WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

ACHIEVING SUCCESS AS SERGEANT AT ARMS

Club Leadership Training Session
THE MISSION OF THE CLUB

The mission of a Toastmasters club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every individual member has the opportunity to develop oral communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.

ACHIEVING SUCCESS AS SERGEANT AT ARMS
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Club Leadership Training Session** .................................................. 4  
  Conducting the Session ................................................................. 4  
  In Your Own Words ........................................................................ 4  
  Using Visual Aids Effectively ........................................................ 4  
  How to Use the Outline .................................................................. 5  
  Checklist for Training .................................................................. 5  
  Evaluation and Follow-up ............................................................... 5  

**Outline** ......................................................................................... 6  
  Standards for Success ................................................................... 6  
  Your Leadership Opportunity ....................................................... 7  
  Display and Maintain Club Equipment and Supplies ...................... 10  
  Club Organization and Protocol .................................................... 11  
  Safety and Foresight ..................................................................... 11  
  Discussion Exercises ..................................................................... 11  
  Closing ............................................................................................ 12  
  Additional Resources ..................................................................... 13  
  Evaluation ....................................................................................... 14
CLUB LEADERSHIP TRAINING SESSION

The club is the heart of the Toastmasters program. It provides the environment and support members need to develop their communication and leadership skills. Club officers support the club and sustain consistent club quality to keep members satisfied. In order for a club to be successful, club officers must know their roles and responsibilities. That’s why this training session is so important: it identifies performance standards and describes how to achieve them.

The cornerstone of a good training session is preparation. A good presenter of a club officer training session is familiar with the Club Officer Handbook (Item 1310). This item is available online at www.toastmasters.org/clubofficerroles.

Training does not end with the training session. It is a process that continues throughout an officer’s term. Let your trainees know the area governor and district leaders are all available to help if questions arise during their term of office, and provide them with area and division governor contact information for their respective clubs.

CONDUCTING THE SESSION

The sergeant at arms is responsible for maintaining club property, arranging the meeting room, and welcoming members and guests at each meeting. This training will identify these responsibilities and discuss some ways to fulfill them.

This product consists of three parts:
1. Definition and explanation of the session
2. A training outline
3. A PowerPoint presentation to be viewed along with the session

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material with your own narrative style. This training session may be modified by each district as necessary.

USING VISUAL AIDS AND HANDOUTS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids and handouts add interest and help your audience retain information. You are encouraged to use them. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this session as visual aids, you will need a data projector, a laptop computer, a table to support them, and a screen for viewing. In the outline, in the right-hand column, are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides and distribution of handouts. Each is numbered. Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If you cannot arrange for projection equipment but still would like to use visuals, you may copy the material onto a flipchart. Do this before the presentation. Use a heavy marking pen that does
not seep through the paper, and write on every third or fourth page so succeeding visuals will not show through. Also, make your letters large and heavy with plenty of space between them.

Follow these tips when using visual aids:

- Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners. Place your projector so it projects a large, high, undistorted image on the screen. Focus the image.
- Bring spare equipment, such as a projector bulb, extension cord, and extra marking pens.
- Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flipchart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- Remember not to stand between the screen or flipchart and your audience or you will block their view.
- Maintain eye contact with your listeners. Do not talk to the screen or flipchart. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only when facing your audience again.

HOW TO USE THE OUTLINE
As you prepare for the session, keep two things in mind:
1. Fit your planned discussion into the time allocated.
2. Allow ample time for group discussion and participation.

Mention that trainees can find information on all of the duties of office in their club officer manual. Urge them to use the Web Resources page in the Appendix of their officer manual.

CHECKLIST FOR TRAINING

- Visual aids prepared
- Room arranged and properly equipped
- Supplies and reference materials on hand
- Laptop and projector available
- Flipchart, easel, and marking pens available
- Notepads and pencils available for each participant

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP
Ask the participants to fill out the evaluation form at the end of the session. Use this information in planning future sessions.

Evaluate the use of materials. Be sure to follow up with the club leaders throughout their term. Keep in mind that learning is a continuous process. Hold formal or informal review sessions as frequently as possible. If necessary, hold a make-up session for those who were unable to attend.
STANDARDS FOR SUCCESS

Club officers are responsible for fostering an environment of meaningful self-development within the club for all members. Officers accomplish this in part by meeting specific performance standards that:

- Help officers clearly understand their roles.
- Provide a point of reference for club members to better understand what to expect from club officers.
- Aid members when evaluating current leaders and candidates for office.
- Facilitate communication when expectations differ among club officers and members.

