

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

ISSUE 15 | OCTOBER 2023

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FOR BETTER
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SOUTHERN AFRICA TOASTMASTERS



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NOTE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

“In the pursuit of excellence, whether in education, career, personal growth or creativity, the mantra of “review, revise, repeat, is a timeless guide.”

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“Repetition is the mother of learning, the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishment.” - Zig Ziglar

In our quest for growth and mastery, three simple words hold the key: review, revise and repeat. These actions, when applied diligently, are the foundation of progress in any field.

Review – The Starting Point

Reviewing is where it all begins. It's about revisiting what you've learnt or experienced. Whether you're studying for an exam, recalling a conversation, or reflecting on past actions, reviewing reinforces your knowledge and identifies gaps in your understanding.

It's a vital first step towards improvement.

Revise – The Refinement Stage

Once you've reviewed, it's time to revise. This involves making changes, refining your work and improving your skills. In academics or at work, it's about enhancing your projects or presentations.

In personal growth, it means reevaluating your goals and adjusting your habits or thought patterns. Revise bridges the gap between what you know and where you want to be, ushering in gradual progress.

Repeat – The Path to Mastery

Repetition is where true mastery is achieved. It's the consistent practice of what you've reviewed and revised. This is where knowledge turns into wisdom, skills into expertise, and aspirations into accomplishments. The more you repeat, the stronger your foundation becomes. It solidifies your understanding and ensures your lessons are woven into the fabric of your life.

In the pursuit of excellence, whether in education, career, personal growth or creativity, **the mantra** of “review, revise, repeat”, is a timeless guide. These three words represent a cyclical process that fosters consistent progress. Embrace this cycle, and you'll find that it's the road to success, paving the way for your journey towards excellence.

What specific aspects of your personal improvement endeavour will you commit to reviewing, revising, and repeating, starting today, to achieve your goals and aspirations?

Robert Salijeni, DTM

FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S DESK

Celebrate Life, Celebrate Toastmasters International!

2023/2024 Toastmasters International year has started with many individual and collective success stories in our Toastmasters Southern Africa community, notwithstanding the 99th Anniversary of the establishment of Toastmasters International way back on 22 October 1924!

Celebrating every moment of success (both individually and collectively) is a reminder of how far we have come. A short reflection on our first three months journey completed for this 2023/2024 Toastmasters International year:

- Over 4 500 individuals within Southern Africa have reinvested in their personal development journey with Toastmasters International, thus far.
- Approximately 212 clubs remained active and committed to create a friendly, safe and supported environment for our members to practise their communication and leadership skills.
- More opportunities were created for individuals to participate in the Toastmasters International program when five (5) new clubs were added to our Toastmasters Southern Africa family.
- Approximately 650 educational awards have been processed on the Toastmasters International website

- Eight (8) members have received their Distinguished Toastmasters awards after diligently working on their personal development goals.
- Approximately 91% of our club officers have completed first round Club Officers Training.
- Approximately 96% of our Division Directors and Area Directors have completed first round District Officers Training.

These are some of the successes we can be proud of!

Then there are the many untold stories that are not reflected in the statistics, amongst others, stories of overcoming, determination, sacrifice, disappointments, pushing through, hanging on, tears, laughter, joy, fellowship, heartbreak, loss, peace, unity, humanity and most of all love!

In every breath, in every moment, in every handshake, in every smile, in every hug, in every hello, in every call, **remember to celebrate life and your success story!**

Thank you, Dr Ralph C. Smedley for Toastmasters International, we Celebrate Toastmasters International and the Legacy of impacting lives one speech at a time for over 99 years!

Yours in Legacy Building,

Angie Kivido



THE PUBLIC RELATIONS CORNER

In the fast-paced whirlwind of modern life, it's vital to pause and reflect. This pause is an opportunity to unlock our potential for greatness. As the PR Manager, I stress the significance of this **PAUSE** in our relentless pursuit of excellence.

Modern life's rush can be overwhelming, pushing us to chase success without introspection. Taking a pause is not a sign of weakness but an act of wisdom. It allows us to refocus, identify our strengths, and set our course towards excellence.

Self-reflection is the compass guiding us to the extraordinary. It helps us learn from our experiences and align our actions with our organisation's vision. Balancing the pursuit of excellence means acknowledging our humanity while striving for improvement.

In summary, taking a pause to reflect is the key to the continuous pursuit of extraordinary success.

Yonela Motloun, DTM



LEADERSHIP HARNESSING THE POWER OF MASTERMIND & EXCELLING IN EDUCATION

In the pursuit of educational excellence within the Toastmasters International community, the concept of a mastermind group can be a catalyst for accelerated progress. Raj Trilochun reveals how using this approach offers a unique avenue for personal development within a supportive community of kindred spirits who share aspirations and elevate each other's trajectories.

