

SECTION 8

Accreditation Basics

ACCREDITATION BASICS 1

Philosophy

The Accreditation Program

Philosophy

By conferring designating initials on those who qualify, POWER*talk* International's Accreditation program makes an important statement to the public about the competence and skill of its members who are accredited.

The philosophy behind accreditation is widely accepted in the public domains of training and competence.

A Word About the Philosophy of Accreditation

The word *accreditation* signifies two positive actions, that of officially **recognizing achievement** and that of **guaranteeing** quality. Both achievement and quality are nebulous ideas without standards.

By its nature, the attainment of a standard of knowledge or competence invariably involves undergoing a planned process of measurement or assessment against a predetermined standard. Behavioral scientists have long extolled the important role of evaluated performance and recognition of achievement in the learning process.

No matter what the learning technique, assessing the progress made in relation to understood goals or standards enhances it. Objective feedback from such assessment serves to provide encouragement where progress has been made and to point to logical objectives, where learning weaknesses are evident.

Additionally, both the achievement of a goal, together with recognition that goes with it, serve to reward the learner and infuse an increased level of motivation to achieve the next goal.

This proven process of stimulation, reaction and reward, lends itself to a learning curriculum that sets up a series of goals marked by milestones on the pathway from start to finish. More important even, is the fact that the work required between milestones can represent learning that builds on the work done for the previous milestone.

The final goal is always in sight in this process, and the learner is able to assess what it will take to get through the remaining milestones. This provides further stimulation and motivation to succeed.

Did you know that the use of the word pass in the learning field stems from the analogy of road travel? It is the joy of passing milestone after milestone on the achievement highway that spurs you on.

It is this proven pattern of measuring the process of mastery, by marking the progress with milestones of achievement that POWER*talk* International has astutely incorporated in its Accreditation Program.

ACCREDITATION BASICS 2

Objectives and Overview

Objectives

1. To promote personal growth and development through systematic training.
2. To raise standards of performance by encouraging participants to strive for a high level of proficiency in every assignment.
3. To provide a challenge in the field of continuing education.
4. To encourage self-evaluation by providing high standards against which to measure individual performance.
5. To award special recognition to those participants who succeed in satisfying the required level of competence.
6. To publicise and protect the standards and value of *POWERtalk* International's training by identifying qualified members with designating letters.

Overview

The five-course program covers primarily, the leadership skills and communication competencies of listening, speaking and organization. Detailed requirements for each project within the five levels are set out in this Master Manual under Project Basics.

While participants will normally enter at Level One and proceed sequentially through the program, they may elect to change the order in which they present some assignments. Those who do not meet the required standards for each assignment may expect to have to repeat until a satisfactory degree of excellence is attained.

While participants may choose to complete only selected portions of the program, formal recognition will be given only to members who satisfactorily complete the requirements as follows:

Effective Communicator (EC) Level One;
Proficient Communicator (PC) Level Two;
Skilled Communicator (SC) Level Three;
Accomplished Communicator (AC) Level Four; and
Distinguished Communicator (DC) Level Five.

For those who aim to complete only selected parts of the program, *POWERtalk* International urges you to make every endeavour to fully compete the first three project levels.

ACCREDITATION BASICS 3

Structure & Administration

Structure and Administration

Overall responsibility for administering the program rests with the *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Chairman and Committee.

The *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Committee supervises any testing required and provides guidance and assistance to club, council and region Accreditation Chairmen and their committees.

New clubs lacking experience are advised to seek additional assistance from their extension committee, neighbouring clubs, and councils.

The *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Chairman:

- is responsible for managing the program and deciding aspects of program implementation and operation referred by regions, councils, and clubs;
- provides final notification of certification upon receipt of approved application;
- is assisted by the *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Committee that is composed of no less than seven members in all, selected by the International Board; and
- the Accreditation Chairman shall be, where possible, a Distinguished Communicator

The Region Accreditation Chairman:

- is responsible for certifying satisfactory completion of assignments performed at Region level; and
- is assisted by the Region Accreditation Committee that is composed of no less than three members in all, each of whom has a minimum of five years as a *POWERtalk* International member.

