



# District 31

## Marketing Handbook

(Best Practices for District Marketing Teams)

Doug Sheadel, DTM

### Get the Most from this Handbook

What is a successful District? The success (or failure) of the District is a direct outcome of marketing program. The net growth of the District equals the number of new clubs started minus the lost clubs. The number of new clubs lost is a direct relationship to the success of the new club sponsors and mentors. The mature clubs lost is a reflection of club health; membership, dues paid, officer team effectiveness.

In the planning for the Marketing year 2011-2012, significant research was conducted into the history of District 31. What were the characteristics of a successful Marketing program? What is the likelihood of a newly chartered club surviving two years? The results were Shocking! A new club had less than a 50/50 chance of survival. ***Some program years dipped as low as 25%!*** The 2011-2012 Marketing Team focused on changing those statistics. As a veteran of 9 separate Marketing teams, a lot was learned from experience. Even more was learned by reaching outside the district to glean wisdom from the most successful districts in the world. The results were amazing. We moved from one of the last placed Districts (#82 out of 88 districts) to #21 that year.

For the bulk of District 31 history, the Marketing role has been the sole burden of the LGM. Success was measured by the number of clubs started. However, the most productive teams put their energy into not making the most, but making the ***healthiest*** clubs. It may be no surprise that greater numbers of clubs are a natural by-product of this "customer service" approach. It is usually not possible to label why each club failed, but there are some clear elements that lead to a healthy club. The handbooks comes from that work.

*(A personal note from the author: What were the differences between the most successful programs and the least successful? While the Sample Meeting is key, **I believe it was how much energy was invested before and after the Sample Meeting that makes the difference in promoting a long term healthy club.**)*

# Executive Summary

What is the purpose of a Toastmasters Club? We know that our mission is to "*provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.*" The purpose of the club is to support the needs of the members. The Toastmasters format is all about meeting the needs of the club members. The Club Leader Handbook is available to all Toastmasters at [www.toastmasters.org/CLH](http://www.toastmasters.org/CLH).

## Characteristics of a Healthy Club

- The club is a self supporting organization led by 7 club officers.
- There are 20 to 30 active members with 15 to 20 attending each meeting.
- The club meets frequently and consistently.
- Speech projects follow the Competent Communicator Manual.
- Table Topics are fun, effective, and draw members to participate.
- Evaluations are specific, positive and supportive.

So the goal of the marketing program is not to "add another club number", but to equip a group to use the Toastmasters format, follow it so the members benefit from it. Everyone on the marketing team needs to have a clear and unified understanding of these goals. While the Toastmasters format should be familiar to every Toastmaster, building a healthy club requires a team that is working together in an organized way. The marketing team needs training to operate as a team, with several very specific purposes.

This Marketing Handbook is based on the team approach to the District Marketing process. The effective use of the handbook will be to train the team, drawing them together. The handbook is based on the strategy developed and implemented by the most effective district teams in recent Toastmasters history. Looking backward, the model also fits the most effective Marketing teams in District 31's history. The Handbook comes out of the research and experience of the 2011-2013 District 31 Marketing teams.

- 1. No individual can accomplish what an organized team can. Coordinated teams need training on common goals, methods, tools and expectations. Teams are not only more effective, but have more fun and comraderie.**
- 2. Careful attention to using leads to identify, encourage, train and equip the sponsors can double or triple the number of leads and multiply the long term health of the clubs. Most leads will disappear after a few months of neglect. Put them into the hands of a central Toastmasters who can be trusted to follow up.**
- 3. Promotional Materials are widely available from Toastmasters and from District 31 files. Specific recommendations on their use can multiply the efforts of the club sponsors. Making the sponsors effective makes the team effective.**
- 4. We only get one chance to make a solid first impression. Most model clubs will model the Sample Meeting for the first 6 months to a year. It needs to be the best, most clear example of the Toastmasters format that can be offered.**
- 5. We will lose clubs, including some new clubs. Reduce this number by training and following-up with the new club sponsors and mentors. Make sure they equip the club leaders to work as a team, execute the TM format, work with the Area Governor, trust the District to support them. The Club Coach has the same goals for an existing club.**
- 6. Continue to work with the clubs - after the first 6 months of mentorship, after the club coach has supported a distinguished Club award. Make sure the club is aware of valuable resources and tracking tools on the WHQ and District websites**

