

# D117 TOASTMASTERS HYBRID MEETING PLAN



## **HYBRID MEETING PLAN**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During COVID-19 many Toastmasters Clubs began virtual meetings. The possibility of meeting in-person appears to be reasonable in the Summer / Fall of 2021. As Covid restrictions are lifted Clubs are faced with a decision on where or how they should meet.

The choices are-

**In-person?**

**Virtually?**

**Hybrid?**

Clubs will be assessing how best to return to in-person meetings and do they need to simultaneously support virtual membership. Club's circumstances may have changed in the past year - for example do they still have a physical space to meet at? If not they may remain virtual until they can acquire a location. Some members may not be comfortable returning to in person or the location now supports a limited occupancy - these clubs may look to hybrid meetings. Clubs that have added virtual-only members (geographically they could never attend locally) will have to decide how to best accommodate those members or if they will. Hybrid could bridge the gap for these virtual members.

We recognize the value of in-person meetings but circumstances may suggest clubs will benefit from a hybrid model. Since clubs are now versed in both In-person and virtual meetings this discussion will focus on Hybrid Meetings.

The move to hybrid could be considered as:

- A temporary solution to allow members to transition back to attending in-person
- A long term solution which would allow current members flexibility in attending

Clubs will have to weigh their ability to conduct quality Toastmasters meetings in each scenario as well as changing from virtual to another format and what effect it will have on member retention. Meeting venue changes that negatively impact member retention or limits the guest experience will have an adverse impact on the club.

**Hybrid meetings** would allow some members to attend meetings at a specified location and continue with the virtual transmission of the meeting to members attending at home, traveling, or in remote locations. Guests could attend either venue. Alternative meeting structures could include any variant such as alternating in-person meetings and periodic virtual meetings.

Executive Committees of clubs can discuss

- Should the club move forward with a hybrid meeting
- An initial outline of how the process would be executed

Initial discussions have centered on a strategy for execution and we have come up with two principles for execution:

1. Keep it simple.
2. It doesn't have to be perfect.

## **DECISION POINTS**

Clubs can plan ahead by assessing the current situation and working towards the best outcome for the club and its members. Clubs will want to keep up with restrictions easing, regulations and the space owner's guidance. Clubs will have to assess their financial situation and potential cost commitments. Technology purchases also means that clubs will need the right skills to set up, operate and manage meetings. Meeting execution, club culture and the guest experience need to be discussed and adapted as needed for high quality meetings.

### **Local Regulations**

Clubs should monitor developments in regards to the opening up of public space. Legal and restrictions imposed by the space owners may constrain clubs to a restricted number of members attending. If a club is not able to have all members in-person do they wait (continue virtually) or start by having some members in-person and others remotely?

### **Member Concerns**

Some club members may or may not want to meet in person. Each club should survey members on their intentions. Club Executive boards may want to be sensitive to privacy or reasons why members make a selection. If needed, members can be surveyed anonymously.

### **Financial Issues**

A financial model needs to be developed by each club to support the hybrid model. The model should be reasonable and equitable for members and the club health. Clubs will need to assess how expenses (Technology purchases + monthly Zoom fees) are justified and the overall desire or interest to have remote members.

### **Equipment**

Equipment considerations are going to be key for clubs with lower membership and limited financial resources. The sophistication and cost can be reduced. Much of this equipment could be borrowed from members for a meeting. A risk factor is not having a key piece of equipment because someone doesn't attend.

### **Club Culture**

Club culture is a source of pride for many clubs. In the hybrid environment the club will need to assess if they can provide the same culture to virtual members or if that is necessary. There is no right answer here - clubs will need to decide if and how they can extend the club culture.

### **Guest Experience**

The guest experience is paramount to driving new members. In the hybrid model it is assumed that guests could attend in-person or virtually. Clubs have experience and processes for converting guests to members at in-person meetings and will need to replicate or modify for guests that attend virtually.

## 2. ROLES / DEFINITIONS

The following list is an explanation of the roles and definitions for common understanding.

**Zoom Master** - acts as lead technician connecting laptop to internet and service for broadcasting and cables to devices. Zoom Master puts focus on the speaker when the speaker is remote so the in-person audience can see them on a monitor. Zoom Master removes the video feed so the in-person audience is not distracted during an in-person speaker. Zoom Master manages Zoom feed to video monitor at the physical location. Once this role is mastered then the Zoom Master can also take on additional speaking roles during the meetings. The Zoom Master also plays a key role in setting up the sound, video and presentation material for in-person speakers. The Zoom Master also supports the Timer by conveying timing information to the virtual participants.