Raj Trilochun shares:

Throughout the Golden Quarter, my educational aims revolved around attaining the utmost echelon of proficiency in the realms of public oratory, leadership, and the art of discourse within the Toastmasters International community. It was my intention to successfully traverse multiple pathways, shoulder significant leadership responsibilities, and ultimately enrich my prowess as a communicator and leader; thereafter replicate the same with the clubs under my leadership in Area B1.

My introduction to the concept of mastermind was the fruit of my networking endeavours within the Toastmasters International milieu. Recognizing the formidable force that collaborative learning represents, the idea of a mastermind assembly beckoned to me as an expedited route towards my goals, enlisting the wisdom and solidarity of like-minded individuals sharing identical objectives, especially during times of need.

My mastermind fellows provided consistent appraisals, encouragement, and a robust system of accountability. For example, they diligently aided in the structuring and refinement of my speeches, critiqued my performances, and furnished invaluable constructive criticism that facilitated my evolution as a speaker and Area Director.

I encountered challenges encompassing the efficacious management of time, sustaining motivation, and surmounting the presence of moments of anxiety. My mastermind group remained instrumental in steering me toward my objectives and supplied the moral backing. They generously shared their personal experiences and stratagems, thus providing me with a panoply of methods to address these obstacles.

The mastermind group engendered a profound sense of affiliation and fellowship within the Toastmasters International enclave. This atmosphere further bolstered my self-assurance, engendered opportunities for leadership, and established a milieu where I

could perpetually glean insights from others. This contributed exponentially to my role as Area Director and Toastmaster.

Our mastermind group frequently extended invitations to luminaries and authorities in the domains of public oratory and leadership. These sessions introduced us to new ideologies, techniques, and methodologies that played a pivotal role in our development. Furthermore, we collectively disseminated resources such as personal anecdotes, experiences, hints and tips to underpin our educational endeavours.

The collaborative and nurturing ethos of our mastermind group rendered the learning odyssey not only enriching, but also profoundly motivating. It evoked the sensation of a shared adventure, replete with celebrations of one another's achievements and the collective imbibing of insights from our amalgamated experiences. The communal sense of accountability impelled us to attain greater heights together than we might have achieved individually.

I would wholeheartedly encourage toastmasters to explore the possibilities inherent in mastermind groups. These collectives offer a superlative avenue for personal development and provide an affable community of kindred spirits who share your aspirations. When in the process of creating or joining such an assembly, I would urge the selection of members of variegated skills, experiences, and objectives. Establish a structured regimen for meetings and maintain an open line of communication, thereby optimising the advantages of this collective learning approach. Remember, on your Toastmasters International journey, you are not alone, but rather a participant within a collective of fellow toastmasters, poised to bolster and elevate your trajectory.

Edith Utefe



LEADERSHIP IS ACTION

Johannes van de Spuy is a Quality Manager at an Aviation Manufacturing company who took the bold step to join Toastmasters International in 2022. It has been a notable journey ever since and this is evident through the current leadership role he upholds. At this point in time, he is the current Vice President Education of his home club Chuckle 'n Chirp Toastmasters in South Africa.

When asked what lessons he had learnt during the Golden Quarter, he simply answered, "Don't cry over spilled milk."

To elaborate, he further added that he had noted that they have a great club with great club members but each person's Toastmasters journey starts and ends at different times. Thus it makes no sense to cry of the spilled milk of members moving on as it is not something within one's control and there will always be others just starting their journey as well and in need of support.

In conclusion, he urged other club officers to take heart during the various transitions that would occur as members leave clubs and be comforted by the fact that there are many they have yet to meet.

Tumelo Maphalala

INSIGHT INTO SUCCESSFUL VPPR STRATEGIES: ATTRACTING NEW MEMBERS DURING THE GOLDEN QUARTER

In a challenging season, our club experienced a significant loss of members due to work commitments, reassignments, and departures. As a result, our membership fell below 20, prompting us to take action to attract new members while reinstating those ready to resume their Toastmasters International journey. Our goal was to gain at least 5 new members and reinstate 2, with the objective of reaching a minimum of 10 members. We not only achieved this goal but exceeded it, currently boasting 29 members.

As a corporate club, our target audience is limited to staff members within the organisation. Therefore, our strategies needed to align with their career growth and communication skill development needs. As club officers, we implemented a mixed approach, combining both broad and personalised communication to reach prospective members. I personally made myself available to assist new members, explaining anything they needed to know and helping them align their personal goals with what Toastmasters International offers.