# Marketing Handbook

## 1. Building a Marketing Team

Anyone that has supported a club startup knows the enormous personal benefits that come from the successful process. Losing a club soon after chartering is a heartbreak. At the same time, they are familiar with the concept of "**Only 24 hours each day**". Don't try to do it alone! This is a time to develop/practice your leadership skills, *including recruiting and delegating*. District 31 has, for most cycles, left the marketing to the LGM to manage. Based on our history, a single well intentioned dedicated Toastmaster with District help can support about 10 clubs in one year. A net increase of 10 clubs is a respectable year for the District. But while the LGM focuses on 10 new clubs, they usually run out of time and energy to support the existing clubs. A year without an active club retention program will usually lose more than 10 clubs. Toastmasters has formal roles for a Marketing Team made up of an LGM along with Club Extension and Club Retention chairs. This team can spread out the critical task of Marketing and accomplish much more than single leader. But recruiting and managing a team is a whole new task to add to the already overwhelming role of LGM. And a very successful LGM will usually have a team that includes several marketing groups across the District. For these reasons, the District nomination team (and electorate) should be looking for team leadership experience as a key factor for a successful LGM candidate.

It is a rosy concept that the Marketing Team will be made up of "All District Leaders". Rosy, but seldom a reality. Like any effective team, its members need to be personally committed to the common goal. They need to be willing to receive training, work for the collective good and collaborate with other members. The LGM should pour their energy into members who have committed themselves to work together for the common good of the District. How big the team needs to be can be determined by the team leader, knowing that the important balance is to have a team big enough to effectively share the load. And small enough for effective and clear collaboration between the leader and the members of the team.

## 2. Handling Leads:

Prospective clubs are identified through several means. They can be at corporations, churches, community centers, schools or restaurants. Most community clubs are open to anyone. Most corporate clubs are "closed", meaning that they only accept employees as members. However, a community club may also be considered "closed", such as an advanced club requires all members to be Advanced Toastmasters. And corporate clubs can be open to the community. No Toastmasters club can have a membership requirement based on age (except to persons under 18), race, creed, gender, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. New clubs must be chartered with a minimum of 20 members. Only three of the first 20 individuals may be members of another club, and are referred to as dual members. The remaining 17 must be new, reinstated or transfer members. Once you've decided on the type of club you want to form, seek help from other people.

**Leads** can come through Toastmasters WHQ: An inquiry is made on the Toastmasters website requesting more club startup information. WHQ (New Clubs office) replies with an email to the inquirer and copies the relevant district leaders. Their email cites the TM resources that help with the new club startup process. Every one of our District 31 Marketing Team needs to be closely familiar with these materials and how they can be used to support our efforts.

*"Please view our Toastmasters Building [New Clubs](#) section which will give you some basic information on starting a Toastmasters club. We recommend that you read our step-by-step guide, [How to Build a Toastmasters Club](#). This guide will have all the forms required to start a club.*

*Here are some brochures that our members felt useful when starting a Toastmasters Club:*

[All About Toastmasters](#)

[Find Your Voice](#)

[Clear Communication. Your Organization Needs It.](#)

[Confidence. The Voice of Leadership"](#)

**Leads** can come from existing or past Toastmasters. They decide they want a Toastmasters club where they work or live and contact the District for support in the process.

**Leads** can also be from active marketing efforts on the part of the District leadership team. Working through the team, a point of contact at a company or community is found. This may be supported directly from the District or it may at some point turn into a WHQ lead.

**Leads** come in many flavors. Very few sponsors are independently motivated and will make the club happen without support. Most leads that are not followed closely tend to disappear within several months. They were launched when the sponsoring individual was thinking about a communication program. If they don't hear from us soon, they get busy, change their focus or lose interest. ***An active follow-up on every lead is the foundation of an productive marketing program.***

Pulling leads "cold" out of the District leadership or members is another way of planting seeds for prospective clubs. An interested club sponsor is only the beginning of the process. The lead needs to be matured as the sponsor becomes more familiar with the process, materials and recruiting process of Toastmasters. Most sponsors need a lot of encouragement to turn the lead into a Sample Meeting. The leads should be followed up by a central point-of-contact. Sending a lead out to a local Toastmaster or leader has a very low chance of success. The central follow-up contact follows and supports the lead until they are ready for the Sample Meeting at which time they are turned over to the local Marketing team. What does that follow-up contact have to discuss with the Lead? **Here are some important things to discuss.**

