



Club Care The Life Cycle of a Toastmasters Club

THE ORGANIZATIONAL PHASE

Just like any other group, a club has a Life Cycle. Phase 1 is the **Organizational Phase**. With the excitement of starting a new club, or reinvigorating an existing club, there is a dynamic spirit. New friendships are formed. People step forward to serve as officers. Everyone anticipates the benefits of membership:

- learning new skills,
- gaining personal confidence,
- overcoming fears,
- taking on leadership roles.

This phase can last for months or a couple of years, during which membership, and members' skills, blossom. With experience:

- The club's operations start to settle down into a comfortable standard
- New members constantly join
- Club members participate in contests and activities outside of the club.

THE MATURE PHASE

Over time, the club stabilizes and enters the **Mature Phase**. Membership hits a rather consistent level. Members progress beyond the basics and into advanced skills. Meetings flow with less effort. The club is highly productive:

- The club is consistently Distinguished or better
- Membership growth is consistent
- Meetings and programs are high-quality
- Members are advancing in the Toastmaster educational programs.

The **Mature Phase** can last for years, as long as:

- There is an influx of members
- Leadership roles are passed along to newer members
- The membership maintains an activity level inside and outside of the club itself.

However, if a club does not keep that level of quality, it is in danger of slipping into:

THE COMPLACENT PHASE

The club may become rather static. It loses momentum in attracting new members. Guests are infrequent. Leadership loses enthusiasm. The club's overall program seems lacking in some manner. Overall, the club's vibrancy wanes. As time goes on, a tired leadership throttles growth. New members aren't as easily assimilated into the club's leadership. The advancement of members in their skill level seems to stagnate. The Distinguished Club Program is glossed-over, or ignored. An attitude of complacency prevails.

A club in the **Complacent Phase** is at-risk. This is a stage where intervention will make a difference. It may come from enthusiastic new leadership or new members, or it may come from the Area or Division leadership.

But if nothing changes, the club may move into a more extreme aspect of the complacent phase:

THE DORMANT PHASE

The club has entered cruise mode. There is a cozy togetherness that ensures preservation, but lackluster performance can lead to a decline in the quality and quantity of speeches and evaluations. Meetings are predictable and members don't need to prepare as well as they used to – because they “can do it in their sleep” – and to a visitor it looks like they are.

The club is now in real danger.

A club that has reached the “Complacent” or “Dormant” phase has a choice: Will it enter the Phoenix Phase? Or will it die?

If the club and its members become aware that they are in the **Complacent Phase** or the **Dormant Phase**, they can decide to do something about it, and enter:

THE PHOENIX PHASE

This means members understand that their club is at risk, and that it needs the infusion of outside assistance to revitalize it and bring its performance up to charter standards.

The club leadership may request the assistance of the district in the form of a **Club Coach**.

The club can ask District leaders to provide assistance and materials to rejuvenate a lesser-performing club, helping it to regain its charter strength membership, rebuild its operations, and re-ignite the energy to maintain a mature club.

Club officers and members can meet with district leaders in a workshop environment that brings together several clubs in similar straits, providing networking possibilities and the opportunity to celebrate mutual successes.

Resources:

Your Area Director
Your Division Director
Your Club Growth Director
Your District Web Site (D50tm.org)
toastmasters.org

Making the commitment, and enacting action plans to rejuvenate your club's climate and attract and mentor new members, will lift your club back to the enthusiasm of the **Organizational Phase**.

If the club does NOT make the commitment, it will instead enter:

THE DEATH PHASE

That means the club membership falls below eight for two renewals, and the club charter is revoked; or, the members become burned out and just give up.

Source:

District 72 Max Plan, Session 4 Murray Coutts DTM, 2010/11 LGM