

The Toastmaster is a meeting's director and host.

Begin preparing for your role several days in advance. You'll need to know who will fill the other meeting roles. You will select a theme for the meeting. You'll need to prepare a meeting agenda. Get this information from your VPE.

Contact the general evaluator and make sure you're both working from the same agenda. Ask the general evaluator to call other members of the evaluation team – speech evaluators, Table Topics master, timer, grammarian– and remind them of their responsibilities. Remember, as the director, you're responsible for ensuring all of the meeting's players know their parts and hit their marks.

As the Toastmaster, you'll introduce each speaker. If a speaker will not write his or her own introduction, you will write it. Introductions must be brief and carefully planned. Contact speakers several days before the meeting to ask about:

- Speech topic and title
- Manual and project title
- Assignment objectives
- Speaker's personal objectives
- Delivery time

You need all of these elements to create your introductions. Remember to keep the introductions between 30-60 seconds in length.

Of course, you want to avoid awkward interruptions or gaps in meeting flow so your last preparation step before the meeting is to plan remarks you can use to make smooth transitions from one portion of the program to another. You may not need them, but you should be prepared for the possibility of awkward periods of silence.

## **The Big Show**

On meeting day, show up early. You'll need time to make sure the stage is set for a successful meeting. To start, check with each speaker as they arrive to see if they have made any last-minute changes to their speeches – such as changing the title.

You and the speakers will need quick and easy access to the front of the room. Direct the speakers to sit near the front of the room and make sure they leave a seat open for you near the front.

When it's time to start the program, the Sergeant at arms calls the meeting to order. Sometimes he or she will make announcements or club business before introducing you.

When you're introduced, the Sergeant at arms will wait until you arrive at the lectern and exchange a handshake with you before being seated. (This is why you should sit at the front of the room).

Pay attention to the time. You are responsible for beginning and ending the meeting on time. You may have to adjust the schedule during the meeting to accomplish this. Make sure each meeting segment adheres to the schedule. If time allows, you can make some brief remarks about Toastmasters' educational program for the benefit of guests and new members before you move forward with the introductions:

- Introduce the general evaluator as you would any speaker. Remain standing in front of the room after your introduction until the speaker has exchanged a handshake and then be seated. The general evaluator will introduce the other members of the evaluation team.

You will lead the applause before and after the Table Topics session, each speaker and the general evaluator. When each presenter has finished, you return to the front of the room exchange a handshake so the speaker can be seated and you can begin your next introduction.

At the conclusion of the speaking program, request the timer's report and vote for the best speaker.

Briefly reintroduce the general evaluator

While votes are being tallied, invite comments from guests and announcements (such as verification of next week's program).

Present ribbons.

Adjourn the meeting, or if appropriate, return control to the club president.

Serving as Toastmaster is an excellent way to practice many valuable skills as you strive to make the meeting one of the club's best. Preparation is key to your success.