The Council Accreditation Chairman:

- is responsible for certifying satisfactory completion of assignments performed at Council level; and
- is assisted by the Council Accreditation Committee that is composed of no less than three members - each of whom, preferably, has a minimum of three years as a *POWERtalk* International member.

Accreditation Basics 3: Structure & Administration continued...

The Club Accreditation Chairman:

- certifies the satisfactory completion of assignments performed at Club level;
- certifies completion of all course requirements upon application from the participant and submits the certified form to the POWERtalk International Accreditation Chairman, c/o IMS;
- is assisted by the Club Accreditation Committee which is composed of no less than three members in all, each of whom, preferably has had one year as a member of POWERtalk International; and
- is advised to have a representative from the club Program/Education Committee serve on the Club Accreditation Committee where possible.

Levels and Examinations

Level One
Level Two
Level Three
Level Four
Level Five
Level Five Oral Examination

Specialist Options for Levels 4 and 5:

Option 1: Leadership
Option 2: Communication
Option 3: Community/Organizational Skills
Option 4: Business Administration Skills
Option 5: Conference and Event Organizing

Eligibility:

1.1 All POWERtalk International members may participate in the Accreditation Program.

2. Procedures:

2.1 Participation shall proceed at the pace set by the participant and begins on the date the participant delivers his/her first assignment.

2.2 There is no time restraint on participation at any level. An assignment at a higher level may be undertaken for accreditation at the member's discretion.

2.3 The order in which the courses are completed and certified shall be in accordance with the sequence in which each course is placed in the Master Manual, Project Basics, Level One to Level Five.

Accreditation Basics 3: Structure & Administration continued...

- 2.4 However, notwithstanding this general procedure, (but with the exception of the oral examination referred to in Level Five, where the opportunity to perform an assignment scheduled in a later course becomes available), members shall not be precluded from performing such an assignment and receiving certification for that assignment at any time.
- 2.5 Accreditation Chairmen at club level shall ensure that they are familiar with each planned program in order to be ready to assess participants at each meeting. Where relevant this assessment is to be done in consultation with the assigned evaluator(s) on the club program.
- 2.6 Participants at council level and higher shall provide advance notice of assignments, stating the course item, appropriate to the level at which the assignment will be performed, as set out below, to the Accreditation Chairman:
 - no less than 2 weeks prior to the council meeting;
 - no less than 30 days prior to the region conference; and
 - no less than 60 days prior to the *POWERtalk* International Convention.Deviations from this rule shall require the prior approval of the Accreditation Chairman at the appropriate level.
- 2.7 No less than 60 days prior notice of applications for an Oral examination appointment referred to in Level Five shall be given to the *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Chairman. All course requirements (One through Five) shall have been completed before applying for the Oral examination referred to in Level Five. When unable to attend Convention the applicant shall apply, 60 days prior to the relevant Region Conference, to the *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Chairman for an Oral examination appointment at such Region Conference.
- 2.8 Questions and requests for test arrangements shall be addressed to the *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Chairman.

3. Committees, Chairmen and Membership

- 3.1 The International Accreditation Committee shall be composed of a chairman and no less than six other members, with the approval of the ITC International Board. The Accreditation Chairman shall be, where possible, a Distinguished Communicator (DC).
- 3.2 Region Accreditation Committees shall be composed of no less than three members, each of whom has a minimum of five years as a member of *POWERtalk* International.
- 3.3 Council Accreditation Committees shall be composed of no less than three members. It is preferable that each of these committee members has had a minimum of three years as a member of *POWERtalk* International

Accreditation Basics 3: Structure & Administration continued...

3.4 Club Accreditation Committees shall be composed of no less than three members. It is preferable that each of these committee members has had one year as a member of POWERtalk International except in the case of new clubs. (See advice for new clubs under Structure and Administration.)

4. Performance, Evaluation and Certification

4.1 A minimum of two committee members shall evaluate each performance and concur on the recommendation to certify.

4.2 They shall have proper regard both for the requirements of the Master Manual and for the guidelines on standards set out in this manual and shall not recommend accreditation where, in their opinion, assignments have not been performed to the required standard.

4.3 When ready to have any requirement certified, participants shall notify the Accreditation Chairman at the level of the assignment concerned.