To promote our club and engage potential members, we utilised platforms such as WhatsApp, email, and our internal Facebook group. Among these, WhatsApp proved to be the most effective. We also collaborated with other clubs to create exciting meetings that showcased the power of Toastmasters International as a personal development tool to our colleagues within the organisation. Additionally, we engaged with the Human Capital department, which expressed interest in incorporating Toastmasters International into their development initiatives for a small cohort of colleagues. The supportive Human Capital Management team has witnessed the growth of seasoned members through Toastmasters International. Some of us, including myself, have been assigned to host internal events due to our public speaking capabilities.

This demonstrates the practical benefits of Toastmasters International, setting members up for success by providing important platforms. Furthermore, we consistently educate and remind new and existing members of the benefits through periodic educational sessions.

Throughout our efforts, we encountered objections such as the lack of time. To address these concerns, the club officers and I engaged in one-on-one communication, emphasising that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. We stressed that Toastmasters International provides a safe learning environment where individuals can learn by doing. Key metrics used to measure the success of our strategies during the Golden Quarter were the number of onboarded members and the progress of new members, indicating their level of engagement and commitment.

For other VPPRs, my advice is to focus on attracting new members while implementing strategies to retain existing ones. Attend VPPR-related training sessions to learn how to craft meaningful messages, incorporating the right choice of words, tone, and objectives, as well as designing effective flyers. Continuously communicate with members, making newcomers feel welcomed, supported, and connected, thereby increasing their likelihood of staying engaged for the long term. Lastly, increase the visibility of your Toastmasters International club within your local community and leverage social media platforms and internal channels within your organisation.

Edith Utete

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PLAN VS ACTUAL RESULTS - DIVISION H DIRECTOR REVIEW

"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail" – Jim Rohn

Division H, the Division of heroes is lucky to have four dedicated Area Directors who selflessly raised their hands to make it the success it is. The division has thus far worked on the schedule and plans for District 74; and the Area Directors implemented the plan and made sure that the due dates and inputs required from District are adhered to and delivered on time.

Of course, we've had challenges and speed humps here and there especially with

the first renewals in the Toastmasters International year, but the Area Directors encouraged the clubs to do the best they can do and help those in need by looking at alternative ways such as running Open Houses for struggling clubs and clubs that want to increase memberships. One club, Morningside Toastmasters, had about 54 visitors joining their face-to-face meeting which resulted in over 10 sign ups in that month. Another club with successful visitors registered 34 online visitors.

The division is planning to have Black Friday Specials, New Year Specials, and Contest Drives to increase participation into clubs and involve the current members and new members. All these are efforts that the Division of Heroes is planning to implement so as to increase awareness on Social Media platforms and create a Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in the clubs; and get more members engaged while showcasing the bigger picture of Toastmasters International.

Our plan is set out by Toastmasters International, and at division level we just implement and most importantly, follow up with our members. We are successful in what we do because our members at club level are responsive and the Area Directors are also there for them every day when needed.

In Division H, all our members are Heroes because they take their educational investment seriously and complete their educational goals. I would also like to recognize the hard work of all executive leaders who make it possible that members get to deliver their speeches and evaluate them. Without the executive team leaders, who volunteer their time and resources, none of the success Division H is experiencing would be possible.

Lumbani Misoya



LEGACY BUILDER

Aletta Rochat's journey to becoming Toastmasters International's First Vice President is remarkable. In this interview, Aletta discusses her unique rise, personal growth, and vision for the organisation.

Her Rise

Unlike typical District Office elections, Aletta was nominated and elected unopposed at the Toastmasters International Convention. This unique process placed a significant burden of expectation on her shoulders. Grateful for the opportunity, Aletta acknowledges the need to grow into her new role and meet the high expectations of her position.

Curiosity as a Catalyst

Aletta's journey into Toastmasters International began with curiosity. A stay-at-home mom seeking something just for herself, she decided to attend a Toastmasters International meeting out of curiosity. What started as a personal pursuit soon turned into a passion for learning. Aletta vividly recalls her initial impression of the organisation, "It became evident to me that this was a place where I could learn."

Personal Growth and Transformation

Aletta's involvement with Toastmasters International proved to be enriching. It not only enhanced her communication and leadership skills, but also made her a better wife, mother, and communicator. Her family life improved, her interactions with clients became more effective, and she even ventured into entrepreneurship, authoring books and becoming a professional trainer. Aletta describes Toastmasters International as a catalyst for multifaceted personal and professional development.

Leadership Roles and Unexpected Opportunities

Throughout her Toastmasters International journey, Aletta held various leadership roles, starting as a club officer and advancing to district positions. She even travelled with International President Pat Johnson, broadening her perspective.

