

## Evaluator



### Evaluate to motivate!

People join Toastmasters to improve their speaking and leadership skills, and these skills are improved with the help of evaluations. Members complete projects in the *Competent Communication* and *Competent Leadership* manuals and you may be asked to evaluate their work. At some point, everyone is asked to participate by providing an evaluation. You will provide both verbal and written evaluations for speakers using the guide in the manual. You'll always give a written evaluation for leadership roles, though verbal evaluations for leaders are handled differently from club to club. Sometimes verbal evaluations are given during the meeting and sometimes they are given privately, after the meeting. Check with your vice president education (VPE) or the Toastmaster if you're not sure of your club's method.

Several days before the meeting, review the *Effective Evaluation* manual you received in your New Member Kit. Talk with the speaker or leader you've been assigned to evaluate and find out which manual project they will present. Review the project goals and what the speaker or leader hopes to achieve.

Evaluation requires careful preparation if the speaker or leader is to benefit. Study the project objectives as well as the evaluation guide in the manual. Remember, the purpose of evaluation is to help people develop their speaking or leadership skills in various situations. By actively listening, providing reinforcement for their strengths and gently offering useful advice, you motivate members to work hard and improve. When you show the way to improvement, you've opened the door to strengthening their ability.

When you arrive at the meeting, speak briefly with the general evaluator to confirm the evaluation session format. Then retrieve the manual from the speaker or leader and ask one last time if he or she has any specific goals in mind.

Record your impressions in the manual, along with your answers to the evaluation questions. Be as objective as possible. Remember that good evaluations may give new life to discouraged members and poor evaluations may dishearten members who tried their best. Always provide specific methods for improving and present them in a positive manner.

If you're giving a verbal evaluation, stand and speak when introduced. Though you may have written lengthy responses to manual evaluation questions, don't read the questions or your responses. Your verbal evaluation time is limited. Don't try to cover too much in your talk; two or three points is plenty.

Begin and end your evaluation with a note of encouragement or praise. Commend a successful speech or leadership assignment and describe specifically how it was successful. Don't allow the speaker or leader to remain unaware of a valuable asset such as a smile or a sense of humor. Likewise, don't permit the speaker or leader to remain ignorant of a serious fault: if it is personal, write it but don't mention it aloud. Give the speaker or leader deserved praise and tactful suggestions in the manner you would like to receive them.

After the meeting, return the manual to the speaker or leader. Add another word of encouragement and answer any questions the member may have.

By giving feedback, you are personally contributing to your fellow members' improvement. Preparing and presenting evaluations is also an opportunity for you to practice your listening, critical thinking, feedback and motivation skills. And when the time comes to *receive* feedback, you'll have a better understanding of the process.