4.4 The Accreditation Chairman shall arrange for a minimum of two committee members to evaluate the participant's performance.

4.5 Upon completion of the assignment, the participant shall meet with the evaluators to discuss the performance. The participant, the committee, or both, shall be obliged to recommend repetition of any assignment which failed to meet expected standards of performance.

4.6 Where the committee and the participant are satisfied that the performance has met the required standards, the committee shall accredit the assignment.

4.7 Participants who have completed assignment requirements at a club, council or region other than their own, shall apply for certification of completion by the Accreditation Chairman of the club, council or region where the assignment was performed.

4.8 Participants who have completed assignment requirements outside the organization as provided in specific courses, shall present proof of such performance to the Club Accreditation Chairman.

4.9 Upon completion of all requirements for any course, the participant's manual shall be submitted to the Club Accreditation Chairman. The Club Accreditation Chairman shall forward the application for certification form (as supplied in this Manual) together with a copy of the Projects Chart sheet and any other relevant pages of the applicant's manual, to the current Accreditation Chairman.

4.10 Certification shall be made by the current Accreditation Committee Chairman at Club, Region or Council level appropriate to the level of the particular course requirement.

Accreditation Basics 3: Structure & Administration continued...

5. Courses, Waivers, Substitutions and Exceptions

- 5.1 Except where substitution has been approved in terms of rule 5.7, only assignments specified in the Courses detailed in the Master Manual, shall qualify for accreditation.
 - 5.1.1 However Section 3.6 of the Master Manual contains alternative speech assignments and the level of accreditation to which they apply. These may be substituted for the speech assignments listed on the respective Project Basics Charts.
- 5.2 Where the same optional assignments are detailed in more than one course, credit shall be earned by applicants for the performance of such an assignment in respect of one course only. (Example: A Guest Speaker assignment is detailed as one of the options both in Level Three and in Communication Options Levels Four and Five. Performance of only one such assignment shall be credited. Similar assignment repeated to be accredited at another level.)
- 5.3 Applicants shall earn credit in respect of only one assignment where the holding of an elected office as well as the function of that office are detailed as options. (Example: Credit shall not be given for both the holding of the office of Club Vice President and the function of Club Program/Education Chairman).
- 5.4 Participants shall be at liberty to complete assignment requirements at a club, council or region other than their own.
- 5.5 Participants wishing, by exception, to perform assignment requirements outside the organization in addition to those assignments that the course requires to be performed outside, shall apply in writing to the POWERtalk International Accreditation Chairman for permission to do so.
- 5.6 In exceptional cases, an Accreditation Chairman of club, council or region shall be permitted to recommend that a participant be granted an exception/waiver to complete a requirement. Any such recommendation shall be submitted to the POWERtalk International Accreditation Chairman for approval.
- 5.7 Requests by members to substitute a required assignment with one from a course of equal or higher order shall be submitted to the Accreditation Chairman at the level concerned, for approval.
- 5.8 Substitution shall not be permitted in the case of any of the Special Options 1 to 4.

Accreditation Basics 3: Structure & Administration continued...

6. Disputes

- 6.1 Both a participant wishing to dispute a ruling at club, council or region, and the Accreditation Chairman at the level concerned, shall submit documents fully recording the facts of the dispute to the POWERtalk International Accreditation Chairman.
- 6.2 The POWERtalk Internatioanl Accreditation Chairman, whose ruling shall be final, shall exercise sound judgment having regard particularly to the objective of maintaining the high standards referred to in this Manual.

7. Recognition and Designation

Recognition:

- 7.1 Participants shall receive a certificate of accomplishment from POWERtalk International upon successful completion of each level, as detailed in rule 7.4
- 7.2 Participants shall be entitled to purchase and wear an appropriate POWERtalk International Accreditation Pin designating the level of accomplishment attained.
- 7.3 A letter of recognition from POWERtalk International shall be sent to the participant for adding to his/her resumè/curriculum vitae.