**Zoom Ambassador** - in-person member that interacts with virtual members and guests before or after the meeting, and at any breaks. This could be VP Membership or a rotating member. The role is to encourage questions and share answers. The member helps bridge the virtual environment by sharing the club culture and processes. This role is envisioned for larger clubs and is optional.

**In-Person** -members and guests attending at the club physical meeting location.

**Virtual (Audience, Guest or Speaker)** - any member or guest attending via the hosting software.

**Camera Person** - operator of the device that broadcasts the speakers at the club physical meeting location. Note: This role is not desirable as it takes another member away from the meeting.

**Traditional Toastmaster Meeting Roles - Toastmaster, Evaluator, General Evaluator, Table Topics Master**, etc - traditional Toastmaster roles have no changes and no responsibilities in the broadcast or technical aspects of the meeting.

**Broadcasting software** - subscription or free software used to connect members and guests through the internet. Most commonly used software (and used in discussions) is Zoom.

**Monitor/Screen** - at the in-person physical location a monitor or screen will be needed for the in-person audience to see the virtual audience. A monitor could be as small as a large computer monitor if the group fits around a conference room table to an LED monitor (wall mounted or on a tripod) or an LED Projector and screen. Monitor and screen are used interchangeably.

### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Video Mojo (VMTM) is a Toastmasters club in Raleigh, NC that chartered prior to the pandemic following the Toastmasters principles but using technology for speakers. Leveraging Facebook, Video Mojo provided live meetings to both an in-person and remote audience. This document takes a modified approach that they used as the model for a hybrid meeting. More information about the Video Mojo Process can be found in Appendix A.

### 4. EQUIPMENT LIST

The process of adding equipment will be evolutionary based on the space, member/guest experience, and need. For example, supplemental lights work well when close to the speaker but diminishes in effectiveness as distance grows. Existing room lighting configuration will dictate the need. Some items may be purchased in advance while others may need to be used in the space to determine if they work.

After discussions with technologists the following recommendations are put forward for review. Configuration #1 has a higher cost but would ensure sound and video quality. Configuration #2 would be good for a club that is trying to limit financial investment. Samples are shown in Appendix B & C.

#### **Configuration #1.**

The Zoom Master would use a laptop computer connected to a webcam placed on a tripod. The webcam could have internal microphones or use an external shotgun mic. A reasonably priced webcam (\$30-60) would have adjustable width for capturing the speaking area.

The laptop would connect to either an LED projector or LED TV via USB or HDMI cable which would act as an extended screen of the computer. With the projector we anticipate needing USB speakers to bring the volume up for virtual speakers projected in the room. Using an LED projector would also mean using a screen for viewing. If the club uses an LED TV, the sound from the speakers would be adequate.

#### Pro's

- Single operator - no camera person reduces the need to pull members out of roles
- Deliver quality sound and video no matter the speakers distance from the camera
- Allows for long or close in view of the speaker
- Equipment cost reasonable and has functionality after the pandemic to record members
- Single connection to existing WIFI or hotspot reduces bandwidth issues

#### Con's

- Zoom Master is multifunctional during the meeting with numerous duties (see Operations)
- Some switching back and forth what needs to be shown internally
- Couple of cords running around the room could be trip hazards
- Set up will take 10-15 minutes before a meeting

## **Configuration #2.**

This offers a lower cost alternative and may be a good starting point for clubs. A tripod with an adapter is used with a member's cell phone connected to Zoom. The phone broadcasts the lectern continuously throughout the meeting. It could be stationary or manned and operated. An operator should mute the phone when virtual speakers are talking. The Zoom Master operates a laptop and projects appropriate information for the in-person audience to see on a TV/monitor or to a projector. The Zoom Master also must connect to the Zoom meeting via the internet. Sound volume from the laptop or projector could be an issue needing supplemental speakers. Sound from a monitor/TV with built in speakers would suffice.

### Pro's

- Low cost if using member's equipment
- Little storage space needed
- Easy set up and breakdown

### Con's

- Two connections to the internet needed. A robust WIFI will not have an issue but anything less than a 5Mbps upload service may have issues
- Second connection may have to be via a hotspot
- Data costs could be incurred by the broadcasters
- Sound and video feed diminish as the phone is placed further from the speaker
- Ambient noise would be picked up equally as the speaker (papers rustling, moving in seats)

Additional details concerning the equipment is included in the financial section below.