The Role of First Vice President

As First Vice President, Aletta serves on the board and executive committee. Her responsibilities include working with the accredited speaker program and playing a vital role in defining the organisation's strategic objectives. Aletta acknowledges the challenges the organisation faces in the post-pandemic era, particularly in terms of losses and revenue constraints. However, she remains enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to rebuilding a stronger Toastmasters International, especially with the organisation approaching its 100th year in 2024.

Building a Collective Legacy

Aletta's view of legacy transcends personal accomplishments; it's about contributing to the collective legacy of Toastmasters International. As the first person from the African continent to reach this leadership level, she aspires to demonstrate that she won't be the last. Despite setbacks, Aletta believes in the potential of the African region and aims to make Toastmasters International more accessible to people in Africa, the Middle East, and globally. She sees herself as part of a more extensive legacy, one that involves expanding clubs and extending Toastmasters International's reach.

Impactful Moments and Challenges

Toastmasters International Conventions provide a unique platform for connecting with toastmasters from around the world who share a common bond. Aletta's role as co-chair of the diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility committee allowed her to listen to and understand the discrimination and challenges faced by members. The committee facilitated building bridges of communication and understanding among members.

Leadership and Role Models

Aletta offers valuable advice to aspiring Toastmasters International leaders: be willing to make yourself available and be open to learning. Even if you don't fully grasp a role initially, saying "yes" to opportunities can lead to substantial personal growth and the ability to influence people without formal authority.

Balancing Act

Balancing Toastmasters International responsibilities with personal and professional life can be challenging, but Aletta manages it with careful time management. She relies on her Google Calendar, focuses on one task at a time, and sets boundaries, such as avoiding meetings on Sundays. Regular exercise and self-care are crucial for maintaining balance.

An Invitation to Join

As a Toastmasters International Legacy Builder, Aletta encourages individuals to join and participate. She emphasises the unique contributions each person can make as they gain confidence and grow. Toastmasters International is not just about personal development; it's a path to a more extraordinary future.

In conclusion, Aletta Rochat's journey in Toastmasters International is a testament to the transformative power of the organisation. Her election as First Vice President and her dedication to building a lasting legacy for Toastmasters International inspire members worldwide. Through her leadership, Toastmasters International is poised for a new era of growth, inclusivity, and opportunity for all.

Anke Stow



A JOURNEY OF EMPOWERMENT: MAGDELINE NCUBE SITHOLE

Magdeline Ncube Sithole's life is a testament to the power of determination and self-belief. From her humble beginnings in Musina, Limpopo, she has risen to become an extraordinary individual making a profound impact. In this article, we'll explore Magdeline's journey, challenges, triumphs, and the lessons she offers to those striving to break through.

The Early Years:

Magdeline's early life was marked by adversity. Losing her father at age four, she was left in the care of an illiterate, unemployed mother. Despite her circumstances, she found strength in Mrs. Rosina Makhadzi Ncube and her cousin, Mrs. Ndika Mathivha, who provided a strong foundation.

What Sets Magdeline Apart:

Magdeline possesses unique qualities:

Fearless and Bold: Unafraid of risks, she confronts challenges courageously.

Strong Faith: Her belief in Christ and faith's power to move mountains drive her to overcome obstacles.

Resilience: Challenges become opportunities for growth, not setbacks.

Continuous Self-Improvement: She embraces self-development, learning, and personal growth.

Joining Toastmasters: Overcoming Self-Confidence Challenges:

As a second-language English speaker, self-confidence was a challenge. She struggled to speak confidently in professional settings and feared public speaking. Her life took a turning point when she discovered Toastmasters.

Toastmasters equipped her to conquer these fears. She learned to craft well-structured speeches, use vocal variety, master body language, and develop her unique communication style. Magdeline emerged as a confident and fearless speaker.

What Makes Magdeline Extraordinary:

Magdeline's extraordinary nature shines through her relentless pursuit of self-improvement, mentoring young women, and her deep appreciation for life. She's committed to making every moment count.

Words of Encouragement:

For those feeling stuck:

"Dig deep, discover your potential,



and believe in yourself. Work on and develop your strengths. Don't wait for perfection. Just start with the right mindset, and you'll be proud of your accomplishments. Remember, a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

Magdeline Ncube Sithole's story is a powerful reminder that extraordinary achievements are within reach for those who overcome self-doubt, embrace challenges, and relentlessly pursue their dreams. Her journey from a small town in Limpopo to a confident and empowered speaker inspires all striving to break through limitations and achieve greatness.

