

The Big Picture...Bringing the Toastmasters International Strategic Plan to Life

As an officer, I would make sure that every decision we make, every policy we propose, everything we do, is consistent with what we have identified as our pathway to the future. There are six tenets of the Toastmasters International Strategic Plan. The more I read and reread these simple yet powerful intentions, the more excited I become about the future of our great organization. It is important that we endeavor to ensure that every member understands the grand plan for moving our organization forward, and that we each understand our own role in that process.

It is very common to assume that only Officers or Directors can influence the direction of Toastmasters. My goal here is to demystify that belief, and show how we all have roles to play to help Toastmasters achieve its strategic goals. As you read this analysis, I encourage you to add your own ideas and insights, and share them with others in your club and district. Imagine our entire membership educated about the strategic direction of our organization, and each of us committed to playing our role in making it happen! Envision Our Possibilities Together! Here are the Strategic Plan objectives:

1. Consistently achieve membership growth.
2. Increase the recognition of Toastmasters International as expert in the fields of communication and leadership.
3. Become as well known for leadership development as for communication development.
4. Provide programs that are adaptable for different generations and cultures, and for emerging technologies.
5. Achieve global market penetration.
6. Achieve excellence in the quality and consistency of programs, products, processes and services throughout the organization.

“The future does not get better by hope, it gets better by plan. And to plan for the future we need goals.”

Jim Rohn

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1. Consistently achieve membership growth:

Member Benefit:	Organizational Impact:	Responsibility for Implementation:	Action Steps for Implementation:	Tracking Results:
<p>Members have a greater opportunity to help others grow.</p> <p>More members available to participate in club meetings, thus providing better chances of having well-run meetings.</p> <p>Members hear a wider range of speeches and perspectives and share more experiences.</p> <p>Members have an opportunity for more personal and professional contacts.</p> <p>Members have an opportunity to speak in front of larger audiences.</p>	<p>Supports plan for global market penetration.</p> <p>Increases baseline revenues.</p> <p>Reaches and serves more people.</p> <p>Broadens our base of influence and impact.</p> <p>Provides evidence of successful marketing programs and activities.</p>	<p>World Headquarters (WHQ) to provide member and club leads to Districts and appropriate material and resources to support membership growth.</p> <p>WHQ to develop management reports that allow Districts to better use the available statistics.</p>	<p>District: club extension and membership building activities, public relations efforts.</p> <p>District: identify and support low membership clubs following reviews of reports from WHQ.</p> <p>Club: Run excellent meetings, special functions (such as open houses, guest nights, etc) to attract guests and new members, membership building contests.</p> <p>Member: Invite family, friends, and other guests to meetings, and encourage them to join your club.</p>	<p>Encourage clubs to track membership every quarter, and where there is a decrease and the base is low, devise a plan for restoring and then growing for the next quarter. Repeat the process at the end of the following quarter.</p> <p>Districts use analysis of performance reports as a normal part of operations.</p>

“Unless we expand who we are, we’ll always have what we’ve got. The decision to grow is ours.”
 Glenn Van Ekeren

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2. Increase the recognition of Toastmasters International as expert in the fields of communication and leadership.

Member Benefit:	Organizational Impact:	Responsibility for Implementation:	Action Steps for Implementation:	Tracking Results:
<p>Members receive world-class training in vital skill areas.</p> <p>Impetus for increasing desire to improve communication and leadership skills.</p> <p>Increase in self-confidence for making the right choice in joining a great organization.</p> <p>Members who are trainers have an opportunity to broaden client base (EX: My presentation at a bankers association conference led to other training clients).</p>	<p>Membership growth based on perceived expertise.</p> <p>Increased clout in the field of communication and leadership development <i>(Remember the NY Times front page interview of IPIP Jana Barnhill, DTM, AS, to evaluate President Obama's inaugural speech?).</i></p>	<p>WHQ staff in promoting organization, and Board of Directors, Past International Directors and Past Presidents serving as exemplary ambassadors.</p> <p>Districts, in selecting appropriate speakers, trainers, and other representatives who demonstrate the expected level of proficiency.</p> <p>Members, in promoting the organization and its programs; recommending other Toastmasters to groups and organizations that may need speakers and trainers; being great examples ourselves.</p>	<p>Election of excellent communicators and exemplary leaders, ambassadors who would serve as poster children for what the organization can and does produce.</p> <p>Actively promote Toastmasters International communication and leadership programs at every opportunity.</p> <p>Encourage manual speeches only at club meetings, and give thoughtful, meaningful evaluations to facilitate member growth.</p>	<p>Clubs and districts note any references to Toastmasters International in local media.</p> <p>Surveys with select organizations.</p>

“People look at you and me to see what they are supposed to be. And, if we don’t disappoint them, maybe, just maybe, they won’t disappoint us.”

Walt Disney

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3. Become as well known for leadership development as for communication development.