- What does the sponsor already know about Toastmasters?
- What brought them to consider a Toastmasters club?
- Let them tell you what you can do to support this club project.
- Do they have corporate management support?
- How big is the pool of potential members? (must be >250)
- Are there other nearby pools of potential members if it is needed to "open" the club?
- Do they have an adequate place to meet? (size, convenient, consistently available?)
- How big is the pool of potential members? (must be 250 or greater)
- Do they need tools or support to talk to their managers? (need an info. mtg? send FBV flier?)
- Do they have a club startup team? (recommend 4-6 person team)
- What kind of promotional materials would be best for this group? (see next section).
- Make sure they understand the primary steps to become a club.

### **Simplified Steps to Start a Toastmasters Club**

- Read the Toastmasters step-by-step guide, How to Build a Toastmasters Club at [www.toastmasters.org/build](http://www.toastmasters.org/build). This guide includes all the forms required to start a club for your group.
- Get buy-in from your management or leaders.
- Fax or mail Form 1 (complete the first page and top half of the second page) from the Guide along with a \$125 check or credit card payment to Toastmasters International (This will provide you with 20 sets of basic communication and leadership manuals for the first 20 club members).
- Schedule a Sample Meeting with Lieutenant Governor Marketing.
- Promote the meeting. Gather at least 25 to 30 prospective members, who are ready to sign up to be members of Toastmasters.
- Conduct the Sample Meeting (we will bring our team).
- Prepare charter documents with our help. Obtain:
  - A minimum of 20 member applications and membership dues (\$20.00 for New Member Kit plus \$36.00 for the first six months per member)
  - Elected club officers - Club President, Vice Presidents (Education, Membership, Public Relations), Secretary, Treasurer and Sergeant at Arms
  - Club name
  - Meeting frequency, day of the week, time, location
- Subsequent meetings are conducted by your club startup team based on the Sample Meeting example.

### 3. Promotional Materials

Like all communication, Public Relations and Marketing efforts should be focused to target the specific audience. Avoid clobbering the Sponsor with every resource available. Work closely with the Club Sponsor to make sure they have the promotional tools that are best suited for their specific needs. Make sure that each club is given a Charter Member List to help them effectively organize their prospects. They should already have a copy or link to "How to Start a Toastmasters Club at [www.toastmasters.org/build](http://www.toastmasters.org/build).

We all remember the Good Ole' Days of having a Clip Art lectern graphically announcing the theme of our invitation or Flyer. You, the club officers are responsible for maintaining the health of your club. It is your right (and responsibility) to appropriately represent Toastmasters International in your little corner of the world. If this material is what you think serves your club's needs, then you have reason to use it. Become familiar with the: [toastmasters.org/brandmanual](http://toastmasters.org/brandmanual) and [toastmasters.org/brandguideline](http://toastmasters.org/brandguideline).



There are abundant resources right on their website to support our club needs. Check out [www.toastmasters.org/PRcorner](http://www.toastmasters.org/PRcorner). There are templates for newsletters, press releases, media resources, business correspondence and more. Another important link is the Virtual Brand Portal, ([www.toastmasters.org/vbp](http://www.toastmasters.org/vbp)) which provides an exhaustive variety of professional images, logos and branded materials to support your creative endeavors.

What does Toastmasters offer to a club that doesn't want to recreate the marketing wheel? Brace yourself, there are buckets of material to choose from. And District 31 can help you make the most of your choices. There is a Membership Building Kit for \$10 at the WHQ Bookstore. It includes the following materials:

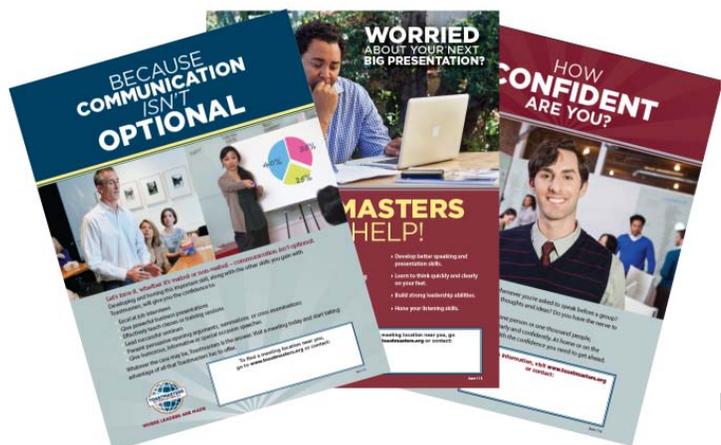


- All About Toastmasters (Item 124)
- Membership Growth (Item 1159)
- 5 Confidence. The voice of leadership. (Item 101)
- 3 From Prospect to Guest to Member (Item 108)
- 5 Find your voice. (Item 99)
- 5 Guest Information Card and Badges
- 5 The Benefits of Toastmasters Membership Flyers

For \$20 or \$30, a club can get a nice collection (2 or 3 sets) of these professionally printed materials that can be personalized right at your computer. Check out the templates on the District website ([www.district31.org/PRtemplates](http://www.district31.org/PRtemplates)) for personalized stickers based on Avery label #2660. They are in MS Word format, so they are editable by the user to provide all the club details or a personal club touch.

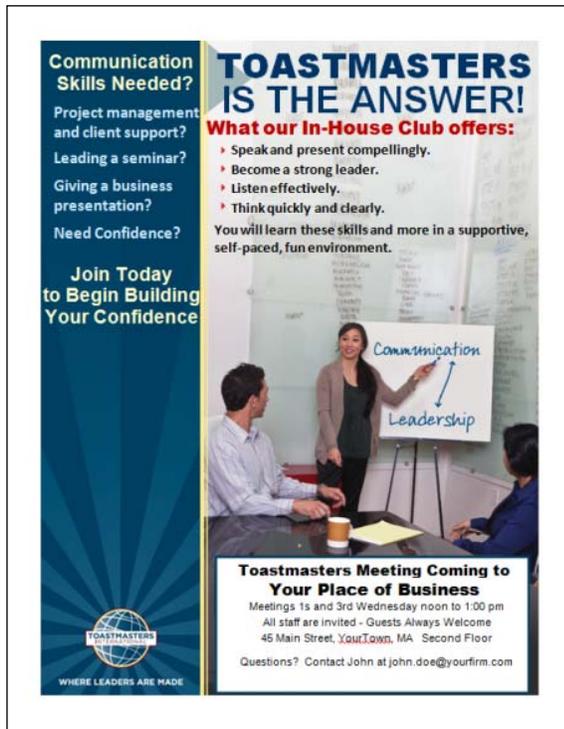
If your club is in need of high quality materials and has little or no means to obtain them, please contact District leaders at [LGM@District31.org](mailto:LGM@District31.org) to see how we can help. The District has a limited supply of Flyers and handouts to support specific club marketing efforts. Would your club benefit by distributing Club Business Cards? Sometimes the larger Flyers and handouts are quickly discarded. A business card might find its way into a wallet or rolodex, making it a valuable tool. District 31 created a MS Word template based on Avery Business Card Stock #8371 (10 per page). It is intended to be used for a club event, not for individual Toastmasters. (There is a personal business card on the TI website) Laser printers are recommended for all PR materials, as the inkjet printout is lower quality and is instantly and permanently affected by moisture.

High Quality Professional Flyers are available from the TI Bookstore. These sheets correspond to items #113, #115 and #116. They are professionally printed on high gloss paper with no white margin at the edges. There is no practical way to locally print this level of quality. At \$3.00 per 50 sheets (plus shipping) it is clear that TI is supplementing the production cost to make



these available to us. There is a space on the base of each Flyer allowing it to be personalized for the club or event. This can be done using stickers, or better yet by printing directly onto the sheet using a laser printer. District 31 provides templates for both of these methods.

Digital Flyer files can be used on Video Displays that are used for internal communication within many companies. They often need to be altered to simplify the text and change the format from Portrait to Landscape. Various formats have already been produced by District 31 for #113, #115 and #116. When requesting the files from District 31, specify what information needs to be printed at the base of the screen.