## **5. NEXT STEPS & MEETING EXECUTION**

### **NEXT STEPS**

Video Mojo's Justin Struble suggested building the basic equipment and starting to execute meetings now with a setup trial. Clubs will have to inventory their space and technology to determine a configuration that works for them. Configurations shared below can act as suggestions or baselines for your final implementations. Measuring the physical space will allow for the purchase of correct length cords and equipment specifics. Decisions around purchases should not be made until closer to return to the physical location to account for any variance or events that currently can not be predicted.

### **MEETING EXECUTION**

Meetings will not substantially change. The two scenarios discussed are an In-person speaker (any role) and a Virtual speaker (any role). The Zoom Master will be in charge of the IT and display thus that person will have an active role in the meeting.

**In-person** - Every speaker in the physical location will take their place at the lectern or in the speaking area. The Zoom Master will broadcast the speaker to the virtual audience. The monitor in the room could be blank, show a blue Toastmasters slide, or the remote audience. The speaker would see the timing lights in the room and the Toastmaster would announce the

timing results to the virtual audience. The virtual audience would not see the timing lights of a speaker that is in the club's physical space (Speakers, Table Topics Contestants or Evaluators).

The Timer presents a unique problem. Most likely, the virtual audience will not be able to see the signalling device from the Timer in the in-person physical room. If the Timer is located virtually, then the in-person speaker is not able to see them as they will be projected on the monitor which will probably be located behind the speaker facing the audience. In the future we may open this role up to virtual members but for sake of consistency and ease of execution the initial decision is to have the Timer role physically at the in-person location. A solution is for the Zoom Master to relay the timing signals to the virtual audience (for a virtual speaker only) using the Zoom green, yellow, and red backgrounds by taking cues from the Timer.

**Virtual** - Every speaker in the virtual space will broadcast as they do now. The Zoom Master will turn off the webcam and broadcast the colored backgrounds as they are relayed by the Timer. The virtual audience will see Zoom backgrounds similar to current virtual meetings. Speakers in the virtual space (Speakers, Table Topics Contestants or Evaluators) will be timed as usual. Roles that are not timed (Toastmasters, Joke Master, or Invocation) will see no change. When a virtual speaker appears, the Zoom Master will broadcast the Zoom meeting, pinning on the monitor/screen in the Speaker View. The in-person members and guests will view it like they view it currently with a larger version of the speaker surrounded by other virtual guests or members.

With a virtual speaker, the Timer will still operate the timing signals for in-person attendees. The Zoom Master will additionally operate the blue, green, yellow, and red Zoom background slides for the virtual speakers.

**Presentations** - Virtual guests will present media or slideshows as they do now. Zoom will transmit the shared material in Speaker view by default and the speaker will be a small image to the side of the screen.

The in-person speaker with a presentation will need to coordinate with the Zoom Master regarding the display of slides / media. The Zoom Master will facilitate the presentation of the slides / media to the in-person room monitor / screen as well as to the virtual attendees via Zoom.

An in-person member will present slideshows using the monitor/screen in the room. They will have to bring in the material for sharing, access it from the internet before the meeting or load it on the Zoom Master's laptop prior to the meeting. The Zoom Master will configure the material on the monitor/screen ready to go and use sharing once the speaker starts. The Zoom Master will continue to share this way. Virtual viewers will see the shared material in the main speaker window and the speaker beside it in a smaller box. The in-person members/guests will see only the shared material. The speaker will control and advance the material using a clicker wireless presenter Remote associated with the Zoom Master computer.

**Communication** - Announcing when meetings are going hybrid should take place with advance notice along with a short survey of members who are planning on attending. Understanding member preference will add to the reliability of being able to hold in-person meetings with virtual attendees. Coordinate the announcement with notifying past members that in-person meetings will be resuming and an invitation to rejoin. Follow up notices to past members/guests should take place over the next couple of months.

The club officers will need to inform members of upcoming changes to meetings as the time gets closer. The club should provide announcements on how the meetings will run and share presentation material educating members on changes and new processes.

