

TOASTMASTER®

January 2007



Building New Corporate Clubs

A professional sales approach

Do You Belong to the Ideal Club?

Take this Survey

Keep Guests Coming Back

Your Club Web Site: Build It and They Will Come

Why Attend Club-Officer Training? 9 Reasons

Think Big

✦ In one of the episodes of the old comedy show *Home Improvement*, Tim (Tim Allen) asked his wife, Jill (Patricia Richardson), to pick a number...any number. She replied, "Seven." Tim immediately remarked that that's what was wrong with her: She didn't think big enough. He said he would have answered... 13,000!

Sure it's funny, and we laugh about it, but think of the profound truth. If we don't think big, we will always be outclassed. If we are content with doing what we've always done, we will also have to settle for getting what we have always gotten.

It's surprising how many people, when asked if they are going to get their CCs or CLs this year, answer, "Oh, I'll never make it. I'm not good enough." The road to being an amazing Toastmaster entails thinking big – having the ambition and drive to go for that CC or AC, that CL, AL or DTM.

Do not shortchange your own potential. We all have what it takes to be successful, either in Toastmasters or in our personal and professional lives. Dream those big dreams. Think those big thoughts. You can shine if you allow yourself to.

Walter Wintle's poem, "The Man Who Thinks He Can," says it so eloquently:

*"You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger and faster man;
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the one who thinks he can."*

This New Year, let us all resolve to think big. Your club has never had more than 20 members in the past? Think big! Go for 30 members – 40, even. Spread the word about Toastmasters! Start a membership drive; invite everyone to come to your club meetings. Even if you finish with 25 members, that would be five more than you've ever had – five more because you dared to think big! But if you do hit 40, wow! That would be Simply Amazing!

When I visited District 15 in November, LGM LaMont Snarr told me there seemed to be a self-imposed glass ceiling that kept the district from building many new clubs. Well, he wasn't one to think small. He took me to six corporate visits, and all six yielded positive results that could potentially turn into six new clubs. Chartering six clubs would break the district's glass ceiling, and it is now possible because he was thinking big! Isn't that Simply Amazing!

In Toastmasters or in anything we undertake, when we aim for the moon, even if we don't make it, we would still be among the stars. At the end of that episode of *Home Improvement*, Tim goes to his neighbor, Wilson (Earl Hindman), and asks him to pick a number. Wilson replies, "762 trillion!" It's a New Year! It's time to think big, dream big and win big! You'll be simply amazed at the new you.

Johnny Uy, DTM
International President



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The Toastmasters Vision:

Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

The Toastmasters Mission:

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

Meeting Article Brings Mirth

As I was walking on the treadmill at the gym, leafing through the latest *Toastmaster* magazine, I found myself laughing out loud. John Cadley's article, "Let's Take a Meeting" (November) filled my morning with mirth. His description of each of the meeting's attendees and antics was so true to life that I felt I was in that room myself.

As in making a good speech, writing a good article is just as important and much appreciated. He got his point across in a creative and entertaining way.

Thank you for a great start to my day!

Linda Potter • Tracy Toastmasters • Tracy, California

Praise for Networking Article

I just read the article "The Art of Networking and Mingling" in the November issue. It has to be one of the best and most useful articles I have read in what I think is usually a pretty good magazine.

In fact it was so good that I e-mailed the author and told her so. Both Kathy Meeks and the *Toastmaster* are to be congratulated.

Greg Bowlen • City of Greater Geelong Club
Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Thank you for the November issue dedicated to networking, an essential business skill. My chamber of commerce regularly offers a course called Membership 101 that gives prospective and new members an opportunity to practice – and receive constructive evaluations of – their 90-second networking "elevator speeches" (very short Table Topics, even though they don't call it that). The November issue kick-started me to volunteer to teach "Networking 101" at our winter club-officer training.

Susan Ellsworth, DTM • Crown of Laurel Club • Adelphi, Maryland

I read with interest your articles on networking and was struck by the omission of a simple idea. I often

find that my name badge at a seminar or conference has only my name on it. While it is handy to know people's names, it isn't very helpful for starting a conversation. I fix this by simply adding a few words on my tag. For example, at a conference for librarians I would add: "interested in small public libraries." This makes people stop and read my badge and gives me a really good starting point for a conversation. It can also be a catalyst to a new career.

Alison Edwards, CTM • Ettalong Beach War Memorial Club
New South Wales, Australia

Let's All be Cultural Detectives

I read "Be a Cultural Detective" by Jeanne Feldman (October). Her opinion helps me. I live in Indonesia, where every region has a unique tradition and culture. With so many different habits and customs, it's easy to have a conflict or misunderstanding. For example, in one region here in Indonesia, people talk very slowly and smoothly. But in another, they talk very loudly. If we don't know this in advance, it could cause misunderstandings.

Ms. Feldman's article helps me to be aware of everyone's background. By understanding our listener's culture, we become better communicators. When people

understand each other, there is hope for peace.

Maybe Lorensia • Excellence Club • Tangerang Banten, Indonesia

Not Dressed for Success

I was taken aback by your choice of photo to supposedly demonstrate the proper way to moderate a panel discussion. The young lady in a polka-dot sundress (and a short one at that!) leaning casually against the panel's table certainly wouldn't win points for professionalism. Tip No. 1 was "Take the job seriously." Neither her apparel nor her posture indicated she was doing that.

Tammy D. Bailey • Star-Telegram Toastmasters • Fort Worth, Texas

Twice the Experience

After reading Frank Adamo's letter about being competent or confident, I've decided to join a second club. As a CTM, I still wasn't very confident when speaking, but after becoming a member of two clubs, the confidence has come over me. I'm less nervous and speak more calmly. Having two roles each week is very interesting and gives me the opportunity to become not only a competent Toastmaster but a confident one, too.

Becoming a Toastmaster is simply amazing!

Antoine Frage, CTM • Orchidee Toastmasters Club
Port Au Prince, Haiti



Our mission is about people, not numbers.

Running the Numbers

‡ If I hear one more person talk about “running the numbers,” I am going to scream! This is not a good response from a Toastmaster, I admit, but it reflects my extreme frustration with the shortsightedness of so many Toastmasters.

The mission of the club is “to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop and practice communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.”

Our mission is about *people*, not *numbers*. The club provides the opportunity for its members to grow and learn – the members don’t pro-

vide the club that “earns” that CC truly benefited? It would be better if four relatively new members get their first CC. If a new member is extremely shy, it may be enough in that year for him/her just to give an Ice Breaker and participate in Table Topics. At some point the CC will come.

Just for fun, let’s take a look from a preposterous perspective. Let’s visit the “Numbers Toastmasters Club.” Because this club cares more for numbers than for people, once eight new members have joined, there’s no reason to solicit more members. Guests aren’t greeted or asked to join. After all, they’ve reached their new-member goal, so why bother? On April 1st, with

went to training, and he or she doesn’t know about submitting them online. Besides, the numbers have already been met, so who cares?

Send new-member applications in promptly? Huh? Where is that in the “numbers?” As long as eight get sent in sometime during the year the numbers are made.

Run productive meetings? Have interesting Table Topics and good evaluations? Huh? Where is that in the “numbers?” Besides, the VPE wasn’t one of the officers trained, so why bother with themes? Who cares about structure? It’s not in the numbers.

As you can see, the numbers game doesn’t really make any sense. Even an accountant (and I’ve been an accountant all of my life) wouldn’t want to be a member of the “Numbers Toastmaster Club.”

If your club is not making the numbers, step back and look for the true causes. Why aren’t new members joining? How do you treat guests? Why didn’t the officers get trained? Do they take their office seriously? Why aren’t there any CCs/ACs? Does the VPE encourage all members to continue to make progress? Is there a progress chart displayed?

Let’s not be short-sighted about “making the numbers” this year. Let’s strive toward quality Toastmasters clubs where “every member has the opportunity to develop and practice communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.”

The numbers will follow the people, as it should be. **T**

“The Distinguished Club Program supports the goal of the club, it doesn’t replace it.”

vide the club with the opportunity to “make its numbers.”

The Distinguished Club Program *supports* the goal of the club, it doesn’t *replace* it. If a club is doing what it should, fulfilling the goals for the DCP will be automatic. The Distinguished Club Program helps the officers and club members focus on what needs to be done. The educational content of award requirements helps all of the members learn and grow, and ensures that members get information that is beneficial. There is no competition here, just common sense.

The Toastmasters organization is about people. The quality of their experience is of the utmost importance. If someone gets their 5th Competent Communicator award by simply running through a series of speeches, have they truly benefited?

only three months left, no Ice Breakers are scheduled. There is no chance of earning any further CC awards that year, so why bother? This club is focused only on immediate rewards. The future seems too far away to care about. (Actually, since there are no new members, there aren’t any Ice Breakers to schedule, anyway.)

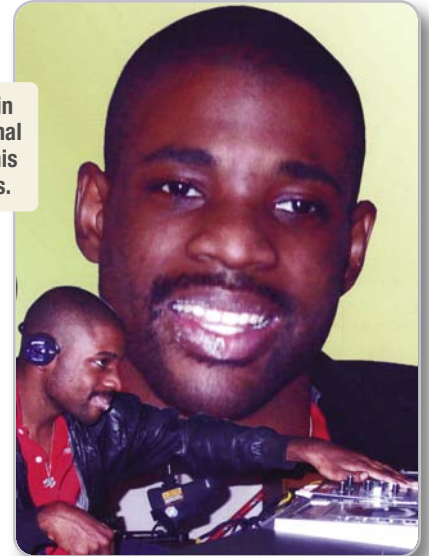
It gets worse. Because only four officers have to be trained per training period to meet the numbers, why encourage all of the officers to attend? After the first four officers go, no one is encouraged to participate. Those who don’t attend the first time can always go the second time.

Officer lists are sent in on time, and the October dues renewals are submitted on time, but what about April dues renewals? Well, the treasurer wasn’t one of the officers who

Michelle (Miki) Baker, ATMS, is a member of Camden County Toastmasters 1189-38 in Haddonfield, New Jersey. She can be reached at mikibis@gmail.com.

Confined to a wheelchair since childhood, this Toastmaster motivates others to excel.

► John Russ in a promotional poster for his DJ business.



Pushing Past His Disability

At age eight, while other boys watched cartoons for fun, John Russ viewed speeches given at presidential conventions and other political events. As he studied each speaker's mannerisms and message, Russ dreamed about being a motivational speaker one day. This is unusual behavior for any young boy, but especially for Russ, who was born with cerebral palsy.

Diagnosed during infancy with a moderate case of this neurological disorder that permanently affects body movement and muscle coordination, Russ lives life in a wheelchair. But he has never thought of himself as limited.

"For me, having cerebral palsy has been a motivator," says Russ, a member of the Lamplighters club in Wilmington, North Carolina. "I've always been goal-oriented. When I was young, I told my mom that I wanted to live on my own one day and get married like everyone else. I moved out when I was 19, started my own DJ business and married my high school sweetheart eight years ago," says Russ, now 31.

Fellow Lamplighters member Bill Carleton has been especially impressed with Russ. "In one of his first speeches, he told us that the best way to treat a person with his condition is to expect intelligence, responsibility and productivity and save our sympathy and special

treatment for others, and I thought, 'Wow!'" says Carleton. "John is an inspiration to everyone in the club. He sets tough goals and then achieves them. He earned his CC in 10 months. When he entered the humorous contest after his 6th speech, he had us all rolling in the aisles."

Russ has performed since elementary school when he started a rap group, entered a competition and won. In middle school he ran for vice president of the student body and nearly won, and in high school he won the position of class president twice. The latter experience gave him his first real taste of public speaking.

"When I ran for student body president, I knew my speech had to be terrific and that it would be hard," says Russ, who has been a Toastmaster since November 2005. For Russ, reading and writing has always been difficult, so when he wrote that first speech, a fellow student drew symbols to represent

the various concepts. The system worked and he still uses it today.

Russ' speaking skills were noticed at a young age. When he was 14, the Special Olympics asked him to be a part of its Athletes for Outreach program, which is now called Global Messengers. For three years he spoke at numerous fundraisers and civic events about the Special Olympics program. Kathy Kittleson, who is currently recreation supervisor for the city of Wilmington, was coordinator of the Athletes for Outreach program when Russ was involved.

"John was a dynamic speaker even then," says Kittleson, who has known Russ since he was a young child. "He could take any event and make it seem like ice cream. He has always championed and advocated for the rights of people with disabilities. He spoke eloquently and passionately about the Special Olympics and how it improved his life and gave him many opportunities. He always made the audience feel like it's the ability and not the disability that counts."

Even after he finished with the Special Olympics program, Russ was asked to speak to various groups, including youth groups and teachers working with disabled

“Anything is possible if you believe and work hard.”

children. It was during this time that he heard about Toastmasters and how the group could help fine-tune his speaking skills.

After looking into Toastmasters, Russ could see that the organization was the answer to making his dream of being a motivational speaker a reality, but he didn't immediately seek out a club.

“I was nervous about what being a member would entail in terms of reading and writing, and I was worried about how they would accept me socially,” admits Russ. “I'm a very independent person, and I didn't want to get into a situation where I would need a lot of help.”

Finally, in November 2005, Russ worked up the courage to visit Toastmasters and was pleasantly surprised.

“They never had a member with a disability, and I don't think they initially knew what to think of me,” says Russ, whose voice is deep, rich and slightly hesitant at times. “The club is composed of a great group of people from all walks of life, and they've been very supportive. They have definitely enhanced my self-esteem, which has really helped my speaking skills.”

The first time Lamplighter's member Richard Weisman saw Russ speak, he was impressed. “I'd never seen someone speak from a wheelchair, and I thought that it was incredibly brave of him,” says Weisman, who is the club treasurer. “He's very good at engaging people and working the audience, and he has a great sense of humor. I really enjoy his speeches and find them inspiring.”


As members of the Wilmington club see it, Russ is well on his way to meeting his goal of becoming a motivational speaker. “John is confident, personable and outgoing, and he lets nothing stop him,” says Carleton. “He was a good speaker when he joined us and he continues to improve.”

In addition to speaking, Russ runs DJ Smooth Entertainment (www.djsmoothentertainment.com), which offers mobile disc jockey services for parties, weddings, conventions and other events. Russ started the business in November 2002 with the goal of combining music and speaking to convey his message.

“I've always loved music, and I think it's very therapeutic for

listeners,” says Russ, who plays all types of music for his audiences, but personally favors R&B, hip-hop and gospel.

Russ has found that Toastmasters has given him more confidence to talk about his disability and motivate audiences to set goals and fulfill their dreams.

“Thanks to Toastmasters, my message is more polished and effective,” says Russ. “I tell audiences that I've overcome a lot in my life, and they can too. I urge people to set goals and be determined, because anything is possible if you believe and work hard.” 

Julie Bawden Davis is a freelance writer and longtime contributor to this magazine. She lives in Southern California. Reach her at Julie@JulieBawdenDavis.com.

Editor's Note: Do you have an inspiring story of how the Toastmasters program has helped you? Tell us at letters@toastmasters.org.



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*"The well-balanced,
intelligent speaker is the
natural leader in any group
of which he is a part."*

– DR. RALPH SMEDLEY,
FOUNDER OF TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL.

Building New Corporate Clubs

A professional sales approach

By Patrick McClure, ATMS/CL

Last year, Toastmaster's International hired an experienced marketing organization to research and to recommend ways to establish new corporate clubs. TI's Board of Directors as well as attendees at the 2006 Toastmasters International Convention reviewed the resulting recommendations. Here is a summary:

The year was 1924 and the location was a small room at the YMCA in Santa Ana, California. A small group of young men was listening to a slightly-built, dark-haired man wearing thick glasses. They listened as Dr. Ralph Smedley, the founder of Toastmasters, explained that their careers and future success were linked to their ability to communicate. He encouraged these young men to help each other develop their communication and leadership skills and to use these skills for the good of society.

From those humble beginnings, Toastmasters International has experienced explosive growth. Today hundreds of thousands of people speak in more than 10,700 clubs in 90 countries. For 81 years, Toastmasters has been building successful speakers and leaders on an unprecedented scale.

Every year, approximately 900 new Toastmasters clubs are formed worldwide. Of these clubs, 60% – about 540 – are *corporate* clubs. Unlike community clubs, these are sponsored by a corporation with meetings held on corporate premises at lunch or during off hours. Most corporate clubs are not open to outsiders but they use the same Toastmasters materials and they follow the same standards and procedures as do community clubs. Some of the most famous corporations in

America sponsor corporate clubs, including American Express, AT&T, Bank of America, Boeing, Farmers Insurance, and Sun Microsystems. In fact, more than 50 percent of all Fortune 500 companies sponsor in-house Toastmasters clubs in affiliates worldwide.