Yonela Motloun, DTM

REFLECTIONS OF AN AREA DIRECTOR

Stanley Phiri is a leader of note who joined Toastmasters International on the 1st of October 2020 in Zambia. He is currently the Area M1 Director but has held various leadership roles in the past. He has been Brand Management Team Lead in 2020-21, Social Media Manager 2021-22 of the Toastmasters Southern Africa LinkedIn Account, Vice President Education 2021-22 of his home club Eagles Toastmasters Club, Vice President Public Relations 2022-23 of the same club and Division M Online Meetings Manager from 2022 till date to name but a few. All of this whilst being a Digital Entrepreneur.

We caught up with him to get a gist of his highs and lows during the Golden Quarter. He immediately shared that his biggest lesson has been learning that any leadership journey in Toastmasters International is not a sprint, but rather a marathon. However, as such it is always beneficial to have a good start, because one never has to recover from a good start.

He also shared that one of the highs in this Golden Quarter was getting nearly every club officer trained and prepared for their role. Many opportunities were provided for club officers to be trained and these were taken advantage of. Leadership can be overwhelming, and getting trained for it gives one the tools needed to navigate it.

Another high he relayed was seeing clubs and their members showing dedication to their personal growth by advancing in their educational journey. Toastmasters International is ultimately about individual members, and the goal is to ensure that those members benefit from the program.

When it came to the lows, he lamented that the due's increase seems to have had quite an effect on clubs, especially in countries where the exchange rate is not very favourable. However, he is hopeful that all will soon adjust to the new landscape and find ways of navigating it.

He also noted that his biggest personal low was realising that he was not where he had planned to be by this

time, with regard to helping clubs achieve certain milestones. Even so, from this he has learnt another lesson. That is, when working with others, one realises soon enough that they can't control everything, and different people work at different paces. If one keeps the vision in front of them and ensures that they stay in the race until the end and obtain the prize, that is a win, even if it is secured two months later than planned. He concluded by saying, "While winning early is nice, the ultimate goal is to win, period. And we are going to win."

Tumelo Maphalala



MENTORSHIP IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT

Mentorship is highly valued and plays a significant role in the Transformers Toastmasters Club. The club defines mentorship as a tool that guides members to serve one another and optimise their time to maximise their impact. Mentorship is a means to fuel the fire of speaking, serving and leading. Chris Bumpass, the Club President's mission statement is "FUELING THE FIRE TO SPEAK, SERVE, LEAD."

One example of mentorship's crucial role in helping a member achieve their educational goals is when, as Division H Director, Frances Kazan, in 2012 embarked on her High-Performance Leadership (HPL) project. She was mentored and assisted in putting together a committee of 20 Division H Executives. They had an amazing year taking Division H from zero to hero - re-energizing clubs, introducing the Career Cup and the Magic Mentor Division events. Many of the committee members took on District leadership roles. It happened through powerful mentors and Frances' group of 20.

Another example is when she approached the Vice President of Education (VPE) with unsolicited advice on meeting outlines and contents. Instead of being irritated, the VPE was grateful for the guidance. Through weekly mentoring sessions, the VPE flourished, gained a deeper understanding of the Toastmasters ROI, and eventually accepted the role of club president. This mentoring experience transformed the club from surviving to thriving.

Transformers Toastmasters Club supports and encourages communication between mentors and mentees through various structured activities and resources. They have *Mentoring Monday* sessions led by



VPM Keith Bowens, where mentors answer questions and support their mentees' growth. They also have an *L1 Group Mentoring* program led by Frances Kazan that focuses on accelerating new members' onboarding and goal-setting. The Club also has *Bespoke Mentoring* - person-to-person led by VPE Michelle Leopold. Additionally, the club provides a library of resources, including spreadsheets mapping the Toastmasters Pathways and Competent Leadership Manual.

The club ensures successful mentor-mentee relationships by matching mentors with mentees through discussions between the VPE and the new member. The club emphasises that members can have multiple mentors, allowing them to benefit from different styles and experiences. The mentorship program is accessible to all members, regardless of their experience level or Toastmasters journey. The club provides resources, training opportunities, and a supportive environment for mentors to fulfil their roles effectively.

Mentoring fosters a symbiotic relationship where mentors reenergize and mentees are guided and directed, leading to personal growth and improved professional lives. The club aims to continuously enhance the mentorship experience and help members achieve their educational goals.

Frances' vision is to resurrect the Magic Mentor event to the point where it becomes a district event.

Edith Utete

LEADERSHIP STARTS WITH SELF-LEADERSHIP

When asked, how do you define personal leadership? Keith Bowen confidently responded; that's a great question, however I'm not sure I am the right person to answer it (giggling), I guess it's the ability to inspire self...Taking his time to reflect on what leadership traits and qualities would mean to him personally.

