



# Holding an Open House

1. Start Planning Early! Everything takes longer than you expected. Schedule multiple planning sessions. Don't try to do it all by yourself, enlist a bunch of people: many hands make light work. Have food (and make sure to publicize it.) For some reason nothing packs them in like free food.
2. Make it an HPL for someone. If someone is doing leadership they should get credit for it. The key is: Decide you are really going to do it, Get Enthusiastic, and do a lot of planning.
3. Advertise! A lot! And start early. Advertise using as many different methods as possible: word of mouth, your list of prospects, flyers in grocery stores and public places like the library, local daily or weekly newspapers, and an ad on public TV...
4. Be sure to have membership forms, pens, name tags, guest / new member kits if you use them, and pamphlets from International. Give the guest something to take with them. If you do not use them; **START NOW!!**
5. Collect contact information from guests (email, phone or address depending on what your club uses.) Follow up with guests. A phone call is powerful but also doing multiple emails is easy.
6. Shake hands a lot! Research has shown that the more people who introduce themselves and shake hands with a guest, the more likely that guest is to join. The magic number seems to be around seven, so if you have seven members make sure they *all* greet the guests. Assign a person to sit with each guest and explain the meeting and answer questions and make sure they know to try to engage the guest.
7. Don't expect the Toastmaster, person setting up the room, or speakers to do a lot of guest greeting. They are distracted by trying to get ready. So if you have people who are crucial to greeting guests, don't give them a big job during the meeting that will prevent them from greeting.
8. Consider having a guest speaker. That way you don't have to provide the speaker, you can advertise as a special event, and you have one less member distracted. The district can help you find a guest speaker.
9. Let guests speak (so leave room on the agenda). Invite them to talk about themselves or why they came, subjects they'll be comfortable with. Don't force them to come to the front or otherwise make them uncomfortable. They are nervous, which is probably why they came. Show that they can become comfortable and they will become members.
10. Remember to thank the hardworking members who made your open house possible. Appreciation is one of the dimensions of leadership so saying thank you is important.
11. Be enthusiastic about your club and show it. Nothing sells like honest enthusiasm.
12. Invite the guests to join the club or attend the next meeting.