A very large part of TI's expansion, and its future, depends on the organization's success in recruiting new corporate clubs. However, a recent study found that while a small number of Toastmasters districts were highly successful in recruiting new corporate clubs, most districts struggled with attracting "new business" and needed help.

If you're facing the task of recruiting new clubs, and you're starting to despair at the job, take heart! Here is a list of strategies to help increase the number of corporate clubs in your community. They are core approaches that successful marketing professionals know. Why not apply them to the job of "selling Toastmasters?" If you master these seven simple strategies, you will be amazed at your results:

1 Select your Prospects Wisely. Before anything else, spend some time researching your community and determining the most likely prospects. You want to spend your valuable selling time with the people and companies that are most likely to need your Toastmasters program.

Research online via Google or Yahoo to learn about every company in your geographic area that has a facility with more than 250 employees. Include churches, associations, companies, corporate divisions, schools and governmental bodies.

Most sales people waste too much time trying to sell to the wrong customers, and you don't want to make that mistake. With a "master list," you'll be able to determine your ideal prospects and spend your time more productively.



2 Qualify your Prospects Further. Here are some areas to investigate for each company on your list:

- What is the company's size, location, revenues and activities?
- Who are some key contacts that can be isolated in departments such as personnel, training, finance or the office of the president?
- Does this company invest in training its employees?
- What are this company's priorities?
- Is the company conservative? Is it into high growth with executives willing to take risks with products or services offered?
- What are the company's strategies, mission, key initiatives?
- Is there any recent research, recent news or a Web site about the company?
- What is its business focus?

Your research may include asking other Toastmasters in your area to find out who they know in the target

companies. At a minimum, it should identify the decision makers in the company you plan to contact.

3 Brush up on Features and Benefits. You will be calling on corporate executives and asking for their support for a Toastmasters club. These are professionals, so you will need to explain how the benefits of TI's program are valuable to them in their terms. A typical executive will be most interested in hearing how Toastmasters will help with:

- Boosting their return on investment
- Reducing turnover
- Refining employees' presentation skills
- Achieving more effective meetings
- Improving leadership skills
- Promoting better teamwork
- Increasing loyalty

Refer to the Features and Benefits chart on the next page for more information. Remember to describe the



Toastmaster's International

Features / Benefits / Value Chart

Features "We Have ..."	Benefits "It Will ..."	Value "Which Means ..."
Workshop-based communication skills training	Improved communication skills	Better teamwork Improved morale Increased productivity
Company-sponsored training program	Overcome anxiety and fear of public speaking	Self confidence Career advancement
Weekly meetings	Reinforce lessons learned continually	Skills learned are used and retained
Opportunity for leadership roles	Improved leadership skills	Improved management and increased productivity
Low cost/very economical	Welcome everyone to benefit from the program	Great return on investment
Mutually supportive training environment	Enhances teamwork and morale	Decreased turnover and improved customer service
Prepared speeches	Train employees how to structure presentations for maximum effectiveness	Effective meetings and better communication with customers
Table Topics	Teaches how to think fast and react to crises	Enhanced confidence and poise under pressure
Critical evaluations	Improves ability to coach and help teammates	Smoother team functioning better performance
A key benefit for all employees	Enhance your job satisfaction and career	Employee retention Career enhancement
Meetings are kept lively and fun	Improve enjoyment of your job	People who enjoy themselves will perform better
Opportunity to meet fellow employees from other areas of the company	Enhance diversity and teamwork	Improved productivity Less absenteeism
Work at your own pace	Adapt with flexibility to employee/company schedule	No disruption or loss of productivity
Training on how to properly conduct a meeting	Improve quality and results of meetings	Increased productivity and morale
Active participation in the training	Assist employees to learn by doing with help from fellow club members	Better teamwork, morale and productivity
Leadership development programs	Directly improve leadership skills	Reduced "churn" and better managers

benefits of Toastmasters in terms that a business executive can appreciate.

4 Send a Letter of Introduction. Send out a nicely written letter of introduction to the executive you wish to meet. It should be hand-addressed and stamped with a regular stamp, not a postal meter. It should be printed on good paper and enclosed in a high-quality envelope. This letter will identify you as a volunteer with Toastmasters and will explain why you are asking for an appointment. Most importantly, it will explain the benefits of this introductory meeting to the executive. You may wish to include the brochure, *Clear communication. Your organization needs it.* (Catalog No. 103) This is an eight- by 10-inch document, which will require a larger envelope than a regular letter, but its size may increase the likelihood that the letter will be read.

5 Make First Contact. Nothing happens until you pick up the phone and contact your prospect. No one ever closed a sale by staying in their office and avoiding contact. Your role in this first telephone call is to schedule an appointment. Don't get bogged down in over-explaining the details of Toastmasters on the phone. Stress the benefits of the program and request 20 minutes in the executive's office to cover the details.

You'll find that sending a "warm-up" letter first, followed by your call, will result in many more appointments. If you have trouble reaching the executive in charge, try befriending an assistant and gaining his or her support for your cause. Remember to stress that you are a volunteer and you're only asking for a short meeting to introduce yourself and explain a valuable program. Most people have already heard of Toastmasters and will be favorable or curious about hearing more.

6 Present TI's Program to the Executive. Be prepared. TI offers several excellent brochures describing Toastmasters and its corporate club program. You can order a New Club Information Kit (123B), which includes two inserts focused specifically on the benefits of corporate club building. This kit is free, aside from a shipping charge. Take it to the meeting, along with some samples of the *Competent Communication*, *Competent Leadership* and *Advanced Communication program* manuals. Share the manuals during the meeting, and leave the New Club Information Kit as a resource for future reference by the executive.

Review the benefits of the program and give examples of TI's success with corporations. Refer to other companies in the area who are already benefiting from Toastmasters.

Answer their questions and respond politely to any objections, then confirm their support for an in-house

club. Studies have shown that the biggest mistake all sales representatives make is failure to ask for the order!


Review the Club Application form and ask the corporate executive to sign it. It's a good idea for you to request a check from the company at that time as a monetary commitment to the club. If they include a charter fee of \$125 with the Club Application form, their company will receive all initial club administration materials plus 20 New Member Kits (which include the necessary manuals for club members). But what if the executive can't decide? There is one additional tool you can use to win or confirm this person's support: Schedule a demonstration meeting so that company members can see, first-hand, how Toastmasters works.

7 Schedule the Demonstration Meeting. Don't delay! Schedule the next meeting as soon as possible, and confirm it with the executive or his or her assistant before you leave the office. Always have your next meeting confirmed before you leave, to avoid having to follow up via phone or e-mail.

Use this meeting to showcase the "Toastmasters experience." Ask your corporate contact to invite all prospective employee-members to attend. Your objective is to prove how Toastmasters works and establish the "go forward" plan with that company. Usually, meetings like this produce dozens of potential Toastmasters who decide they'd like to learn more.

Remember to choose experienced Toastmasters for this demonstration. You want to validate the executive's decision and set the stage for a great club, so choosing carefully is worth the effort.

Toastmasters offers an excellent reference guide to help you through this critical meeting: *How to Build a Toastmasters Club* (Catalog No. 121) includes guidelines for the demonstration meeting as well as several subsequent meetings. It provides information on all the steps a company executive needs to take in order to charter a club.

Today's business leaders are looking for ways to increase their employees' performance and bottom-line results. They need managers and leaders who demonstrate confidence, can express their ideas with conviction and can manage others with superior communication skills. In short, they need Toastmasters. You can help by sharing the excitement of a club meeting and convincing these leaders to give TI a try. 

Patrick McClure, ATMS/CL, an area governor in Founders District, is a member of Rancho Speechmasters in Rancho Santa Margarita, California. He owns the PTM Sales Group and can be reached at www.easysaleshome.com.

We all have ideas on what an ideal Toastmasters club would be like. Most members might agree that enjoyable meetings, unlimited learning opportunities and a sense of belonging are what they look for in that “perfect” club. Well, they’re right.

This checklist offers you the chance to measure your club against the “ideal.”

Complete this questionnaire, then give it to your club president. The president will discuss the answers with the club’s executive committee, who should work on implementing any necessary changes.

Your answers, and the changes that your club may make thereafter, will put you well on the way toward becoming an ideal club!

