



District 78 New Member Onboarding Guide

A Practical Resource Guide

DISTRICT 78

STRONG MEMBERS...

...STRONG CLUBS

**A PRACTICAL RESOURCE HANDBOOK
FOR SUCCESSFUL
ONBOARDING OF NEW MEMBERS**

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 3 |
| Potential member identified and invited to club meeting..... | 4 |
| Welcoming guests to a club meeting..... | 5 |
| Recruiting guests to new members..... | 6 |
| Welcoming new members..... | 7 |
| New member onboarding..... | 8 |
| New member achievement recognition..... | 9 |
| Summary..... | 10 |
| Appendix A..... | 11 |
| Find a Club | |
| What to Expect at Your First Toastmasters Meeting | |
| Explanation of club meeting roles | |
| Club Meeting Agenda Template | |
| Meeting Roles and Responsibilities | |
| Toastmaster Guest Packet | |
| Appendix B..... | 11 |
| Toastmaster Member Welcome Kit | |

Introduction

The ongoing success of Toastmasters International is defined by the success of each individual member. Members that use the Pathways curriculum to improve and accomplish their goals, contribute to overall club success. Club success contributes to Area success, Area success contributes to Division success, Division success contributes to District success, and this continues up to the international level. Clubs that spend time and effort ensuring guests and new members get the most out of their Toastmasters experience are rewarded with strong clubs as well as knowing they are contributing to something bigger.

The Toastmasters International website is full of resources to help clubs and members succeed, but sometimes it can be challenging to find the resources you need, when you need them. This guide has been developed by our District 78 Program Quality Committee to give clubs guidance and resources at your fingertips that we hope will help you strengthen your club membership.

What is the purpose of this handbook?

This handbook describes a process starting with identifying a person interested in Toastmasters through to Level 1 completion in Pathways. The intent is to give guidance and resources while allowing for flexibility to club officers and members to use what works best for them. This process is often supported by club officers, but members should also be encouraged to engage in the process.

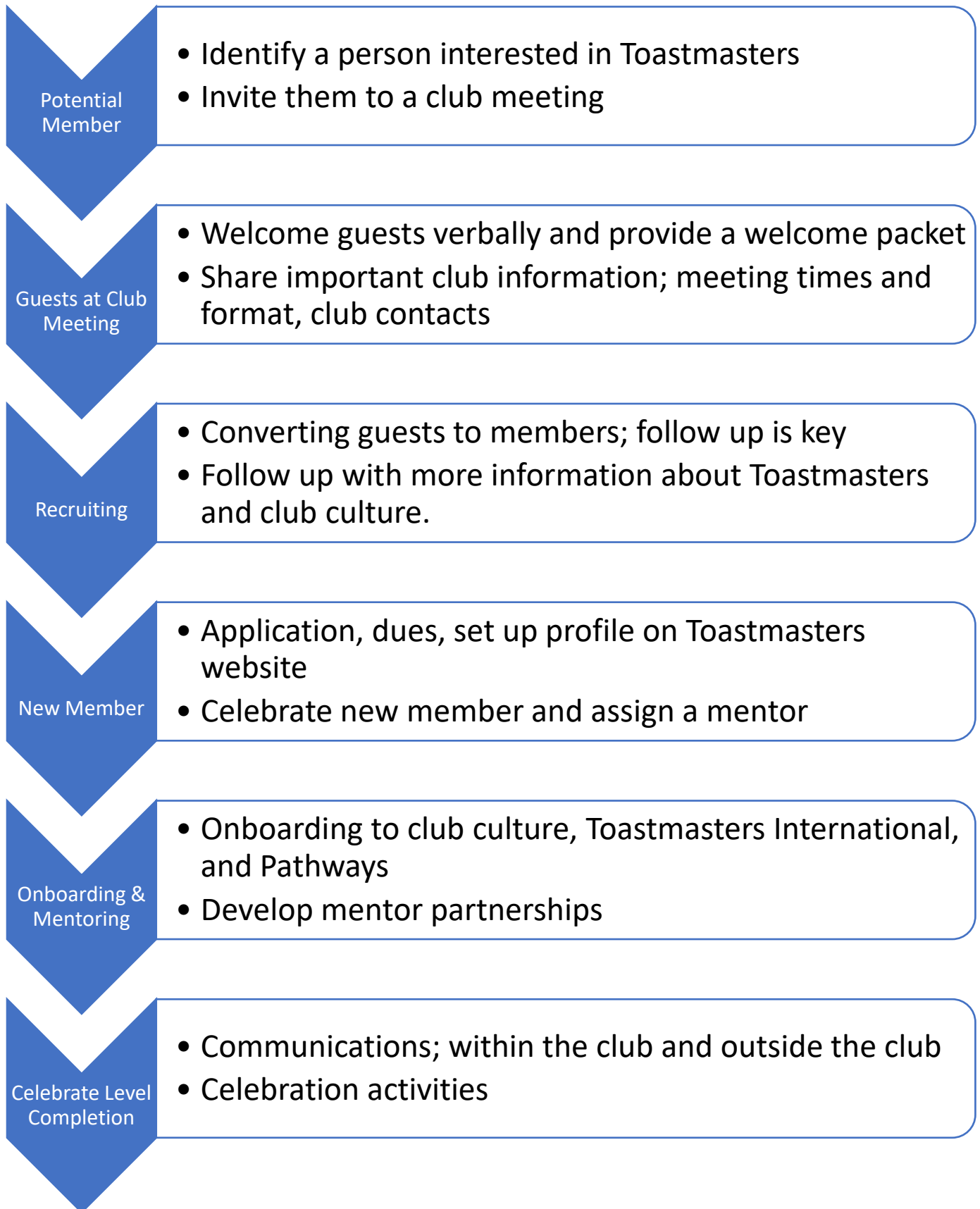
The handbook is designed to fulfill three objectives:

