



POWER

positive opportunities with exceptional results

The Newsletter of District 27 Toastmasters

February/March 2009

MARKETING MATTERS!

By: Paul E. White, DTM

Recruitment of new members into clubs and recruitment of new clubs into the District are two of the Marketing "R's." We all know that the Recruiting "R" Matters. Does the Retention "R" Matter?

YES, RETENTION MATTERS.

Over 1,500 District 27 Toastmasters did not renew membership in October? With a desertion rate that high, can we achieve our membership goals? What should or could we be doing to increase member retention in our club programs?

If you are a club officer, how are you doing on retention? Do you know? Are any of the 1,500 non-renewing Toastmasters from your club? If so, who are they? Why did they leave? Are you and your fellow officers making efforts to attract the non-renewing members back to your club? If you are an Area Governor, are you actively involved in helping your clubs contact non-renewing members?

PRIORITIES

Clubs and Area Governors should place a high priority on identifying why members leave clubs and on attracting back to the club any members who have not renewed. At the same time, action should be taken to reduce future desertions. Here are a few tips that club officers

should consider and Area Governors should promote to keep club member satisfaction high and retention high:

For newly recruited club members, including those in new Toastmaster clubs:

- a) Interview new members to identify their expectations;
- b) Assign a mentor to guide new members through their initial 6 months or more;
- c) Program new members to participate in club roles and speak earlier rather than later;
- d) Follow-up when members miss meetings to determine why; and
- e) Periodically check with new members and their mentors to assess satisfaction.

For veteran members, club officers should strive to:

- a) Interview veteran members to determine how their needs have changed over time;
- b) Encourage veteran mem-

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Talk up Toastmasters

is a membership building campaign designed to help add members to your club.

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Spring Conference

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The HEDGEHOG Concept: What's your club's BHAG?

By John Lesko, DTM D27 LGET

This is the fifth newsletter article related to the district-wide High Performance Leadership (HPL) project based upon Jim Collins' business best selling book: Good to Great. Timed with the start of the 2nd half of our Toastmaster year this article draws the readers' attention to the disciplined thoughts of clubs that seem to know to apply their 'hedgehog' concept toward meeting or exceeding Distinguished Club Program (DCP) goals.



As the old story goes, there once was a fox and a hedgehog. Each morning the fox lay waiting for the hedgehog just outside its home – a small hole in the ground. The fox spent its time thinking up all the many ways that he would capture --I mean -- “invite” the hedgehog to lunch.

The hedgehog on the other hand had only one big idea. When attacked he would simply roll up into a ball and the prickly spikes along its coat would protect the hedgehog until the fox tired of being stuck (in the tongue) by these spikes.

The author Jim Collins suggests that good companies and organizations many times “out think” themselves. They come up with idea-after-idea, new program after new program, and then when these ideas don't quite work out they abandon their efforts and try again something totally difference. Good organizations are like the fox.

Collins then opines that GREAT organizations tend to behave as hedgehogs. They don't have anywhere near the same number of good ideas. They just have one GREAT idea or strategy which time and again ‘saves the day.’

So the questions becomes: “When you think of your Toastmasters club, are you a den full of foxes or are you a collection of hedgehogs?”

In my opinion after serving this district for over ten years and observing quite a few foxes and hedgehogs, the strategic difference between good clubs

and GREAT clubs can be explained in two fundamental distinctions:

- GREAT clubs based their strategies on a deep understanding of three key dimensions — see these 3 dimensions/circles below.
- GREAT club translate that understanding into a simple, crystalline concept that guides all club members' efforts. This concept is the club's BHAG or HEDGEHOG CONCEPT.



**Includes your core values and purpose.*

How do these three circles apply to Toastmasters clubs?

- 1) When the members of a club are passionate about learning and improving – both their communication and leadership skills -- there's a good chance that the club will achieve its goals and become a distinguished, a select distinguished, or a president's distinguished club.
- 2) When a club decides that it can become the best club in its area, division, or district -- a BHAG -- then it is more likely to realize this goal than a club which hasn't even talked about let alone considered such an achievement. In other words, the mere fact that a club pauses to reflect on its DCP progress and future positions it to take the first steps toward becoming what it envisions for itself. What we can conceive, we can achieve.

3) What drives a club's 'economic' situation is a tougher concept to apply given our non-profit status. So let me suggest that a club that strives to become distinguished or better by the combined efforts of its members is much more likely to do so than a club that is being 'carried' by the Herculean efforts of a few die-hard regulars.