Member Benefit:	Organizational Impact:	Responsibility for Implementation:	Action Steps for Implementation:	Tracking Results:
<p>Pride in belonging to an organization with a commitment to leadership development, and a plan to accomplish it.</p> <p>Perceived as receiving a high level of training from a respected organization.</p> <p>Greater desire and willingness to accept leadership positions.</p>	<p>Strengthens position as an industry leader.</p> <p>Improves club extension efforts, particularly with corporate clubs.</p> <p>Raises the profile of Toastmasters leaders in other organizations in which they serve.</p> <p>Provide members opportunities for training leaders of other organizations.</p>	<p>WHQ/Board to make this goal a critical part of our narrative, touting it as much as we do with our communication skills development.</p> <p>Districts and clubs to highlight and promote leadership opportunities, and help members attain them.</p> <p>Individual members taking advantage of leadership opportunities and promoting them externally.</p> <p>Board adds leadership development as a critical success factor for Distinguished District Program.</p>	<p>WHQ/Board: continue to produce more leadership development materials and programs.</p> <p>At all levels, pay special attention to leadership selection and transition, and provide mentors for leaders.</p> <p>Clubs and districts to increase efforts to promote existing leadership development programs, and celebrate members' accomplishments.</p> <p>Clubs sending periodic press releases to local newspapers announcing members' leadership accomplishments.</p> <p>Ensure there is appropriate training at all levels to develop effective leaders.</p>	<p>Clubs and districts note any references to Toastmasters International in local media.</p> <p>Survey members to determine effectiveness of leaders and of leadership training.</p> <p>Survey corporations with clubs to determine usefulness of leadership training within corporate setting.</p>

“We are the dwelling place of incredible opportunities. They live in us. With consciousness about who we are, with the awareness of the problems we’re faced with, with a commitment not only to ourselves but to each other, we can make it work. We will make it work.”

John Denver

4. Provide programs that are adaptable for different generations and cultures, and for emerging technologies.

Member Benefit:	Organizational Impact:	Responsibility for Implementation:	Action Steps for Implementation:	Tracking Results:
<p>Increases variety of learning and communications opportunities and media.</p> <p>Easier to fit in regardless of age or culture.</p>	<p>Supports membership growth objective.</p> <p>Supports global market penetration objective.</p> <p>Maintains currency with prevailing trends within and across cultures.</p> <p>Positions us as nimble, flexible, and inclusive, with a commitment to serving all of our current and prospective members.</p>	<p>WHQ and Board of Directors can be at the forefront of generational learning and technological trends.</p>	<p>Understand cultural standards, models, and expectations both globally, and as much as possible, in specific markets, especially where growth is occurring or expected.</p> <p>Research, as appropriate, best practices in organizations similar to ours.</p> <p>Develop and implement “best practices”.</p> <p>Evaluate emerging technologies and tech trends for possible deployment, aimed at facilitating learning and communication.</p> <p>Set specific goals for introducing new programs.</p> <p>Seek input from members.</p>	<p>Monitor the introduction of new materials, especially in formats not currently available.</p> <p>Evaluate the use of new materials</p> <p>Evaluate the perceived value of materials to members</p> <p>Survey members to determine benefits to them from new (and existing) materials.</p>

“Stretching ourselves beyond the usual and customary will yield new experiences, new ideas, and new opportunities.”

Bash Turay

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5. Achieve global market penetration.

Member Benefit:	Organizational Impact:	Responsibility for Implementation:	Action Steps for Implementation:	Tracking Results:
<p>Pride in belonging to a truly global organization.</p> <p>Opportunities for more members to visit clubs around the world as they travel.</p>	<p>Consistent with membership growth objective.</p> <p>Supports corporate mission of making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.</p>	<p>WHQ with targeted marketing plans.</p> <p>Members taking the initiative to make contacts that could result in new clubs in new markets (<i>it took a lone member to start the club in Turkey</i>).</p>	<p>Develop marketing strategies specific to a targeted region.</p> <p>Encourage members to leverage their contacts in areas where club start efforts would be productive.</p> <p>Develop translation policies that support club growth in new areas.</p>	<p>Number of new countries joining our global family this year.</p> <p>Number of clubs in each country.</p>

“Let us share the benefits we have gained for ourselves with others.”

Dr. Ralph Smedley

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6. Achieve excellence in the quality and consistency of programs, products, processes and services throughout the organization.

Member Benefit:	Organizational Impact:	Responsibility for Implementation:	Action Steps for Implementation:	Tracking Results:
Members receive the best training from the best source in the business.	<p>Supports our core values.</p> <p>Ensures greater member satisfaction.</p> <p>Results in better training and service delivery in general.</p> <p>Organization is seen as developing good communicators and leaders.</p> <p>Simply good business.</p>	<p>WHQ and Board of Directors for consistent overall excellence.</p> <p>Districts and clubs for excellence in program delivery and member satisfaction.</p>	<p>Create programs and delivery mechanisms.</p> <p>Districts and clubs to bring programs to life.</p> <p>Provide training on effective use of programs.</p>	Member surveys/interviews and comparison of metrics with prior surveys.

“Good, better, best; never rest till ‘good’ be ‘better’ and ‘better’ best.”

Mother Goose

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