Designations:

- 7.4 Participants successfully completing specified levels of the program will be awarded the following designating titles:

Level One: Effective Communicator (EC)
Level Two: Proficient Communicator (PC)
Level Three: Skilled Communicator (SC)
Level Four: Accomplished Communicator (AC) and
Level Five: Distinguished Communicator (DC)

ACCREDITATION BASICS 4

Reference Materials & Guidelines

Reference Material and Guidelines

This section of the Master Manual has been provided to assist in the interpretation and implementation of the Accreditation rules.

In addition *POWERtalk* International education features (refer to the *POWERtalk* International website www.powertalkinternational.com) and other *POWERtalk* International manuals (refer to the Officer Manuals section of this Master Manual) are available for participants to use in preparation for completing assignments in the *POWERtalk* International Accreditation Program.

Guidelines on Standards

While the Master Manual lays down requirements for the projects in the case of the Effective Communicator, Proficient Communicator and Skilled Communicator (Levels One, Two & Three) as mentioned in the ‘Overview’ section of Accreditation Basics, acceptable performance standards are not defined or laid down.

The need for consistent standards:

Leaving such standards as an entirely subjective decision by a committee or evaluator runs the risk of applying a wide range of differing standards with the risk of unfairness between members and the risk that the public might perceive *POWERtalk* International’s qualification as unreliable or inconsistent.

The public view as a point of reference:

The recognition awarded under this program inevitably projects a public image. These qualifications are therefore meaningless unless they provide a measure of assurance that a *POWERtalk* International Accomplished or Distinguished Communicator can indeed be deemed by a discerning public to be, respectively, accomplished or distinguished within the normal meaning of those terms. For the same reasons, treating longer-standing members differently from new members may have some merit internally but not in the case of these public qualifications. This premise provides a valuable basis for setting guidelines for acceptable standards in respect of the whole program but more especially for the Accomplished and Distinguished Communicator awards.

Especially, (but not only) for Levels Four and Five therefore, both participants and committees are required to appreciate that, if the public does not accept a DC level as being distinguished in reality, there is a risk to the credibility both of participating members and of *POWERtalk* International.

Accreditation Basics 4: Reference Materials & Guidelines continued...

Basis for standards:

The probable public assessment, therefore, is the guideline in meeting the challenge of maintaining a consistent standard.

This can be done in three ways:

- When accreditation committees sit to evaluate an assignment they ought to do so, consciously visualising how the performance would come across to a public audience.
- Evaluators should bear in mind that the public is concerned with effectiveness and makes no allowance for internal practices or special individual considerations.
- In using scoring techniques to rate performance, such committees should add a weighting that emphasises those aspects of the evaluation most likely to impact on a public audience.

(Example: Where an evaluator is using a score sheet for rating against a number of criteria such as impact, vocabulary, organization etc., one more criterion should be added, namely likely public assessment. Give this criterion an attributed value of, say, 8-10% of the total score).

This guideline is provided with the objective of ensuring that accreditation standards are as consistent as possible throughout the entire organization.

This common approach aims to ensure absolute fairness between participants and to enhance the public perception attached to the qualifications.

Guidelines for participants.

Participants are required to:

1. Enter the program at Level One.
2. Complete an Oral Exam in Level Five.
- 3 In using scoring techniques to rate performance, such committees should ensure that emphasis is given to the aspects of evaluation most likely to impact on a public performance.
4. In advance of the time they wish to be accredited, notify the appropriate Accreditation Chairman at the level the assignment will be performed in accordance with rule 2.4. This notification, stating the course item/assignment, must be made at least two weeks prior to the council meeting; 30 days prior to the region conference, and 60 days prior to the POWERtalk International Convention.

Deviations from this rule shall require the prior approval of the Accreditation chairman at the appropriate level.

Accreditation Basics 4: Reference Materials & Guidelines continued...

