

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | JUNE 2020

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



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Succeeding Through Succession Planning



“I wish I knew at the beginning of my term all that I learned throughout the year as the Club President.” Sound familiar?

That thought was running through my mind in June 2004, as I neared the end of my term as the President of the Toastmasters Club of New Delhi in India. Every year on July 1, leadership in Toastmasters changes hands. Officers exit through one door and re-enter through another door. Each leadership role is accompanied by its unique responsibilities. But we rarely prepare ourselves to understand all it entails before we commence serving in that new position.

Anne Mulcahy, former chair and CEO of the Xerox Corp., has some advice that is worth considering as Toastmasters prepare [new officers to step into their roles](#): “One of the things we often miss in succession planning is that it should be gradual and thoughtful, with lots of sharing of information and knowledge and perspective, so that it’s almost a non-event when it happens.”

I’ve learned the value of succession planning. Start now on yours. I promise you’ll be a more successful leader because of it.

June is the time to start preparing for the transition. You have already been elected or appointed for the position that you will start on July 1. Read all you can from the [Club Leadership Handbook](#) or [District Leadership Handbook](#) about your role and the accompanying responsibilities. Meet with the member currently serving in that role to learn more about the challenges you are likely to encounter and get tips on how you can overcome them. Gain a practical understanding of how your role contributes to club and District success. Your preparation this month will enable you to succeed and serve as a role model for those who follow you.

In August 2019, I assumed the position of [International President](#). My predecessor, Immediate Past International President Lark Doley, DTM, and I met frequently from March 2019 onward so that I could understand my new role and shadow Lark as she went about serving her term as International President. The time I spent learning the ropes from Lark has proven invaluable in these last 10 months that I have served in this position.

In my years of leadership, I have learned the value of succession planning. I urge you to plan for your succession as well. I can promise that you will be much more successful as a leader with this preparation.

Get started now so that you never have to say, “I wish I knew at the beginning of the program year all that I know now!”

Deepak Menon, DTM
International President

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Toastmasters celebrate their countries and clubs.



Members of Rise Toastmasters Club of Magarpatta, Pune, India, dress in traditional Indian garb to celebrate the country's Republic Day, which honors the date the Constitution of India came into effect.



Camelback Toastmasters of Glendale, Arizona, U.S., is 65 years old, and members are proud to have earned President's Distinguished status for the last 10 years.








To celebrate 20 years of Toastmasters in Basel, Switzerland, nine clubs from the Area came together to host a public demonstration meeting and enjoy a dinner.



Send your fun club photos to photos@toastmasters.org. Include a description and your club name, number, and location. Photos must be in jpeg format with a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) and size of at least 1 MB (megabyte). Out-of-focus images cannot be accepted. It is not necessary to include the Toastmaster magazine or other branded materials in your photos, but if Toastmasters materials are displayed, they must reflect the current brand.

www.toastmasters.org/Magazine

-  **Watch** informative videos.
-  **Listen** to enlightening audio features.
-  **View** collections of fun and interesting photos.
-  **Access** valuable resources through hyperlinks.
-  **Share** articles with prospective members, friends, and colleagues.



FIND MORE ONLINE THIS MONTH:



The Power of Panels

Want to learn how to moderate powerful panel discussions? Watch a video with meeting facilitator Kristin Arnold for extra techniques on keeping your panel both lively and informative.

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE



Music: A Universal Language

June 21 is Make Music Day! Celebrated in more than 120 countries, this day attracts thousands of musicians who share their music with friends, neighbors, and strangers.

Learn how fellow Toastmasters use their gift of music to communicate to the world by reading [this online-only article](#).

WEB RESOURCE



Quick Reads Online

[Find relevant articles](#) with tips and techniques for virtual meetings and contests, as well as advice on finding camaraderie online with other clubs and members around the world.

www.toastmasters.org/Online-Meetings



Ready for TED?

Discover if you have an idea worth sharing by watching popular TED Talks for examples of inspiring presentations.



This icon at the top of a page means an online extra is included with the article at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.

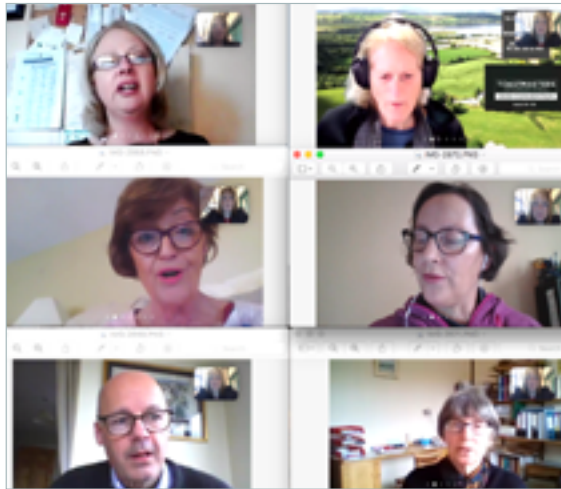
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MEMBER RECOGNITION

Showcasing members, mentors, and clubs

Toastmasters around the world are choosing to hold online meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These members of West Cork Toastmasters in Cork, Ireland, held their first-ever online meeting in March. Vice President Public Relations Siobhan Cronin said, “While our Table Topics were based around



the COVID-19 topic, the questions were very uplifting—like what positives have you taken from self-isolating and social distancing, and what positive changes have you made? Overall, we all found it a very positive meeting and a lovely way to socially interact with each other.” Thank you to all our Toastmasters clubs who transitioned to online meetings and are keeping each other’s spirits high in a time of change and uncertainty.

Seven Toastmasters from District 49 in Hawaii participated in a TEDx program earlier this year. **Rose Kirland, DTM; Robert Cravalho, DTM, AS; Jicky Ferrer, DTM; Charles Edwards; Dan Orias; Willie Jones; and Charletta Wilson** gave speeches at the event, which took place at the Hickam Air Force Military Base on the island of Oahu.

Toastmasters represented about half of the participants in the debut of TEDxHickam. Fifteen speakers in total participated in the event. Kirland, a past District 49 Director, said it was a great opportunity for membership building. “We established relationships that I feel can help Toastmasters grow,” she said. “The audience was hyped, motivated, and inspired as they engaged with us, and had questions about Toastmasters. Everyone saw the value and benefits to step up and jump into Toastmasters.”

To learn more go to www.tedxhickam.com.



FROM LEFT: *Jicky Ferrer, Dan Orias, Rose Kirland, and Robert Cravalho*



Thirty years ago, **Desi Mora, DTM**, joined Toastmasters and since then has helped charter many clubs and mentored numerous Toastmasters in the Austin, Texas, area, including his wife, **Miriam Hilton Mora, DTM**. “I admire Desi’s intelligence, his breadth of knowledge, and his resourcefulness,” she says. “Desi enjoys helping others. He saw strengths in me of which I was not aware. I credit him for encouraging me to complete my Distinguished Toastmaster requirements and for urging me to compete in my first speech contest. Desi is a consummate Toastmaster, a motorcycle and car enthusiast, and my favorite husband!”

TALK TO US! Do you have a short story (aim for 130 words), fun photo, inspiring anecdote, or Toastmasters “Ah-Ha” moment you’d like to share? Mark your submission “Member Recognition” and email it to submissions@toastmasters.org.

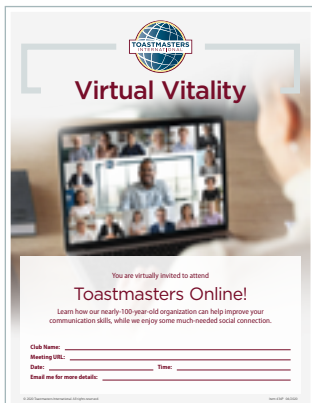
► NEWS FROM TI

Online Meeting Resources

In light of [COVID-19](#), Toastmasters clubs in every corner of the world have moved online to host high-quality club experiences in virtual settings.

To support these virtual victories, World Headquarters has created special webpages filled with tips, videos, how-to meeting instructions, meeting software comparisons, online speech contest information, and a variety of branded materials to boost the visual appeal of online meetings. You will also find exclusive online magazine articles, as well as [FAQs](#) and COVID-19 news updates from World Headquarters.

To view the collection, visit the [Online Meetings page](#) on the Toastmasters website. Just a few of the new items are highlighted below.



You are virtually invited! Open your club to members and prospects alike with these eye-catching invitations.



Proudly share Toastmasters core values at meetings via a custom Zoom background like this, available in 11 languages.

