

District 77 Best Practices Guide

May 2026 Edition: R.I.S.E. in Action — Converting Guests, Creating Experiences, and Keeping Speaking Meaningful

Recruit • Inspire • Speak • Encourage

INTRODUCTION

May’s nominations show three different ways clubs build momentum: **(1) measurable guest-to-member conversion**, **(2) creative themed-meeting experiences that attract participation**, and **(3) a speaking culture built on meaningful topics, engagement, and fellowship**. This guide captures the best practices from each submission so clubs across District 77 can adopt what works—immediately and pragmatically.

May 2026 submissions reviewed:

- Redstone Toastmasters #1932 (Area 12, Division A)
- VA Voices #651363 (Area 21, Division B)
- Montgomery Toastmasters #1334 (Area 24, Division B)

R — RECRUIT

Recruitment That Converts: Guests Are Only Step One

Best Practice 1: Track and Improve Guest-to-Member Conversion

Observed at: Redstone Toastmasters

What Worked

- Welcomed **10+ guests** and converted **3** into members (clear pipeline performance).
- Growth was paired with a supportive, high-quality club experience—key for conversion and retention.

Try This

- Track 3 numbers monthly: **Guests / Follow-ups / Joins**.
- Assign a “48-hour follow-up owner” for every guest (text/email + invitation to return).
- Offer a “New Guest Path”: *welcome* → *short orientation* → *first role* → *mentor* → *Ice Breaker date*.

District Insight: Recruitment isn't complete until guests **return** and **join**—measure conversion, not just attendance.

Best Practice 2: Use Social Media to Promote a Special Meeting Experience

Observed at: Montgomery Toastmasters

What Worked

- Promoted a themed meeting on social media and included guests in the interactive experience (guest participation increases likelihood of return).

Try This

- Post a simple 3-part promo: **Theme + Date/Time + “Guests welcome”**.
- Ask members to share the post (club page reach multiplies fast with member shares).
- Capture 1–2 photos during the event for the follow-up post (“You missed it—join us next time”).

District Insight: Social media works best when it promotes a **specific, fun reason to visit now**.

I — INSPIRE

Inspiration Comes From Service, Fellowship, and Creative Formats

Best Practice 3: Build Club Pride Through Community-Facing Service

Observed at: Redstone Toastmasters

What Worked

- Members volunteered to support youth speakers through a speaking contest experience—connecting Toastmasters skills to real-world impact.
- Fellowship (e.g., social connection outside meetings) strengthened camaraderie and belonging.

Try This

- Identify one “service moment” per month: contest volunteering, youth leadership, community speaking support, etc.

- Make service visible in your club: announce it, invite others, and celebrate participants.

District Insight: When members feel their club is making a difference, engagement and retention rise.

Best Practice 4: Create a Signature Meeting Format That Energizes Members

Observed at: Montgomery Toastmasters

What Worked

- An **Escape Room themed meeting** created novelty, teamwork, and shared memories—great for morale and guest engagement.

Try This

- Run 1 themed meeting per quarter (Escape Room, debate night, storytelling night, panel, workshop).
- Keep Toastmasters structure intact: add **Table Topics** tied to the theme and a short educational segment.

District Insight: Themed meetings are most powerful when they combine **fun + skill-building**.

S — SPEAK

Strong Speaking Culture Needs Proof Points and a Repeatable System

Best Practice 5: Make Speaking “Meaningful” Through Topic Intentionality

Observed at: VA Voices

What Worked

- Members delivered speeches designed to spark reflection and conversation, strengthening speaking and listening.
- The club reinforced engagement through interactive fellowship (game night) and inclusive participation.

Try This

- Set a monthly speaking theme (resilience, leadership, relationships, courage, etc.).

- Encourage evaluators to comment on **impact and audience takeaway**, not just technique.
- Track speaking activity: **# speeches, # evaluations, participation rate** (simple spreadsheet).

District Insight: Great speaking culture is more than “we had speeches”—it’s intentional topics plus measurable consistency.

Best Practice 6: Tie Speaking to Pathways Outcomes (So Progress Is Visible)

Observed at: Redstone Toastmasters (and recommended for VA Voices & Montgomery)

What Worked

- Pathways progress was documented alongside participation, reinforcing that speaking opportunities translate into advancement.

Try This

- Add a monthly “Pathways Progress Moment” (2 minutes): who completed what, who’s next.
- Publish a 4–6 week speaking calendar so members can commit in advance.

District Insight: When progress is visible, members stay motivated—and the club performs better in DCP.

E — ENCOURAGE

Encouragement Works Best When It’s Structured

Best Practice 7: Turn “Supportive Culture” into Specific Practices

Observed at: Redstone Toastmasters (and opportunity for VA Voices & Montgomery)

What Worked

- Mentorship, evaluations, and a positive environment were documented as part of member growth.
- Fellowship and community connection strengthened belonging.

Try This

- Adopt one concrete encouragement system:

- Mentor assignment within 7 days
- “First 30 days” new member roadmap
- Recognition moment every meeting (roles, milestones, effort)

District Insight: “We encourage members” becomes stronger when it’s described as a **system**, not a sentiment.

BONUS IDEAS

(Use these to strengthen future nominations.)

- Add **hard metrics:** guest count, joins, speech/evaluation counts, participation rate, Pathways completions.
- Include 1–2 **member testimonials/quotes** (powerful evidence of impact).
- Document one **external/community impact item** each month (service, outreach, partnership).
- Attach **supporting materials:** flyers, photos, screenshots, or a one-page summary.

DCP-ALIGNED TAKEAWAYS FOR ALL CLUBS

Club Focus	What “Good” Looks Like
Growth	Guests + follow-up + conversion metrics (not just attendance)
Quality	Consistent participation + meaningful speaking experiences
Sustainability	Pathways progress is planned and celebrated
Culture	Fellowship + service + recognition create belonging and momentum

FINAL THOUGHT

May's nominations reinforce a simple truth: **clubs grow faster when they measure what matters, create memorable experiences, and make member progress visible.** Whether your club is converting guests, testing new meeting formats, or deepening speaking impact, District 77 thrives when clubs share what's working so others can replicate it.

👉 **COTM Hall of Fame & Best Practices Page:**

<https://toastmasters77.org/cotm-hall-of-fame-and-best-practices/>