

Rising Phoenix Award Winner

Rising Phoenix Journey

Voices Toastmasters Club

by President Yeoh Pit Shing

An 8-year-old club with 10 members, club meetings with an attendance of fewer than 10 people, and the majority were invited guests. This was the reality when I first started my term.

The club had been in this critical stage for the last few years. Previous Exco teams had tried very hard (*what an understatement !*) to turn it around, but nonetheless, they couldn't come close. I was fully aware of the situation when I promised our Immediate Past President **Andrew Chee CTM, CL** that I would do my best to revive the club. What a daunting task that laid ahead of me ! (*Gee, what have I got myself into this time ??*)

My journey for the last 12 months had been very challenging but interesting to say the least, and very fulfilling at the same time. Trying to juggle between family, career and performing club CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is not for the faint hearted! My triumph and tribulations can be summarized into 8 points:

(1) Everyone counts - T.E.A.M.

Together Everyone Achieve More. The club belongs to everyone, and all of us have a part to play. Just like all the gears in a watch, regardless whether it is a big gear or small, missing one and the watch stops functioning. My 1st priority was to gather everyone around and share with them the sense of urgency. "We need to revive the club !" (*Thank GOD that I have a team that stands next to me !*)

(2) Recognize the uniqueness in each individual

Recognizing the fact that each and every member is different, I find it much easier if I assign various tasks and **responsibilities that best suit individual personality**. Some are out-going and like "clubbing" therefore PR and Promotion jobs are theirs, and some are thinkers so they like planning and coordination. (*Me ? I'm a visual guy, so, flyer design and email promo is my cup of tea*)

(3) Inspire, encourage & motivate

I've learnt that to lead is to inspire, to encourage and to motive. The best way to inspire is to share common direction and vision, get their buy-in and create togetherness. For us, this is easy, we either rise up to the challenge, or perish ! (*Oh boy ! Encouraging and motivating team takes a lot of time and effort, and need to do it at personal level ! But, worth it ! I have gained and learnt much more than what I gave*)

(4) Plan, Act, Follow up

Instead of trying to do everything, we **focus on only 2 critical areas** that we want to put our mind and heart into, i.e. (1) to make our club a great place for learning (have fun !), and (2) spread the news out (promotion and marketing) and getting them in (membership recruitment).

We then lay out a few simple action plans and assign to various members matching their personality (refer #2 above). We then follow up with SMS / emails / calls, and also meet face-to-face bi-monthly at Starbucks.

Too bad we have to pay for our own coffee _ (*DCP and awards ? What awards ? We never have these in mind. Survival is more important than everything else.*)

Log onto our website <http://Voices.FreeToastHost.com> and look for the "Photo Album" link. You shall be able to have a glimpse of the fun we had.

(5) Do wonders when motivated

A highly motivated team will do wonders ! We concentrate our effort for the right reasons - to rebuild our club, for fun and for learning, and not for the award. We know for sure that, if we do the right things, the award will come by itself. **"Award is the result of what we do"**. We never aim for DCP status, but we made the right strategies.

This term, our club achieved the 1st President's Distinguished status after 9 years ! *(The Rising Phoenix Award ? He-he, sorrylah, we never knew about this award, not until Jan'08)*



(6) Recognize & celebrate

Recognizing great effort and celebrating achievement is a great leadership lesson I learnt this term. We celebrate with all club members together, to make it a fun thing to do ! After this, we move on to the next action item on the list. *(Like the saying goes "celebrate for nano second")*



(7) If you don't succeed, try again

Toastmasters is the best place to learn and to grow. I have learnt so much, and of course, I made a few big mistakes. We learnt from our mistakes and we sure will move on with more confidence. *(Luckily, no one fired me as the CEO of our club ☺)*

(8) Reach out - no one struggles alone

Best advice I received, and would like to share, is **"no one will struggle alone in Toastmasters !"**. If you are in trouble or at a loss, reach out. Help is just a call away (or an email / SMS away). *(Make good use of your Area Governor or Division Governor ☺)*

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