Awards Deadline Is Here

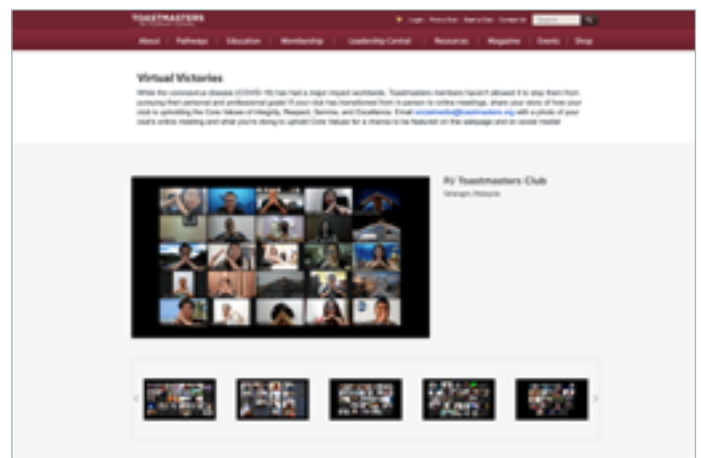
Take those last steps toward gaining your traditional education award! With June 30 marking the final day of the 2019-2020 Toastmasters program year—and the end of the organization’s traditional education program—this month is the last chance to turn in paperwork for most program awards.

Members must submit their applications for awards in the traditional program to World Headquarters by June 30, 2020, to have the credit count toward the Distinguished Club Program (DCP) in 2019-2020. For awards requiring a leadership role, such as club officer, District leader, or club coach, you can submit applications before the role has been completed, beginning June 1.

During the 2020-2021 Toastmasters year, members can continue work to complete the High Performance Leadership project (the requirement for the Leadership Excellence award) and the Advanced Leader Silver (ALS) and Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) awards, all in the traditional program. All applications for these awards must be submitted to World Headquarters by June 30, 2021. In addition, the club coach provision to earn both a club support and District leadership credit will be extended through that period.

However, only DTM awards, whether earned through the traditional program or Pathways, will count toward DCP credit in 2020-2021.

For questions, please email the Education Services Team at educationprogram@toastmasters.org or call +1 720-439-5050, extension 403.



Send us photos of your online club meetings and a brief comment on how you're upholding our core values of integrity, respect, service, and excellence. Send to socialmedia@toastmasters.org for a chance to be featured on this webpage or on social media.

▶ **SNAPSHOT**

For an “around the world”-themed meeting, members of SSA Toastmasters Club in Singapore chose to wear hats from different countries. Table Topics questions were based off proverbs from the countries represented, such as the African proverb, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

▶ **PRESENTATION SKILLS**

10 Tips to Make Your Speech Sparkle

1 Don't apologize. If you make a mistake, there's no need to say you're sorry. Pick up where you left off and keep going.

2 Use humor when things go wrong. If something goes awry during your speech, tell a quick joke to help put you and your audience at ease. For example, if the lights go out, a good joke might be: “Who forgot to pay the electric bill?”

3 Eliminate filler words. Using umms and ahhs in your speech will distract from your message. Briefly pause to gather your next thought or take a sip of water.

4 Ditch distracting mannerisms. Nervous fidgeting or gestures will detract from your message. Use purposeful gestures to give your speech more impact.

5 Keep your notes in check. If you need to use notes, be subtle and do not read your speech.

6 Test your volume. Before your speech, ask a friend or colleague to listen to you from the back of the room to ensure you're speaking at the right volume.

7 Enjoy yourself. Choose a topic that is important to you and that you feel passionate about. Your commitment to the topic will help sell the speech to your audience.

8 Use visuals. Make sure your visual aids reinforce your message and don't distract from it.

9 Embrace your unique style. Don't copy the style or gestures of other speakers, as your audience will sense a lack of authenticity. Be yourself; no one does that better than you can.

10 Fuel your mental engine. Eat a light meal at least 20 minutes prior to your speech.

TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



GET CREATIVE! Traveling Toastmaster wants to highlight creativity in quarantine! Take a picture in your home or socially distancing with your magazine or other Toastmasters memorabilia. Send your fun photos to photos@toastmasters.org

1



1 | **LAURA TIERRA** of Barcelona, Spain, virtually revisits an olive shop she discovered in Morocco, prior to the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

2 | **ROWENA GARCIA** of Elmhurst, New York, U.S., enjoys the views in El Nido, Palwan, Philippines.

3 | **MICHÈLE O'CONNELL** of Milton Keynes, England, U.K., stands with the matriarch elephant of the Elephant Jungle Sanctuary near Pattaya City, Thailand. She says both she and the elephant are the same age and retired.

4 | **DAVID FRAQUELLI** of Los Angeles, California, U.S., explores Antarctica with his Toastmaster magazine in hand.

2



3



4



View additional photos in this month's Traveling Toastmaster photo gallery at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.

The Toastmasters Club Game

What is it? How do you play it? How do you win it?

BY LANCE MILLER, DTM

I joined Toastmasters in 1992 to become a better speaker. At the time, I was not looking for an all-encompassing, life-transforming experience. However, today I am the [2005 World Champion of Public Speaking](#) and a longtime, enthusiastic investor in the success of my home club, Renaissance Speakers in Hollywood, California, www.renaissancespeakers.org.

Our club has enjoyed a strong, healthy culture for 32 years, often maintaining a membership roster of 60 to 90 members. Currently, we have 31 members and we are growing!

Like many clubs, we initially struggled to achieve success in the [Distinguished Club Program](#) (DCP), which recognizes annual achievement in education, membership growth, training, and effective club management. At one point, a few years after chartering our club, we had 35 members on our roster but fewer than 12 attended meetings. There was a feeling like the club was failing.

One day only five of us showed up for the meeting, so instead of continuing business as usual, we sat down over coffee and discussed whether we should close the club or try to revive it.

We decided to figure out how to “win” at Toastmasters and build a great club, treating the DCP as a challenging game. We got points for each accomplishment and if we could attain Distinguished status, that would indicate success. This approach was the starting point that allowed us to fit the pieces together for a successful club future.

Before we created this new “game plan,” our weekly meetings were exactly that, “weakly meetings.” Our club had no clear direction or plan that created continuity week to week. There was no sense of accomplishment—for members or for the club as a whole. Without a specific vision and clear goals, success was elusive.

Now we were upping our game, [focusing a winning mindset](#) tightly on education and membership building. When we began



Members of Renaissance Speakers host an international meeting with Toastmasters from other clubs visiting on their way to the International Convention in Denver in August 2019. The author, Lance Miller, is the last person, bottom right.

playing the DCP game, we started tracking how we could accumulate points for what we were accomplishing over the course of the entire Toastmasters year. Just like football, tennis, or ice hockey, when the game is over, you start a new game and everyone has zero points. That is what happens on June 30 of each year in Toastmasters.

Our first step was asking each member to complete one Competent Communicator or Advanced Communicator award each year, as we were working in the traditional education program at the time. To do this, it was crucial that members had to give speeches more often. And as they did, I watched them really start to win with Toastmasters. Member confidence and self-esteem improved dramatically; overall, enthusiasm for the club soared. The more our members experienced life-changing growth, the more they wanted to tell the world about Toastmasters. They eagerly brought guests to club meetings.

Among our other game-winning practices:

- ▶ Delivering weekly meetings that were [high energy](#), fun, productive, and on time. Everything was planned and confirmed in advance.
- ▶ Expecting speakers, evaluators, and other functionaries to show up as

scheduled, and fulfill their roles once they confirmed. This taught what it meant to be a team member.

- ▶ Enthusiastically engaging guests; asking them to stand and introduce themselves, participate in Table Topics®, and tell us what they thought of the meeting.
- ▶ Diligently scheduling speakers and meeting roles so members stayed on track with their goals and had plenty of opportunities to speak.
- ▶ Establishing a great meeting venue that was convenient for members and guests.

The hallmark of everything we do in Toastmasters is improvement of the individual. A winning club is comprised of winning members. Club officers win by learning to manage club activities, work with members, and run effective meetings. Members win by improving as speakers and listeners, learning to deliver effective feedback, and leading inside and outside of Toastmasters. When the individual grows, [the club wins.](#) **T**

LANCE MILLER, DTM, is the 2005 World Champion of Public Speaking. He is a leadership and communication coach and partner in Miller, Knutson & DaRe, LLC. Learn more at www.lancemillerspeaks.com.

Moving Forward by Honoring the Past

Pathways program reflects Ralph Smedley’s vision.

BY SUE STANLEY

EDITOR’S NOTE: *Toastmasters International’s traditional education program ends on June 30, the last day of the 2019-2020 program year. After that, Pathways will be the sole education program. To mark the official transition, Toastmaster magazine is reprinting part of a 2016 article by Sue Stanley, Toastmasters’ senior instructional designer. It highlights the guiding spirit behind the creation of Pathways—that the program is not a departure from Toastmasters’ educational foundation, but, rather, an expansion and evolution of its principles. Some of the original content has been updated.*

Dr. Ralph C. Smedley wrote his first Toastmasters publication in 1928 to provide a small group of club members a framework for learning public speaking skills. It was with the same goal of member support that the Toastmasters International Pathways development team designed the [Pathways program](#) using the most current research in adult learning.