Outside the Club Meeting

The following standards identify the performance that the sergeant at arms must demonstrate outside of the regular club meeting environment to ensure he or she understands his or her roles and to help club members know what they should expect from officers.

- Attend district-sponsored club officer training.
- Schedule the meeting location.
- Maintain club equipment and check after every meeting to ensure adequate supplies are available.
- Attend club executive committee meetings.
- Arrange for a replacement when unable to attend a meeting and for assistance if necessary.
- Prepare successor for office.

At the Club Meeting

The following standards identify the performance that the sergeant at arms must demonstrate during club meetings.

- Room preparation should be complete at least 10 minutes before the meeting begins.
- Greet members and guests and arrange for guests to sit with members. As sergeant at arms, it is your official duty to welcome visitors and fellow members to each meeting and set an example for other club members.
- Greet the area governor and other visiting officers and escort them to the club president.
- Arrange for food service at meal meetings.
- Ensure the meeting starts on time. Your role is to pay attention to time and warn the club president several minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin.
- Collect ballots and tally votes for awards.
Trainer: Review each of the above standards with trainees. Ask trainees to explain why each standard is important and what, if any, negative impression is presented when a standard is not met. Write answers on a flipchart.

After the discussion, ask trainees if they have questions about their duties that are not addressed in their officer manual. If so, address the questions. If not, continue the training.

**YOUR LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

The sergeant at arms is responsible for maintaining club property, arranging the meeting room, and welcoming members and guests at each meeting. To enjoy a successful and rewarding term, a sergeant at arms must:

- Set realistic and attainable goals.
- Plan how to accomplish the goals.
- Delegate tasks as needed.
- Monitor progress toward goals.
- Coach team members when necessary.

**Exercise**

Trainer: Divide trainees into small groups. Have each group develop three goals relating to the duties of sergeant at arms for a club and a plan to accomplish the goals. Discuss the goals and strategies developed by the small groups with the entire group.

For example, one goal a sergeant at arms has is to recruit 1-3 members to serve on the reception committee. The plan could include observing members the first few meetings and asking those that are particularly warm and inviting to join the committee.

The skills of motivation, delegation, and coaching also are instrumental to the success of leaders.

**Motivation**

Motivating fellow club members to put forth the efforts necessary to attain a goal can be challenging. Sergeants at arms must have a deeper understanding of the concept of motivation in order to use it effectively. There are five principles to help sergeants at arms successfully motivate club and other team members.

**Five Steps of Motivation**

1. **Understand what motivates each person by learning about their**
   - Personal aspirations
   - Professional objectives
   - Toastmasters goals

2. **Focus on the benefit to the individual.**
   - Show the team member how participation will be of personal value.

3. **Make expectations clear.**
   - Set milestones for achieving goals and share it with team members.
4. **Recognize their work.**
   - Point out team members’ Toastmasters participation.
   - Say “thank you” when the team member accomplishes a task.

5. **Be a leader.**
   - Recognize an individual’s success.
   - Be enthusiastic about the work to be done.
   - Support team members in all tasks.

**Trainer:** Ask the group to suggest specific examples for each step of motivation, then briefly discuss the suggestions.

For example, those individuals on the reception committee do a remarkable job greeting members and guests. Because of their warmth, many guests become members. This is a perfect opportunity to be a leader and recognize an individual’s success.

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**Delegation**

Club officers must carefully delegate authority to team members in order to accomplish the team’s goals and objectives. Delegation is the process of transferring a responsibility from one person to another and empowering that individual to accomplish a specific goal. By following the five steps of delegation, a leader not only creates opportunities for other team members to gain leadership experience, but also builds a stronger team that can accomplish more.

**Five Steps of Delegation:**

1. **Decide what to delegate.**
   - Prioritize your tasks.
   - Identify what can be delegated.

2. **Decide who will do the task.**
   - Select a team member who is available and capable of completing the task.

3. **Assign responsibility.**
   - Allow the person to decide if they can handle the task.
   - Clearly explain what needs to be done.

4. **Grant authority.**
   - Provide the necessary tools and resources.
   - Confer the authority needed to make required decisions.

5. **Establish accountability.**
   - Define reporting requirements.
   - Set a timeline with milestones.

**Barriers to Delegation:**

Sometimes leaders are reluctant to delegate tasks. Leaders must learn to recognize five of the common barriers to delegation and work to overcome them.

- Lack of confidence in others’ ability to do the job
- Fear of losing control of the team or project
Selfishness – not wanting to share credit
Insecurity – feeling bad about asking others to do things for you
Reluctance – fear that another person will do so well that he or she will usurp leadership

**Training:** Solicit trainees for methods for overcoming barriers. Discuss with the group. Conduct a discussion about delegation and how to use it within the scope of this office.