What do we find at the intersection of these three strategic circles?

We find the BHAG or “Bold Hairy Audacious Goal” which becomes the club's driving concept toward not only surviving as a club but also toward achieving GREATness.

So in conclusion consider at your next club executive committee meeting the following:

- Are you the best club that you can be? For example, are you the best in the ACME manufacturing company? Are you viewed as a corporate asset or a cost center?
- If sponsored by a governmental agency, then what service do you provide to your sponsor? Are members of your club being promoted within the civil service?
- Do you aspire to become the best community club in the county? Have you visited other community clubs to check out your competition?

Resolve to review the club mission statement and the Toastmasters' Promise. Follow through with this and reap Positive Opportunities With Exceptional Results. ☀

Make Two Lists: Your 'TO DO' & Your 'STOP DOING' Lists

By John Lesko, DTM D27 LGET

In this newsletter article, we continue to share lessons drawn from Jim Collins' business best seller, Good to Great, and relate these lessons directly to our communication and leadership skills development as Toastmasters.

January is for Hedgehogs.

February is for Groundhogs.

And in this month, February, I want to revisit a story as told in the movie

Groundhog Day.

So if you know the movie, prepare yourself for a surprise twist. If you haven't seen the movie, then here's the basic story line.

Phil Connors is a weatherman played by actor Bill Murray and finds himself living the same day over and over again in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. At the start of the movie,

Phil is depressed, thinks his career is at a stand-still, and he's not very nice to be around. And so when he's sent to Pennsylvania to cover the weather predictions of an 'oversized rodent' something very strange happens and our hero snaps. Phil then wakes up day-after-day to re-live each day just as the previous one, February 2nd, Groundhog Day.

Through the monotony we all soon ask, "What if everyday was Groundhog Day?" Well as the story unfolds our main character learns to predict the actions of all other villagers in Punxsutawney. The waitress at the diner, the insurance salesman, and of course Phil's love interest all behave as they

normally do. Only Phil has 20/20 foresight. He begins to change his ways through trial and error: shaking his depression, learning to play the piano, generally becomes a better person, and falling in love.

This insanely funny story reveals to us many lessons. We have choices to make every day. We can continue on our way and behave as we did yesterday. Or we can change our behavior for the better. So what does this have to do with the lessons from Good to

following:

- ✦ Do all the TO DOs on this list directly support your "BHAG" (that "Bold Hairy Audacious Goal" we spoke of earlier).
- ✦ How long is your TO DO list? Are you focusing on accomplishing the items on the 'critical path' or are you busy being busy?

Is your TO DO list in some sort of priority order?

Now make your TO STOP DOING list.

- ✦ Has the situation changed in any way since you created your first list?
- ✦ What items on your TO DO list have been completed and yet for whatever reason you're still spending your time and talent on re-DOING something until "it's perfect"?

Are you feeding a pet rock; expending resources better spent elsewhere?

Jim Collins suggests that many of us are undisciplined in our thinking and our actions. I know that I can be so at times. I'm guessing that you might discipline your actions too by drafting a TO STOP DOING list.

Are you trying TO DO too much in your speeches or leadership role? Could you accomplish more by working on a TO STOP DOING list rather than spending all your time on that TO DO list?

Sometimes – as in SUPER BOWL XLIII – the difference between the winner and the 2nd place team is measured by who keeps their 'eye on the ball' while not being distracted. Disciplined action prevails.

Wishing you and your clubs **Positive Opportunities With Exceptional Results.** ☼

Great? Please read on. But first allow for me to suggest that you...

Make Two Lists

Your first list should be your TO DO list. Many Toastmasters have a TO DO list. This is your checklist which you've prepared of what you'd like to accomplish. It is full of both URGENT and IMPORTANT tasks. If you've thought about this list in a systematic way you may have a system that controls what goes on your TO DO list and what does not. Many then place a checkmark by those TO DOs that you finish at the end of the day, week, month, or year.

How can we enhance what's on this first list? Consider the

MARKETING MATTERS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bers to repeat excellent speeches and present educational modules;

c) Recognize the long and valued veteran members' service to the club;

d) Program fun and creative meetings to maintain the interest of all members; and

e) Ask veteran members to serve as mentors to new members and advisors to club officers.