Club Meetings

- | | YES | NO |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do club meetings start and end on time? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Does the club president follow the pre-printed agenda? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Does every member wear a name badge and membership pin? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Are all members greeted at the door and made to feel welcome? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Are all guests greeted at the door and introduced to others? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Is there a friendly atmosphere during the meeting? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is the meeting environment comfortable, pleasant and enjoyable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Is your club meeting place easy to find, with signs posted? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Is the cost of meals reasonable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Is the Toastmasters International Supply Catalog displayed at every meeting? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Is the business meeting conducted quickly and efficiently? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Are programs interesting and varied? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Are speakers, evaluators and other meeting participants reminded of their responsibilities well in advance of the meeting? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Are speeches well-prepared and based on manual projects? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Are evaluations positive, helpful and constructive? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Do You Belong to the Ideal Club?

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 16. Is everyone given an opportunity to participate in the program? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Are your officers effective in their roles as leaders? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Do officers report on the club’s progress in the Distinguished Club Program? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Membership

- | | YES | NO |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19. Does your club set a membership goal for the year? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Does your club regularly have membership drives and promote its meetings to media and in the community? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Does your club participate in Toastmasters’ membership-building programs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Are guests introduced during the club meeting? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. After the meeting, are guests invited to join the club? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Are new members oriented to the Toastmasters program immediately after joining? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Are new members reported immediately to World Headquarters so that they may receive their membership materials? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. Are new members assigned a mentor? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. Are new members scheduled to speak soon after joining? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. Are new members assigned meeting roles soon after joining? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. Are new members formally inducted and given a membership certificate, pin and name badge? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. Is your club free of an absentee problem? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



- | | YES | NO |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 31. Does a member contact those who miss more than one meeting and encourage them to attend regularly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. Are all members assigned to a club committee? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. Is your club free of members who disrupt meetings and have a negative influence on meetings and members? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. Are members recognized during meetings for their accomplishments and contributions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Educational Activities

- | | YES | NO |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 35. Does your club provide opportunities for speaking outside the club? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36. Does your club regularly conduct programs from <i>The Better Speaker Series</i> , <i>The Successful Club Series</i> and <i>The Leadership Excellence Series</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 37. Are members encouraged to visit other Toastmasters clubs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 38. Does your club encourage members to attend area, division district, regional and international functions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 39. Do you know the value of and requirements for the various educational awards? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40. Does your club display a Member Program Progress Chart (Catalog No. 227) for tracking members' manual completions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

General

- | | YES | NO |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 41. Do you have a club newsletter or Web site? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 42. Does your club take advantage of freetoasthost.org to create its Web site? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 43. Do you have a formal and impressive installation for club officers? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 44. Are you encouraged to attend your club's executive committee meetings? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Complete this questionnaire, then give it to your club president.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 45. Are you familiar with the proxy your club receives each March, which entitles it to votes at the Regional Conference and International Convention? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 46. Does the club treasurer begin collecting October and April dues early and give members plenty of reminders about the due dates? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 47. Do your officers thoroughly understand their responsibilities and carry them out? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 48. Are members encouraged to assume leadership roles in the club? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:



Keep Guests **Coming Back**

I recently joined the wonderful world of Toastmasters. After visiting five clubs repeatedly over two months, I finally made my choice, signed the check and gave my first speech. I have rolled up my sleeves and am ready to learn all I can from many of the brilliant minds I've found within this amazing organization. I can't wait!

In my travels from group to group however, I noted a few things that made me hesitate to sign on the dotted line. The brilliance of many members didn't always shine through as well as it could have. But being the type of

A club visitor's guide to making a good first impression.

By Karen Hobson

person to always give people a second, third and even a fourth chance, I kept going back to see if things would improve over time.

Sometimes, I was glad to see that while certain groups didn't make a great first impression, they did in fact come across better on the second and third visits. Unfortunately, not everyone is like me and willing to return time and again to allow for off nights. Often, visitors will come once and never return – or worse, they will slip out during the break before they can be given any sort of real sales pitch or proper greeting.

Since I'm still new to Toastmasters, I thought you might benefit from my "new eyes" to help you see what kinds of things impressed me and made me want to come back to several of the Toastmasters clubs I visited.

- **Greet Guests At The Door.** Have someone stand at the door to greet people with a friendly smile and this simple statement: "Welcome to Toastmasters!" The greeter should hand out the agenda personally to everyone who enters. Let me explain why. When the papers are placed on seats or at spots around the tables, it can look to a visitor like all the seats are taken and this can cause a guest to stand awkwardly, not knowing where to sit. By introducing yourself and guiding visitors to a seat, guests can immediately begin to feel part of the group.
- **Start On Time.** Do not wait for Oscar, Sara and Cornelius to come. Oscar, Sara and Cornelius are no more important than the guests. If guests made the effort to be on time, the rest of the group should acknowledge that effort by not making them wait.
- **Honor Thy Banner.** Between meetings, it might not be the best idea to place your banner in the bottom of your cupboard with boxes of crackers and the coffee machine jammed on top of it. You will want to display it wrinkle-free and proudly, so store it accordingly. Your banner and ribbons should say: "We are Toastmasters! Look at all our accomplishments! You too can be part of this amazing group of people!"
- **Keep Things Moving.** Do not allow the business section to drag on for too long. Guests want to dive into the regular meeting as soon as possible. Do not wander off-schedule at the beginning of the meeting. Remember, there is a whole new generation of people out there who hold remote controls, cell phones or computer mouses for most of their day. They are used to multitasking and often have the attention span of a fly on a sugar high. Most club visitors aren't used to sitting through long sermons or speeches. So, you don't

want to bore these sparkplugs into a semi-coma or have them planning their escape. If you keep up the pace, you will keep them interested.

- **Post Location Changes.** When a group has changed locations for the night because of a pot-luck party or because the room is being painted, make sure to put a sign on the door with a phone number or directions to

"If you always portray your organization as competent, open-minded and caring, people like me will not only come back but will sign up and jump right in!"

your new location – yes, even if it is for just one meeting. That way, people who read you club's meeting notice on the Web or in the paper will be able to find you. After all, you don't know how much of an effort they have made to get there and you don't want them to feel like they've come all that way for nothing!

- **Double Check Ads.** On Web sites or in ads in community papers, make sure to double check that the phone number is printed properly. Wrongly printed numbers can lead to potential visitors giving up if they don't know the right contact information. Whoever is the designated contact person should have an answering machine with a cheerful greeting: "You have reached Suzy's place as well as the number for your local Toastmasters club. We'd love to invite you to a meeting. So please, leave a message and we will call you back as soon as we can!" Do not use outgoing messages left by kids and their dog. This is a little *too* friendly...
- **Give Guests Presents.** "For *me*?! And it isn't even my birthday!" Everyone loves a present. Have a folder ready with various pamphlets and other information for guests. Make sure to include the phone numbers and e-mails of your club's officers, in case guests want to follow up with questions. In the folder, it's a good idea to have small descriptions of meeting roles such as what defines a Toastmaster, a sergeant at arms, and grammarian.
It is also nice to have a small description as to how the gavel is to be passed from one member to another. This helps guests feel included into the Toastmasters family.



■ **Update Your Web Site.** It isn't hard to find someone with a digital camera these days. Ask people in your group to pose in front of a large sign that says "Come Join Us!" (You can use three large poster boards with one word neatly printed on each.) Also, with their permission, get committee members to pose for the site with their title under their names. (Let them pick the photo of themselves that they want on the site – don't put one on without their permission.) This way, when guests visit, they can already be familiar with some of the faces.

Alternatively, if some members don't want their names published, you could have a "fun page" with photos of members with a silly caption underneath, such as "Likes to talk about Mars" or "Calls himself 'too seri-

ous' but managed to win the Humorous Speech Contest last year!" Or, "She goes to yoga on Mondays and Toastmasters on Tuesdays!" These little blurbs can help intrigue readers and make them want to meet club members in person.

■ **Use Modern Equipment.** If your club has a video camera or PowerPoint presentation equipment, show it off! New gizmos are cool and make you look hip. If your group has a video camera, encourage people to use it as a learning tool. Offer to videotape one another and then organize a "popcorn and movie" night. This encourages camaraderie and shows guests that you are willing to try new ideas.

■ **End On Time!** Last, but not least, when you see that the meeting is going on too long, press the "fast forward" button. Keep the general evaluation and grammarian sections short if you are running late. Time belonging to others is not yours to spend. You must be aware that there may be a taxi waiting outside, a babysitter at home who is fed up, or even a cute guy in a candlelit bubble bath with a bottle of wine waiting for a certain guest to return from a meeting.