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**Coaching**

The sergeant at arms is a member of the executive committee. This means he or she, as well as the other officers on the committee, is responsible for ensuring each officer meets the standards for his or her office. Occasionally, a team member will demonstrate a need for guidance and the sergeant at arms must coach the team member and provide opportunities to improve existing skills and build new skills so the team member can meet standards. Leaders can help their team members to improve by following these:

**Four Steps to Successful Coaching:**

1. **Agree that a problem exists.** The leader and the team member can’t solve a problem until both agree there is a problem.
2. **Discuss solutions.** The leader and the team member should outline possible solutions to the problem.
3. **Agree on an action.** The leader explains the behavior necessary to produce the desired result, and develops a timetable for carrying it out.
4. **Follow up.** It isn’t enough to simply point someone in the proper direction. Leaders must stay in contact to ensure the team member remains on course.

**Group Activity: Coaching a Team Member**

**Scenario:** A club’s meeting location is available only for a specific time during the day so the club must adhere to a strict timetable and begin and end meetings promptly. One member habitually arrives late to meetings, disrupting the group and causing meetings to run overtime. If meetings continue to run overtime, the club will lose their meeting place.

**Exercise**

**Training:** Divide trainees into groups of three. Each group member will play one of three parts – sergeant at arms, habitually tardy club member, or observer. Using the scenario above, the sergeant at arms will provide feedback, the tardy member will receive the feedback, and the third person will observe. The goal of this exercise is for the sergeant at arms to successfully coach the tardy member using the four steps to successful coaching.

1. Agree that a problem exists.
2. Discuss solutions.
3. Agree on an action.
4. Follow up.

The observer in the group will note the behaviors and words used by the other two participants and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the interaction.
If there is enough time, have group members shift roles and then practice the scenario again. All participants should take on a role different from the one in the preceding exercise. Ask trainees to share their thoughts about their experience in the exercise – giving feedback, receiving feedback, or observing.

**Trainer:** Remind trainees to review the calendar and the Web resources in the Appendix of the officer manual.

**DISPLAY AND MAINTAIN CLUB EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

The sergeant at arms should arrive at the meeting site at least 30 minutes before the meeting is to begin and use the Meeting Room Checklist in the Appendix of the sergeant at arms manual to prepare the club meeting room.

**Before the Meeting**

- Arrange tables and chairs.
- Check room temperature.
- Set up lectern at the front of the room.
- Place gavel on lectern.
- Hang club banner behind the lectern to the left or right.
- Display the national flag (optional) at the front of the room to the left of the lectern.
- Set up timing lights toward the rear of the room to the right or left where they are visible to the speaker.
- Set the guest book, pen, and nametags for guests on a table near the door
- Place ballots on each seat.
- Display promotional fliers, educational materials, club newsletters, order forms, the Toastmaster magazine, club charter near the guest book.
- Display trophies, ribbons, buttons, etc., at the front of the room near the lectern so they are visible to the audience.

**After the Meeting**

- Pack all club property.
- Store club property in a secure place (The sergeant at arms is responsible for finding a secure location for storing club property).
- Ensure the timing device is in good repair.
- Inventory the supply of name badges, ballots, and other items. If any items are low, ask the secretary to order more.

**Asset Inventory**

Clubs must maintain a written list of assets and a written process to ensure that the assets are accounted for and transferred smoothly to future club officers. In order to maintain the club’s equipment and supplies, the sergeant at arms keeps the list of assets and implements a written transfer process.
CLUB ORGANIZATION AND PROTOCOL

A well-prepared meeting place helps convey a feeling of order and organization. The sergeant at arms role is a significant factor in whether a club can keep the tightly organized structure needed for members to learn to:

- Begin meetings on time.
- Deliver quality speeches.
- Keep up the meeting’s momentum.
- Conduct club business.
- Provide useful feedback.
- End meetings promptly.

Over time, each club develops its own set of protocols – where to stand when speaking, how to greet each speaker, what to do when speeches run long, etc. Maintaining these traditions provides a valuable sense of fairness, character, and continuity. The sergeant at arms as well as other officers should take the time to teach these protocols to new members.

SAFETY AND FORESIGHT

The sergeant at arms maintains safety and order by providing a consistently well-equipped meeting environment, free of distractions and confusion. Simple acts of preparation can have a powerful impact.

Safety

- Power cords removed from walkways or secured to avoid tripping.
- Flashlights in case of power failure.
- Standard first-aid kit.
- Location of and routes to emergency exits.
- Appointed assistant for emergencies.