## **6. TECHNICAL ROLES DISCUSSION**

To execute a hybrid meeting the club will need to add at a minimum one technical role of Zoom Master. Supporting technical roles may include setup assistance and camera person. The Zoom Master may do all roles or just set up and run the meeting. At first Zoom Master will be focused on working on developing and adjusting the process for your club and will be single focused. After a few meetings it is anticipated the Zoom Master could start to take supporting roles in the meeting in addition to their duties. Set-up assistance and camera person would be optional roles for larger clubs.

Following the example Video Mojo has set; we believe that executing the technical portion of the meeting should be a secondary and voluntary role. Our focus remains with Toastmasters goals of speaking and leadership. A volunteer portion of the club members will become the technical team to execute a meeting and engage anyone one (experienced or new) who wants to learn the procedures and skills needed to be the Zoom Master and run the Zoom portion of the meeting. This is a critical role for the club. We encourage members who have the skills to volunteer for this role.

Keeping the technical roles to a minimum is key to all clubs and especially those that have trouble filling all the roles for a meeting. The camera person can easily be eliminated if the room configuration allows for a stationary positioning of the broadcasting phone if the speaking area is static. Speakers can opt to adjust where they stand for optimum broadcasting. Once the setup of equipment is in place before the meeting there is no reason the Zoom Master could not participate in the meeting. Only certain transitions will demand their attention.

## **7. GUEST, IN-PERSON, & VIRTUAL ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE**

Consideration needs to be given to every attendees experience at our Toastmasters Meeting. While the in-person meeting is the best experience, there is also a responsibility to meet the needs of our guests and members as we transition back to in-person meetings. Member retentions is met when members needs are met and guests join

A number of meeting specific recommendations are captured and appear in Appendix D

## 8. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### ZOOM

Clubs will need to develop their own financial model to justify costs. A sample follows.

Clubs that have contracted with Zoom are paying upward of \$180 per year. Wherever possible clubs should share this expense with other Toastmasters clubs reducing the expense. The club would need to partner with clubs that meet at different times and preferable days. Reducing this expense by sharing with two other clubs means the annual cost drops to \$60 a year.

The club charges members a \$2 per month fee or \$24 per year for expenses. Without the club subsidizing this cost the break even point for having remote members is 3 ( $\$24 \times 3 = \$72$ ). Two members fees would cover most of the cost (\$48) directly from the members with a deficit of \$12. This assumes the only cost of operation is Zoom and not WIFI or the cost of equipment.

Clubs will assess if they need to add WIFI at the location or use Hot Spots to connect to the internet and any related costs.

Equipment costs could be borne by the club or spread over time against dues. Sample equipment costs can be used for decision making.

### EQUIPMENT

Equipment cost (Configuration #1)

Category	Manufacture	Cost
Webcam	<a href="#">NextGo</a>	\$40
Tripod	<a href="#">Amazon Basics</a>	\$28
USB Cord 20' Extension for Webcam	<a href="#">XXONE</a>	\$15
HDMI Cord 20''	<a href="#">Highwings</a>	\$22
Laptop (See optional equipment)*	Provided by member	\$0
Presentation Remote control	<a href="#">Beboncool Remote</a>	\$10
<b>OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT</b>		
Shotgun Microphone	<a href="#">Movo</a>	\$40
Sound cord 25'	<a href="#">Hftywy</a>	\$11
Chromebook* (replaces laptop from above)	<a href="#">Acer</a>	\$250

Port Replicator	<a href="#">Q Geem</a>	\$25
50" TV	<a href="#">Insignia</a>	\$300
Monitor Tripod	<a href="#">Perlesmith</a>	\$60
Case (for protection during storage and transport)	<a href="#">Gator</a>	\$186
LED Project / Screen	Various - in lieu of TV and monitor tripod	\$200-400

## EQUIPMENT

Equipment cost (Configuration #2)

Category	Manufacture	Cost
Cellphone	Provided by member	\$0
Tripod	<a href="#">Amazon Basics</a>	\$28
Tripod/Phone adapter	<a href="#">UBEEsize</a>	\$10
HDMI Cord 20"	<a href="#">Highwings</a>	\$22
Laptop	Provided by member	\$0
<b>OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT</b>		
Projector / Screen	TBD	TBD
50" TV	<a href="#">Insignia</a>	\$300
Monitor Tripod	<a href="#">Perlesmith</a>	\$60
Case (for protection during storage and transport)	<a href="#">Gator</a>	\$186

## 9. CORPORATE CLUBS

Corporate clubs may have conference room facilities that can accommodate a hybrid meeting. Consideration to how cameras are positioned and meeting flow needs to be determined by space and equipment specifics. Some conference room facilities show the entire table or room. Where possible it would be good to focus a camera on the speaker.