5. Upon completing the assignments, meet with the evaluators (minimum of two assigned by the appropriate Accreditation Chairman and/or Program Chairman at club level) to discuss performance. If the participant, along with the evaluators, concur that the performance met the required standard, certification will be made.
6. Take responsibility and have the right to withdraw the request for certification, prior to the evaluation discussion, if the participant feels the performance was not up to required standard.
7. Present the relevant Projects Chart to the Accreditation Chairman for certification signature.
8. When performing an assignment at a non-POWER*talk* International function, submit a printed program or letter from the organization indicating the role the participant played in the program.
9. Request certification of any assignment contained in the POWER*talk* International Accreditation Program at any time, regardless of what course level they may be working on at the current time. The exception to this is the Oral Examination as laid down in rule 2.5.
10. After completing all requirements in a Level, advise the Club Accreditation Chairman and together fill out the Request for Certification Form. (The Chairman is required to forward a photocopy of the participant's Projects' Chart detailing all requirements completed, to the POWER*talk* International Accreditation Chairman who will forward the result to IMS for processing.)

Guidelines for Accreditation Chairmen and Committees at all Levels of POWER*talk* International

1. Accreditation Committees are a mandatory component of POWER*talk* International structure at all levels.
2. Committee Chairmen receive notification from members wishing to participate in the program.
3. Program participants provide advance notification to the appropriate Accreditation Chairman at the level at which the assignment will be performed, that they wish to be accredited. The notification stating the course item, must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the council meeting; 30 days prior to a region conference; and 60 days prior to the convention as per rule 2.4. Deviations from this rule shall require the prior approval of the Accreditation Chairman at the appropriate level.

Accreditation Basics 4: Reference Materials & Guidelines continued...

4. Chairmen will assign a minimum of two committee members to evaluate the performance. When members of the committee cannot be in attendance, the chairman should appoint qualified members of long standing to assist in the evaluation.
5. After the performance, the evaluators and participant should meet and discuss the assignment. If all parties are satisfied with the performance, the committee certifies completion of the requirement. The participant, the evaluators, or both, may recommend repetition of any requirement that has not met expected standards of performance. A satisfactory degree of skill is determined by the standards as set forth in this *POWERtalk* International Master Manual. Reference should also be made to the guide lines on Standards in this section (Accreditation Basics) of the Master Manual.
6. It is the responsibility of the Accreditation Committee members to study and acquaint themselves with the requirements of the assignment for certification prior to the evaluation.
7. The Chairman at the appropriate level will sign the participant's Projects Chart when an assignment has been satisfactorily completed.
8. The appropriate Accreditation Chairman will make certification of an assignment/attendance requirement presented at another club, council, or region.
9. Members participating in a non-*POWERtalk* International function may present the printed program or a letter from the organization showing the role the participant played in the program.
10. A special Accreditation Committee table should be set up at each council/region meeting so that committee members will be available to the participants to certify attendance requirements.
11. Accreditation Chairmen are responsible for promoting the Accreditation Program by presenting workshops, articles, newsletters, corresponding with lower levels to encourage member participation and inviting reports at each council meeting/region conference.
12. Give recognition to participants attaining the status of:
 - Effective Communicator (EC)
 - Proficient Communicator (PC)
 - Skilled Communicator (SC)
 - Accomplished Communicator (AC); and
 - Distinguished Communicator (DC)

ACCREDITATION BASICS 5

Application Form

Oral Examination (Level Five)

International Training in Communication

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM: LEVEL FIVE APPLICATION FOR ORAL EXAMINATION (Please type or print all entries on this application)

To: POWERtalk International Accreditation Chairman

Applicant: _____ Club Name: _____
Region: _____ Division: _____
Address of Applicant: _____
City/Town: _____ State/Province: _____
Country: _____ Post Code: _____

I, the undersigned applicant, hereby accept the Accreditation Program rules governing the Oral Examination, in particular **Rule 2.5**:

No less than 60 days notice shall be given to the POWERtalk International Accreditation Chairman of application for an Oral examination appointment referred to in Project Basics Level Five. All level requirements (One through Five) shall have been completed before the application is made for the Oral examination referred to in Level Five.

When unable to attend a POWERtalk International Convention the applicant shall, 60 days prior to the relevant Region Conference, apply to the POWERtalk International Accreditation Chairman for an Oral examination appointment at such Region Conference.

Signed at _____ on the _____ day of _____ 20 _____
Applicant: _____
Club Accreditation Chairman: _____

For IMS use only

Application received on _____ by _____
date initials

Application approved on _____ by _____
date initials

Oral examination set for _____ by _____
date examiner's name