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**ICC Eves Toastmasters Club**

**The power of “We” in Toastmasters Fraternity**

Public relations was my forte once upon a time. I studied and practiced it many moons ago when I had had a flourishing advertising career in Mumbai. And after a gap of close to two decades, as destiny would have it, I got the opportunity to venture into this familiar space but unlike the previous, this time with ICC Eves Toastmasters Club. Yes, Vice President Public Relations is my position this time, in a year which has witnessed serious upheavals owing to the pandemic. I make this silent point to highlight the fact that unlike the previous, ‘social distancing’ and ‘digital’ have become the norm this year and all this required co-ordination of a much higher order, different than anything we have witnessed anytime in the past.

I joined Toastmasters to improve my public speaking skills and so when I was asked to assume this responsibility, it did not appeal to me initially. As I rummaged through it in my mind, the idea of exploring the latest technical wizardry and have a taste of a re-run of my erstwhile creative ideas got me excited.

I was informed of the timeframe to release three newsletters in a year, the first which was due September end. I was ably assisted by a very competent 2- member newsletter committee, changing the contours of the project from “I” to “We”. The very thought of We soothed the nerves and instilled a sense of calmness, making me much more focused, but relaxed regarding the way to move ahead.

But then the vexing question was there: how much to delegate and how much to do oneself, to ensure a successful outcome?

Our planning session started sometime in July with a group video call, where we zeroed-in on the first cut, including the theme, the contents, and the layout. We soon shed our inhibitions and discussed much more frankly and honestly that we even imagined. My team members came with their extremely useful skill sets: one having fantastic expertise with design software and the other being ‘meticulous to a T’ with thorough prior knowledge about the job.

We pooled our ideas and expertise through structured Zoom calls and unstructured whatsapp messages, absorbing, debating, and contesting each other’s opinions, while making sure that the focus is not compromised.

We divided the responsibilities and worked at our own pace. Obviously, there were challenges on arriving at a consensus regarding any change that we sought to introduce. But at the end, wise sense prevailed, and we were successful in releasing the newsletter on time. And before we could even realize, the period July-September had gone off in a jiffy, amidst pandemic, pen (or should I say laptop!) and *pakoras (*fritters*)*!

The newsletter was well-appreciated “We, the team” made the work much more fulfilling and enriching and on a slightly personal note, a small tick mark in my tiny leadership role was accomplished.

Yes, teamwork does win championships!