



The Theme of the 2003-2004  
President of Toastmasters International, Ted Corcoran, DTM,  
and Outline of his Program and Goals



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# Ted Corcoran's PRESIDENTIAL THEME 2003-2004



## *Your Dreams Are Your Possibilities*

**A**s I sat down to write this message, the words of Bernard Edmunds, the American writer, came to mind. His words could have been especially written for those of us who've become members of Toastmasters International:

*“To dream anything you want to dream;  
that is the beauty of the human mind.  
To do anything you want to do;  
that is the strength of the human will.  
To trust yourself to test your limits;  
that is the courage to succeed.”*

Many of us join our first club because of a fear of public speaking. In addition to this, we are perhaps too often also lacking in self-confidence and encumbered with a sense of low self-esteem. How we deal with these fears and negative thoughts often means the difference between success and failure, between going on to achieve at least our CTM or dropping out after a few speeches, between growing incrementally in self confidence or continuing always to feel inadequate. The choice is always our own!

That's why I have chosen as my theme **“Your Dreams are Your Possibilities.”** I firmly believe that our dreams can be turned into reality! And I also believe that the skills and increased confidence we all gain through our Toastmasters experience will help us to achieve them. For a long time now I have been personally inspired by the Vision of Toastmasters International, which states that our program *“empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams.”* What a powerful statement! And, of course, all of us are the “people” mentioned!

All success starts with a dream, so we must first imagine what it is that we want to achieve. However, the dreams we have today may not be the dreams we have tomorrow or next year. The miracle is that as our self-confidence and self-esteem grows, so does our awareness of our potential. Because of this, we go on to dream of even greater things to accomplish. When we first join Toastmasters our dreams may be very simple – answering our first Table Topic, delivering our first speech, indeed just showing up! Later, our dreams may be to serve as the Toastmaster of the evening, to complete our CTM or to be a club officer. Then many of us expand our dreams to include serving as a district officer or a district governor – even serving on the Board of Directors. What happens is that our awareness of our potential changes. We are now ready to accept more and more challenges, secure in the knowledge that we are ready for them.

Have you had that experience? I certainly have! I well remember driving to the first-ever meeting in September 1985 of what was to become my home club – Fingal 6255 – in Dublin. On the way I kept saying to myself “I am not going to get involved, I am definitely not going to get involved.” The rest, as they say, is history! Invited that night to be the new club's first president, I accepted! When asked, I said to myself “Why not? Let's give it a try.” You see, during the course of that very motivational meeting, I had a dream that all of us charter members could build our new club into one that would stand proudly among the other successful clubs in Dublin. That was the very first step on the long road to where I am today. Each time, thereafter, when an opportunity to serve the organization presented itself,



I said yes. Each time my dream grew bigger. Each challenge taken and conquered increased my competence and self-confidence. This increase in personal growth, in turn, made me ready for the next challenge.

Toastmasters can do the same for you. Do you have a dream? More than one perhaps? In your personal life? In your career? In Toastmasters? What are you doing about them? Are you embracing the advice of the writer Hana Rose Zadra, who says, “Reach for your dreams and they will reach for you”? Or of William James, in his inspirational words, “Give your dreams all you’ve got and you’ll be amazed at the energy that comes out of you.”

But where do you begin? Like any other project, you will need to break your dream down into a series of steps and then **take the next step**. It’s as simple or as complicated as that! But you will need some tools to help you achieve your goals. Tools like presentation skills, listening skills, working as part of a team and leading a team. You’ll also need management skills such as planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and delegating.

All these skills can be acquired or developed through the Toastmasters programs, but you must stick with it. So often many of our members leave our organization without getting the full value from their membership. Are you getting the full value from your membership? It’s never too late to start! And you can succeed if you have a positive attitude and persistence. I have on my bookshelf Norman Vincent Peale’s best-selling book, *You Can If You Think You Can*. The title of his book and his advice is truly as pertinent today as it was when it was written all those years ago.

So what are my dreams as President of this great organization that is made up of so many wonderful people from all around the world?

❖ **MY FIRST DREAM** is that every one of us will be successful in whatever goals we set for ourselves for the coming year. It could be delivering your first speech or evaluation; being part of the team that achieves

the Distinguished (or better) Club award; being a Distinguished (or better) Area, Division or District Governor; chartering a new club. Whatever it is, reach for your dreams and they will reach for you.

❖ **MY SECOND DREAM** is that our membership will exceed 200,000 for the first time. We are very close to reaching this goal right now and, with a little extra push by everyone, we can do it. Remember: We can if we think we can.