1. Provide District 78 with a single resource that provides guidance for onboarding new members.
2. Help club officers and members to strengthen their clubs through a 6-step member onboarding and success model.
3. Provide links and helpful resources from Toastmasters International and other sources that support member onboarding and achievement.

Who uses this handbook?

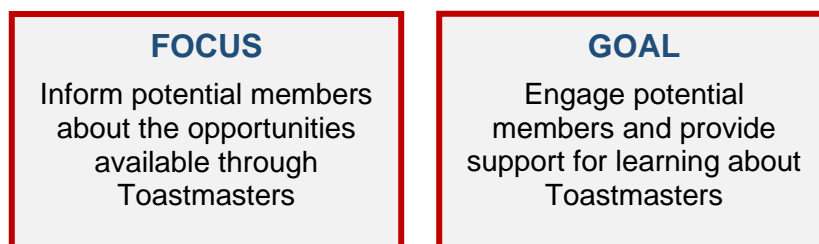
This handbook is intended for use by prospective and current Club Officers, as a resource guide. It also serves District 78 Officers who are responsible for recruitment, appointment, training, coaching and development of Club Officers.

Overview: 6 Steps of Onboarding New Club Members



We've identified a person interested in Toastmasters...now what?

Some people have great natural instincts about how to get and keep someone interested in Toastmasters. There are many different successful approaches, and this guide could never list them. However, there are some key things that are especially helpful with this process.



Helpful ideas to consider

Share information about Toastmasters International including the website and share your personal journey with to help illustrate the value of being a member.

Consider their individual goals, meeting times, meeting style (ie virtual, hybrid, in person), and help guide them to a club that will fit them best. If that's not your club, you can direct them to the [Find a Club](#) search on the Toastmasters International website. (Appendix A)

Be sure to invite them to upcoming club meetings or events so they can see the value of Toastmasters in action. Discuss their technology capabilities and offer support as needed for them to attend.