Would you say personal leadership is important? Well, I would not really say it's important primarily because I am not a leader naturally but more of an influencer however, I believe it does make life easier

Does it assist with conflict resolution? I believe anyone who cultivates the idea of leading self has way more self-control than those that do not and therefore would know when and when not to engage in any conflict and how to engage to lead the conflict to a resolution and not a bigger problem.

Then is it safe to assume that it assists with delegating? One hundred percent! And I say this because personal leadership comes with understanding oneself which in turn helps you understand others better and that assists in assigning certain tasks to certain individuals because you are aware of their strengths and weaknesses

How would you encourage personal leadership? The same way Toastmasters International does, the Toastmasters International motto is "Where leaders are made". Many of us come to Toastmasters International to learn how to communicate well or overcome a fear, however that can all be done through learning. One must be willing to learn, to learn about their leadership style and about being a better leader through understanding their strengths and capitalizing on them and accepting their weaknesses so they can either delegate or work on them.

How do you set priorities as a leader? By understanding the goal and prioritizing achieving that goal.

Considering that as with our motto in Toastmasters International, we believe that feedback is the breakfast of every champion, how do you respond to feedback as a leader? I believe I respond well to constructive feedback because it saves me from a lot of problems and enables growth. However, of course, timing is everything, I appreciate feedback provided in time to allow me to rectify whatever I did incorrectly but I don't understand people who wait until the last minute or until everything has gone wrong before they give advice on how else it could have been done...what then is the point?

Last but not least, are you encouraged to prioritize personal leadership and work on yourself? With a loud laugh Keith says oh yes, this conversation got me thinking about how much work I have to put on myself in order to be an effective leader...

Sibongile Mazibuko



EDUCATION

DISTRICT GROWTH THROUGH CLUB EXCELLENCE: STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

In the serene landscapes of Swakopmund, Namibia, situated within District 74, Granny Be's dedication to Toastmasters International shines brightly. This district, covering the vast region of Southern Africa, stands on the cusp of multiplication, a testament to its growth. At its heart is Granny Be, one of two Program Quality Directors, who shed some light on the intertwined journey of club quality and district expansion.

She advocates an ideal leadership transition model: VPM to VPE, VPE to President, then transitioning to the immediate past president role. This ensures a seamless flow of experienced leaders with the right institutional memory, crucial for club quality. She also highlights that club vitality lies in its active members. Clubs with 20+ engaged members ensure that roles are never left vacant. This robust participation directly feeds into the district's health.

She passionately advises that viewing clubs as enterprises ensures a focused approach. Clubs, in her vision, should provide a quality learning environment that encourages education, training while nurturing leadership and development, and that meetings

should serve as platforms for practice. Aligning with this, the Distinguished Club Program (DCP) becomes a strategic roadmap, emphasising goal achievements over mere participation and point counting.

For addressing the challenge of rapid member turnover, Granny proposes a mentorship culture "each one help one", a member who has just completed their icebreaker can mentor a member who is about to complete an icebreaker in short. By guiding newcomers, clubs foster community, enhancing member retention and club quality.

She advocates for the Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) and its calendar which provides valuable leadership education to Toastmasters, ensuring that club officers are well-equipped to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. This, in turn, ensures that clubs function efficiently, meet their goals, and provide value to their members.

In conclusion, while strategies like the ideal transitional leadership model, the DCP roadmap and the TLI calendar offer a path to excellence, challenges persist. Yet, with visionaries like Granny Be, the district's trajectory towards sustainable growth looks promising.

Machiri Marodi

WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

As the year draws to a close, workplace stress often heightens as a number of people get overwhelmed by the thought of unmet targets or goals. This October I found myself caught up and whisked by the plethora of worries regarding work that should have been done and work that should be done. Can you relate?

According to the World Health Organization, work-related stress is a significant health issue. It has been

estimated that stress at work is the cause of mental health challenges and other physical conditions such as hypertension and burnout.

Here are tips on effectively managing workplace mental health during the last quarter of the year.

1. **Evaluate Workload and Prioritise:** Assess your workload and set realistic priorities. Break tasks into manageable steps, communicate effectively by following up and giving feedback, and delegate when necessary. I've learned that focusing on essential responsibilities prevents overwhelm and denying extra work is not a sin.
2. **Practice recharging:** Just like your phone, you too need charging. Dedicate time for unwinding through self-care activities, such as exercise, proper sleep, and engaging in hobbies, to recharge and reduce stress. Deep breathing has been an effective exercise for me.
3. **Set Boundaries:** Define boundaries between work and personal life. Maintain a healthy work-life integration by setting realistic expectations, having digital detox regularly, and managing your energies as much as your time. Limit your involvement in what no longer serves you and normalise connecting with people that lighten you up.