Corporate clubs could leverage Zoom or the platform they use for conferences allowing members to stay at their desks or invite employees from geographic locations other than where meetings are currently held. Platform and conference room set up will dictate the technology

use and execution of meetings. Company policies will drive the club to determine if members will be working remotely some or full time. These policies will help determine the need for hybrid meetings.

## **APPENDIX**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

A. Overview - A meeting with Video Mojo Toastmasters Club's Justin Struble, President; Lee Folger, President Chapel Hill Toastmasters (CHTM); Greg Lane, Member CHTM was held on 1/6/2021. Video Mojo (VMTM) is a Toastmasters club in Raleigh, NC was chartered prior to the pandemic following the Toastmasters principles but using technology for speakers. The purpose was to attract anyone that used Facebook Live, Zoom, Webex, or streaming / recorded platforms to reach an audience. Justin was generous to share an hour and a half explaining technology, challenges, and culture of his club. His insights were invaluable and will assist us to make informed decisions.

B. Background Pre-Covid Meetings - Meetings pre-Covid were both in-person and virtually. Members could attend via Facebook Live or at a location in Raleigh. Either in-person or virtual allowed members to participate as speakers or in roles. The meeting included a role of video technician (Zoom Master) who managed the IT portion of connecting and managing the technical aspects of the meeting. A camera person would sit behind a tripod and adjust a cell phone camera to follow the speaker. The Video Mojo configuration used a local WIFI connection with the Camera Phone and Laptop computer both broadcasting to the membership. Video Mojo uses a mix of taped and live speeches.

C. Current Meetings- Since Covid, Video Mojo has moved to a Facebook / Zoom combined meeting. Zoom is used to connect members and guests to the meeting. A private Facebook group is used by members to upload or capture recorded speeches. The Zoom Master selects a recorded speech or message from a member and plays it to the group as you would a YouTube. In the past Video Mojo used the chat feature of Facebook for members to post evaluation comments that were read by either the Zoom Master or Toastmaster.

D. Setup Description - Video Mojo uses a tripod with a cell phone stabilizer (see equipment list) that mounts on a tripod. They recommended a sturdy tripod for stability. The cell phone stabilizer has a mounting bracket for lighting and a Shotgun Mic which is a directional sound capturing device. The microphone plugs into the broadcasting phone. Lighting consists of two rechargeable LED battery powered lights. Charged lights are expected to last a full meeting. Battery powered offers the most flexibility, reduces cords and allows for easy relocation. The room they use has a mounted LED TV (monitor) for viewing by the in-person audience. The Zoom Master uses a personal laptop to connect to the internet.

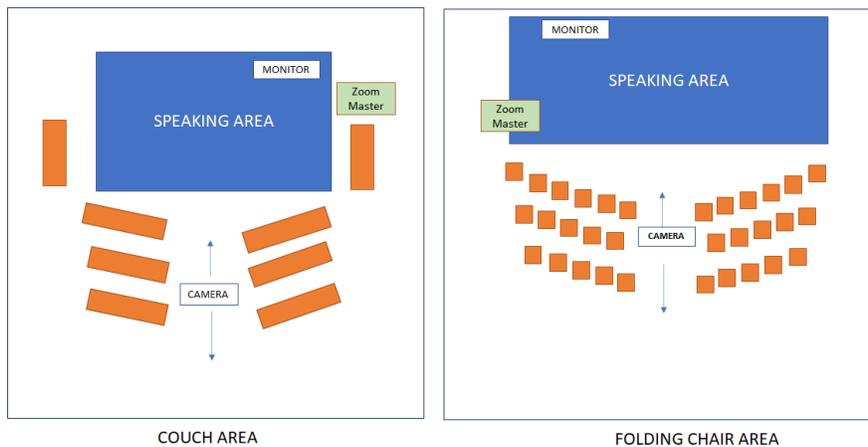
E. Meeting execution - The tripod is located between 12' and 20' from the speaker. A camera person (optional) sits behind the camera and does minor adjustments following the speakers

