

Our mission is to prevent isolation, present ideas and provide inspiration to club coaches throughout the world.

Club Coach Weekly



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Growthmasters Club—District 2

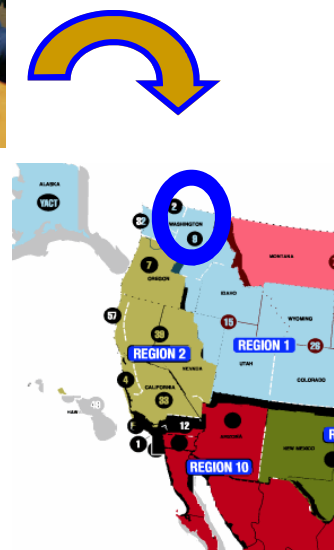
by Sara Johnson

Growthmasters, #4801, was chartered in 1987 at the "local" State Farm Insurance corporate campus. Primarily composed of State Farm employees, the club never really went past charter strength as there was significant turnover in membership. As a result, there were few educational awards achieved (and very few advanced awards) and the club



“... seemed more like a private corporate club.

didn't reach Distinguished Club Status. They were also a community club - but seemed more like a private corporate club.



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In Praise of Sara

I'm the outgoing president of Growthmasters.

I met Sara Johnson when I was searching for a Toastmasters club. I had attended two

other clubs before visiting Growthmasters. Sara spent quite a bit of time with me after the meeting talking about the benefits of joining a small

club. I decided to join Growthmasters because I would be able to deliver a lot of speeches in a short amount of time and because Sara projected the



What is the problem?

“ . . . main issues we had: a corporate setting for a community club, low membership, poor retention, and no sense of “fun” at the meetings. “

Assessment

I was originally the Area Governor, 2008-2009, and saw how much the club was struggling. The State Farm building required signing-in, name badges, being buzzed through doorways, and often being ousted if another meeting was being held. The company was also not sponsoring memberships, as it had in the past, and the employees needed to maintain their own membership payments (due to the turnover, State Farm wasn't seeing any return on

their investment). The most senior Toastmaster in 2008 had been a member for about two years, the next most senior member had been in Toastmasters for three months. Although the club often had open houses, guests did not join. To help the club with a “senior” Toastmaster for guests to talk to and to see the stages of achievement, I joined the club in 2009.

poor retention, and no sense of “fun” at the meetings. As a result, we were down to six “real” members with about three ready to leave.



The main issues we had: a corporate setting for a community club, low membership,

Step One

Our first step was to move the meeting day from Wednesday to Thursday, to see if this would make a difference at our current location.

As State Farm had been the original sponsor of the club, we also tried to connect with the administrative and department heads at corporate campus

to see if we could garner support and reinvigorate the club with State Farm members. Neither of these solutions worked.



Step Two

The second step was to have a planning meeting with the current members about:

- 1) becoming more involved with the club
- 2) scouting out a new meeting location
- 3) having a "Finding New Members" planning session
- 4) recommitting – not just to Toastmasters, but to *Growthmasters*.

Our core members took on officer roles to help support the club. These new officers found a new meeting location, and as a result, we moved and gained 11 new members in about three months. We are supported by our new location, have never been "bumped" for a room, and have become proactive in having guests at every meeting.

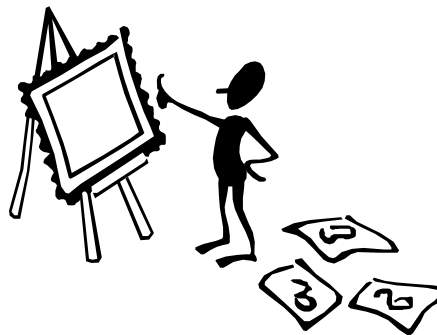
We are becoming more organized, have special event meetings every month (see below), and are having "fun" at every meeting. In fact, that is a goal...to grow as a club, as a group, as Toastmasters, and as people.

Results

We will be a President's Distinguished Club... for the first time this year. We have a strong membership base, a supportive location, great meetings, and returning guests. One comment we often receive is that we are a fun and supportive club where everyone is welcome and wants to be here. When a

member can't be at the meeting, we receive an e-mail with their regrets...even if they are not on the agenda. Our website has been revamped with new information, great downloads, club details, and more. We communicate regularly, have a variety of prepared speakers, and fun with

Table Topics. In short, not just by Toastmasters International standards, but also by our own, we are distin-



Try these special Growthmasters theme meetings:

Move ahead meeting – when a member completed their CC, everyone else that wanted to could move ahead one speech with them.

Taboo Table Topics – Describe your topic without saying what it was and the audience guesses

Evaluation – One speaker, then everyone participates as an evaluator (one starts, then another takes over, etc)

Backwards meeting – evaluations first, then speakers

Table Slang-ops – using current slang for Table Topics

Ice-Breaker-A-Thon – all new members do their ice breakers together (we had 5)

Debate meeting – Table topics and impromptu speak-

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Club Coach Weekly is a combined effort of Dr. John Murphy, DTM, Douglas Wilson, DTM and Patricia Hill, DTM. John is the 2010-2011 Club Coach Chair for District 8 and is responsible for the Club Coach stories. Douglas and Patricia are Past District Governors from District 58. Douglas is responsible for letters of praise. Patricia is responsible for graphic design, editing and layout. Please contact them with any questions, comments or possible content.



In Praise of Sara (from page 1)

aura of a winner. Within a few months, I became the president of Growthmasters. My role was that of cheerleader, but Sara did most of the work. She was constantly thinking of ways to improve the

meetings and deliver more value to our members. Even in the face of declining membership and member apathy, she maintained high energy levels and a positive view toward the future for

Growthmasters. Sara is also humble, but as with most great people, her humility is in inverse proportion to her abilities and accomplishments. I am a great fan of Sara Johnson.

Don Crawley

Lessons Learned

I think that one of the key reasons that Growthmasters is successful is because we don't follow a "standard" meeting format. Although we might have the typical meeting roles, we have variety and spice in how we use them. For example, when our resident linguist was the Toastmaster, we all got a grammar/English lesson about words we use, how we use them, and what words mean. When our computer consultant was Toastmaster, he shared some computer tips and tricks that Toastmasters can use. When a speaker was going to give a PowerPoint presentation, there was an opening speech on how to successfully use PowerPoint in a speech.



With so many new members, we had a "how to succeed at Table Topics" presentation before starting Table Topics. We use innovation of meeting styles, topics, and more to give variety. We have had guests who returned, just to see what we were going to do the next week. We also celebrate our successes - through awards, parties, e-mails, pretty much anything that helps us to give recognition to what we do.

The Harvard Business School stated that there are three things that motivate people in the workplace - I would argue that these three things motivate people anywhere. Achievement - to be proud of one's accomplishments and to help others to achieve as well. Equity - to be treated fairly, respectfully and equally. Camaraderie - to have good, productive relationships. We have these three in abundance at Growthmasters and we are motivated to succeed. That motivation is evidenced through our communication and leadership awards, our members willingness to be officers, and the success of our club.