Navigating workplace mental health during the last quarter of the year requires proactive strategies. By evaluating workloads, recharging, and setting boundaries, individuals can prioritise their well-being, thrive professionally, and find fulfilment as the year comes to an end.

Dr Clinton Kadochi



EDUCATION SEGMENT



“*Reviewing goals is like monitoring the plane’s cockpit to ensure everything is going according to plan.*”

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOALS REVIEW

Reviewing goals is like monitoring the plane’s cockpit to ensure everything is going according to plan. It is a continuous process that tracks progress and prompts appropriate actions to guarantee accomplishment of set objectives. As in any other pursuit, in Toastmasters International, it is also of paramount importance to review goals continually. During the Golden Quarter, which is the period between 1st July to 30th September, such reviews for our (Blantyre Toastmasters) club showed mixed results. On the positive, the new EXCO held its maiden meeting and crafted strategies aimed at maintaining the President’s Distinguished Club status. Also, the leaders attended

appropriate training, members levelled up and new members were registered. However, on the negative, membership renewals were minimal.

Nevertheless, with 3 goals achieved against the annual 10, the club remains buoyant. Currently, it is on fire and flying higher to achieve all the goals by March 2024. Among many initiatives, the club is targeting members directly to complete levels, boosting adverts on social media to attract more members, urging leaders to attend more training and of course, tracking progress weekly. It is a no brainer, failure to review goals can easily lead to mediocre performance.

Gracious Changaya

EXCEPTIONAL AND RAPID PROGRESS IN PATHWAYS: SIMBA REDZIDZO TOASTMASTERS CLUB

As a dedicated dashboard enthusiast, I had the honour of connecting with one of District 74’s newest and most rapidly ascending clubs, Simba reDzidzo, hailing from Division Z. In its mere six months of existence since its chartering in December 2022, its members have achieved a remarkable feat of 21 level 1 completions, 16 level 2 achievements, 12 level 3 accomplishments, and 4 level 4 milestones all in its first six months of existence. The name “Simba reDzidzo,” Shona for the power of education, already piqued my curiosity.

I had the privilege of engaging in a profound conversation with the Vice President of Education, TM Forgive Mutende. He generously shared their success formula with me, showcasing a passion and wisdom that transcends both his biological age and Toastmasters’ experience. His first piece of advice was clear: “Planning is key.” The Club Success Plan wasn’t just a formality for them; it was a tool to meticulously outline their educational objectives. TM Forgive emphasised the importance of setting SMART goals with each member, ensuring

that each goal was Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

If planning is key, execution is essential! Steve Maraboli’s words “Cemeteries are full of unfulfilled dreams... countless echoes of ‘could have’ and ‘should have’... countless books unwritten... countless songs unsung...” and dare I add countless speeches not delivered, echoed in the background. TM Forgive stressed the importance of executing the Club Success Plan and individual education plans, ensuring that all members had the opportunity to deliver their speeches. Their astonishing completion rates, with 21 level 1 completions in 2022/23 alone and 18 at all levels already in 2023/24, were made possible by encouraging members to speak weekly. If their home club couldn’t accommodate them, members were encouraged to visit other clubs for their projects, with feedback forms returning to the VPE to maintain the process’s integrity. Recognition played a significant role in their success, as they celebrated achievements with Toastmasters paraphernalia to create excitement and

encourage further participation.

Despite being a young club, Simba reDzidzo prioritises member support, assigning more experienced members to mentor those at lower levels. This approach yielded remarkable results, with eleven level 4s and seven level 5s completed since July 1, 2023, debunking the excuse of not having enough mentors in the club. Feedback to speakers and role players was central to their recipe for success, guiding members toward higher performance levels.

In the end, it became evident that education truly possesses immense power, and Simba reDzidzo’s rapid rise is a testament to the transformative potential of careful planning, support, and recognition.

Bryton Masiye, DTM





THREE WELLNESS EXERCISES FOR BETTER SPEAKERS

Great speakers practice calm and relaxation exercises to enhance their performance. The part of the nervous system that promotes a state of relaxation and calmness is known as Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS), it is responsible for the body's rest.

Activating the PNS can stimulate relaxation and help leaders thrive in their personal and communication journeys. Incorporating these exercises can induce a calming response.

1. **Mindful Breathing:** Engage in deep, diaphragmatic breathing exercises. Slow, deliberate breaths stimulate the vagus nerve, which is part of the PNS, promoting relaxation and reducing stress levels.
2. **Visualisation:** Practise visualising successful performances and confident speeches to boost motivation and reduce anxiety. See it before you do it!
3. **Gratitude Journaling:** Express gratitude daily to activate the PNS. Reflecting on positive experiences releases calming neurotransmitters, fostering relaxation and overall well-being.