If you always portray your organization as competent, open-minded and caring, people like me will not only come back but will sign up and jump right in! **T**

Karen Hobson is a member of Beaconsfield Toastmasters Club in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Canada. She is a registered nurse, freelance writer and songwriter with 173 compositions under her guitar strap. Her music can be heard at www.musicbykaren.ca.

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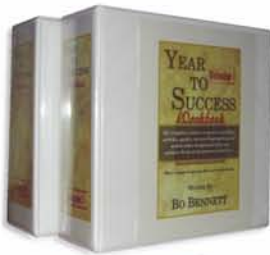
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A contest speech led this former homemaker to a new career as a professional organizer and TV host.



Toastmaster Hellen Buttigieg, CL

From Toastmasters to Hit TV Show

Hellen Buttigieg is the embodiment of competence, strutting around messy houses with a sassy bob and an open face. She locks her huge brown eyes with a client's and asks directly, but respectfully, "Do you really need this? Why? How does it make you feel when I take it away?" And very occasionally, when a person seems unreasonably attached to a

shopping bag of old birthday cards or an ugly ashtray pilfered from a restaurant in Greece, she pulls out the tough love: "Are you going to give me trouble with this?"

As the host of the Discovery Home Channel's hit show *Neat*, Buttigieg provides clutter control and guidance to a new household every week. She's something between an organizer and a head-shrinker, with certifications as a professional organizer and as a life coach. She simultaneously cleans out closets while slowly uncovering subconscious "blocks" that make a person want to hoard junk or prevent them from putting their dirty clothes in the hamper.

Her gentle leadership made a lifelong fan out of client Denise Fujiwara, who says Buttigieg "is a living example of what you can do with an affirmative attitude." The Toronto-based choreographer was lost trying to sort out her home office to make room for a house renovation when she called in Buttigieg to help. As someone who runs her own choreography busi-

ness and dance troupe, Fujiwara's office is prone to clutter. "My office was a horrendous mess," she says. She describes stacks of boxes, piles of unfiled papers, photographs, video tapes, press releases – essentially 15 years' worth of disorder and confusion.

"I'd tried to sort it out in the past, but I hadn't had the skills to do it properly until I worked with Hellen. In about 6 hours, she did what I couldn't do in 15 years," she says.

The two went around the room in an orderly way, starting at the door and working clockwise. "Occasionally, I'd get stuck on something, and she'd push me to make a decision," says Fujiwara. "She pushed through, and in the end I felt euphoric to be relieved of all that stuff."

Buttigieg unloads stuff with a dancer's grace and a politician's diplomacy. Anyone would think she was born taking charge of people's unruly environs, teaching them how to be better organized. In a way, that's true. She says she was always organized, even as a teenager,

when most kids live among piles of laundry, music collections and notebooks. She was also always a confident speaker. In grammar school, she was the girl who narrated the school plays.

In fact, Buttigieg moves and speaks so naturally in front of the camera and with such calm assertiveness, no one would guess that not long ago she was at a loss for what to do with her life.

"I had been out of the workforce for almost 10 years as a stay-at-home mom, but I lacked confidence, and I didn't know what to do," she says from her home in Oakville, a suburb of Toronto, Canada.

She graduated from Seneca College in Toronto with a degree in radio and television broadcasting, and worked briefly as an administrator and fitness instructor. But then she had two children and took off nearly 10 years from work to raise them. Those 10 years at home had slowly whittled away her confidence as a businessperson, but she still wanted to launch a new career – and have some adult conversation. Her solution? In 1999, she joined City Centre Toastmasters.

"Toastmasters changed my life," she says.

She means that in the most literal sense. It started with one of the first lessons any new Toastmaster learns: talk about what you know. Buttigieg started writing speeches about what she knew, and as someone who was naturally neat, she talked about organizing. And then at one contest she gave a speech called "Simple Simon" about simplifying your life by letting go of clutter, and it launched a new career.

"Giving speeches is a journey of self-discovery," she says. "How often in life do people really listen to us? At Toastmasters, people are truly listening; they're not thinking about what they'll say back. It's a safe place to speak, so I could use my speeches to work out what resonated with the audience."

And also what resonated with her. That speech was the nugget that now sits at the center of her professional life. In fact, she still uses parts of the same speech today when she gives presentations: "If you would like to get a taste of the simple life, don't let *stuff* complicate it. Commit to following these three simple steps: If you don't use it, lose it; if you don't need it, don't

buy it; and when you bring one item in, take one item out."

This would become her mantra in several ways. It sparked her desire to become a life coach and also tapped into her abilities as an organizer. Starting her own organizing business, called WeOrganizeU, helped pay for the life-coaching certification. Soon, a group of producers approached her about a new show that would blend her gifts for tidying up with her ability to lead people, and by 2004 *Neat* hit the North American airwaves.


Buttigieg credits Toastmasters with more than just sparking a good idea; she also says she honed her skills as a leader and built confidence. Shalini Alleluia, president of City Centre Toastmasters, says Buttigieg faced a short learning curve thanks to her take-charge attitude.

"Hellen had lots of energy and was articulate and vibrant," Alleluia says. "She always smiled and was willing to try anything."

Alleluia says even though Buttigieg was a new member, she asked her to chair a speech contest and encouraged her to assume meeting roles. Soon Buttigieg was helping others to be better speakers.

"I think Hellen was more of a mentor to other people than other people being a mentor to her," Alleluia says. "She has a charisma that makes people want to follow her and to be like her in personality and capability. She's a good listener, and she always pays attention to the evaluation notes. I once told her she was very loud and didn't have expression in her delivery, and she really listened."

Like any good Toastmaster, Buttigieg is still seeking advice on how to improve. She still asks Alleluia for feedback on her presentations and episodes of the TV show. "I'm honest, and I'll tell her what I thought the show lacked or what I learned," says Alleluia.

While Alleluia coaches Buttigieg to improve some public speaking skills, her student is working toward a broader purpose. "I'm a teacher," she says. "I feel that whether I'm organizing or coaching or speaking, there's still that element of wanting to pass on the information I know to improve other people's lives." 

Monique Cuvelier is a professional writer in Boston, Massachusetts, who credits Sky Rappers Toastmasters for her own confidence in front of a crowd.

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Think of a universal theme and apply it to your own life.



Looking for a Speech Idea?

Next Friday is your club's International Speech Contest. The last few days have been overwhelming as you have felt pressured to come up with a brilliant theme. You practically drive yourself insane worrying about what to say as you search for a theme for all ages.

Relax! The good news is that virtually all the speeches that have won the World Championship of Public Speaking follow a trend: All the champions took an old theme and, by applying their own spin, made the speech fresh and memorable.

How can this be true? Aren't we speaking to intelligent audiences that have heard, seen and felt it all? Many seasoned Toastmasters have listened to hundreds, maybe even thousands of speeches. Don't we need to impress them? Shouldn't we blow them away with a brilliant *new* idea?

The simple answer is no. In fact, there are only a few universal themes that appeal to the human heart and mind. It's unrealistic to expect that you'll come up with an unprecedented concept.

Western beliefs support this position. The Biblical passage Ecclesiastes 1:9 states "...there is nothing new under the sun." A Professor of rhetoric once told me that the Ancient Greeks considered *all* the important themes and what we discuss today are merely footnotes. Even Shakespeare was known to have used very few original ideas, "stealing" his material

from the great storytellers who preceded him.

Instead of trying the nearly impossible, why not use a proven formula? Use an old theme and say it your way. We see this pattern of an old idea presented in a fresh manner year after year at the world championships, and the last few have not been exceptions.

In 2004, World Champion Randy Harvey spoke on the age-old theme of a father-and-son relationship in his speech titled "Fat Dad." He told a touching story about his father's role modeling. We all *knew* the importance of good parenting. We *learned* that not only are the sins of our fathers passed from generation to generation, their good deeds are too.

2005 International Champion Lance Miller followed the same pattern. His speech was titled “The Ultimate Question.” Although it was a profound-sounding title, it did not delve into a meta-physical concept. It was about validating people wherever and whenever you can. And although the theme was simple, the speech had a profound effect on my life as I’ve tried to incorporate Lance’s advice throughout my everyday experiences.

In Washington, D.C., last August, our current World Champion, Ed Hearn, followed the pattern. In “Bouncing Back,” Ed said “Success in life is only about 10 percent of what happens to you; the other 90 percent is what you do about it.” He reinforced a concept we often hear and know in our hearts. His illustrations using a metaphoric

punching bag helped us visualize this theme in his unique way.

This issue of newness versus universality reminds me of a heated debate that occurred several years ago between the blockbuster movie *Titanic* director James Cameron and *Los Angeles Times* movie critic Kenneth Turan. In one of a series of scathing reviews, Turan attributed the tremendous commercial success of the film to his belief that “...audiences have been sadly eager to embrace a film that... is a witless counterfeit...”

After ignoring the countless other attacks, Cameron could no longer keep silent. In a letter to the editor, the movie director responded to the critique by stating that “this is paternalism and elitism in its worst form and utterly insults the audience.” He went on to argue that *Titanic*’s success was

attributed to fulfilling the audience’s needs in its use of universal themes such as the dichotomies of marrying for love versus security and machine versus nature, as well as many others.

If audience approval is the measure of success – a goal of every Toastmaster – then I believe Cameron was the clear winner in that debate.

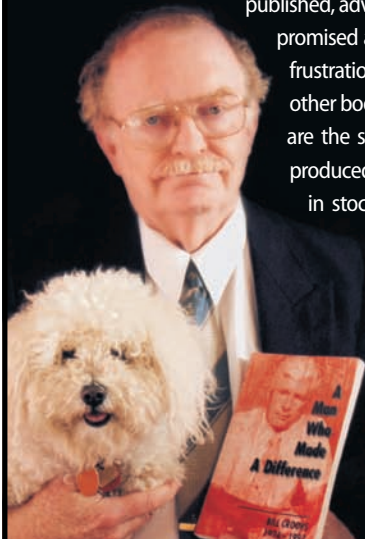
Next time you need to find something to say, simply think of a universal theme and apply it to your own life. You will discover something that appeals to any audience. Save time trying to attain the elusive *new* idea. Do something better; find *your* idea! 📖

Ron Palermo, DTM, is a member of Adelante club 9020-55 and can be contacted at Area71gov@sbcglobal.net.

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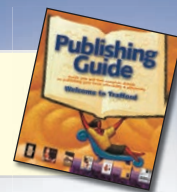
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Why Attend Club-Officer Training?

Here are 9 good reasons.

By Shelia Spencer, DTM

always look forward to our district's bi-annual club-officer training sessions, and am surprised if I see any empty chairs.

There are so many good reasons to attend these events!

However, when I speak to individual club officers, I sometimes hear indifference or reluctance to take advantage of this wonderful resource. Instead of, "of course, I'll be there!" I hear, "Oh, I used to go to those when I first joined, but I don't need training any more." Or "Why bother? I have the manual, isn't that enough?"

For the benefit of current club officers, their area governors and anyone thinking about serving on their club's executive board in the future, here are some reasons to attend your next mid-year training:

1 Help your club earn a point in the Distinguished Club Program (DCP).

Don't think of it as a duty, but as an opportunity for you and your fellow officers to have direct impact on your club's success for the year. Earning one DCP point – by having at least four current club officers attend both initial and mid-year training – means that you and your club's leaders have demonstrated a unified commitment to achieve club, district and TI goals. What a great example you are to all your members!

2 Get direct access to your district leaders and the important information they have to share. Area and division governors, as well as other district leaders, attend the

training sessions, often as facilitators. They bring news from TI headquarters, announcements of coming district events and a wealth of knowledge about our program. Don't hesitate to approach them individually for advice. They have relevant personal experience, as well as access to resources that can help you achieve club and personal goals.

Don't be a passive listener; bring a list of your questions and concerns so you can take advantage of this forum. (Note: Even if you've filled this same officer position in the past, some of the guidelines may have changed! Attend and review the current club officer manual to ensure you have timely information.)

3 Share your own ideas and experiences with other officers at your table. Personal growth is subtle; we often aren't aware of how much knowledge and experience we are gaining while developing new skills

and handling new responsibilities. But when we participate in our mid-year training session, we suddenly realize how much we have learned since July! Now, instead of merely receiving information from the trainer, you may find yourself sharing unique, practical insights with the other participants at your table. Appreciate this validation of the skills and wisdom you are acquiring in your role as a club officer!

4 Achieve your goals by networking with members from other clubs.

A training session is the perfect place to connect with experienced, supportive individuals who can offer advice and assistance. Ask vice presidents of education who have scheduled their spring speech contests to help find seasoned members to serve as judges or other contest officials. After one club president training session in my district, the participants decided to maintain contact via e-mails and monthly dinner meetings. They continued to advise and support each other during the rest of their term in office. Not surprisingly, their clubs each achieved at least seven DCP points for the year.

5 Build on the personal relationships you formed at the last training. You may not have the same trainer, but you will see familiar faces. Socializing and nurturing relationships outside your club is a wonderful benefit of attending these training sessions. Not only do friendships make the event more enjoyable, they also enrich your experience within our international organization. The members of your extended Toastmasters family are eager and happy to share ideas, activities and growth opportunities that will nurture your development as a Toastmaster, communicator and leader. Some will become very special long-term friends.

6 Expand your network by meeting new club officers. Every training event is attended by a different mix of district dignitaries, trainers and participants. Your table is likely to include newly elected officers who will begin serving their clubs in January.

“What is the best way to spend the remaining six months of your year in office?”

Take time to introduce yourself, help newcomers feel welcome, and find common ground that will contribute to a friendly, supportive atmosphere for everyone. Don't feel that you must restrict your conversation to Toastmasters issues; share your career goals and other information that will allow you to expand your personal and business network.

7 Revisit the goals you set in July, and determine the best use of your time and energy for the second half of your term. Your year is half over! Think of this meeting not only as training but as a time for reflection, review and reassessment. Share your progress and achievements to date and consider where you need to spend more time and focus. Based on the discussion you have with your trainer and fellow club officers, what is the best way to spend the remaining six months of your year in office?

8 Introduce your mentees to leadership opportunities. In a few months you'll be handing over your club officer role to another member, perhaps someone you've already been mentoring toward that goal. Who has impressed you with their desire and potential to take on a Toastmas-

ters leadership position? Why not invite that person to attend a training session with you, as a guest observer? While that person's attendance does not count toward your club's DCP credit, most sessions can accommodate interested members who would like to observe. With prior approval

of your local training coordinator, offer to accompany your interested club members to a session, and introduce them to your friends.

9 Explore other Toastmasters leadership roles, so you can serve in a different spot next year. Whether you ask at your training table or approach other members during the social time, feel free to request input about the duties, benefits and challenges of serving in various Toastmasters leadership positions. If you would like to run for a different club position next year, consider attending a second training session. This way, you can hear more about the role of educational vice president, club treasurer, etc.

Also, don't hesitate to ask, "What does an area governor do?" or "How does someone become a district parliamentarian?" Who knows? Next year you may not only be looking forward to attending a club officer mid-year training session, you may be leading it! **T**

Shelia Spencer, DTM, has held all club offices and is grateful for the experiences of each. She is an active Toastmaster and freelance writer living in New York. Reach her at bocki@attglobal.net.



Build It and They Will Come

By Beth Stinson, CL

or the past six months, our club has averaged two or three guests at every meeting. Most of them join after the first night. Less than half-way through the Toastmasters year, we exceeded our annual membership goal. When we ask guests how they located our club, almost all exclaim, "It was your Web site!"

Being the club Web master, my ears always perk up when I hear "Web site." The last two guests I interviewed told me they looked at the Web sites of all the clubs in the area and decided to visit our club because they liked our site the best. They were aghast that some clubs didn't even have a Web site. When queried further, the reason they liked our site best was the welcoming message they received from the text and graphics. "I felt that you really wanted me to

visit," said one recent guest. Another said, "Your site looked so professional. I knew you were the group for me."

So how do you build an affordable and professional Web site when you aren't a computer geek and only recently mastered e-mail? Careful research and planning are the keys to developing a great membership-building Web site.

Do Your Research

Only 30 percent of all Toastmasters clubs in one of the most “wired” areas of the United States – Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., – have a club Web site. And yet, in this same region, according to the Pew Charitable Trust, 70 percent of adults have daily access to the Internet, many with broadband. Of all the adults using the Internet, according to a 2004 Harris Poll, nearly half use it to find information on products, services, hobbies and special interests. Jim Chamberlin, CTM, past president of Capital Toastmasters I, says, “At least half of the prospects we’ve had over the last year have visited as a result of our Web site. A club without one is at a serious disadvantage.”