Foresight

- Keep practical items among club supplies such as scissors, post-its, paperclips.
- Inspect alternate meeting sites for special events or joint meetings and establish equipment and seating requirements.

**Trainer:** Have trainees share acts of preparation they or other members have used that are not specifically prescribed duties.
DISCUSSION EXERCISES

Exercise

**Trainer:** Break the participants into groups of three and have each group brainstorm solutions. Discuss groups’ solutions and share recommended solutions, if necessary.

**Dealing with Meal Issues**

Your meeting location is convenient for your club members who work in nearby businesses. However, the site does not allow food, and the meetings take place over lunch break for the club’s many working members. Several members have been bringing sack lunches to the meeting, and since they must return to work immediately after, this is their only opportunity to eat mid-day. The owner of the property has been very clear about the “no food” rule. What do you do?

**Recommended Solutions:**

- Talk with the location management and try to work something out. If this proves to be futile, bring up your problem at your executive committee meeting. The committee may decide to change the meeting place once they have conferred with club members.
- The executive committee can ask the club members if anyone works at a location that has a break room available. Alternately, you can research local restaurants and suggest meeting in one, though you would then also have to ask the members if they would be willing to purchase lunch from the restaurant.

**Preparing for the Meeting**

Your club meets at 7 a.m. every Thursday, and as sergeant at arms, you have decided to arrive at 6:30 a.m. to set out club materials and equipment. However, you have difficulty getting into the restaurant where your meetings are held because the restaurant staff has been late consistently for the last couple of weeks. As a result, your meetings are starting late because you are still setting up the room at 7 a.m.

**Recommended Solution:**

Talk with the restaurant management and try to work something out. If this proves to be futile, bring up your problem at your executive committee meeting. The committee may decide to change the time or meeting place once they have conferred with club members.

**CLOSING**

Serving as a club officer is not only a responsibility, it is a privilege. It is an opportunity to learn and practice communication, organization, and leadership skills as well as to support fellow members, educate new leaders, and contribute to the success of the club as a whole.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

General Leadership

Laws for Positive Leadership
The article “Laws for Positive Leadership” (Toastmaster magazine, September 2006) by Victor Parachin describes how to be a leader others want to follow.

The Leadership Excellence Series Set (Item 310)
A complete set of The Leadership Excellence Series modules containing outlines and PowerPoint presentations. Individual module titles include: “Resolving Conflict,” “Building a Team,” “Motivating People,” and “The Leader as a Coach.”

“Leadership, Part I: Characteristics of Effective Leaders” (Item 255)
This educational seminar program explores the qualities, values, and styles effective leaders display.

“Leadership, Part II: Developing Your Leadership Skills” (Item 256)
“Leadership, Part III: Working in the Team Environment” (Item 258)
This educational program helps participants learn to use leadership skills as they pertain to working with and leading teams.

Delegation Techniques

Delegating Authority
The best way to wield power is to share it responsibly. In order to accomplish the team’s goals and objectives, a leader must carefully delegate authority to team members.

High Performance Leadership (Item 262)
This five-project program offers instruction and practice in vital leadership skills.

The 360º Leader (Item B119)
In The 360º Leader, international best-selling author, speaker, and consultant John C. Maxwell shows how 99% of all leadership in most organizations takes place in the middle. And he shares the secrets of how to increase your influence - from wherever you are.

“Delegate to Empower” (Item 315)
This presentation discusses how to effectively delegate tasks and responsibilities.

“Building a Team” (Item 316)
Build teams through delegation. This presentation reviews how to create and lead a team.

Conflict Resolution

“Effective Solutions for Team Conflict”
Renee Evenson’s article for the Toastmaster magazine explains that when you confidently manage conflict others will see you are a person of action and will respect your forthrightness and leadership.

“Turning Team Conflict into Team Harmony”
In his article for the Toastmaster magazine, “Turning Team Conflict Into Team Harmony,” Dave Zielinski cites team-building experts who offer advice on how to be a team leader, leading volunteer-based teams, and what to do when your team isn’t working.
## EVALUATION FORM

Date: _____________________________  Session Name: ___________________________________________

Facilitator: ____________________________________________________________________________

On a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating, please rate the course and facilitator on the following items by circling the number you find most appropriate:

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<th>How relevant was this session to your job in Toastmasters?</th>
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<td>To what extent did the visual aids add to your understanding of the presentation?</td>
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<td>How were the meeting facilities?</td>
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8. What are two things you learned that will make you a more effective club officer?

Additional Comments: