look around you at your world of family and friends and ask yourself how you can be of service to them through the application of your skills in listening, thinking, speaking and leading. For example, if you are skilled in interpersonal communication, then use this skill to solve tough relationship issues with your family or friends. Have you developed expertise as an evaluator or mentor? Use that expertise to coach your children through their challenges. Are you known as a good listener in your club? Now there's a skill your significant other would love you to practice at home!

▶ **The World of Work.** By being a role model for Toastmasters, by putting into practice what you have learned at your club, you will contribute to the shaping of your workplace. Kelsey Howarth, a new member of my home club in Manotick, Ontario, Canada, recently gave a presentation using PowerPoint to her professional colleagues. Here is Kelsey's story: *"Yesterday, I conducted a 30-minute presentation for our European marketing teams. I was terrified, but due to my handy-dandy Toastmasters skills I was well prepared and my presentation went really well. The funniest thing was that about 10 minutes into my presentation, my computer died. All the other participants could see my presentation, but I couldn't. Thanks to my training, I didn't skip a beat. I kept talking even as I scrambled under my desk trying to rescue my poor PowerPoint. I was prepared, so I didn't need it."*

Kelsey's presentation skills were in good shape, thanks to Toastmasters, and in turn she used her skills to shape her business environment. There are many "Kelsey" stories out there. No doubt you've had similar experiences.

My career in the Canadian Forces has taken me to several hotspots around the world, where I have been

called upon to intervene in some very tense situations. I have found the skills acquired through Toastmasters to be directly relevant to peace support operations, both in working with our own troops and also in communicating with the leaders of warring factions. For me, the opportunity to help shape the world through the application of more communication rather than more firepower was extremely rewarding. As our organization's founder Ralph Smedley said, "Understanding comes through communication, and through understanding we find the way to peace."

Whether it's meeting management, a new insight you have gained by working through the *Speeches by Management* manual, or the application of theory learned through *The Leadership Excellence Series*, understand that you have value to add in shaping your workplace, and it won't go unnoticed by your employer!

▶ **The World of Community.** All communities need confident leaders and well-spoken citizens. Toastmasters contribute to their worlds by volunteering their talents in so many different ways. Perhaps you're a fabulous speech contest or conference organizer. How can you use this skill to make your community a better place? I know several Toastmasters who work with the youth of their communities through delivery of TI's Youth Leadership program, and many more who volunteer as speech contest judges for youth organizations.

For several years, I've been volunteering for the Canadian Diabetes Association; that's a small way I can help shape one of the worlds my daughter, Kate, lives in: the world of diabetes. Through service as a fundraiser and facilitator of provincial and national leadership conferences I hope to contribute to the shaping of her life, and all Canadians living with diabetes. You can bet that I have found my communication and leadership skills developed through Toastmasters to be directly applicable to this community work. What does *your* world need, and how can you use your skills in shaping *your* world?

During this Toastmasters year, I encourage you to think about how this organization is helping you shape your life, and how you in turn have the opportunity to shape your world – both locally and globally. As Ralph Smedley expressed it: "Sometimes a man gets hold of an idea, and it shapes his whole life." I would respectfully add that it is by Shaping Ourselves through Toastmasters that we are indeed Shaping Our World.

***Toastmasters: Shaping Ourselves...  
Shaping Our World!***

# Club Quality and Educational Growth



**W**hat kind of shape is your club in? Are meetings well-organized, productive and fun? Do all members attend regularly and are guests abundant?

It is important that every club create an environment in which members can explore their potential, shape themselves and, in turn, shape their world. Club officers must make sure members have educational goals such as Competent Communicator, Advanced Communicator, Competent Leader and Advanced Leader, and they must ensure that each member has plenty of opportunities to complete speech and leadership projects. Club officers must actively seek out new members to ensure every club meeting is well-attended. Every new member must have a mentor. Mentors help new members to quickly become familiar with the club, and they offer helpful advice and encouragement so new members don't become discouraged and leave.

Your club, itself, must be in good shape if it hopes to shape its members. Officers should be trained in their responsibilities. Every club should conduct *The Successful Club Series* program "Moments of Truth." This program gives members the opportunity to analyze how the club functions in several critical areas and to determine how to improve any weaknesses. Every club should use the Club Success Plan to set goals for itself, with the ultimate goal of being a Distinguished Club. Distinguished Club recognition indicates that members are being served and are shaping themselves and their world.

## **Objectives:**

To achieve by June 30, 2008:

- ▶ Every club a Distinguished Club or better
- ▶ Four CCs per club
- ▶ Two ACs per club

## **Strategies:**

- ▶ Encourage clubs to complete their Club Success Plan at the beginning of every officer term and to monitor progress in the plan at every meeting using the Distinguished Club Program Wall Chart.
- ▶ Encourage clubs to conduct "Moments of Truth" at least once each year to measure their shapes and identify areas that need improvement.
- ▶ Remind clubs to use the Member Progress Charts to track members' progress toward their educational goals
- ▶ Ensure that clubs conduct *The Successful Club Series* module "Mentoring," to promote the benefits of having a mentoring program for members.
- ▶ Encourage club officers to attend training so they are better prepared to lead their clubs.

# Leadership Development



If our members are to shape the world around them, they need leadership skills. Toastmasters is the ideal forum in which to learn and practice leadership skills.

The *Competent Leadership* manual gives members the opportunity to improve leadership skills while serving in club meeting roles and other club positions – and receive feedback on their efforts. The High Performance Leadership program, in which a member assumes a leadership role for a project of his or her choosing, is another training tool. Serving as a club or district officer is yet another leadership development opportunity for members.

We must encourage members to earn the Competent Leader award and encourage Competent Leaders to earn the Advanced Leader Bronze and Advanced Leader Silver awards. When members take advantage of the opportunities these awards offer to enhance their leadership skills, they gain the knowledge and experience they need to shape themselves and their world.

Of course, the organization needs people with leadership skills to help clubs and districts achieve their missions. Every club and district should identify prospective leaders and encourage them to serve. In turn, we must make sure that these volunteer leaders have the tools and knowledge they need to shape their clubs and districts. Training is the key to achieving this. Districts must provide training that meets officers' needs and empowers volunteer leaders to shape their clubs, areas and divisions.

## Objectives:

- ▶ At least two members in each club achieve the CL award before June 30, 2008.
- ▶ At least two members in each club achieve the ALB award before June 30, 2008.
- ▶ At least one member in each club achieves the ALS award before June 30, 2008.
- ▶ Districts train at least 90 percent of club officers before they take office.
- ▶ Every district officer is trained.
- ▶ At least 900 members in TI achieve the DTM award before June 30, 2008.

## Strategies:

- ▶ Promote the leadership track and the CL, ALB, ALS and DTM awards to members.
- ▶ Present outstanding training programs that give club and district officers the knowledge they need to be successful during their terms using Toastmasters International's training materials.
- ▶ Publicize early and often the benefits of attending training.
- ▶ Make leadership recruitment an ongoing activity at all levels, encouraging current officers to search for future leaders.

## Membership Growth



**S**trong and vibrant clubs are the key to long-term membership growth. Such clubs attract guests and turn them into members. When a club is in good shape, meeting quality is high, and existing members keep coming back, they remain with the club because they want to gain the same personal growth they see in their friends and colleagues.

There is large turnover in our organization, though, and my goal this year is to build membership by focusing on member retention. Let's pay close attention to those members in our clubs who are on the verge of leaving: What can we do to motivate them to stay? If only 15 percent of the ones planning to leave decide to stay for another six or 12 months, our organization grows and districts achieve their membership goals. But most important: these members will be in much better shape as communicators and leaders as a result of staying in Toastmasters and benefiting by repeated practice and feedback in their clubs.

So let's make sure club members' needs are fulfilled. Ask them about their progress and goals and assign them a mentor. Again, take advantage of the Moments of Truth module to help the club determine what kind of shape it is in. Most of all, have fun! An atmosphere of camaraderie and friendship goes a long way in retaining club members well beyond the statistical 18-24-month limit.