The focus on the future was important, but it wasn’t the only consideration. We also [looked back to the origins of Toastmasters](#) and the vision of its founder. In developing Pathways, much time was spent reviewing educational content—including Smedley’s original writing—in past Toastmasters programs. There is great wisdom in all Toastmasters education manuals, and the instructional-design team wanted to be sure that this wisdom and Smedley’s vision continued on—well-placed and relevant in Pathways.

With a great deal of pleasure, we discovered how well Smedley’s view of the education program was aligned with the

organization’s vision for Pathways. At its core, it is designed to develop members’ public speaking skills. It is also focused on helping you identify and nourish other, possibly latent, skills and talents.

Smedley believed that by building and practicing public-speaking skills, other skills would be uncovered and developed—such as confidence, along with leadership, thinking, and listening skills. To this end, he included very few parameters around the projects in his 1928 manual. His view was that the work of developing topics, speeches, and content belonged to the member.

Shifting Views

Over time, many of the tenets of the first Toastmasters evaluations and speeches were changed to accommodate shifting views on learning and to encourage members to participate in a clear, well-defined program. With so much research available today about adult learning and the way we process new information and develop skills, it became clear that Smedley’s first

PATHWAYS AT A GLANCE

270,000 active paths

Toastmasters in 143 countries use Pathways

>85% of members finishing a path say it helped them reach their goals

Toastmasters International Research, as of March 31, 2020

take on how skills would be developed was correct; the more open-ended and comprehensive the project could be, the more likely members would feel a sense of ownership during the process of developing speeches, and the more they would gain from each project.

With a great deal of pleasure, we discovered how well Ralph Smedley’s view of the education program was aligned with the organization’s vision for Pathways.

Pathways projects were designed with flexibility and challenges in place. Once members achieve success in their clubs, they can transfer those skills out into the world—into their Toastmasters Districts, other organizations, the workplace, their personal relationships, even politics, government, and community service. It was Smedley’s hope that members would parlay what they learned in their clubs out into their communities.



It was Smedley’s hope that members would parlay what they learned in their clubs out into their communities.

As responsibilities change and shift in life and career, our needs change as well. Some members have a particular talent they would like to share on a broader scale by speaking, posting to a blog, or developing a podcast. Toastmasters has always provided a place for members to try new things. They want to take risks in a safe environment and hear constructive feedback so they can build skill and confidence.

Opportunities and Ownership

This commitment to personal growth and development [continues with Pathways](#). The opportunity is open, as it has always been, for members to select and design their learning. As Smedley knew in the earliest days of the organization, members need to have full ownership of their learning and their progress to be successful. He understood that he could offer a small inkling of what members could do, but in the end, they [would forge their own paths](#).

Pathways is a step forward in Toastmasters learning, but it is anchored in the first, most important beliefs and understanding of our founder:

In the course of years, as we gained experience, it was seen that our processes had values far beyond the mere training of people to face audiences and speak their ideas. Communication was seen to have its effects in almost every phase of life. Improvement was needed not only in public speaking, but in all use of words, whether spoken or written. Training in speech had definite values in many lines of improvement.

ELEVATING BASE CAMP

When the Toastmasters [Pathways learning experience](#) launched more than two years ago, it accomplished one of the organization’s most important goals: modernizing its education program. Indeed, Pathways reflects the benefits of digital learning, featuring an array of interactive tools, including videos, quizzes, assessments, and other activities.

As the number of members working in Pathways has continued to increase, Base Camp—the online gateway to the program—has evolved as well. (Although purchasing Pathways content in print is an option, most users choose the digital version.) [Base Camp](#) is where members find the tools they need to navigate Pathways, and providing members the best online experience possible is an ongoing effort.

To that end, the Pathways team at World Headquarters recently redesigned the Base Camp home page. The redesign is aimed at making it easier for members to access the items they use most, such as paths and learning materials, speech evaluations, and other Pathways resources.

The redesign marks the latest step to improve the online experience. In 2018 a team at World Headquarters was established, composed of members from different departments. The group gathered feedback and suggestions from members about the online experience and subsequently enhanced the digital [Navigator](#), which helps new members better understand Base Camp.

Another significant move came late last year when the Pathways team “unlocked” all levels in the program’s 11 paths. Pathways users can open and view any project in any of the five progressive levels. Being able to view what’s available in their path’s higher levels may help members plan their projects and chart their learning—although it’s still highly recommended that projects be completed in sequential order.

The process to select a path has also been made easier. The path-selection process from your Toastmasters Profile (on the Toastmasters website) was refreshed and given a new, streamlined look, making the process more intuitive. To learn more, log in to your Profile and select “Choose a Path” or watch the video on the Toastmasters YouTube channel at bit.ly/TI_PathSelection. (Access to Pathways Base Camp has been extended through June 30, 2020, for members who were in good standing as of April 30, 2020.)


As more and more members make the online journey to Base Camp, the process continues to be refined and improved.

Some of these may be listed thus: It leads to the discovery of hidden abilities, bringing these latent talents into use, and thus enriching the individual’s life. It broadens the person’s conception of how to live with people. It helps in the integration of personality. It brings out for use the leadership traits and abilities, and thus helps to prepare the individual to be a leader.

It opens the way to more creative and constructive living for the person

who takes full advantage of the opportunities offered.

—Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, from his book *Personally Speaking*

For more information about the Pathways learning experience, go to www.toastmasters.org/Pathways. 

Sue Stanley is senior instructional designer for Toastmasters International.

Coaches Find Common Ground

Two runners trade tips on competing and communication.

BY LAURA MISHKIND

Even though they are 41 years apart in age, [Madonna Hanna](#) and [Marcus Chambers](#) are in lockstep with two loves: competitive running and Toastmasters.

Hanna, 66, is a veteran of several U.S. state and national competitions for senior athletes, while Chambers, 25, is an Olympic hopeful on Team USA's track and field team. Both are members of Thursday Nite Live Toastmasters in Parkland, Washington. The two runners have developed an enduring friendship, in which they coach each other. Chambers is Hanna's running coach, while she serves as his Toastmasters mentor and illuminates the similarities between running and speaking.

Theirs is perhaps an unlikely partnership, given their age differences and life experiences. Chambers—a lifelong athlete—is the first male in his family to earn a college degree. Hanna picked up running on a whim, thanks in part to her late husband, Steven, who coached her to racing success. In her career, she was a fashion and retail executive, author, and high school teacher before becoming a professional speaker. She even won an educator's award and grant in 2007 for an anti-swearing campaign she created for her students.

Despite their age gap and different backgrounds, working together and communicating came easy for Hanna and Chambers. It's a simple matter: respect. "I respect her and even

though I am much younger, she respects me," Chambers says. "It's honestly a great fit."

Finding the Balance

When Hanna lost her husband to cancer in 2018, she wanted to continue running and needed a new coach. Her physical therapist connected her to a few people, and she ultimately reached Chambers. When Chambers first met with Hanna, he wasn't sure he had the time to take on coaching, but he realized she would put in the time and effort to become a better 100- and 50-meter sprinter and wanted to help her do so. Together they poured hours and effort into practice. The effort paid off when Hanna ran in the U.S. 2019 National Senior Games in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and significantly cut her sprinting time.

Even though Chambers had been reluctant to take on the coaching role due to his busy schedule, after a few months, he really enjoyed the experience. "She is very coachable, positive, and determined to do well," Chambers says of their time together. "The pure satisfaction of helping someone reach their goal is personally rewarding and warms my heart."

Today, Chambers still coaches Hanna while training to compete in the Olympic trials next year in hopes of running in Tokyo, Japan, at the 2021 Summer Olympics in the 400-meter event.

From Track to Toastmasters

During their training, Hanna discovered Chambers' interest in public speaking. As a longtime Toastmaster, she jumped at the opportunity to introduce him to her club. She quickly embraced the role of a Toastmasters mentor and found ways to connect speaking to running to help Chambers learn. "Speeches need polishing and fine-tuning just as running needs to be smooth and effortless," she explains. "Preparation is essential in both speaking and running. From start to finish, it is a journey that includes daily practice and discipline."

"Toastmasters has given me confidence, and I bring that in my training for the Olympics."

—MARCUS CHAMBERS

Perseverance is key to both activities, adds Hanna, who overcame a ruptured Achilles tendon back in 2014 to continue her running pursuits.

The lesson resonated with Chambers, as he learned that improving his speaking skills involved more than he had anticipated. "I just thought I would have to practice every now and then. Madonna taught me there was a lot more to it."

Chambers is now aiming to not only compete at the Olympics but become the



Marcus Chambers and Madonna Hanna

track Chambers is vocal and encourages two-way communication to ensure Hanna understands the drills and avoids injuries. They plan to continue to work together for as long as they are able.

More to Come

The duo enjoyed running and speaking together so much that they teamed up to speak at a local church to an audience of students. They spoke about their similar and different experiences as successful individuals from two generations, aiming to inspire the students to work hard and never give up. And this likely won't be the last time they present together. Hanna says, "In the future Marcus and I look forward to the opportunity of speaking on important topics that embrace the concerns of two generations."

Hanna plans to continue keynote speaking and hopes to compete in the National Senior Games as long as she stays healthy and injury free. Though the Olympics have been delayed a year due to the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, Chambers plans to continue his training and keep pursuing his Olympic dream.

In the meantime, he is starting to realize his second dream: becoming a youth-focused motivational speaker to teach others to persevere to achieve their dreams—just as he did. He recently completed a contract with a Tacoma public school district to speak at every middle school in the area on preparing for college. Chambers says, "I am grateful to be a member of Toastmasters. The school district provided opportunities that allowed me to demonstrate what I have learned thus far."

The future looks bright for these rising track stars, and though they come from different backgrounds and generations, they continue to train together, speak together, respect one another, and learn from their differences—no matter how great the generation gap. **T**

Laura Mishkind is assistant editor for the *Toastmaster magazine*.

most well-spoken athlete in the Olympic Village. Ultimately, he wants to be an international motivational keynote speaker for young audiences, hosting keynote events to share stories of his own victories and tips for positively handling defeat.

"When you're speaking in front of people, you have to be confident. When I am running in front of thousands of people, I have to be confident in myself," Chambers says. "Toastmasters has given me confidence, and I bring that in my training for the Olympics."

Deep Breaths

One of the key pieces of advice Hanna gave Chambers is simply taking a deep breath before beginning to speak. This came naturally to him because he often utilized similar breathing techniques just before a race. Chambers says breathing slowly and visualizing the outcome of a race or speech is a vital component for his success and allows him to perform to the best of his abilities.

"Both speakers and racers seek opportunities to perform, as well as improve their skills daily," Hanna says of the similarities between the two skills. "There is always something to be tweaked, whether it is gestures in speaking, or how arms are positioned to maximize speed when racing. Every time someone runs or speaks, they have an opportunity to learn something new."

Toastmasters training has also helped Chambers with posture, a lesson that has transferred directly to the track. "Thinking about and actively working on my posture in Toastmasters reminds me to focus on it during practice," he explains. "When racing against the fastest people in the world, it isn't just about speed. It's about who can run the most efficiently. In the end, maintaining good posture is going to help win the race."

"Preparation is essential in both speaking and running. From start to finish, it is a journey that includes daily practice and discipline."

—MADONNA HANNA

As they continued to work together, the two runners learned more about one another and the generations they come from—and the stereotypes surrounding them. "Supposedly, millennials are selfish. That label definitely does not describe Marcus Chambers," Hanna says. One trait he does have is regular use of his cellphone and texting, to which Hanna has adapted. "Madonna is text-savvy," he notes. "However, she likes in-person meetings too. I had to adjust to these."

Though like many millennials, he prefers digital communication, on the

What TEDx Organizers Want

Thinking of stepping on the TED stage? Here's what organizers want you to know.

BY ELENA PAWETA, DTM, Ph.D.

“How can I become a TEDx speaker?” This is a question I hear often, ever since I started [organizing TEDx events](#) in Poland. After [TED launched](#) the independently organized TEDx events all around the world in 2009, speaking on the “red dot” has become the dream of many. Speakers, authors, and presenters see the stage time at TEDx as a possibility to reach broader audiences; it's both a distinction and a great opportunity for promotion.

But it takes more than just being a confident speaker to get to the TEDx stage. Organizers have specific ideas in mind when they curate a TEDx event. To get deeper insight into the process, Toastmasters members and District leaders who are involved in organizing TEDx events share their experiences.



Finding “Ideas Worth Spreading”

The motto of all TED events is “Ideas Worth Spreading.” When organizers begin to plan the event, they don't start with speakers—they start with the ideas they want to spread in their local communities. Usually, TEDx events feature a diversity of speakers across several disciplines who address a variety of topics.

Cristina Juesas, DTM, an organizer of TEDxVitoriaGasteiz in Spain, says she looks for ideas that are truly adding something new in terms of scientific discoveries and challenges, with ideas never told before and [different points of view](#) on common topics. Norberto Amaral, DTM, an organizer of TEDxPorto in Portugal, says, “We always look for ideas and projects that can have the greatest impact and relevance for the community. It's also important to reference what we are *not* looking for: life coaches, simple inspirational and motivational messages, linear life stories, and unfounded opinions.” Alberto Escobar, DTM, a TEDx organizer in Mexico, looks for genuine ideas that impact attendees. “I always seek to change something in our society; I am looking for ideas that change the world,” he says.



Elena Paweta, DTM, on stage at the TEDxWarsawWomen conference.
Photo credit: Agata Dabrowska

You may be surprised to learn that professional speakers are specifically not recommended for the TEDx stage for several reasons. They usually already have their platforms to share ideas, have probably shared this idea to different audiences before, and can speak about anything. Having confidence in speaking in public is not enough to get to a TEDx stage—you need to have a new, interesting, and factual idea worth spreading. Do you have one? Then the next part is for you.

Pitching Your Idea

When presenting your idea to TEDx organizers, it is important to be clear about the goal and main message you want to deliver, and how it benefits the local community. A TED Talk topic has three main criteria:

1. It is a new idea, not previously shared with another audience.
2. It is factual, based on evidence.
3. It will be interesting to a broad audience.

If you're considering pitching a TED idea, here are some do's and don'ts when presenting yourself and your topic.

What NOT to say:

- ▶ I am a professional speaker/trainer/coach.
- ▶ I have delivered this talk to a different audience and they loved it.
- ▶ I can speak about anything! What do you want me to speak about?
- ▶ I would like to recommend my boss—he is an amazing speaker!

What to say:

- ▶ This idea will add value to your event because ...
- ▶ This idea is innovative because ...
- ▶ I am competent to speak about it because ...
- ▶ The idea is interesting and relevant to our local community because ...

“It’s important to know the TEDx event you apply for,” says Norberto Amaral, the TEDx organizer in Portugal. He recommends familiarizing yourself with the theme of the particular event you are applying to and the kind of talks given previously. In light of this, he says, “Write a short proposal about your idea and why it matters. Make sure you explain why you are the right person to do a talk about this subject.” He cautions against sending the same message to different TEDx organizers.

As a TEDx organizer, I agree with Norberto. Let me share that many of us know each other, and we share information: For example, speaker candidates who are more interested in self-promotion rather than sharing ideas worth spreading go on the blacklist.

Considering International Venues

As a result of an overwhelming amount of applications, TEDx organizers have to choose among the best ideas. What if your idea was rejected from your local TEDx event? Don't worry. Ask for feedback. Find out why it was not suitable for this specific event and ask if it would be reasonable to apply next year. Cristina Juesas, the TEDx organizer in Spain, says that it is always worth asking for the cause of rejection. Maybe your idea is not as worthy of spreading as you think it may be. And the organizers can help you to improve it.

WANT TO GO BEHIND THE SCENES? BECOME A TEDx VOLUNTEER

Participating in organizing a TEDx event offers an excellent leadership opportunity for Toastmasters. Volunteering to support a local TEDx event can offer insights on team building, delegation, leadership communication, sales skills, and much more. Organizing an event requires the work of several teams; typically these teams include:

- ▶ **Curation.** This team manages event curation—choosing speakers, organizing workshops, assigning speaker guides, organizing rehearsals, and coordinating stage management.
- ▶ **Marketing.** The marketing team handles everything connected with marketing and public relations of the event—managing social media profiles, contacting the press, copywriting, organizing interviews, and handling media coverage.
- ▶ **Partners.** This team looks for sponsors and partners for the event. It handles negotiations and manages outside relationships.
- ▶ **Event experience team.** These people handle everything going on in between sessions—registration, event activations, workshops, networking, etc.

Most of the TEDx events are focused on local communities; however, it is also possible to apply for an event outside your geographic area. The events I organized in Poland included speakers from Sweden, the U.K., Canada, and Germany, all of whom had ideas relevant for our local audience. Just keep in mind that TEDx events are nonprofit and often don't have a budget to cover expenses of speakers traveling from afar.

"We have brought foreign speakers and only covered travel expenses to the event," says Alberto Escobar, organizer of TEDxBarriodelaEstacion. "Many of them are honored to be invited to give a talk, so it is common for them to accept some costs."

Helping You Prepare

So you have a great idea, you apply for your local TEDx event, and you get accepted as a speaker—what's next? How do you prepare to deliver your perfect TEDx Talk? The event organizers will help you with that! During the last TEDxWarsawWomen event I organized in Poland, we started the speakers' preparation process five months before the event.

Preparation included individual meetings with speakers and several workshops on everything from the TED Talk structure

to voice projection and stage presence. All speakers had mentors assigned to support them with speech preparation during the process. Before the event we had two rehearsals, first to see the final version of the speech and make last-minute adjustments, and then a dress rehearsal with lighting and a microphone to make speakers comfortable with the stage. It takes a lot of time and effort to prepare a truly impactful TEDx Talk, but it really makes a difference.