FOLLOW UP

As with new member, it is important for club officers to follow up with veteran members if they miss meetings. Often, a "we miss you" phone call or hand-written note will entice a member who is "missing in action" back to the club. If you are a VPM, have you conducted a survey to gauge member satisfaction in the last six months?

AREA GOVERNORS CAN HELP

Area Governors can make an important contribution to retention by encouraging activities such as those outlined above. Enhanced member retention, is important to club success and therefore to Area success. Area Governors who

insist on club DCP goals being based on member interviews and discussions insure solid club planning. This makes the DCP process all about "meeting member needs." That has a positive impact on member satisfaction and retention.

THE DISTRICT CAN HELP

The District has a role. We provide training and support to club coaches, Ambassadors and to club officers, and the Marketing Team stands ready to carry out or train clubs on Moments of Truth and member satisfaction survey administration and analysis. The District also assists clubs and areas by making direct contact with non-renewing members via phone calls, e-mails and post cards in the effort to attract those members back to clubs.

WHOSE JOB IS IT ANYWAY?

Member retention is everyone's responsibility up and down the Toastmaster ladder. But achieving high retention rates rests largely on what happens during club meetings and on what club officers and Area Governors do to strengthen club programming and club processes between meetings.

TALK UP TOASTMASTERS

The Talk Up Toastmasters membership building cam-

paign (February 1st and goes through March 31st) is underway. Add 5 new, reinstated or dual members to your roster and you will receive benefits from Toastmasters International and District 27.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Use February to plan a themed meeting around Valentine's Day or LOVE and use that meeting as a "marketing" tool to invite guests. Flyers have been provided to club VPMs for whom we have email addresses.

MARCH MADNESS

Whether you're a basketball fan or a fan of the Irish (St. Patrick's Day), use March as a chance to have a themed meeting and use that meeting or those meetings as a "marketing" tool to invite guests. Flyers will be provided to VPMs for whom we have email addresses.

TOGETHER WE CAN

Together we can achieve this year's membership targets, but only if we take concerted action now to Recruit new members into clubs, Recruit new clubs into the District, Restore low-member clubs to



Sources of Information

**LOOKING FOR WAYS
TO BUILD MEMBERSHIP?**

<http://www.toastmasters.org/members/spotlightarticles/17ideas.aspx>

**REACHING OUT TO
NEW MEMBERS?**

http://www.toastmasters.org/members/memberexperience/satelliteprograms_1/speechcraft.aspx

UPCOMING EVENTS

Talk up Toastmasters is a membership building campaign designed to help add members to your club. District 27 has added the theme “Love is in the Air” to help you plan an Open House for the month of February. “March Madness” will be repeated this year to help you plan an Open House for the Month of March. Paul, our Lt. Governor Marketing (LGM), will be providing detailed information to the Vice Presidents Membership (VPMs) in each club if we have an email address on record.

Distinguished by April 30th.
For those clubs that achieve

Distinguished or Better (5 or more goals) by April 30th, the District will present them with a \$50 gift certificate during the Hall of Fame at the Spring Conference. Remember, in addition to meeting the goals, there is a membership requirement. The club must be at charter strength of 20 or have a net gain of 5 members.

Spring Conference: The Spring Conference will be held on May 2, 2009 at George Mason University – Fairfax Campus. Registration forms will be available soon. The Region VII senior International Director will be in attendance to give us the latest information regarding

the changes happening within the Toastmasters organization.

Hail & Farewell: Save the date of June 27, 2009 for a POWERful night of fellowship, food and festivities. This event is held to say a “thank you” to all of the people who have served in District leadership positions during the 2008-2009 Toastmaster year. Whether you were the person out front or the person behind the scenes who helped with events, we want you to attend and be recognized. This event also is a chance to say “welcome” to those who will serve in District leadership positions in the 2009-2010 Toastmaster year.

CLUB BIRTHDAYS!!

DIALoguers

Start Date: Mar. 1st, 1974
Years of Speaking: 35 !

Mount Vernon Toastmasters

Start Date: Mar. 1st, 1979
Years of Speaking: 30 !

Virginia Advanced Speakers

Start Date: Feb. 1st, 1984
Years of Speaking: 25 !

B-2 Toastmasters

Start Date: Mar. 1st, 1994
Years of Speaking: 15 !

SPEAC

Start Date: Mar. 1st, 2004
Years of Speaking: 5 !

Stars of Constellation Toastmasters

Start Date: Apr. 9th, 2004
Years of Speaking: 5 !



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District 27 Toastmasters
Email: questions@d27tm.org
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