By tapping into this powerful and growing trend, Toastmasters clubs can rapidly and inexpensively build membership. And they can attract a large number of diverse people.

To decide what you want to include in your own club’s site, start by touring other club sites. You can do this in a variety of ways:

- Use Internet search engines like Google or Yahoo to find Toastmasters club sites.
- Check out your local “competition” by using the “Find a Club” feature on the Toastmasters International Web site and typing in your zip code or city.
- At the next contest or conference you attend, ask fellow Toastmasters about their Web sites and get the URL so you can visit.

Print out the Web site pages that “grab” you and share them with your club officers. Decide, as a club, the look and feel you want for your site. Decide how to display and use colors for elements on your pages to create a cohesive and professional style.

Web Page Reminders

Through FreeToastHost.org, your club can have a professional-looking Web site that adheres to TI’s branding guidelines.

A professional-looking Web site is important for publicizing your club and attracting new members. Toastmasters International has a free Web-hosting service, **FreeToastHost.org**, that your club can use to create, maintain and host its own Web site. In addition to hosting your site, **FreeToastHost.org** provides templates and step-by-step directions you can use to design and customize it. No experience in Web site design is necessary. Toastmasters International strongly recommends that you use **FreeToastHost.org** for your club’s Web site.

Useful information to include on a Web page is:

- the club name, meeting time and location, and a contact telephone number
- the mission of the club
- the features and benefits of Toastmasters club membership
- Distinguished Club Program goals and progress
- membership promotion ideas for the club’s members
- a calendar listing club and district events
- a date identifying the timeliness of the information
- a link to the Toastmasters International Web site
- a link to the district Web site (if available)

Club Web sites should not contain material that is not relevant to achieving the mission of the club. Clubs may only place on their Web sites information about candi-

dates for club, district or International office who are members of that club.

The Web page may also include an online version of the club’s newsletter. It must carry the Toastmasters International trademark acknowledgement statement as published by World Headquarters. Toastmasters International – the trademark owner – reserves the right to determine how clubs use trademarks as part of domain names. While the vice president public relations or Webmaster designs and maintains the club Web page, the club president is the publisher and is responsible for its content.

Clubs may include on their Web pages the names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of club officers, the creator/maintainer of the page (the Webmaster), club support personnel and individual members after having received express written permission from each individual. Individual member information (such as member addresses, e-mail addresses or telephone numbers) may be placed on club Web sites only if it is placed in a password-protected area.



Make a Plan

Plan your Web site by deciding the types of information you want to make available to the public and to your membership. Get out some paper and diagram how you want your pages to look and link together. Web sites are composed of pages of content that are linked together by hyperlinks, also called links. Hyperlinks are what allows you to “jump” from page to page and back again.

A menu of links is always helpful to people visiting your site. This is referred to as “navigation.” What you show and tell people about your club will be the content of your pages, and the manner that you present your information will be determined by your navigation. Many software programs like Microsoft Word have templates for Web sites that have a basic page and navigation structure designed for you.

When designing navigation, keep in mind a few best practices:

- Avoid creating dead ends. Allow people to jump to any page from any page within your site by having all the navigation links available on every page.
- Make sure your links are large enough for people to read and for people to click on. Tiny buttons, text and links are hard for people to use and will turn them away.
- Keep your navigation consistent. Visitors will expect to find the navigation in the same place on every page. The most common places for navigation links are down the left or right side, or across the top of a page.
- Label your navigation links descriptively so visitors can anticipate they are heading to the right page. A link that says “Map” isn’t as informative as a link that says “Finding Our Club.”

Write Your Copy

Once you have decided what you want to show and tell people about your club, it’s time to write the “copy” (text) for your pages. You can type your copy directly into a program that formats it for the Web. With **FreeToastHost.org**, you can type directly into their template, and...*voila!* You have a Web page.

Keep your text short so that viewers don’t have to scroll down a long page to read information. Consider writing a brief separate page for each of these topics:

- A welcome statement
- An information statement detailing when and where your club meets
- Directions and a map for getting to your meeting

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) where visitors can find answers to common questions about Toastmasters and your club
- “Meet Our Members” gallery where members can put up pictures of themselves and share some personal information
- Links to Toastmasters International, to your district Web site, and other resources

Illustrate Your Text

“A picture is worth a thousand words,” and that is so true on the Web. Snappy graphics can add visual interest to your site, making it look professional. Photographs and graphics also will give your site a friendly feeling and break up text making it easier to read on a computer screen.

There are many free resources for clip art and stock photos on the Internet so you do not need to be an artist or photographer to add a little dazzle to your site. If you are fortunate enough to have a digital photographer in your club, ask him or her to snap some pictures of members at a meeting so you can include some “action” shots in your pages. If you have a film camera, simply ask your film developer to create a photo disk with your images on it.

Don’t forget to get signed release forms from every member or guest whose picture or information you post.

Pictures that are displayed on the Web have to be saved in a format that is compatible with Internet browser programs. The most common formats are “JPG” and “GIF”. Most digital cameras will save photos in a “JPG” format. Graphics that you find on the Web will already be compatible.

Assemble and Back Up the Pieces

There are many free resources on the Internet that can help anyone build a quality Web site without knowing any computer programming. Most of these tools use templates to guide you through the design and creation process. They will write the HTML code for you and link your pages together. Having your plan in place, your copy written and your graphics selected will allow you to quickly assemble a professional site, sometimes in one sitting! At the end of this article you will find a list of tools you can use to build your club Web site.

Make sure to copy (back up) all your files and save them on a CD or external computer drive after you are done. Whenever you change your site, keep a copy of the new files in the same place. Having a copy of your site on an external medium makes transferring ownership of the site to a new Webmaster a snap. It also ensures that you have a back-up copy in case your computer has problems.

Getting on the Web

How do you get your new site on the Internet? Web sites exist on computers called “Web servers.” These machines are connected to the Internet and configured to let other computers view the material on them. The HTML files and graphic files that make up your site have to be uploaded (transferred) to a Web server from your local computer. Depending on the tool you used to create your Web site, some or all of your files may already be stored on a Web server and ready to be viewed.

If you have created your Web site using **FreeToastHost**, you will take advantage of a free service designed expressly to make Web site-building for Toastmasters easy and fun. **FreeToastHost.org** is a Web-hosting service created by a Toastmaster for all Toastmasters. But it is more than just a free hosting solution; it is a pre-designed Web site for your club to use, complete with many templates (colors and designs) to choose from.

Some clubs use other Web site-building programs on the Internet (such as Yahoo’s GeoCities). With either of these methods, you can use the tools the host provides to upload any necessary files, such as graphics, to the Web server. With **FreeToastHost**, these extra tools are designed for use by Toastmasters. Jeff Miller, DTM, who is Vice President Marketing for the DTM Leaders club in Laurel, Maryland, says, “I had no trouble at all adding text, adding member information, and publicizing our club’s Web site using **FreeToast Host**. It was pretty straightforward.”

Helping Visitors Find Your Site

Congratulations! You did it! You planned and designed a Web site, created copy and graphics, uploaded your work to a Web server and now your club has its own site. There are millions of Web sites on the Internet and the number grows every day, so how can you help people find yours? First, register your site with Toastmasters World Headquarters. The club president or other officer can update the club’s information by adding the URL for your site.

Second, register your Web site with the major Internet search engines such as Google and Yahoo. This will increase the chances that visitors will locate your site if they are looking for it. The best way to ensure that your site is listed with a search engine is to fill in the keywords fields when registering your site. Keywords for a Toastmasters Web site could include:

- Toastmasters
- Public speaking
- Presentations
- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Your town or city name

Resources

This list only features free resources because most Toastmasters clubs run on a tight budget. I have tested everything listed here and continue to use many of the resources myself. If your budget allows, your club can pay for services and software for a wider selection of advanced features.

Free Toastmasters Web site Hosting

- **FreeToastHost**
<http://www.freetoasthost.org>
Offers a simple, easy and fun way to design and use your club’s Web site. It also boasts many useful behind-the-scenes tools to make life easier for club officers. The newest is a dues renewal notice/collection tool. Imagine how happy your club officers will be when they can send dues invoices from your club Web site!
- If you want to try something else, search for companies and organizations using this reference site <http://www.free-webhosts.com/> that will host your club’s Web site for free. This site includes advanced searching, so you can narrow your search by eliminating sites that force you to display advertising.