What is the difference between the TEDx and Toastmasters speaking styles? In both settings there are no specific requirements in terms of delivery. However, crucial differences are worth highlighting.

| | Toastmasters | TEDx |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Timing | ▶ 5-7 min. (in most cases) | ▶ 3-18 min. |
| Goal of speech | ▶ Depending on the project, the goal can be to inform, inspire, entertain, etc. | ▶ Persuasive speech. The goal is to make people adopt your idea. |
| Audience | ▶ Limited to a club or conference participants (in most cases). | ▶ Not limited to event participants. TEDx Talks can get millions of views globally. |
| Body language | ▶ Speakers are encouraged to move purposefully on stage when speaking. | ▶ Speakers are not encouraged to move on stage. This is mainly for the recording and post-production purposes. |
| Visual aids | ▶ Using slides is not encouraged, unless required by the project. | ▶ Using slides can be helpful in explaining complex ideas. |

In Toastmasters we practice how to be confident presenters; therefore, good delivery often can be a goal itself. On the TEDx stage, however, delivery is the tool to get your message through. All TED Talks focus on the content—a well-crafted message, simple structure, good arguments supported by evidence.

I have seen [a lot of amazing speakers](#) with ideas worth spreading. The TEDx stage is a great platform to share ideas with the broad audience. If you have a new, interesting, and research-based idea that has the potential to change the world, challenge yourself and don't be afraid to apply for your local TEDx event. **T**

Elena Paweta, DTM, is a District 108 leader (Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia) and a member of Poland's First Toastmasters in Warsaw, Poland. She is a Dale Carnegie trainer and an academic lecturer holding her Ph.D. in economics.



Neuroscientist Offers Antidote for Stage Fright

But Anwesha Banerjee, DTM, Ph.D., is still afraid of spiders.

BY SUZANNE FREY

What's it like to deliver a TEDx Talk and have it be widely shared? Toastmaster Anwesha Banerjee, DTM, Ph.D., [gave a TEDx Talk](#) in Decatur, Georgia, in the United States, in September 2019 on the topic "Stage Fright: Don't Get Over It, Get Used to It." Two months later, her talk began being promoted by TED on social media under its "How to Be a Better Human" series. It has now been viewed more than 23,000 times across the globe.

Banerjee is an assistant scientist at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where she studies the neurological disease mechanism in myotonic dystrophy, a muscular disorder. Born in Kolkata, India, she moved to the United States—to Dallas, Texas—for her doctoral degree in neuroscience. She also has a master's degree in biotechnology and a second master's in the topic of cognition in neuroscience. She also finds time to serve in a District 14 leadership position.

Tell us about your experience giving a TEDx Talk.

I got the TEDx Talk opportunity because of a Toastmasters connection. A fellow Toastmaster in my District, Daniel Enger, DTM, was the main organizer for TEDx Decatur. He reached out to me, and we discussed how it might be interesting to combine my background in neuroscience and public speaking and therefore address stage fright from the perspective of neuroscience. I spent three months preparing for my talk, although the first month was just thinking and developing the idea I wanted to communicate. TED's concept is to have "ideas worth spreading." It is often hard to



Anwesha Banerjee, DTM, Ph.D., talks about stage fright from the perspective of neuroscience.
Photo credit: TEDxDecatur

figure out that one important thing that you really want to communicate. Once I figured it out, then developing the rest of the story was easier. But of course, I did go through many iterations during my writing, and many Toastmasters friends provided feedback on both content and delivery. TEDx was truly a one-of-a-kind experience.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

I joined Toastmasters in 2013 in Dallas, Texas, while in graduate school. I completed all my education in English and didn't have any difficulty with the language. However, after moving to the

U.S., I realized spoken English, effective communication, and presentations required me to adjust to a different way of speaking, including a new focus on pronunciation and diction. Public speaking was definitely not one of my strengths.

My thesis proposal in 2011 was my first big presentation, and it was terrifying. It was almost like I started feeling each of my organs individually: the heart pumping, the stomach churning, the palms sweating, and the legs shaking. It was as if my whole body was dancing, but to bad choreography. I felt judged with so many eyes on me at once. I knew I could



have done much better, so I decided to give Toastmasters a chance.

You said, “When it comes to stage fright, don’t get over it. Get used to it.” What do you mean by that?

When we tell ourselves “I can’t” too many times, it influences our mindset. My question to everyone is, How do you know you can’t do something, if you don’t even give it a serious effort? An important part of my Ph.D. training was to get used to failed experiments because it is normal to have multiple failed experiments before a single success. If we do not get used to failed experiments, the path to a successful experiment will become painstakingly long and cumbersome. The process of becoming a good communicator and leader is no different.

Are you saying that most fears can be reduced by exposing yourself to situations that intimidate you?

In neuroscience, a lot of research validates the use of exposure therapy to overcome fear, such as for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some scientific rationales support the fact that fears can be reduced by exposing yourself to situations that intimidate you. Of course, that hasn’t worked on me yet for my fear of spiders ... so I cannot completely claim that works on all fear!

Why do you think your message was so popular?

I think the TEDx message was popular because it was on a relatable topic that can be implemented easily, and the importance of good communication is something we can all relate to. The nature of our jobs is different from a few decades ago. We now have to present a lot more, talk to clients more, and therefore the need to connect with people via effective communication is essential. For that, we



Anwesha Banerjee, DTM, Ph.D., is congratulated by fellow Distict 14 Toastmasters Carlos Greene (left) and Daniel Enger, who both helped organize and facilitate the TEDxDecatur event in September 2019. Photo credit: TEDxDecatur

have to be ready to get up on the stage and deliver at a moment’s notice.

What are your thoughts on the importance of clear communication in the scientific community?

Important and essential work by scientists is often misinterpreted and even fails to see the limelight due to lack of proper communication to a more general audience. We scientists have a recurring habit of using jargon and complex language, which makes it hard to understand not only for non-scientists but even other scientists with a different research focus. Therefore, I feel strongly about developing communication skills among scientists. Science is fun. Science is important. We need to let the world know that.

Besides becoming a better presenter, has Toastmasters offered you other benefits?

Toastmasters introduced me to this whole new world of wonderful people and exemplary leaders. I have made friends for life, and I have had the opportunity to learn from mentors I wouldn’t have found otherwise.

Working through multiple leadership opportunities, I have improved my

management skills and learned to work better on teams in my club and in my District. However, most importantly, Toastmasters has instilled confidence in me that has changed the way I see myself and how I see the world.

What’s it like to have your TEDx presentation become so widely shared?

The entire experience still feels surreal to me. I am still processing the overwhelming support and encouragement I received from friends and family. Some of my friends from my college days in India, who previously witnessed my fear onstage, were super happy to see how far I have come in terms of my confidence and delivery in front of a large crowd!

Any words of advice to those seeking to land a TEDx Talk?

My advice is to go beyond individual clubs and network more. That’s how I landed a TEDx Talk, and others may too. Get as much feedback on your content and delivery as possible. **T**

Suzanne Frey is the senior content strategist for Toastmasters International.

Overwhelmed by Advice?

The five things you must know about public speaking.

BY DOUGLAS KRUGER

Try this experiment: Imagine a new speaker asks you for the most important things you've ever learned about public speaking over the past 20 years. "But boil it down to five things only, please," he adds. "Otherwise I'll just get overwhelmed."

I've been a Toastmaster for just shy of two decades, and a [full-time professional speaker](#) for the past 15 years. The idea of condensing all the lessons I've ever learned, from generous past Toastmasters World Champions of Public Speaking and highly paid professional speakers, into such a tight answer intrigued me. Was it possible?

Here's what I came up with. Boiled down, these are the five philosophies I've found that will get you the most bang for your speaking buck:

1 Create Images that Move

Anyone who's been around speakers for more than 20 seconds will have heard the advice: Tell stories. After two decades, I can vouch for that excellent advice.

The best speaking is simply this: Make a point, tell a story, make another point, tell another story.

Story illustrations help your point come alive. And the best ones evoke images that move or scenes that progress in the audience's imagination. If they can see it in their mind's eye, and follow the action, that's winning half the battle.

You can spend years studying how to tell stories well in speeches, and you can become a master at the form. But the starting point is simply to be aware that stories are the heart and soul of good

communication. Try to turn every point into a story.

2 Be Gandalf, Not Frodo

There's nothing wrong with speaking about yourself. But it shouldn't be all about you, as though the whole point were to show off. Instead, you should be guiding the audience toward a goal, showing them how to achieve the things they want. Be Gandalf, not Frodo. Be Obi Wan, not Luke.

Make your speeches all about how the audience can get to where they want to go. It's the difference between "How I wrote a bestselling book!" versus "How you can write a bestselling book!" Same speech, same stories, different orientation.

3 Insert Pauses for Drama

I prefer a natural tone of speech. In fact, there's nothing worse than when a speaker sounds like he or she is (dramatic voice) "delivering a speech!" Conversational is always best.

But to truly elevate the level of mastery in your delivery, pause after important points. It gives you time to think, it gives the audience time to digest, and if you put your pause in just the right place, it can add goose-bump levels of drama. Pauses heighten everything and make you look masterful.

4 Move Around for Stories, Stand Still for Points

When should you move? When should you stand still? I find an excellent rule-of-thumb is this: When you're getting caught up in telling a story, feel free to move around the



Douglas Kruger

speaking area and become animated. But when you get to the point of that story, chat directly with the audience. Stand still in one place, and just connect with them.

5 Smile and Blink

Little things can give away your nervousness. For instance, when most inexperienced speakers stand in front of an audience, their eyes tend to go wide, and then switch off in a sort of "deer-in-the-headlights" stare.

I once heard some excellent advice to solve this: "Imagine there's a light at the corners of each eye. Now switch that light on."

Most real smiling actually happens around the eyes, not the mouth. Charm and warmth come from switching your eyes on, smiling, and allowing the eyes to crinkle every now and then. Sometimes the biggest difference between someone who looks amateur and a pro, is just that the pro remembers to smile.

Keep those five ideas in mind, and you can carve years off your learning curve. **T**

Douglas Kruger is a full-time professional speaker and business author. He is a five-time winner of District 74 International Speech Contest and has been inducted into the Speakers Hall of Fame by the Professional Speakers Association of Southern Africa. For more tips and advice, visit his YouTube channel or www.douglaskruger.com.

How to Moderate a Panel Discussion —Virtually

Start strong and show the audience they are in good hands.

BY KRISTIN ARNOLD

At a time when panel discussions are becoming increasingly popular in online meetings, political debates, and business presentations, knowing how to moderate a panel—and especially to do so virtually—is a valuable skill for any presenter.

[Panel discussions](#) are a fabulous format in this volatile and uncertain world where one person does not have the definitive answer to the topic at hand. Hearing multiple perspectives helps us understand common themes and appreciate diverse points of view.

Moderating a panel can be both terrifying—you have no control over what people will say—and electrifying. Add the technology and the “virtual” element to it, and it can be downright overwhelming. All the little things that a live audience won’t see (or forgive) get magnified online. Not to worry! Moderating a panel is similar to learning speaking skills: The more you moderate, the better you will be.

Here are my top 10 tips to moderating a lively and informative virtual panel discussion:

1 Prepare. Research the topic, the panelists, and the audience beforehand, and consult the meeting chair and planner to learn more about the event format and how much latitude you have to be creative.

2 Know your platform. Don’t expect to just “hop on” to whatever platform your meeting organizer has scheduled. Learn the platform capabilities—e.g., chat box or polling features—and figure out if you want to use them. If your audience is brand new to virtual panels/webinars, then keep it simple. Don’t try to use every feature available!

3 Select, invite, and confirm interesting panelists. If panelists have not yet been selected, round up **DEEP** people who can sufficiently address the topic:

- ▶ **Diverse.** Make sure the panel represents the demographic of the audience while ensuring a diversity of opinion and





thoughts. A group that is in complete agreement can make a discussion boring.

- ▶ **Expertise.** Invite a recognized authority or thought leader in the industry who possesses strong credentials. That person must establish credibility with the audience quickly via a biography or a 30-second introduction.
- ▶ **Eloquent.** Panelists should be good conversationalists. Do they speak well on the phone? Did your interview with them produce a monologue or a back-and-forth discussion? Review video footage of your potential panelists to make sure they can keep the audience engaged and interested.
- ▶ **Prepared.** Panelists must be willing to make a few key points and tell stories that illustrate those points. Preparation makes the difference between a mediocre panel and an amazing one.

4 Craft great questions. Get the conversation started quickly with well-prepared questions. Start with broad questions to set the tone for the discussion. Next, move to stating the reasons the audience should care, and then ask specific questions

to spur the panelists to share anecdotes, concrete examples, and implementation ideas. Be willing to let go of your planned questions when an interesting discussion emerges. (For more on preparing questions, see page 25.)

5 Select the Q&A format. You don't need to save your question-and-answer session for the end. As people come into the virtual room, pose a quick question via the chat box, and as they answer, welcome them by name. Periodically pause and take audience questions from the chat box, ask people to "raise their hand," and invite them in to pose their question, or put people into virtual breakout rooms to submit their most challenging question.

6 Practice *on that platform* with the panelists. Get comfortable with the technology and the functions you want to use. Make sure the audio and video work for all panelists—and that they all have enough bandwidth—during the dry run *and* 30 minutes before the panel starts. Show the panelists how to log



on, mute themselves (especially if they have a coughing fit!), and turn the camera off (if for some reason they need to leave for a moment). Ensure there is adequate lighting on each panelist's face—and that the camera isn't looking up their nose. Don't forget to look at everything in the video frame and audio range and remove any distracting elements.

7 Start strong. Online audiences get bored quickly, so start with a short, interesting hook to grab everyone's attention. Plan how you will introduce yourself and welcome the audience, as well as describe the technology, topic, and panelists. Dispense with the long preamble and get right into the discussion within the first three minutes. You want your audience to be leaning into the conversation and refusing to multitask.

8 Keep the conversation moving. If you have prepared the panelists appropriately, and you kick off the discussion with a few good questions, the conversation will start to flow on its own. Encourage each panelist to comment on particular parts of other panelists' statements. You may need to interject a follow-up question here and there to keep the conversation moving at a brisk pace. Probe deeper, make bridges between ideas, present opposing views, catch contradictions, test the unsaid, shift gears, create transitions, and intervene firmly and respectfully to keep everyone on track.

9 Shift gears. Audiences get bored when the conversation stays between the moderator and the panelists. You'll have to deliberately mix it up. Take questions from the chat box, take a quick poll, conduct a panelist "lightning round," call on a participant. The choices are endless—but you'll have to think it through using the technology.

10 Be positive. Always be uplifting. Bring positive energy to the virtual room. Compliment the audience and the panelists. Make it personal by using the panelists' first names and saying the name of the person who submitted the question.

11 Put a bow on it. Let the audience know the program is coming to an end by saying, "We're almost out of time. There are a few key things to wrap up." Then, summarize the discussion (or have your panelists do it) and offer opportunities to extend the discussion beyond the session. Make final announcements and conclude with heartfelt words of thanks and a round of applause.

12 Have a backup plan. Consider what could go wrong and try to prevent it from happening. Here's my go-to backup plan for virtual panel discussions:

- ▶ Have all the panelists log on 30 minutes prior to the start time of the panel to check all the equipment. Now you'll have some time to troubleshoot any problems.
- ▶ Have the cell phone number of all the panelists just in case the audio or video drops. Know how to connect them via audio.
- ▶ Make sure your panelists shut down all programs running concurrently on their computers to maximize bandwidth.
- ▶ Check that your panelists have a pair of headphones or earbuds at the ready in case there is audio feedback.
- ▶ Have some interesting backup questions in your back pocket—just in case there aren't any questions that come in from the audience!

Especially in the virtual world, it's easy to have a chitchat with the panelists and literally lose sight of your audience. As the panel moderator, you are the champion for the audience. Always keep them in mind and make sure their needs are being met throughout the entire session. **T**

Kristin Arnold is a meeting facilitator, moderator, trainer, keynote speaker, and the author of *Powerful Panels: A Step-By-Step Guide to Moderating Lively and Informative Panel Discussions at Meetings, Conferences and Conventions*. For more information about how to moderate a panel discussion, see Kristin's free seven-part video course at www.PowerfulPanels.com.

Editor's Note: "Moderating a Panel Discussion" is a Level 5 elective project in all 11 paths of the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.

POWERFUL PANELS

Here's how to prepare questions to get the best answers.

The key to any [great panel discussion](#) is for the moderator and audience to ask questions that inspire frank conversation. Skilled moderators make these questions look spontaneous; however, in my experience, such queries are often curated in advance by the moderator or crowd-sourced from the audience.

After doing your research on the audience and the panelists, pull out that long list of potential questions you've gathered and ask yourself: What's the most prevalent question on everyone's mind?

- ▶ Why is this topic important right now?
- ▶ What key challenges are the audience members facing about this topic?
- ▶ What two things are most important to share or discover about this subject during the panel discussion?
- ▶ Where does the panel agree and disagree about the topic?

Focus on the questions that home in on the subject at hand. Pull out the ones that will:

- ▶ Deliver the biggest and broadest impact and value from the audience's perspective.
- ▶ Address an issue, challenge, or interest of the audience.
- ▶ Start a deeper conversation or spark an interesting debate.
- ▶ Uncover something the audience can't easily find on the internet.
- ▶ Provide takeaway value.

Have at least two main questions per panelist. Make sure these questions draw on the panelist's expertise and experiences in a useful way. And keep a backup of 10 or more questions to use if needed. Here are some more tips.

Sequence the questions. Typically, moderator-curated questions have a flow that moves from strategic to the more tactical:

- ▶ **Strategic.** Start with broad or "high-altitude" questions designed to discuss what is happening in the world.
- ▶ **Benefits.** Address the benefits and/or consequences about why the audience should care.
- ▶ **Specifics.** Ask more specific questions where the panelists will be more inclined to share anecdotes or concrete examples.

- ▶ **Application.** Make sure the audience walks away with substantial value and the ability to apply the information.