❖ **MY FINAL DREAM** is that we will reach 10,000 clubs. Building new clubs and, indeed, saving weak ones, not only strengthens our organization, but, more importantly, extends the benefits of Toastmasters to many many more people, thus enabling them to realize *their* potential and realize *their* dreams. This is the reason for the organization’s very existence! If we build one new club per Area this year we can achieve this goal.

You see, even though your dreams are your possibilities, the wonderful thing is that collectively all our dreams are the organization’s possibilities. It’s truly a win/win situation. Don’t be afraid of taking on the challenges, whatever they may be. You will learn a lot about yourself and others on your journey. You will be a better, more confident and more capable person at the end than when you started. Trust yourself to test your limits, as suggested by Bernard Edmunds. Be inspired by the words of Kobi Yamada, “Sometimes you just have to take the leap, and build your wings on the way down.”

So let’s get started! We have much to do. But we can if we think we can. In the words of Helen Keller, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Your Dreams Are Your Possibilities! May they all come true. 🌱

*Ted Carson*

# CLUB QUALITY AND EDUCATIONAL GROWTH



**M**any of us join our club because we fear public speaking, lack self-confidence, or have low self-esteem. Our club helps us overcome our fear, build our self-confidence, and increase our self-esteem, giving us the power to make our dreams come true.

Too many of our members leave our organization without ever experiencing these benefits and gaining the full value from their membership. They leave because somehow their club has disappointed them. Club meetings were poorly organized, members didn't give manual speeches, and officers didn't carry out their duties. These members didn't have the opportunity to challenge themselves.

It is important that every club create an environment in which members can explore their potential and

achieve their dreams. Club officers must make sure members have educational goals such as CTM and ATM, and they must ensure that each member has plenty of opportunities to give manual speeches. Every new member must have a mentor. Mentors help new members to quickly become familiar with the club, and they offer helpful advice and encouragement so new members don't become discouraged and leave. Each club meeting must be well-attended and fun, offering stimulating programs.

A club can create this environment by participating in the Distinguished Club Program. Use this program to set goals for the club and its members, with the ultimate goal of being a Distinguished Club. Distinguished Club recognition indicates that members are being served, testing their limits, and becoming better speakers and leaders.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

To achieve by June 30, 2004:

- Every club a Distinguished Club
- Four CTMs per club
- Two ATMs per club

## **STRATEGY:**

- Encourage clubs to display the Member Progress Charts at each meeting, so members can monitor their progress in the educational program.
- Urge clubs to display the Distinguished Club Program Wall Chart at every meeting and use it to review their progress in the program.
- Encourage clubs to conduct *The Successful Club Series* program "The Distinguished Club Program" to promote understanding of and participation in the program.
- Ensure that clubs conduct *The Successful Club Series* program called "Mentoring" to promote the benefits of having a mentoring program for members.
- Urge clubs to use the "Club Mentor Program Kit" to establish and maintain a mentor program for all club members.

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Leaders are often successful in not only making their own dreams come true, but in helping others realize their dreams as well. To make the Toastmasters vision of “empowering people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams” a reality, we need to identify prospective leaders to take on club, district and international leadership roles. We must strive to seek out future leaders within our clubs and districts. Encouraging club officers to become Competent Leaders and encouraging Competent

Leaders to become Advanced Leaders can help ensure the continued growth of our organization.

Toastmasters International provides excellent tools to develop leadership skills. We should take every opportunity to enhance our leadership skills, and then take advantage of those leadership skills in our lives outside Toastmasters.

Toastmasters leaders empower others. Empowerment gives members ownership of goals. Help others succeed and you will be successful.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Districts train every Division Governor and Area Governor.
- Districts train at least 90 percent of Club officers.
- Districts train at least one officer from every club.
- Districts ensure that 90 percent of all training takes place before the volunteer takes office.
- Every club achieves at least one Competent Leader Award by June 30, 2004.
- Seven hundred fifty members achieve Advanced Leader Awards by June 30, 2004.
- Seven hundred fifty members achieve Distinguished Toastmaster awards by June 30, 2004.

## **STRATEGY:**

- Focus on the Toastmasters International mission for districts and clubs. District and club leaders help make effective worldwide communication a reality.

- Recruit new leaders by explaining how each position presents a unique opportunity for a volunteer to acquire valuable leadership skills.
- Deliver high-quality training to club and district officers, using the core information in the training programs published by Toastmasters International.
- Use each training event as a strategic opportunity to invest in the future success of clubs and districts.
- Make leadership recruitment a team effort, encouraging current officers to actively search for future leaders.
- Recognize outstanding leaders and leadership achievements.

# MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



One of my dreams is that this year our membership will exceed 200,000. We are fast approaching that mark. With a little extra push, and some focus on the Distinguished Club Program, we can do it. Remember: We can if we think we can.

A very important part of our membership-building strategy is the individual member. The member – especially the new, excited member – is our best recruiter. We need to ensure that these members understand their role in helping their clubs bring in new members. The tool for creating this awareness is the Distinguished Club Program. It's my belief that every member of every club should have a basic understanding of the DCP and where their club stands in relation to the DCP's objectives. The Distinguished Club Plan's new-member

requirement is a driving force in our organization's membership-building success.

And let's not forget the power of invitation. That's how I ended up serving not only as club president, but now 18 years later, as the President of Toastmasters International: by deciding to attend, only once, a club meeting in Dublin. Before I knew it I was hooked! The same will happen to countless people who attend club meetings as a guest with the intention of just visiting once. Remember: Our program sells itself. Our job is simply to invite people to visit a meeting. Anyone can do that!

Working together, we can reach the 200,000 member mark. We can make this dream possible!

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Increase total membership to 200,000.

## **STRATEGIES:**

- Challenge club officers to make participation in the Distinguished Club Program a top priority, to share DCP goals with the members of their clubs, and to regularly inform members of the club's progress.
- Ask every member to invite at least one friend, relative or colleague to a club meeting this year.
- Ensure that districts promote and encourage the use of Toastmasters International's membership-building programs.

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# CLUB GROWTH



**M**y dream is that this year we will reach the amazing milestone of 10,000 clubs. Club building and rebuilding is not done simply to inflate numbers and reach milestones. For each new club that is chartered, each club that is successfully rescued, hundreds, maybe thousands of individuals will experience the wonder of Toastmasters. Through Toastmasters they can build the skills they need to achieve their dreams. By building one new club per Area this year, we can achieve this goal.

Our volunteer district officers drive our organization's worldwide club-building efforts. Those who have participated in the formation of new clubs can vouch for

the tremendous opportunities for personal growth this experience provides. I encourage each of us to actively encourage at least one person who has never helped build a club to get involved in doing so this year. Ultimately, enlarging our pool of experienced club builders will result in more clubs. More clubs create more opportunities for those who have not yet benefited from Toastmasters.

Together, districts and individual members must continue to ensure that we work toward fulfilling our mission of making effective communication a worldwide reality.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Build one new club per Area.

## **STRATEGIES:**

- Motivate Area Governors to actively participate in club building and to form a new club during their year in office.
- Encourage all those involved in club building to bring at least one person into the club-building process to expand our pool of club builders.
- Train district officers so they have the skills and knowledge that will enable them to search out and develop new-club opportunities.
- Encourage all members to support and become involved in forming new clubs.

# DISTRICTS—TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY



**D**istricts help clubs succeed, just as clubs help their members realize their dreams. Toastmasters International has 2,500 district officers worldwide. Each officer makes an important contribution to the organization and strives to make their clubs a place where people can learn, grow and achieve. Our district officers are committed to the Toastmasters vision of helping people throughout the world improve their communication and leadership skills.

*The District Mission is to “enhance the performance and extend the network of clubs; thereby offering greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from the Toastmasters International educational program.”* Districts do this by:

- ❖ Supporting and encouraging clubs to be the best they can be for their members.
- ❖ Increasing the number of clubs, so that ever-increasing numbers of people get to experience the transformational power of our educational program.
- ❖ Training club and district officers to be successful.

Toastmasters International will be successful if its districts are successful. Conversely, districts will be successful if clubs are successful. So if you do your part in helping clubs be Distinguished, the clubs will help districts become Distinguished.

## **OBJECTIVE:**

- Every district to become a Distinguished District by June 30, 2004.

## **STRATEGY:**

- Focus on the Toastmasters mission and the district mission. Our district and club leaders must recognize their responsibility in helping people acquire communication and leadership skills.
- Make achieving Distinguished District each district's top priority. Every district should be the best it can possibly be. Achieving Distinguished District Program goals is the measure of a district's success.
- Promote the Distinguished Club Program and focus on making every club, area and division Distinguished.
- Train club and district officers and make training an ongoing activity that helps people achieve club and district goals.
- Promote the district-wide use of TI's membership-building and educational programs. We have effective tools for club and member success, but we must promote and use them.