By incorporating these parasympathetic nervous system-activating exercises, Toastmasters International members can effectively manage stress, cultivate mental well-being, and enhance confidence.

Dr Clinton Kadochi

VARIETY KEEPS THE CLUB VIBRANT

Next time you visit the Warm Heart of Africa, Malawi, please visit Blantyre City to attend at least one session of a Toastmasters meeting at Blantyre Toastmasters Club. This is where beauty and brains dish out speeches and a variety of spices while dining and drinking 'Pathways' in different ways, and yet without breaking or bending any Toastmasters International's rules. The club meets every first and third Monday of the month from 18:00 to 20:00 hours at Blantyre Sports Club. Your presence won't be strange as there are always strangers at each sitting.

The club has been operational since 1992 and one wonders how the momentum has been maintained. One thing, though, that has helped the club to achieve unprecedented President's Distinguished accolade recently was variety including: -

Adoption of digital/social media to advertise meetings to reach out to many people.

Inclusion of toastmasters from other clubs to take a variety of roles.

Alignment with role players to ensure proceedings are entertaining yet informative and educative.

Seeking some funny lines about members and guests during introductions.

Invitation of former toastmasters to inspire

the current members.

Attending different trainings and conferences to level up.

Maintenance of members of different age groups, professions etc to perpetuate diversity and variety.

Lining up speakers strategically including Education Spots and Table Topics.

Incorporating all in providing feedback to designated speech evaluators while excusing the speakers. This adds depth and breadth to the evaluations and makes the process engaging.

Provision of complimentary snacks and drinks and encouraging all to interact and connect (thirty minutes after the session).

As they say, variety is essential for growth. These are some of the things that have kept the club vibrant and growing. During this Golden Quarter, there were times that the place could be filled up with both members and guests on a continued basis. And the feedback has been the same - there is variety at Blantyre Toastmasters Club, and yet all the values of Toastmasters International are adhered to. Finally, once again, next time you are in Blantyre, remember to visit the club.

Gracious Changaya



BLANTYRE TOASTMASTERS

WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 2023 - 2024

 Gracious Changaya President	 Patrick Ndovi VP Education	 Abel Manda VP Membership	 Maureen Nyirenda VP Public Relations
 Chikondi Kambauwa Treasurer	 Atupele Stambuli Secretary	 Yusuf Milanzi Sergeant at Arms	 Angella Masikini-Phiri Outgoing President



TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL | DISTRICT 74 | MAYCON

Still dreaming of meeting some of your favourite Toasties in person, then look no further, in less than eight months, District 74 is hosting the largest in-person meeting, the DreamCon Conference 2024.

Not only will you get to mingle with your virtual friends, you get to rub shoulders with District leadership, contest champions and experience the Speech contest in person.

The time is now. Get in touch with your Area, Division and District leaders.

Sacrifice that daily cup of coffee!

Sacrifice that pair of shoes!

Sacrifice that handbag and invest now in a lifetime experience!

Hope to see you at DREAMCON2024 in Johannesburg, South Africa in May 2024.

If you want the Convener, Kirstin Bosworth, to keep you on the loop with all the exciting upcoming details, then you can reach her through WhatsApp using her mobile phone number +27 84 0556 277

Noma Muzunze

EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT BECOMING A DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER & CELEBRATING THIS HIGHEST TOASTMASTERS ACCOLADE ACHIEVERS (SERIES 1)

In this edition we introduce a series where we will be discussing the topic, Becoming a DTM and those members who have achieved it to motivate us in our Toastmasters International learning journey.

In our first series we will talk to Thato Majela DTM and Liza Zindoga DTM.M.



Zindoga DTM.M.

Becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) for me is a culmination of dedicated hours of hard work even when you don't feel like it and the progress is too slow.

I remember years back meeting our IPDD, Andrew Tsuru, DTM when I first joined Toastmasters International and asked him "what can I do to reach the level of the DTM?" And his advice was, "Make sure that every meeting you attend, your name appears somehow in the agenda."

For the past four years as a Toastmaster I've lived by that motto." Thato Majela, DTM

West Rand Toastmasters Club



It's an award truly earned. Service to my fellow Toastmasters, to my club, to my area and to my Division. Support for a new club, bringing the Toastmasters International experience to more Zimbabweans in the form of new clubs, all culminating in this recognition. As I achieve the DTM award, I realise even more ways I can serve my fellow man. I can't wait to celebrate all those that are on the path to becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster.

We started a support group with DTM Future last year where we encourage and guide each other for those on the path to DTM and those that want to get started. Reach out to me if you require such support.

"It always seems impossible until it is done" Nelson Mandela It can be done.

#DTMVibes #ItCanBeDone Liza Zindoga,DTM

Noma Muzunze