What method to use? You also should consider how you want to ask the questions to the panelists. Many moderators opt for what is called the **hot-potato method**. This is when you ask the same question to every panelist. This can get boring, and it puts the last panelist in an awkward position, trying to come up with something new to add.

The other option is **the ping-pong method**, which involves preparing a unique, separate question for each panelist, tailored to highlight some specific aspect of the panelist's background. For this, you want to make sure to have the same level of question (softy or hardball, but not both) for everyone else on the panel. You don't want to seem unfair by giving a softy question to your favorite panelist and then going in for the kill with a hardball question to a different panelist.

The first question sets the tone for the panel, so you want to be thoughtful about how you start. Softy questions warm up the panelists. These are broad, easy queries that allow the panelists to settle in and relax. Ask for a definition, talk about the history of the topic, or ask them why this subject is so interesting. Then raise the stakes, probing more controversial areas. Or you can opt for a more aggressive style and start out with a strong, provocative question. For example, ask each panelist to offer a strong opinion on the topic in 30 seconds or less.

Who to ask first? The first person to speak will influence the tone of the panel, so consider carefully who you want to start with; you can even have the seating plan reflect your initial order of questions. Keep in mind that you may need to tweak the questions as you go. Keep them brief (the shorter, the better) in order to keep the panelists on track.

Finally, consider creating cue cards. You can write your questions on index cards or use a tablet computer to scroll through the questions. You can also use such prompts for your welcoming remarks, panelist introductions, and closing comments.

Why go through all the effort of curating some fabulous questions for your panelists? Consider it an insurance policy. You may not even need to use many of them if the conversation flows easily. Other times, you may have to use every single one of them.

—Kristin Arnold

Do You Have a Warm-up Routine?

How to be a more confident speaker in five minutes or less.

BY DIANE WINDINGLAND, DTM

Just like you work out to make your muscles strong, you practice your speaking to become a stronger speaker. And if you want to be a strong public speaker, you need to warm up before you perform just like athletes and entertainers do.

Since 2011, I have been [speaking professionally and coaching](#) speakers. I developed a specific speaking warm-up routine after I blanked out during a District speech contest more than a decade ago. I've found that doing these simple exercises alleviates some of the most common physical and psychological issues that can cause confidence to dip right before speaking, specifically body tension and lack of belief in yourself and in your message.

Below is a five-minute warm up, and a 10-second confidence-boosting routine for right before you speak. I recommend performing most of the speaker warm-up exercises in a private space—the car, a hotel room, or a restroom—within half an hour of speaking. Some techniques, such as tactical breathing and visualization, can be done right before you take the stage. Download a one-page warm-up checklist here: bit.ly/speakwarmup.

The 5-Minute Speaker Warm-up in 3 Stages

Stage 1: Tension Reduction (1.5 minutes)

Tactical breathing, 4 sets

Feeling anxious or tense constricts your breathing, tightens your throat, and makes your voice sound stressed. A quick trick

to gaining control is to use some variation of tactical breathing, which will calm your nerves and relax your vocal chords. You can do this simple process in 16 seconds: Breathe in through your nose for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of four, exhale through your mouth for a count of four, and hold your breath again for a count of four. Repeat the cycle as many times as necessary. Pressed for time? Just do a big yawn.

Tall stretch

Stretching can reduce muscle tension, release feel-good endorphins, and improve your posture. For the tall stretch, stand with feet shoulder-width apart, and without bending, raise one arm straight up, reaching as high as you can for four seconds, then do the same with the other arm. Then stretch up both arms at the same time, rotate your arms and shoulders outward as you pull your arms back and down with your elbows leading the way down.

Neck stretch

A lot of people carry tension in their necks and shoulders. Loosen up with a slow neck stretch: Hang your head to one side, with your ear toward your shoulder (shoulders down) and then breath and relax into the stretch. Repeat on the other side.

Facial warm-up

The muscles in your face play a huge part in your ability to express yourself. Limber them up with a facial warm up: Smile big a few times, wiggle your lips, and stick your tongue out!

Stage 2: Vocal Exercises (1.5 minutes)

Sing

Practice scales to warm up vocal variety (e.g., “Do Re Mi...”) or any song you know well.

Vocal slide

Perform a vocal slide a few times (with your mouth open, sing “ah” as you slide from a comfortably low note to a comfortably high note and back down). Repeat, trying to extend your range a little bit, going a little higher and a little lower.

Tongue twisters

Recite a few tongue twisters, such as: “Red leather, yellow leather” or “She sells seashells by the seashore.”

Stage 3: Mental Preparation (1-2 minutes)

Power pose and affirmations

You can change your body language to change your emotional state, as researcher Amy Cuddy discusses in her TED Talk, *Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are*. “Power posing” (standing or sitting in a posture of confidence) causes you to feel and be perceived as more confident. Confident postures are expansive: wide stance, chest up, chin up, arms taking up space. Head to a quiet corner or the restroom before you speak and strike a high-power pose for a couple of minutes. You can try repeating positive affirmations as you hold your power pose, such as, “You are smart. You are powerful. You can make a



difference.” Say them in your mind if you are concerned about being overheard.

Tell yourself “I am excited!”

Several experiments have shown that telling yourself to get excited rather than telling yourself to relax can improve your performance during anxiety-inducing activities, such as public speaking. In one experiment, participants were told to prepare a persuasive speech, which would be videotaped and judged. Before delivering the speech, participants were instructed to say, “I am excited” or “I am calm.” The subjects who said they were excited were judged to be more persuasive, competent, and relaxed than those who said they were calm.

Visualize speaking with energy

Imagine yourself as the dynamic speaker you want to be. Focus on what you want, not on potential problems. Visualize the optimal situation: you as a confident speaker. Another tip is to visualize your audience as engaged, leaning forward, and hanging on your every word.

Say your first few sentences with power

Speak out loud your first few sentences with power and conviction. You can also verbalize in your mind.

Extra Time?

Listen to upbeat, motivational music

Music is known to affect productivity, learning, and energy levels, and it can also affect your confidence. Consider having a confidence playlist that you can listen to on your commute, while getting ready, or shortly before you speak.

Jump up and down

Get rid of some of your nervous energy by jumping up and down a few times, or by swinging your arms.

The 10-Second Confidence Boost Before You Speak

In the few seconds right before you speak, try this short confidence-boosting routine: Ready-Set-Go!

Ready (physical preparation)

Breathe: Take a deep, calming breath.

Lengthen: Stand tall with head up and shoulders back. This makes you look and feel more confident, as well as allows you to breathe more deeply to both project and sustain vocalization.

Set (mental preparation)


Rehearse: Mentally rehearse your opening words.

Go (audience interaction before speaking)

Look: Make eye contact before speaking. Before you launch into your presentation, pause and look at your audience for just a few seconds: Center, one side, other side, back to center, and pick one person, somewhere in the middle to deliver your first thought to.

Smile: Smiling can reduce your stress level. Plus, the contagious nature of smiles encourages audience members to smile back at you. Give your audience an authentic “Duchenne smile,” one that crinkles the corners of your eyes. You are about to give them the gift of your presentation!

Even the simple techniques of breathing and visualization can make a difference in your confidence level, just like they did for one of my recent clients, a candidate for a political committee. The candidate, who suffered from pre-speech jitters, was concerned she would become flustered and forget what she wanted to say. Right before taking the stage at a political event, she did a few cycles of tactical breathing and visualized herself speaking with energy. Not only did the few seconds of doing a couple of warm-up exercises help her manage her nervousness, it made her feel and appear more confident than the other candidate.

Don’t skip your speaker warm-up. Just like an athlete or an entertainer, you can use a warm-up routine to prepare physically and mentally for a peak performance in your next presentation. 

Diane Windingland, DTM, is a presentation coach from St. Paul, Minnesota, and a member of two clubs: PowerTalk Toastmasters and Readership Toastmasters. Learn more at www.virtualspeechcoach.com.

Official Notice of Vote

Vote for the Board of Directors Candidates.

Your Officer and Director Candidates for the 2020-2021 Board of Directors

You will have the opportunity to vote for the International Officer and Director candidates of your choice.

The International Leadership Committee nominated International Officer candidates for the positions of International President-Elect,

First Vice President, and Second Vice President. International Director candidates were nominated for Regions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14. The Committee's selection is presented in accordance with the Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Article VIII.

