

Managing Your Time Effectively

The purpose of this session is to help each teammate make the most of his/her time and save time in this role.

Use your calendar and plan ahead

- Get everything on a calendar early. Write down the dates you'll visit each club. Write down your training, contest, and area council dates. Record the DEC and other events on your calendar.
- Allocate certain days or times of the day to spend on your role. Stick to that schedule. Toastmasters doesn't need to be a 24/7 role.
- Focus. When you're spending time on a task, focus only on that during the time. Mixing activities (ex. TV and TM emails) isn't effective.

Have a process

You need a process for getting things done and completing tasks. If you have something that works, then keep doing it. If you need a process, the Pomodoro Technique is an excellent place to start. It's simple and it keeps you focused for realistic periods of time.

Pomodoro Technique (<https://cirillocompany.de/pages/pomodoro-technique>):

- 25 minutes on, 5 minutes off
- Every 4 pomodoros, take a 30-minute break
- This means you focus on a task for 25 minutes, allowing no distractions to leak in. No email, no phone, and no web (Facebook, CNN, etc.). Nothing. That level of focus allows you to accomplish more in 25 minutes than others accomplish in a day.

Email

- This is an important topic for life in general. Good email habits will save you time each day, saving you significant time over weeks, months, and years.
- Email scrambles our brains and distorts priorities. Email makes the latest and loudest communications take priority over what's really important.
- Email is everyone else's agenda for you. When you need to get something done, close your email.
- Shut off notifications from your phone: email, messages, etc. Unless someone's life depends on it, it can wait.
- Don't check email first thing in the morning. Accomplish at least 1 important task before checking email.
- Not everything needs action right away. Respond to let the other know you received the email and if/when you'll take the requested action. Then prioritize it on your list. Honor the items on your list.
- Keep emails and responses brief. 5 sentences. Yes, this is hard! But, this focuses you on the purpose of your communication. Anything additional can come through a phone call or a follow up.
- Clear and brief emails will usually take less time to write, less time to read, and have a better chance at getting a response. People are busy and get overwhelmed by lengthy emails.

Communication

- Focus on good, 1:1 communication. Group emails almost never get responses. To save your time and be more effective, email to an individual (ex. the club president). 1:1 communications create relationships, and relationships are critical.
- Add value through your communications. No one welcomes emails and communications that ask/tell them to do something. The same goes for communications that are too frequent, too long, or always expect responses. If your communications are to-do lists or have little alignment with the interests of your audience, then they won't be read. Find ways for communications to be interesting and value-adding. If the intent of your communication is to help others and make their jobs easier, then the communication will be read and responded to.

Boundaries

If left unchecked, activities in life can take over your life. Work, friends, church, Toastmasters, and anything else can take over your life if boundaries aren't set. Establish up front what you can and will do in your role. Pay attention to how much time you're spending and how much time you can spend; let others know if something is wrong. We can't run clubs for them, and clubs don't want us to do that for them. Set boundaries for yourself and respect the boundaries of others. We support the clubs and club leaders, and we allow them to run their clubs.

Club Visits

- What's the purpose of a visit? (allow for discussion)
- A visit is an opportunity for you to strengthen the relationship with the club members and leaders. It's an opportunity to add value. Don't treat it as a required activity or a checklist item.
- It isn't just to fill out the AD Club Visit Report!
- Be professional and positive. Most will see you only during this visit. Your role isn't to inspect the club, but to add value.
- Offer to serve in a role. Speak, or serve as GE or Evaluator.
- If permitted, give an educational speech from the Successful Club Series.

Club Visit Reports

The club visit report form is overwhelming and confusing. Making clubs complete this form weakens our relationship with them. Don't go through the report question by question with the president; that's time consuming and painful. Instead, keep it simple and handle most of the form offline.

Club visit reports can be simple. There are 3 items we're interested in learning from a visit report:

1. What is the club doing well? This is an opportunity for praise.
2. What are the club's challenges? The president can provide this.
3. How can we help the club with those challenges?

Submit the visit report within 3 days of your visit. It's more important to get it done rather than make it perfect.