

# FALL DISTRICT CONFERENCE – MALLORCA

## (EPILOGUE)

### INTRODUCTION

This document is a snapshot of comments from several members of the Organizing Committee of the Mallorca Toastmasters Club concerning the District 59 Fall Conference. It is hoped that this document will assist future Conference Organizing Committees in their quest to conduct a meaningful and productive Conference that their Clubs or Areas have volunteered to host. Your comments are appreciated.

### ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

Read the District 59 instructions carefully. It is important that a proper Committee be selected for the following:

**Overall Responsibility** – This can be jointly managed however, a synergy must exist between partners and it is imperative that they be compatible or a single person should be in charge. They should have experience in running meetings, show strength in leadership, have past overall management experience and be able to make decisions quickly and concisely. This position is not to be confused as a popularity contest.

**IT Responsibility** – It is important to have a computer oriented person that can develop a webpage to facilitate advanced publicity and registration. This can be contracted out.

**Treasurer** – This person should be an experienced accountant or someone that can handle figures accurately and has budgeting experience. There will be a bit of pressure on this individual throughout the year. The easiest way to do this job properly is to simply practice income in and expense out. Stay away from what ifs and fancy EXCEL sheets. You will be dealing with budgets of less than €30,000.

**Secretary** – All meetings should have carefully documented minutes with roles and responsibilities of participants so that there is no room for vague directions. Minutes should be published to the Committee as soon as possible but no later than a week after a meeting.

**Visual Aids and Graphics** – This is necessary for posters, agendas, badges, advertisements, etc.

**Sergeant at Arms** – Takes on a new meaning as this individual has responsibility for all matters that are required during the conference. Overhead Projectors, Beamers, Placing of Banners, Audio Equipment, etc and any props that are used during the Conference are the responsibility of this individual. Also, a method has to be worked out so that speakers don't exceed their allotted time.

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**Negotiator** – An experienced person that has the ability to negotiate for meeting and hotel rooms, meals and beverages and entertainment. This can be the person with overall responsibility.

**Administration** – This person is required for all functions at Conference time and should consist of a team. They will handle registrations, late registrations, monitoring non payers, handling complaints and providing for overall administrative management. A person should be selected that knows the area exceedingly well to handle all emergencies. He should have (7/24) telephone numbers of doctors, dentists, police, fire, consulates, etc.

**Publicity** – A person, preferably a Club VP of Public Relations that has good contacts with the media. Also, this person should be responsible for getting a good photographer to record the event and be there to instruct who is who.

**Proposal Writer** – This person would be responsible for generating a proposal for selling the District Board and individual members to have a Conference in a specific location taking into account travel and lodging problems, budget, activities and the usual when, where, what and how much that sells an idea. This person should be a good writer and have the ability to script a performance.

**Planning** - The planning is simple, discipline yourselves to meet regularly. Use volunteers who are responsible and release non contributors as soon as possible. In the beginning meetings should take place once a month or more if the occasion should necessitate it. In the last two months, the Committee should meet once a week and a dry run (dress rehearsal) should be done prior to the Conference start. A script with rolls and responsibilities is very helpful. Start meeting one year before the Conference date.

**Participants** - Participants on the Committee should have a vision on how a successful Conference should look like. This can be achieved by their attending a District Conference prior to bidding for the right to have one.

**Area/Division Management** - Involve your Area/Division Governors and Club Presidents as much as possible. Give them roles and responsibilities so that they can feel the rhythm of the Conference. Clearly defined roles will make them proud to be a participant. Remember, they have a natural speaking ability, especially to large audiences.

**District Management** - Involve your District Board as soon as possible. If not, they will do your Committee more harm than good and you will end up doing their job yourself. Do not take no for an answer.

## FALL DISTRICT CONFERENCE – MALLORCA III

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**Sponsors** - Recent changes to TMI regulations concerning sponsors and the use of advertising has strengthened this cause. Spiraling costs of facilities and meals have necessitated new forms of income other than registration fees. The Mallorca Fall Conference proved that you could charge €90 for registration fees and still make a profit. This approach wasn't unique, all it required was ingenuity. There were many sponsors for the Fall Conference and only one put up money. The rest were donations of webpage assistance, graphic arts and the like. There are sponsors out there. Find out what their business is and capitalize on it. You will find that what Mallorca did was not so exceptional.

**Action Plan** - Any plan is as good as its weakest points. Put together a plan and stick to it. In the development stages, try presenting it to yourselves and then present it to your Club. Often times you will find a champion in your own Club that has done what you are trying to do and may be of valuable assistance to you. Lastly, use Area and Division Management as a vehicle to present the Conference Plan to the District. There are four management meetings held every year and the feedback you would get would be enormous help as some of the District management would have done what you are attempting in some form during their past. Experience is the best teacher.

**Feedback** - A most important part of your solution is what other people think. Don't have a not invented here syndrome blocking your vision. Pay attention carefully to what others think. They may not have a solution but quite possibly, they may turn over something you didn't think about when executing your plan. Don't wait until the Conference is over before you get this feedback, it's too late then to impact what you are trying to achieve.

## ADMINISTRATION ADDENDUM

### Two Files

#### 1 In this file keep all originals, or copies, of all paperwork required for running a District Conference, such as:

Agenda - of Conference

Badges

Bank Details

Budget

Cancellation policy

Contestants - you (& they) often won't know who they are until the conference itself

Contest materials

Hotel - and/or other accommodation

Judges - you don't actually need to know who they are - but you often get asked by others

Meal numbers - inc who are vegetarians

Minutes - of organising committee meetings

Numbers registered - District will often chase you for numbers as the conf date gets closer!

Photographer - make sure she/he is well instructed - and stays late to get the award pictures

Publicity - you only need to be involved if there is any cost involved

Registration pack material

Speakers/Guests - Paid for by the District with exceptions - you need to know who for meal #'s

Educational Speakers - make sure they register and that they pay!

To do List

Transport (if used)

Website - see below

Workshops (non English speaking contests)

#### 2 Keep a copy of each persons Registration - Alphabetically.

**Work closely with your web site designer** - and make sure every question is a mandatory question - otherwise you will forever be sending people e-mails asking for their Club name, Club number, Division, Area, their TM Title, are they available as judges and are they vegetarians! It is important that the Conference Agenda and a local map be put on the website as soon as possible but not later than two weeks before the Conference.

**Make a comments box:** and ask that it be used to put in the name of a second person if they are paying for a second person, if the payment name is different from the registration name - e.g. single name v married name; registration name v company payment name etc

**Make sure a copy of the auto response is sent to your own e-mail** and print off the page to check off against the bank statement once it's been paid - it's also useful so that you can show people that they haven't registered and/or paid.

**If you have people registering and not paying past the due date** - e-mail them once, stating that if you have not heard from them (by ....deadline date) and/or received payment, you will delete them from the registration list.

**Decide on a cancellation policy and stick to it** (usually giving only a partial refund if you have involved any costs) - and certainly the transfer costs are due to them.

**Registration desk** - this is your last chance to make sure that people pay. Assuming that you will have a folder and badge for each person attending - **keep the folders of those who have not paid hidden, out of sight.** When a whole bundle of people arrive at once, they look for their names and take their folders. This is OK if they have paid. Keeping the ones who have not paid out of sight means that the person has to **ask** for their folder and then they have to pay. If they say they have "no cash" - just direct them to the nearest ATM. If they say that they are a Guest of the District, it's up to you to make sure that they are. **Finally - NO CASH, NO SPLASH - nobody, but nobody, gets to attend the conference, especially meals, without having paid first.**