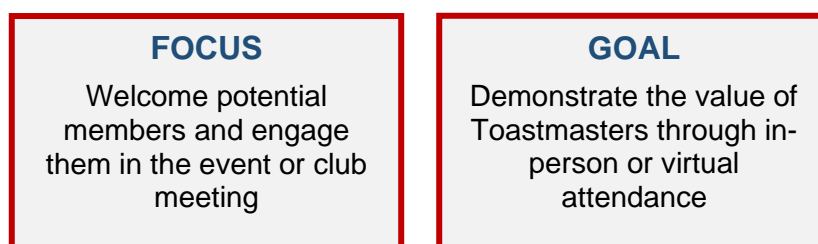
Follow up with the potential member just before the upcoming event or club meeting. Make sure they feel comfortable with finding the meeting location, or the virtual meeting platform being used. Make sure they have a point of contact for the day of the meeting in case they need in-the-moment support.

Helpful tasks to complete

- ✓ Update club contact and club meeting information on the Toastmasters International website
 - Also update any social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, free Toast Host pages, or any other virtual or printed materials where this information is posted.
- ✓ Provide club meeting information such as location, virtual or hybrid meeting invite or link
 - Consider offering support for virtual attendance as needed
- ✓ Designate 1-2 current club officers or members to serve as reliable contacts. They should be comfortable sharing their phone number and email with potential members, and they should be knowledgeable about Toastmasters and prepared to get answers to a variety of questions.

How can we make a guest feel welcome and get them engaged in the club?

Guests come to club meetings for the first time for many reasons. They've often done some research about Toastmasters, and they're already interested. First impressions are critical, and clubs should do their best to make potential members feel welcome and engaged at their very first meeting.



Helpful ideas to consider

Before the meeting starts, welcome guests and thank them for joining the club meeting. The club VP of Membership is officially responsible for welcoming guests, but all club officers can work together to make potential members feel welcome. Make introductions to fellow club officers and offer to answer any questions after the meeting. Club members should also be encouraged to welcome guests.

Familiarize guests with the room or virtual platform before the meeting starts so they feel comfortable. For in-person guests, provide a tour and point out emergency exits, bathrooms, snacks or beverages, and any seating assignments you may have. For virtual guests, demonstrate features used for chat, voting, muting, video on/off, and screen sharing. Hybrid meetings may include explanations for both in-person guests and virtual guests. Multiple club officers or members can support this aspect of welcoming guests.

During the meeting, introduce all the attendees and introduce and explain meeting roles. Consider providing a reference guide for [Meeting Roles and Responsibilities](#) so guests can better understand the meeting. (Appendix A) Invite guests to join in for Table Topics and leave some time at the end for guest feedback. Be sure to invite guests to return and provide upcoming meeting dates and times.

Helpful tasks to complete

- ✓ Share resources ahead of time such as:
 - [What to Expect at Your First Toastmasters Meeting](#) and [Explanation of club meeting roles](#). (Appendix A)
- ✓ Send the meeting agenda ahead of time and offer explanations as needed. A template is available from Toastmasters International:
 - [Club Meeting Agenda](#) (Appendix A)
- ✓ Provide guests with a welcome packet. Here are some helpful resources:
 - [Toastmaster Guest Packet](#) (Appendix A)
 - [Toastmaster Member Welcome Kit](#) (Appendix B)
- ✓ Confirm guests have current contact info and meeting time, location, virtual invites

How can we make new members feel welcome and a part of our club?

Once a guest decides to become a member, club officers are responsible for some key actions. Some of these are administrative in nature, such as having them fill out the application and pay membership dues. There are other actions that demonstrate that your club is excited to have a new member, such as conducting a new member induction ceremony. Assigning an experienced Toastmaster to mentor new members is crucial to their initial engagement and success and can be directly linked to healthy, successful clubs.

| FOCUS | GOAL |
|---|--|
| Ensure all administrative onboarding is complete, assign a mentor, and welcome the new member | Help new members feel welcome, supported, and confident as they begin their Toastmasters journey |

Helpful ideas to consider

Be flexible and sensitive to what the new member needs for support. Some may only need an email with attachments and directions, while others may need a paper application and a more face to face approach. Offer to help if there seems to be a delay getting the application form returned. Be understanding if someone needs to wait to pay membership dues and remind them that the dues will be prorated when they're ready. Once these administrative tasks are complete, take the opportunity to communicate the new membership. Be sure to announce it to the rest of the club members so that everyone has a chance to welcome new members either in person, virtually, or through your club's social media platform. Organize an induction ceremony for an upcoming meeting. You can be as formal or informal as you feel appropriate, and don't be shy about inviting your District 78 leaders to visit during your ceremony. This is also a great time to give out membership pins, or other artifacts that will help your new member feel a part of the worldwide community of Toastmasters as well as your club.