Digital Flyers and business cards can also be used as eye catching email graphics. Most of us communicate by sending and receiving emails. You can help the sponsor prepare an electronic business card or customized Flyer right into an email. The email has a much greater opportunity to be noticed and read if it comes from an associate or friend. Since the Flyer provides all the necessary details, it allows them to provide their own personal message at the top of the email. The email comes from the sponsor, so associates might look at it rather than deleting it.

Some sponsors will want to edit the text to add some local preferences. District 31 has re-created one of the Toastmaster Flyers and packaged it in MS Word format so it can be largely customized by the club user. Almost all of the text on this flyer is user-editable. The quality of the printout will be limited by the printer available. We strongly recommend high quality laser printers be used.

#### 4. Sample Meeting Planning

In many ways, the sample meeting is like a typical Toastmasters meeting. But in some important ways, it is different, or at least has a more specific focus. The sample meeting is by definition an example of a well-run Toastmasters meeting. There is typically a Toastmaster, Humormaster, Wordmaster, Topicsmaster, General Evaluator, Speech Evaluator, Grammarians and Timer. Variations may be introduced to meet specific needs of the expected audience. Of course, this should sound familiar to every District Toastmaster. But many club meetings swing widely from the norm. At some point in the club history, a decision was made to adjust the club format. Many clubs have no idea who or why those changes were adopted. But most Toastmasters are only familiar with one or a few clubs. Therefore, they need to be taught the "basic format". The basic format is much simpler than what most clubs use and is best for new clubs. Based on the performance of past club startups, it is clear that some styles work better than others. *If a club of inexperienced Toastmasters follows our exact example for the next 6 months to a year, it should set the foundation for strong, interactive and fun meetings.* What follows are specific recommendations that have been found to best support Sample Meetings. Most of these recommendations come right out of "Master Your Meetings" and "Think Fast" manuals. Some of these may be self-explanatory. Some may not, so make sure you find out "why?". If you feel that you cannot conform to these recommendations, please contact the Marketing Team Leader. It is important that the whole team is working together. There is only one chance to make a great first impression for this potential club.

#### The Goals

"The mission of the District is to "Build Clubs and Support All Clubs to Excellence". A sample meeting is all about the needs of the soon-to-be Toastmasters. Maximize their opportunity to participate in the meeting. Keep it simple, succinct and light. Focus on Basics, put on your "A" game. Plan for an outstanding

performance. Print out directions, address and phone numbers to the meeting. Follow up with your team to make sure they know their role and the necessary meeting details. Ask everyone to arrive 15 minutes early.

There are a few things worth calling specific attention to.

- 1) Discussions of optional meeting styles that various clubs choose.
- 2) Long introductions of the team and their exemplary qualifications. You want to impress this audience? Let them see you simply excel in your role. Use the KISS principle. Keep It Simple, St\_ \_ \_ \_! Trust that this new club will find its own innovative ways to meet their club needs.
- 3) If tragedy strikes on Sample Meeting day giving you a late start, trim the roles equally, not just Table Topics.
- 4) The audience will learn most from their own participation. Try to make a lectern opportunity for each participant. This makes Table Topics (audience participation) a pivotal part of every Sample Meeting.

Based on the performance of past club startups, it is clear that some styles work better than others. The meeting should be planned at least a week before the meeting. Distribute the draft agenda to the whole team. Notify the Team Leader as soon as practical if you can't fulfill your role. This is our ONE chance to make a great first and lasting impression on this audience. Do your part - with excellence!

### **Toastmaster**

You are introducing Toastmasters and also this Sample Meeting. Quickly introduce important basics like timing cards and the importance of evaluations. But keep your comments succinct and focused on the needs of this audience. Keep the meeting moving. Help the Topicsmaster know when he needs to wind down. In a time crunch, make sure the evaluation team tightens up their comments as necessary. As the meeting winds to a close, provide a brief summary and a strong Call to Action. Show your passion!

### **Humormaster and Speaker**

Make it fun for you and the audience. Keep it simple, clean and high energy. Plan the setup and practice your delivery! Make sure these roles are filled with reliable members who will arrive prepared.

### **Wordmaster**

Remember, this is an example for the first 6 months of the club's life. It is fine to always use "Inspire", "Communicate", "Passion" or "Participate", but feel free to personalize it. No kidding, keep it simple. Make it meaningful. Print the word in a large font, like 100 pitch. No need to print the example sentence.