In addition, let's continue to encourage all clubs to actively participate in the Distinguished Club Program, paying special attention to the membership goals of four new members, then four more new members. When all of our 10,000-plus clubs bring in eight new members, we'll easily surpass 80,000 new members! Think of that: 80,000 more people will have the opportunity to shape themselves through the program we know to be invaluable.

### **Objective:**

- ▶ Increase total membership to 230,000 by June 30, 2008.

### **Strategies:**

- ▶ Challenge clubs to increase their member retention efforts by determining and meeting members' wants and needs.
- ▶ Encourage every member of every club to bring at least two guests to a club meeting this year.
- ▶ Ensure that districts promote the use of TI's membership-building programs and promotional materials.
- ▶ Challenge club officers to make the Distinguished Club Program part of the club's culture, and to make being a Distinguished Club or better the goal of all club members.

## Club Growth



**H**ow does Toastmasters International “shape our world?” The most obvious way I can think of is through our clubs – the tool by which we teach men and women, the world over, how to become better speakers and leaders. My goal this year is to reach a new record of 11,000 clubs. By building one new club per area this year, we can achieve this goal. For each new club that is chartered, for each club that is successfully rebuilt, hundreds of individuals will experience the life-changing benefits of Toastmasters. There is no limit on the number and locations of Toastmasters clubs – our market is far from saturated!

How many new clubs have you helped take shape? One? Five? None? There is no greater legacy in Toastmasters than the formation of a new club. If you haven’t yet, help shape your world – and your leadership skill! – and get involved in the formation of new clubs! Club building is all about providing opportunities for others to participate in Toastmasters.

Districts and individual members must continue to work together as a team to fulfill the mission of making effective communication a worldwide reality. I encourage all districts to fully implement the Club Coach Program to support clubs in need of assistance so they can get back into shape.

### **Objectives:**

- ▶ Build one new club per area by June 30, 2008.
- ▶ Increase the total number of clubs to 11,000 by June 30, 2008.

### **Strategies:**

- ▶ Motivate area governors to actively participate in club building and to form a new club during their year in office.
- ▶ Encourage districts to involve members of successful clubs in the club-building process and to take advantage of TI’s promotional material and support services.
- ▶ Train district officers so they have the skills and knowledge to search out and develop new-club opportunities.

# District Operations



Districts play a crucial role in our organization. They help control the fitness level of their clubs are in, ensuring that club meetings are in tip-top shape—enjoyable, educational and exciting—and that membership is healthy. Districts nourish and coach clubs that experience challenges, and they support growing clubs.

Toastmasters International’s growth depends on the success of clubs, areas, divisions and districts. In successful districts, officers work together as a team. They are focused on and committed to the district mission and to being a Distinguished District. How is your district performing? Do area governors make sure clubs are meeting the needs of members and achieving the club mission? Does the district identify struggling clubs and provide assistance as needed? Are officers actively looking for opportunities to build new clubs? Are district training programs focused and effective? Do district conferences and other events provide value to the member? Is the district cultivating new leaders? Do all district events support the club and district missions?

If you answered No to any of these questions, your district has an opportunity to implement enhancements. Make sure the best people are in leadership positions, and that officers at all levels are trained and committed to excellence. If you answered Yes to all these questions, your district has a clean bill of health and is in great shape!

When district leaders keep the club and district missions in the forefront, work together as a team and commit themselves to being a Distinguished District, the result is *Toastmasters: Shaping Ourselves and Shaping Our World*.

## Objective:

- ▶ Every district is a Distinguished District in 2007-2008.

## Strategies:

- ▶ Districts must focus on the district mission by enhancing the performance and extending the network of clubs so more people can benefit from the Toastmasters program.
- ▶ Emphasize that every district’s goal is the Distinguished District, because that is the measure of a district’s success.
- ▶ Promote the Distinguished Club, Area and Division programs and encourage clubs, areas and divisions to be Distinguished.
- ▶ Encourage districts to make training a priority. Trained leaders are more effective and better able to fulfill their responsibilities and meet member needs.