Helpful tasks to complete

- ✓ VP of Membership reviews completed member application form and submits on the Toastmasters International website.
 - Be sure to get a current and active email address so your new member receives their newsletter and other important announcements.
- ✓ Treasurer collects dues from the new member and pays dues through the Toastmasters International website
- ✓ Club President conducts a new member induction ceremony
- ✓ VP of Education assigns a mentor to the new member and makes introductions

What can we do to help a new member get engaged in Toastmasters and Pathways?

This is possibly the most important part of the onboarding process. It's crucial that a new member has all the support they need to get started. Without it they may take longer to engage in club meetings, Pathways, and all that Toastmasters has to offer. They may even give up, stop coming to meetings, and choose not to renew their membership. Assigning an experienced Toastmaster to mentor new members is very important at this stage of their Toastmasters journey and will ultimately lead to overall club success if its handled well.

| FOCUS | GOAL |
|--|---|
| Critical mentoring time to ensure the new member feels supported and engaged | New member engages by learning about and filling meeting roles, and beginning their first project in Pathways |

Helpful ideas to consider

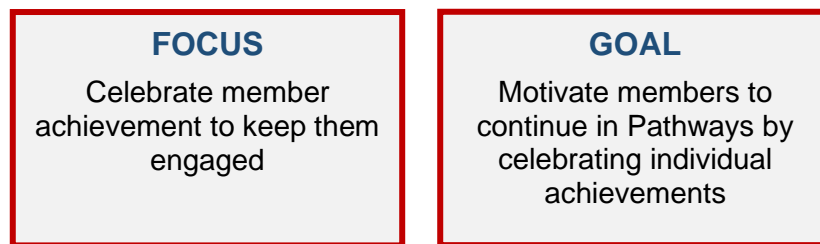
Mentors can be any experienced Toastmaster that wants to help new members achieve their goals. New members may need help understanding how a club meeting works, what the meeting roles are, and how they can help fill them. They may need help setting up a profile in the Toastmasters International website and getting their first Pathway selected. They will most likely need support getting started in their Pathways curriculum. Mentors should adjust to the needs of the member and maintain a dialog until they feel ready to continue independently.

Helpful tasks to complete

- ✓ Mentor provides an initial training session to introduce the Toastmasters International website
 - Assist the member as needed to set up their profile, and take the Pathways self-assessment
- ✓ Mentor provides training to introduce new member to Toastmasters club meetings
 - Review a past meeting agenda and explain its layout, purpose, and other details
 - Review meeting roles and explain as needed
 - Encourage new member to sign up for meeting roles at future meetings, and support them as needed for each role
- ✓ New member selects a Pathway and reports it to their mentor
- ✓ Mentor provides training to introduce the Pathways curriculum and assists with learning navigation
 - Be sure to guide new members to the speech evaluation resources
- ✓ Member works with the VP of Education to schedule their Ice Breaker speech
 - Mentors should consider being the new members first evaluator
 - Follow up after the first speech to explain their evaluation, provide encouragement to continue to the next project in Pathways, and to continue to sign up for club meeting roles
- ✓ Mentor continues the relationship with the new member through Level 1 completion in Pathways
 - Reach out regularly to offer support until the new member is confident on their own

How can we ensure a new members continued progress and success?

Most of us thrive when we feel appreciated and when we feel a sense of accomplishment or achievement. This often leads to continued motivation to pursue goals. That's why it's important for clubs to celebrate and recognize member achievements starting with the very first one.



