



BE THE DIFFERENCE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



NAGARAJA R. RAO, DTM

Candidate's Office: Second Vice President

Region Number: 13

Toastmasters member since: 2002

Education: Bachelor of Engineering

Employer and/or position: Executive Director at Ganesh Food Products Pvt. Ltd.

Served as district governor of district number: 82

Term of service: 2010-2011

In term as district governor, district achieved: President's Distinguished.

Website: <http://www.nagarajafor2ndvp.com>

Toastmasters offices held and terms of service (international and regional level):

- 2013-2014 Region Advisor
- 2015-2017 International Director

Toastmasters honors and recognition (international level):

- 2012-2013 Presidential Citation
- 2010-2011 President's Distinguished District – World # 1
- 2010-2011 Excellence in Leadership.
- 2010-2011 President's Extension
- 2009-2010 Excellence in Education & Training

Relevant work experience and how it relates to Toastmasters and your role as a Board member:

In 1988, my brothers and I co-founded a coffee company that has grown in scope from a regional company to an international one. We now serve multinational clients like Costa Coffee, Dunkin Donuts, Krispy Kreme, Au Bon Pain, Di Bella, Aromas Coffee and many others. Through my business experience, I have learnt to anticipate the changes in the business environment and help re-position the company for continued growth and success. In trying times, when we had to make difficult decisions, we found clarity by focusing on our core values of Quality, Consistency and Customer Satisfaction. My experience in building a corporate entity, creating a brand, establishing international strategic partnerships would serve me well in my role as an International Officer.

What experience do you have in strategic planning?

To place Bayar's Coffee into its present high orbit, I helped develop four strategies: (a) Building production capacity, (b) Introducing systems to ensure quality and consistency, (c) Opening Company owned retail outlets, and (d) Partnering with international café chains. The success of these strategies was made evident by (a) threefold increase in production capacity (b) achieving British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) certification, (c) winning the All India Best Roaster Award four times in a row, (d) by growing market share in both Business to Business and Retail segments. During my tenure as an International Director, I got a first-hand experience of the process of implementing the 2015-20 strategic plan. This gave me an in-depth understanding of the nuances of creating a strategic plan for a global organisation. As Region Advisor I helped develop a three year strategic plan to enable all districts in the region to achieve distinguished status or better. As District Governor I set strategy for successful reformation of District 82 which in the next 4 years, reformed into 4 districts.

What experience do you have in the area of finance?

During the three decades in business, I have been actively involved in financial planning, documentation and statutory compliances. This involved developing financial policy, instilling financial discipline, preparing budgets, costing, reviewing the control mechanisms and the audited balance sheets. As an International Director I was involved in financial oversight and approval of budgets. As District 82 Governor, during our reformation period, we had one of the largest budgets in Toastmasters that year.

What experience do you have in developing policies?

As an executive director of our company, I have been involved in developing policies for quality, human resources, finance and branding, all in alignment with our core values. These efforts have resulted in high employee retention, improved Shareholder value, Positive Brand Equity and our company receiving 'BRC', 'UTZ' and 'RFA' certifications. As an International Director I have contributed in developing and modifying policies.

What lessons did you learn from previous leadership positions?

As an International Director, I gained a better understanding of the Board dynamics and effectiveness. I embraced the culture of constructive challenges and healthy debates, collective decision making and speaking with one voice. I understood the depth of the Committee work and its relevance to organisational performance. I learnt how to be a part of a cohesive team and yet maintain an independent oversight. I realized that providing corporate governance to a global organisation, like Toastmasters International, is complex and challenging.

What experience and key strengths would you bring to the Board of Directors?

My 30 years of business experience has given me an ability to both understand the potential and anticipate the needs of an organisation and its stake holders. An aptitude to explore possibilities and nurture my colleagues helps me in building effective teams. Developing international partnerships has enhanced my skill of building strong working relationships. Brand building, collaborative decision making and an ability to look at the larger perspective are some of the strengths I bring to the Board.

Why do you want to serve as an international officer/director?

Toastmasters provides a positive learning environment that allows everyone to evolve. The communication and leadership skills acquired here can be leveraged for professional and personal success. I have been greatly impacted by the power of Toastmasters. It has given me all-round success for which I owe a huge debt of gratitude. I want to propagate the real-life benefits of Toastmasters to all corners of the world. I would like to see the doors of opportunity being opened for hundreds of thousands of people. I want to serve as an International officer because I am convinced that enabling and empowering people is the finest way to contribute to human happiness.

What volunteer experience do you have outside of Toastmasters?

Trustee – Amruthur Education Trust, which provides quality education to rural children. (www.amruthur-edu.in) Trustee – Subbanna Bayari Charitable Trust, which supports Sanskrit education and Vedic Studies Past Executive Committee member - Shivalli Smartha Brahmana Mahaparishath which organises community service activities and spiritual retreats. Member - Federation of Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Have you worked with other Boards of Directors outside of Toastmasters? If so, describe your experience.

I have served on the Boards of Ganesh Food Products Pvt. Ltd., United Coffee Association of India and Indian Coffee Trade Association. My experiences on the above Boards have been similar. It is all about steering an organisation in the inevitability of its ups and downs by thoroughly involving oneself in the strategic decision making without losing the overall perspective of the long term health of the organisation.

In your opinion, what are Toastmasters International's major objectives and how would you work to achieve them?

In my opinion, the purpose of Toastmasters International is to create an experiential learning environment for maximum number of people to develop their communication and leadership skills. This can be achieved by focusing on club growth, membership growth and retention, developing relevant, high quality education programs and maintaining a global perspective. I would work with the Board to develop and implement the current strategic plan to achieve these objectives.

Additional information about candidate

We live in Bangalore, the 'Garden City' of India. Arathi, my wife for 24 years, is a school teacher. We have two daughters; Divya is pursuing a degree in Architectural Engineering and Deeksha is studying Business Administration. My other interests include travelling, reading, coffee tasting, Yoga and meditation.