Free HTML Authoring Tools for Macintosh and Windows

Even if you use a template, it’s always good to know some HTML tags.

- nVu
<http://www.nvu.com/>
- Amaya
<http://www.w3.org/Amaya/>
- Mozilla Suite
<http://www.mozilla.org/products/mozilla1.x/>

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Beth Stinson, CL, is a member of Greater Olney Toastmasters in Silver Springs, Maryland. Reach her at beth.stinson@yahoo.com

Learning, remembering and properly pronouncing other peoples' names is more than just good manners; it's good business and good citizenship.

*M*y name is Craig. But I'll answer to Greg. Most Gregs I know answer to Craig. Of course we are not alone: there's Eva and Ava, Bill and Bob, Jeff and John, Kristin and Kirsten, Ari and Avi, and many more. I can't complain. I often confuse and occasionally mangle others' names. Names are not my strong suit.

My purpose is not to engage in anthroponymy, the study of personal names. It's simply to remind you that learning, remembering and properly pronouncing other peoples' names is more than just good manners; it's good business and good citizenship. What's in a name? Everything!

Every Toastmaster, indeed every person you meet in life, wants to be seen as an individual, feel special and respected. When you refer to people by their preferred name, you are honoring them and showing respect. You're also seeing them as individuals. It's a good beginning to a relationship.

Over the years I've struggled to learn and remember names. The older I get the harder it becomes, in part because I continue to meet new people, sometimes an audience at a time!

Given our global marketplace we are likely to meet customers from China, Israel, Nigeria and Germany, Argentina and Arkansas. Names and

I'll Never Forget

By Craig Harrison, DTM

What's-His-Name

pronunciations vary by country and region. Eugenia – pronounced “U-Gene-E-Ah” in the United States – sounds entirely different in the Southern hemisphere: “O-beee-Nee-Yah.” Win points by pronouncing it her way! My secret: I spell it out phonetically whether on paper or in my mind. Seeing it this way helps me pronounce it properly.





In Toastmasters it took me a while to pronounce correctly the names of Osafran Okundaye and storyteller Orunamamu (pronounced *O-Roon-a-Mab-moo*). I've heard it mangled seven different ways. Ditto the name of Speechcraft participant John Eweglaben. It would have been so easy to pull an Ed McMahon, and simply introduce him by saying "Here's Johnny!" Instead I had John spell his name out for me phonetically and then practiced saying it repeatedly. Incidentally, it is pronounced "*A-wig-LAY-Bin*."

Incidentally insulted my Pro-Toasties Club colleague from Louisiana, Mademoiselle Carolyn Millet (pronounced *Meee-Aye*), by presuming her last name was pronounced like the grain. That's not Southern hospitality!

Employ the following tips to track names and the vital details that accompany them:

- When you hear someone's name, repeat it out loud as soon as possible in conversation.
- Append it to the beginning or ending of your greeting to that person: "It's a pleasure to meet you, Amber", or "Tyrone, how nice to meet you."
- Try to associate others' names with what they tell you about themselves. Repeat it out loud if need be: "Ken the southeast quality-control manager"; "Ariana, the internal service starlet." Hearing yourself say their names makes it more real and memorable.
- European names employing W may sound like V's: Tony Baczewski of my hometown Lakeview Toastmasters pronounces his name *Tony Ba-SHEV-ski*.
- Chinese names may take the form of last name (surname), first name (given name). For example: Longtime Oakland City Center Toastmaster Joe Parkman tells new friends: "I'm no ordinary Joe, I'm Parkman Joe!" Indeed, he is.
- Employ mnemonic devices or alliteration to help you remember cus-

tomers' names: Ling from Laos, Helen who's gellin', Sandy...like my sister-in-law (of the same name).

- Make written notes to yourself, at the time of the meeting or later. Don't tax your memory. Write on the back of their business card or in your PDA. (Beware of writing on the front of someone's business card. In some cultures it's perceived as defacing the person!)
- Ask for help with complicated names or those in a foreign tongue. Take pride in learning the trills and other accents of foreign languages. Customers will appreciate your efforts and warm to your efforts at correctly pronouncing their name.
- Learn the story behind the person's name. Orunamamu's name, in the Nigerian language of Yoruban, means "Oh you royal one, miss morning star." Sometimes she'll simply tell people "The 'O' is for respect!" That's memorable!
- If you ask someone how to pronounce their name, never respond "Oh, I could never pronounce that!" Not only is it disrespectful, it's lazy on your part, to not even attempt the correct pronunciation. Try your best to pronounce it correctly in their presence; ask for help if you aren't letter perfect the first time. Remember, it's not about you and your comfort level, it's about them and making the effort to respect their identity.
- Most importantly, remember that other people share your pain. If you know your name will be hard to remember or pronounce for others, help them out: realtor Lisa Wierenga of Michigan encourages people to think of the phrase "Wearing A"; A realtor whose last name is Wojokowski helps people by saying, "It's like 'where's your house keys!"; and Oakland poet Lavignia asks people to call her "Vinny the Poet" for short.

According to the mingling maven herself, author Susan RoAne, "if you have trouble remembering names, understand that others have forgotten yours. Never, ever ask, "Do you remember me?"

The author of the bestselling books *How to Work A Room* and *How To Create Your Own Luck: The "You Never Know" Approach*, RoAne recommends that we simply "put out our hand, smile and re-introduce ourselves. Ninety percent of the people will respond in kind and no one is playing the memory game. For the 10 percent who don't ask, tell the truth: "It's been one of those days...I can't even remember my name."

And when the shoe is on the other foot, and your name is forgotten or mispronounced, don't get angry or feel victimized. Our past international president, Dilip Abayasekara, Ph.D., DTM, has experienced the ups and downs of having a distinctive name. Dilip, a Sri Lankan whose last name means "leader without fear," knows his

"And when the shoe is on the other foot, and your name is forgotten or mispronounced, don't get angry or feel victimized."


name is difficult for a first-timer to pronounce. He offers a pronunciation guide, relating his name's pronunciation to words people already know: Dilip sounds like Philip; the first three syllables of Abayasekara mimic the first three letters in Spanish or French: *Ab – Bay – Say*, to which one can add *Kub – Rub*. It works!

Of course, if the person in question offers you a nickname, you are welcome to use it. Many people have trouble pronouncing (and spelling) the name of the longtime Duke University men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski (give yourself two points if you pronounced it "*Shub-SHEV-ski*"). Many players and fans alike eschew the Polish pronunciation and simply call him by the alliterative "Coach K."

One challenge occurs in environments when more than one person has the same name. In such cases nicknames may be the answer. One person may prefer Michael, another Mike and a third might even prefer Mikey. What is needed is mutual assent. Assigning a nickname without a person's permission can be insulting. Get a person's buy-in. Remember, their identity is at play. Accede to their wishes whenever possible; what's humorous to you may be insulting to the person in question.

Recently Distinguished Toastmaster Keith Ostergard, Toastmasters Vice-Chair of Training in the People's Republic of China, told me that companies often have so many employees with the same name it becomes problematic:

"In China it is very common to meet or work with people who have the same name – both surname and given name. Wang is one of the most common Chinese names. Once we had six people in a department of 100 with the name Wang Chen. In order to keep them straight, they all agreed to let me number them: Wang Chen 1, Wang Chen 2, etc.." That worked well until one left the company. They all wanted to change their numbers!"

What's in a name? Gold. Learning, using and properly pronouncing strangers' names is a great first step to building solid relationships based on trust, respect and admiration. Win the name game! 

Craig Harrison, DTM, of Laugh Lovers Toastmasters 596430 in Oakland, California, is a professional speaker and founder of Expressions Of Excellence!™ Visit him at www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com.

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- One secret question that can get you a \$1,500 - \$6,000 bonus!
- 29 tools and forms that you need to get started quickly (they took me 12 years to develop).
- Seven different speaking business models and which is best for you.
- How to speak for free and still earn a huge income

...And much, much, much more

What people have said:

"I have received my first speaking paycheck! You helped me avoid many of the pitfalls that others make."

- Theresa Westcott, Houston, TX

"You really helped me focus on my assets and realize that I am sitting on a gold mine!"

- Andy Dooley, Orlando, FL

"We increased our speaking rates 150% and they didn't hesitate."

- Charlotte Endorf, Norfolk, NE

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Darren LaCroix, 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking

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