Officer Candidates

To view details of each officer nominee's qualifications, please visit the Toastmasters International website at: www.toastmasters.org/OfficerCandidates



INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT-ELECT
Margaret Page, DTM



FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Matt Kinsey, DTM



SECOND
VICE PRESIDENT
Donald F. Bittick, DTM



SECOND
VICE PRESIDENT
Morag Mathieson, DTM



SECOND
VICE PRESIDENT
Radhi Spear, DTM

Director Candidates

To view details of each director nominee's qualifications, please visit the Toastmasters International website at: www.toastmasters.org/DirectorCandidates

From Region 2

Tod Henry, DTM
Karen Marie Lucas, DTM

From Region 4

Robert S. Christeson, DTM
Harold Osmundson, DTM
Linda M. Rhea, DTM

From Region 6

Avis C. Brodie, DTM
Melissa L. McGavick, DTM

From Region 8

Shirley E. Daley, DTM
Roy Ganga, DTM
Rebecca Ann McGilton, DTM

From Region 10

Elizabeth Nostedt, DTM
Patricia O'Reilly, DTM

From Region 12

Lesley E. Storkey, DTM
Jan Vecchio, DTM

From Region 14

Dorothy Isa C. Du, DTM
Liva Wan, DTM

It is the right and duty of all clubs to participate in the vote, either through their representatives or by proxy. Delegates may make additional nominations for International Officer and Director candidates.

2020 Proposals

Make your voice heard.

In August 2020, every Toastmasters club will have the opportunity to vote on proposed amendments to the Bylaws of Toastmasters International.

Proposal A

Board Composition

The Board of Directors proposes amendments to the Bylaws of Toastmasters International that would increase the maximum percentage (from 15% to 20%) of Toastmasters Member Clubs that could compose one (1) region. If approved, the size of the Board would remain the same. However, instead of one (1) International Director serving each of 14 regions, two (2) International Directors would serve each of seven (7) regions. The International Directors would serve staggered two-year terms per region to promote continuity of knowledge on the Board of Directors for each region. In addition, the International Leadership Committee (ILC) will potentially have a larger pool of candidates per region to evaluate. If adopted, this new structure would be in place starting July 1, 2021.

Following are the proposed Articles to be amended, with a brief description of what those amendments entail:

1. Bylaws of Toastmasters International

a. Article V: Board of Directors, Section 1: How Constituted –

Change to two International Directors from each geographic region serving staggered two-year terms. The current requirement is one International Director from each geographic region.

b. Article V: Board of Directors, Section 4: Duties –

Increase the maximum percentage of clubs per region to 20%. The current maximum percentage is 15%.

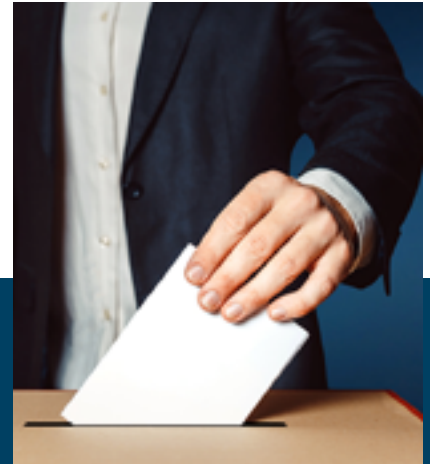


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The Board of Directors asks for your support and recommends that your club vote in favor of the Proposals.

To view the full text of the proposed amendments to the Bylaws of Toastmasters International, visit:

www.toastmasters.org/2020Proposals



- c. **Article VII: Committees, Section 3: International Leadership Committee** – Include two International Leadership Committee (ILC) members representing each region who would serve staggered two-year terms. The total number of ILC members would remain the same. The current requirement is one ILC member from each geographic region.

- d. **Article VIII: Nominations, Section 2: International Directors** – Enable the ILC to nominate candidates for International Director from all regions. The current requirement is for the ILC to nominate candidates for each geographical region that has an International Director's term expiring that year.

- e. **Article IX: Elections, Section 1: Time and Section 2: Qualifications** – At the Annual Business Meeting, delegates would vote for one International Director from each of the seven regions. If approved, each of the continuing International Directors on the

Board would be assigned to one of the seven regions by the International President.

Proposal B

Statement Submission for International Disciplinary Proceedings

When conducting a disciplinary hearing, it is important that the Board, or the International Disciplinary Committee when authorized by the Board, have sufficient time to conduct effective due diligence when reviewing information provided by the charged member. The amount of information provided by a charged member can vary greatly.

In order to ensure there is enough time to review all materials before the hearing, the Board proposes that the **Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Article III, Section 13.d**, be amended to require that information from the charged member be submitted 96 hours before the hearing. The current requirement is 48 hours. 📌

For any questions about the voting or the proposals, please email BoardContact@toastmasters.org.

Motormouth

My car talks too much.

BY JOHN CADLEY



Remember when a car knew how to keep its mouth shut. The only thing that wasn't essential to its actual mechanical functioning was a radio, which remained quiet until *you* decided to turn it on. In other words, you, the driver, were in the driver's seat.

Now my car talks to me, sometimes with words, sometimes with symbols, telling me—*me*, the driver—how to drive. I really don't need to start the day feeling like I'm traveling with my mother. Some other things I don't need: to open the door and have my dashboard tell me the door is open. Or to see a little red arrow pointing to the side of my car where the fuel cap is. To automakers everywhere: Trust me to know that if the gas cap isn't on one side of the car, it will be on the other. Really. I can do that.

As I drive, the screen in front of me displays how fast I'm going in big, clear numbers. Right next to it is a big, round speedometer with a needle that tells me ... how fast I'm going. Please give my thanks to the Department of Redundancy Department.

On the other side of the speedometer is a tachometer, which measures my engine's revolutions per minute (RPMs). Why do I need to know this? Ostensibly, because if I "rev" my engine too high it will cause damage. I don't rev anything. I step on the gas to go, and I step on the brake to stop, and I expect the engine to do whatever revving is necessary to make that happen. I know RPM sounds impressive but for me it stands for Ridiculous Piece of Measurement.

Directly above the speedometer is something called an Eco Gauge, which tells me how I'm doing with fuel efficiency. If it goes to the left, I'm doing badly; to the right, and I'm being eco-friendly. I have no control over my fuel efficiency short of putting a sail on the roof, and I don't appreciate being put on an emotional roller coaster where every trip has me feeling either like a leaking oil tanker or Greta Thunberg.

**My car talks to me,
sometimes with words,
sometimes with symbols,
telling me—*me*, the
driver—how to drive.**

I also have not one but two trip meters, so I can compare the mileage of Trip 1 with the mileage of Trip 2. I honestly, sincerely, genuinely do not know why this is valuable information. I've always had an extremely reliable measure of how long I've been driving—my back. If I can walk upright after taking two ibuprofen every four hours, I've gone about 300 miles. If, on the other hand, the ibuprofen has to be administered intravenously, I've foolishly gone beyond the limits of my physical endurance, and how that translates into physical distance doesn't really matter now, does it? The same with the little warning light that indicates my brake pads are wearing down. I've always relied on the smell of burning rubber to give me that information, and it's worked

just fine. There's even a little alert that tells me the car ahead of me has moved forward at a stop light, as if to say, "It's green. Go!" Did I mention driving with my mother?

I do appreciate the yellow warning light on my side-view mirror when someone is in my blind spot. Great safety feature. Unfortunately, the light also goes on when someone is just passing me. When *two* cars are passing on either side, *both* mirrors start blinking like the instrument panel in a space capsule flashing *Abort! Abort!*—in which case I'm suddenly feeling very *unsafe*.

Finally, there's the GPS, where I can see my progress on a map and hear directions in a pleasant female voice. The particular car I own gives you the option of changing that voice to someone more familiar, like a trusted friend or family member. One of the suggestions is—yup, you guessed it—*your mother!* You can even use your own voice. That would mean not knowing the location of a place and listening to yourself tell yourself how to get there. At that point I'm not in a car; I'm in *Alice in Wonderland*.

You can say I'm exaggerating but I know you've gotten in your car at least once, heard that annoying beep reminding you to buckle your seatbelt, and screamed, "Oh, shut up! I'm putting it on." I know you have. ■

John Cadley is a former advertising copywriter, freelance writer, and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Learn more at www.cadleys.com.

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Online Course

Take our online course to learn the strategies that will help make your book a best seller. For each strategy, a detailed audio and/or video explanation of the idea is included.

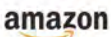


CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM

You might know Bo as the creator of FreeToastHost, the host of the Toastmasters Podcast, or the Founder of eBookIt.com. Or perhaps you never heard of the guy. Either way, you will enjoy his latest book, *Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring*.

What is a "normal childhood?" Does it include almost being murdered by your sister with an ax? Speeding around town in the back of a station wagon because your mom is chasing an "alien spaceship"? Being busted by the police for intent to light a pond on fire? Tackling your mom to the ground and wrestling a knife out of her hand because she was trying to kill your dad? While my stories may be unique, readers will be able to relate to the broader themes that are part of a normal childhood such as sibling rivalry, eccentric parents, doing stupid things, and frequently preventing one's parents from literally murdering each other.

Although some of the subject matter is not something one would generally laugh at, you have my permission to laugh. Social rules don't apply here; my rules do. It works for me, and who knows, after reading the stories from my past, you might be inspired to see your own screwed up past in a more humorous light.

Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring by Bo Bennett is available in ebook, paperback, and audio, at 

We are happy to speak with you about your publishing needs.
Call us at 978-440-8364 or visit us at <http://www.eBookIt.com>.



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