### **Topicsmaster**

In new clubs, topics are the primary tool used to distribute the lectern time among the audience. So YOU choose who will respond and find audience members who are paying close attention. Keep your topics relevant so prospective members will be able to respond. Be gentle in handling the audience. Offer the topic first, giving the whole audience a chance to think a moment about it, then choose the respondent. If they turn down the opportunity, be respectful and supportive, but there is no reason to be apologetic.

### **Evaluation Team**

Have you ever given one of those ten minute "THOROUGH" Toastmasters evaluations? Well, this is not the place for it. Choose your thoughts carefully, a few specific things that went well, a few specific suggestions for improvement and a closing encouragement. Call it an Oreo Cookie or a Sandwich approach, it is always a solid starting place for introducing a Toastmasters evaluation. Every evaluation role, including Grammarian should have this balance. If there is a lot to comment on, feel free to expand the speaker's written evaluation. The oral evaluation needs to be a brief example of the standard formula for these soon-to-be Toastmasters. It needs to have specific observations, which are encouraging and succinct.

Plan every evaluation role to be an example of that TM evaluation formula that the group can model for the first six months to a year. Keep each presentation succinct, leaving more time for the crucial audience participation - Table Topics and Questions at the end.

Remember that the Sample Meeting is fundamental to the launch of a healthy club. There is nothing as encouraging as visiting a club a year after chartering and seeing the members modeling the great example that demonstrated in the Sample Meeting. Prepare to be at your very best. Club startup is core to the mission of our district. The reward is enormous. All roles are focused on setting this club prepared for a long-term healthy life.

## 5. New Club Support/ Retention Support/Chartering Ceremonies

Once the Sample meeting is behind you and the club is up and running, you can pretty much ignore the group and move on to the next "hot lead"... **Absolutely WRONG!** So why does this happen in so many district marketing teams??? Watch your team carefully for this malignant temptation. Remember that the goal is to create long term healthy clubs producing a net growth in the District. Remember how much effort goes into creating a new club. It usually takes much less energy to keep an existing club alive than to create a new one. It stands to reason that if you measure a new club as a "checked box" on your District's record, then more focus will be on "harvesting" than in providing follow-on support (i.e. "planting", "watering" and "nurturing"). Watch your own team management style. Make sure the focus stays on healthy clubs.

But healthy clubs are not just a concept. It requires a lot of work. And the most important work comes from the club leaders. Contact them often. Build your relationships to the clubs before they fail to elect officers or are late to renew their club membership. Let them know that you are there to support them. Collaborate with the Area Governor to make sure the tone remains positive and supportive. Club leaders feel "Special" when they know leaders of many levels. They feel "Beat Up" when they are descended upon only when they mess up. How do you support them? Provide support at Open Houses that lead to stronger membership. Make sure an encouraging Chartering Ceremony welcomes the club into the District. Make sure that the new clubs have active Sponsor and Mentor support. Teach them to watch for important signs that keep the new clubs growing and helps the existing clubs to stay strong. Provide them Successful Club Series presentations when appropriate. Be generous with marketing material. Discuss with the club how to make the most of programs like Speechcraft or Youth Leadership Programs. In short, build a relationship with the clubs and watch carefully as to what they need. Provide it directly or through your team: Sponsors, Mentors, Area Governors, Division Governors and nearby club leaders. There are a lot of ways to support the clubs and they don't always require huge amounts of LGM time.

## 6. Follow-Up Support

During the period between 2011-2013 a lot of resources were developed to directly support our District 31 clubs. Forms for individual club meeting roles. Questionnaires, member interest surveys, promotional materials, sample guest letters or new member instructions. These resources have been distributed directly and placed on the District31 website as available club resources. Do these tools fit every club's need? Certainly not. But they will meet many club's needs. And the editable versions can be modified. Tweaking an existing tool might take less energy and end up with a better club project than starting from scratch. It is important to note that these tools came from clubs just like yours. Most were seen at one club and seemed to be the best of the best, so were stripped of club details and offered to all other clubs. There is a lot of thanks to go around to members in the District that help by offering creative tools for other clubs. Other members support Sample Meeting roles or take roles on the Marketing Team. Our membership is not only the whole reason that the District exists, it is also the only way that we can survive, or better yet *thrive!*