Helpful ideas to consider

Whatever your club culture, traditions, or even budget, there are a variety of ways you can make a member feel appreciated for their achievements. The easiest ways are to simply communicate the achievement. A verbal announcement at an upcoming club meeting is a good start, but there are many additional options at your fingertips. All types of digital communications and social media may already be in use for your club and can be leveraged, and sometimes traditional approaches such as newspapers are also available. Whatever the vehicle, the goal is the same...announce member achievements internally and externally. The announcements will come back to members in the form of congrats and pat-on-the-backs that give them a sense of accomplishment. Clubs may also consider occasional celebrations with potlucks, cake, Pathways pin level tags, or other awards. Be creative, have fun, and celebrate your members successes!

Helpful tasks to complete

- ✓ Member reports level completion to VP of Education
- ✓ VP of Education approves level completion in Pathways
- ✓ VP of Education submits level completion on the Toastmasters International website, and notifies Club President of member achievement
- ✓ Club President recognizes level completion through club announcement and/or celebration
- ✓ VP of Public Relations completes other announcements; determined by the club officers
 - Corporate communications, company newsletters, company website
 - Company club sponsor
 - Member's supervisor or manager
 - Notify Area and Division Director for posting at District 78 events

Summary

Toastmasters is designed to help us all grow into confident speakers and leaders. New members need support to learn about what Toastmasters has to offer. Clubs that focus extra efforts to onboard new members will help them fully engage in Toastmasters and the club. Clubs benefit through member success, which in turn leads to successful Areas, Divisions, and Districts.

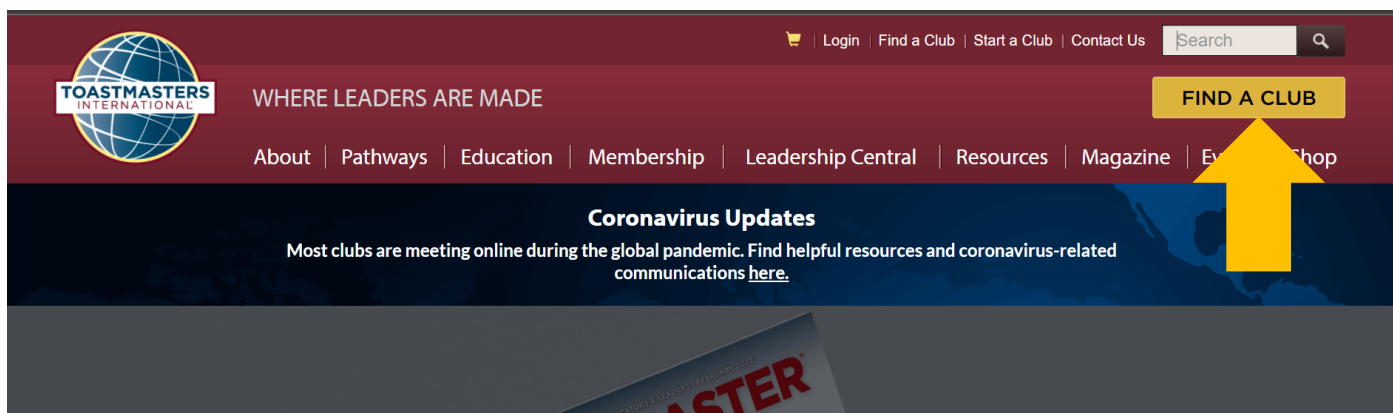
We hope this handbook is helpful to clubs seeking to improve their new member onboarding process as well as overall club success. Knowledge gained by using this handbook will benefit both club officers and new members as they grow and learn through Toastmasters.

Best wishes from the District 78 Program Quality Committee members!

Appendix A

Find a Club:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/> Click the yellow button in the top right corner



What to Expect at Your First Toastmasters Meeting:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/magazine/magazine-issues/2020/may/what-to-expect-at-your-first-tm-meeting>

Explanation of club meeting roles:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/membership/club-meeting-roles>

Club Meeting Agenda Template:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/Resources/Club-Meeting-Agendas>

Meeting Roles and Responsibilities:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/meeting-roles-and-responsibilities>

Toastmaster Guest Packet:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/Shop/387--Guest-Packet> Purchase from TI website

<https://www.toastmasters.org/membership/why-toastmasters> Digital Download

Appendix B

Toastmaster Member Welcome Kit:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/shop/1167--Member-Welcome-Kit> Purchase from TI website