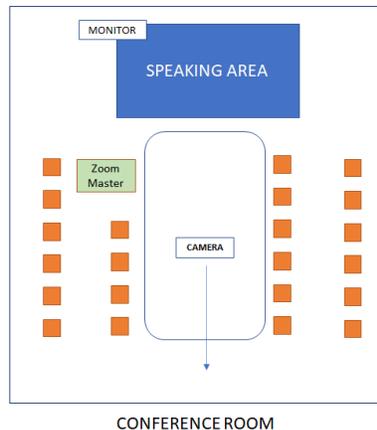
movement and adjusting for height. The closer the camera / microphone / tripod is located to the speaker the less physical space and presence is covered. A distance<sup>1</sup> of 20' from the speaker could potentially allow speakers to utilize a speaking area of approximately 10'x10' and broadcast them from foot to head. A distance of 8' from the speaker could confine them to the lectern area with a "headshot" view of the speaker from chest up. When the camera's position captures an acceptable portion of the speaker it potentially would not need to have an operator. Video Mojo is first committed to Toastmasters Speaking and Leadership with a focus on Video Performing and second to developing members to set up and execute the technical portion of the meeting. It is not required that a member develop the technical skills needed to Zoom Master or execute a meeting - it is done on a voluntary basis.

F. Zoom Master Role - Zoom Master controls who is seen on the screen / monitor mounted in the front corner at the club's physical location. The virtual audience or speakers presentation is shared on the monitor for the in-person audience. By pinning the speaker in Zoom, the Zoom Master manages the speaker and the speaker's presentations (PowerPoint). The in-person audience "hears" the virtual attendees through the TV speakers.

## B. ROOM CONFIGURATIONS

A Sample room configurations follows:





Note: Initial observations on using the webcam indicated that at a distance of 12+/- feet from the speaking area the webcam coverage is 14-16' in width. Webcams will vary but this illustrates what a club is looking at in both a small and large space.

### C. SAMPLE EQUIPMENT LIST

The following is a list of SAMPLE equipment only for representative purposes. Nothing has been validated. When possible we have identified equipment similar to what Video Mojo is using.

#### A. Sample Cell Phone Stabilizer

- [Amazon.com: Ulanzi Smartphone Video Rig for iPhone](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0788Z8888)
- [Amazon.com: ULANZI U Rig Pro Smartphone Video Rig](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0788Z8888)
- [Amazon.com: Neewer Smartphone Video Rig Stabilizer](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0788Z8888)

#### B. Tripod

Tripod is used to mount the cell phone or webcam on. Recommended height should be the speaker's face height.

- <https://www.amazon.com/AmazonBasics-60-Inch-Lightweight-Tripod>

#### C. WebCam

Desired features are microphone, privacy Cover, adjustable range for focus.

- [NextGo](https://www.nextgo.com/) webcam

#### D. Shotgun Microphone

Device that captures sound only in front of the device, eliminating ambient noise.

- [Amazon.com : Movo VXR10 Universal Video Microphone with Shock Mount,](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0788Z8888)

#### E. Cords & Accessories

- The shotgun mic typically has a 3.5mm headphone cord.
- 3.5mm TRS Output Cable to Android and Apple (lighting & USB) adapters
- Flex adapters (male to male, female to female, etc..)
- USB Cord (Computer to Projector) or HDMI cord (Computer to Monitor/TV)

F. WIFI - hotspot - Internet connection

The physical location will need either a shared WIFI or the club will need to use a member's phone hotspot. Determine any cost implications before proceeding. (See Zoom requirements - [zoom](#) site has specifics for computer and access)

- Test in location Wifi capacity to handle network load
- Capability to handle one or two devices broadcasting
- Supplemental would be a personal cell phone(s) hotspot
- Review data plan usage so as to not incur cost to member
- Ability to meet / exceed broadcasting platform requirements ([Zoom](#))

G. Sample LED Lighting

Lighting would be used to better broadcast the speakers. The location used has side and back lighting which is a deterrent to proper lighting. Lamps and overhead lighting exist and will be configured for their best use. LED lighting would be most effective closer to the speaker and may be ineffective at a distance. A good quality webcam will adjust to the existing lighting. Currently there is no recommendation to purchase LED lighting.

- [Amazon.com : RALENO Led Video Light, Built-in Rechargeable Battery](#)

H. Laptop

Potentially start with rotating use of members PC laptop or tablet. This device connects to the internet and Zoom (broadcasting software) and allows Zoom Master to display speakers who are attending virtually. An inexpensive laptop configured to use with hosting, network, settings and particulars could be purchased by the club. Zoom has network and hardware [specifications](#) that would need to be met.

A component that should be added to the laptop is Presentation Remote control for in-person speakers to control the forward and backward flow of presentations.

- [Dell](#) refurbished computer on Amazon.com - \$249 (Specs not validated)
- [Chrome](#) book - features should include HDMI port (or a USB-C) and 2 USB ports.
- Remote control

I. Cell Phone

The cell phone would be used at the in-person meeting to connect the visual and sound of the speaker to the rest of the virtual group. Sample device(s) without a cell phone data plan:

- [iPhone8](#) - refurb on Amazon \$237 (Specs and camera not accessed)

J. Speakers Consider speakers to connect to chrome book/laptop for audio from remote participants to be beamed into the room. Using bluetooth speakers connected to the Chromebook if the sound isn't distributed equally around the room. Zoom Master might have to reduce volume to zero to avoid feedback into the mic.

K. Monitor/TV While the optimal size monitor for a distance of 10' is typically considered 70" the practicality of handling and moving this on a regular basis is fraught with concern. A monitor

of 55” was considered as the best minimum choice for displaying slides and remote speakers. Standard guides are available for distance to monitor size and 55” is best for a 6.9’ – 11.5’ distance. Each space will have its own requirements.

An LED projector was purchased by the club and would be the initial choice for viewing virtual speakers and slideshows. Screens currently available support a 6’ image. Considerations on purchasing a projector include the lumens output. As the facility we use is not easily darkened the projector must overcome a bright situation to be visible. An LED projector will scale up in size as distance is increased from the screen. The brightness and sharpness of the picture will diminish with distance. Tests needed to be conducted in the physical space.

## **D. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE MEETING QUALITY**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN CURRENT VIRTUAL MEETINGS:**

The following is a list of recommendations that could be implemented over time. The list is not exhaustive but should be used as a start of brainstorming for what the club needs. The goal is to honor the existing Toastmaster meeting protocols whenever possible and make allowances for virtual considerations.

Recommendations for improving our current virtual meeting:

#### **CONTROL OF THE MEETING**

- Inform the club that the member in control of the meeting is responsible to tell speakers they are mute and need to come off. The control of the meeting typically falls to the Toastmaster, General Evaluator, or Table Topics Master. This leading role should tell the person they are handing off and to unmute. This avoids various people from jumping in.

#### **TIMER**

- Timers should use TM background slides starting with Blue then Green, Yellow and Red. Use audio sounds for Presentations when requested. Make sure backgrounds have the color name for anyone color blind.

#### **RITUALS & CLUB TRADITIONS**

- Any rituals, tradition or processes that were normative before Covid should be continued as realistically as possible.
- Consider presenting a virtual ribbon to the Table Topics winner.
- Consider emailing or physically mailing Level Completion Certificates to members and presenting a virtual certificate at meetings to acknowledge accomplishments. Certificates can be generated and displayed electronically via screen share.

#### **GUESTS**

- Consider using breakout rooms to move guests or new members for additional conversations. Clubs may need to separate exi

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING FUTURE HYBRID MEETINGS:**

Recommendations for Hybrid meetings should be implemented once a couple of meetings are successfully held. Post meeting debriefs with a Zoom Hybrid Execution Committee and key officers (President, VP Membership, VP Education, VP Public Relations) should be held frequently at first to introduce improvements and streamline the process. Debrief meetings should focus on what went well and what can be improved. Once the improved list is determined then it can be prioritized for implementation. Listed below are some processes or recommendations for hybrid meetings.

### **MEETING SIZE**

- Determine a quorum needed to make an in-person meeting viable. There will be a need to get commitments in advance of the meeting (Leverage FTH or surveys). Consider 6 or more members to hold an in-person meeting otherwise remain virtual that week. Consider that once the club reopens a strong commitment be made to holding regular in-person meetings as guests may attempt to attend. If a meeting is canceled the initial guest experience could be negative.
- Evaluate occupancy capacity restrictions for in-person meetings mandated by the state, local officials or facility owner and need to limit slots.

### **ZOOM AMBASSADOR & SUPPORTING OFFICERS**

- Determine the role of Zoom Ambassador or officer in charge of guest(s) for that meeting and consider using time at the break and the end of the meeting to engage with virtual guests and new virtual members. The guests and Zoom Ambassador or officer could be moved to a breakout room for a private discussion. During most meetings we have found that guests do not show up significantly early for meaningful interaction.
- Use a Break-out room to conduct any visitor or guest Q&A.
- We are not looking for perfection in the execution of meetings - it is a medium to deliver content and practice.
- Consider revamping SAA script to include notes on being present and no distractions:
  - “Prepare yourself to be fully present during the session.”
  - “Consider removing any noise making entities from the room including pets and cell phones?”
- Engage virtual guests during the break (as we would with in-person guests).
- Officers evaluate energy of role takers and encourage excitement and methods to bring more energy. Role model energy and make it contagious.
- Track participation and connect with members that miss a couple of meetings.
- Communicate the Officers Role to members. We have high standards and a goal of excellence but very few people start with that level of performance. The officers' job is to assist everyone in improving - we are not striving or demanding perfection.
- Add fun polls or surveys, add surveys about member satisfaction. Take the temperature of the group regularly. Find improvements on Hybrid meetings.
- Follow up phone calls with guests on their experience (one-on-one is less daunting than in front of a group)

- Increase communications to the entire club including announcements, upcoming events, inspirational notices, etc.
  - Formally survey members at the one month, three month and six month marks for suggestions and feedback. Informally survey guests through VP Membership interactions.
  - This role could be expanded to facilitate interaction (before meeting, during breaks, after meeting, between virtual and in-person attendees via a smartphone
- CAMERA OPERATOR (IF CLUB CHOOSES TO INCLUDE THIS ROLE)**
- Show the in-person audience (verses showing the empty lectern) - when the speaker is virtual show the in-person group on camera.

**ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

- Amend process or ensure that virtual only members (someone who will never attend the physical meeting) meet with the VPE shortly after the voting and review Pathways, choices, picking a path and general TM information. Once orientation is complete they are assigned a Mentor to answer questions.

**TOASTMASTER**

- At the conclusion of the meeting have the Toastmaster interact with any members or guests from Zoom that didn't have a speaking role.
- Reiterate how remote guests can participate frequently to all members
- Add visuals about the meeting, Toastmasters, roles, Pathways etc. This could be done by VP Education/Membership before meetings.
- Reiterate how the club members/leadership can help (Technology, Program, Education system, one-on-one) and mentoring.

**VIRTUAL ATTENDEES**

- Do not require Zoom attendees (especially guests) to show video. Lead by example with members requesting that they do so.
- Engage guests as frequently as possible (Table Topics, Interview, questions).
- During break encourage virtual members to stretch, get up and move

**TABLE TOPICS & ROLES**

- Voting for Table Topics could use a poll supplemented by in-person ballots. Zoom Master gives virtual attendee totals to the Timer. Table Topics results should not be shared as the balloting is not open.
- Timer or Officer announces results at the end of the meeting, consistent with traditional meeting customs.

**GUESTS**

- Explain to in-person guests how the hybrid meeting is working and who can see the speakers. Gauge comfort level before asking if they would speak in front of a camera. Note - not every guest will feel comfortable and respect their wishes.
- Introduce guests at the in-person meeting and consider having them walk to the front of the room so virtual members can see them. (Not mandatory as not everyone may feel comfortable).
- Look at any restrictions with broadcasting guests - do not want legal entanglements.

**VOTING**

- Voting for new members - enable a Break-out room and have SAA accompany guest(s) (soon to be member) while vote and discussions take place.

**CONNECTIVITY IN OTHER SPACES**

- When a club uses “alternate spaces” in a location - those rooms need to be assessed before using. Does WIFI work, how is the lighting, are there enough outlets? Groups that meet in churches or conference rooms occasionally get bumped and need to have assessed contingency plans.

**E. SPECIAL THANKS**

Special thanks to Justin Struble from Video Mojo for a great head start. Video Mojo has customized their meetings to meet the expectations of their membership. They are a video first group who wants the ability to submit videos in advance of the meeting. Video Mojo has climbed the curve of learning key factors like lighting, setup, equipment, and more. Justin generously shared his experience to help us learn faster regarding the experience we want for our physical meeting participants and virtual meeting participants. Justin has been generous in sharing his time and expertise in the true Toastmasters spirit.

Chapel Hill Toastmasters Committee co-chairs Lee Folger, Greg Lane and members Sharon Hill, Sam Gathuya, Kav Muddiyada, Phoenix Miller, Bibi Haddad, Ken Taylor, Irene Hwang and Don Newman have generously shared their time with insightful comments and suggestions that advanced our understanding of a well functioning meeting and set goals for the group to achieve.

**F. CONTACT INFORMATION**

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