

**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL<sup>®</sup>

# **CEO REPORT**

**AUGUST 2021**

# Core Ideology

## Toastmasters International Mission

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.

## District Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

## Club Mission

We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.

## Envisioned Future

To be the first-choice provider of dynamic, high-value, experiential communication and leadership skills development

## Brand Promise

Empowering individuals through personal and professional development

## Core Values

Integrity, Respect, Service, and Excellence

# Message From the CEO

If we look only at the quantitative measurements, the Toastmasters 2020–2021 program year was a dismal failure. Total membership payments were down by 12.8% from 708,846 to 618,117. The number of new members who joined a Toastmasters club declined from 136,410 to 104,573. The number of paid Toastmasters clubs on June 30 fell from 16,204 to 15,875. Our annual retention declined from 53.9% to 49.8%.

There were also some bright lights—the change in the count of paid clubs at June 20 was a decrease of 2.0%, compared to -3.7% last year and increases in all previous years. In the month of June, 325 clubs were chartered, approaching the record of June 2015.

But these are only the quantitative measures. Also during the 2020–2021 program year, more than 11,000 clubs went from meeting solely in person to meeting online. For this to happen successfully, tens of thousands of members had to learn to be comfortable with online or hybrid meetings. Thousands of members discussed these new meeting skills with each other on social media, learning from each other and teaching those with less experience. Club leaders learned to conduct officer meetings and speech contests online and attend Club Officer Training and Area Council meetings that way as well. District officers conducted District Council meetings, District Executive Committee meetings, and the District elections online. Oh yes, and District speech contests too. Remarkably, not a single District video submitted for the International Speech Contest Region Quarterfinals was disqualified, a marked improvement from previous years. The Board of Directors, working diligently to accommodate a rapidly changing environment, conducted every meeting online. And because of the successful online and hybrid meetings, our International President was able to embark on an unprecedented World Tour of club visits.

I recently read a paraphrased statement that hit home in this pandemic year: “Evolve or Repeat.” \*

As we begin this 2021–2022 program year, it seems likely, though by no means certain, that the pandemic is winding down. Are we destined to, or do we desire to, go back and repeat 2019? I certainly hope not. Toastmasters International and its clubs have the potential to springboard into a stronger future. It’s up to each of us, as leaders in the organization, to achieve this. Will we evolve or repeat?

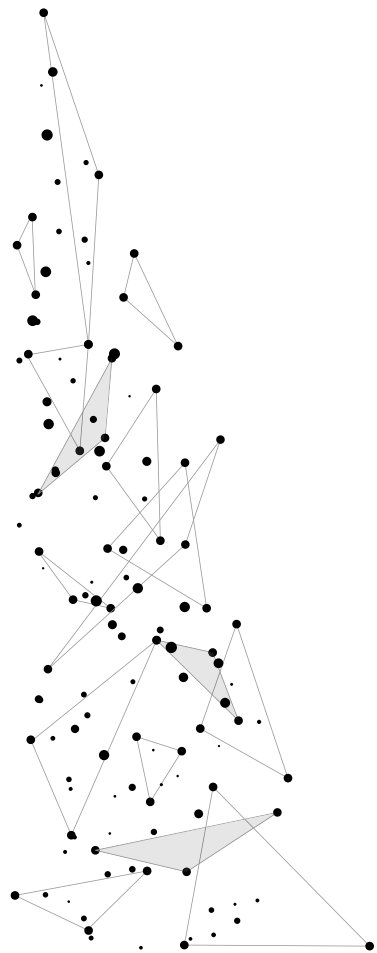


Daniel Rex

\*Attributed to actor and writer Craig Charles

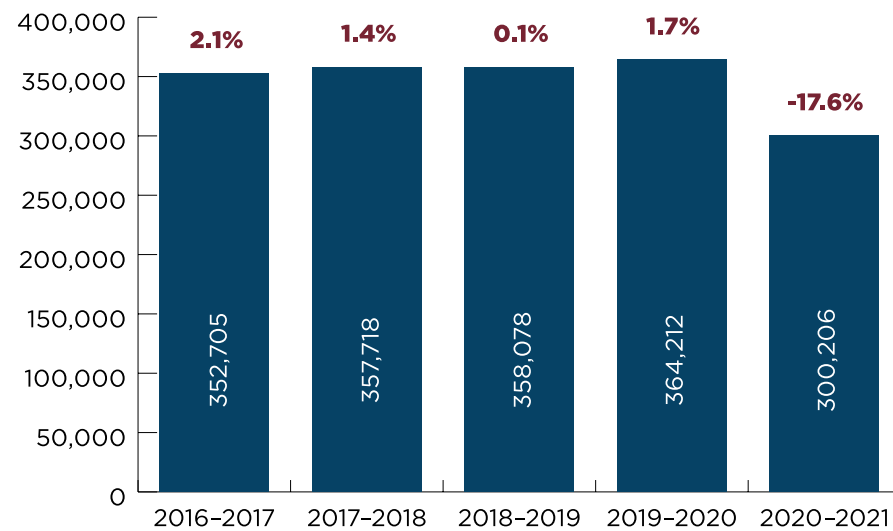
# Table of Contents

<b>Numeric Snapshots</b>	<b>6</b>
Total Membership	6
Membership Payments	6
Members by Country	7
Paid Clubs	8
New and Suspended Clubs	8
Clubs by Country	9
District Reformatations	10
Leadership Awards	11
Pathways Achievements	12
Pathways Awards by Country	13
Distinguished Clubs	14
Distinguished Districts	14
Education and Product Sales	15
Social Media	16
2020–2021 Milestones	17
<b>Interim Plan 2020 Update</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>International President World Tour</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Distinguished Districts and Club Success</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Digital Ad Campaign</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2021 Virtual Convention</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Digital Transformation</b>	<b>30</b>



# Numeric Snapshots

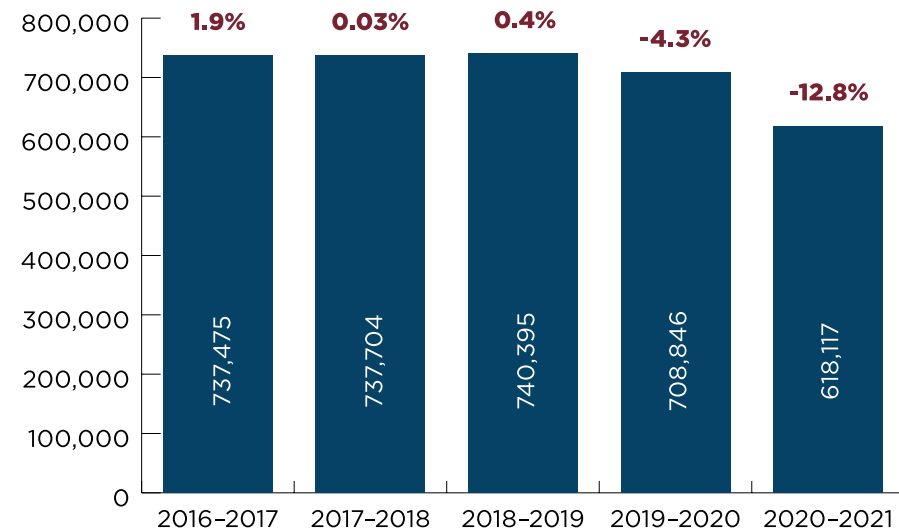
Total Membership as of March 31, 2021



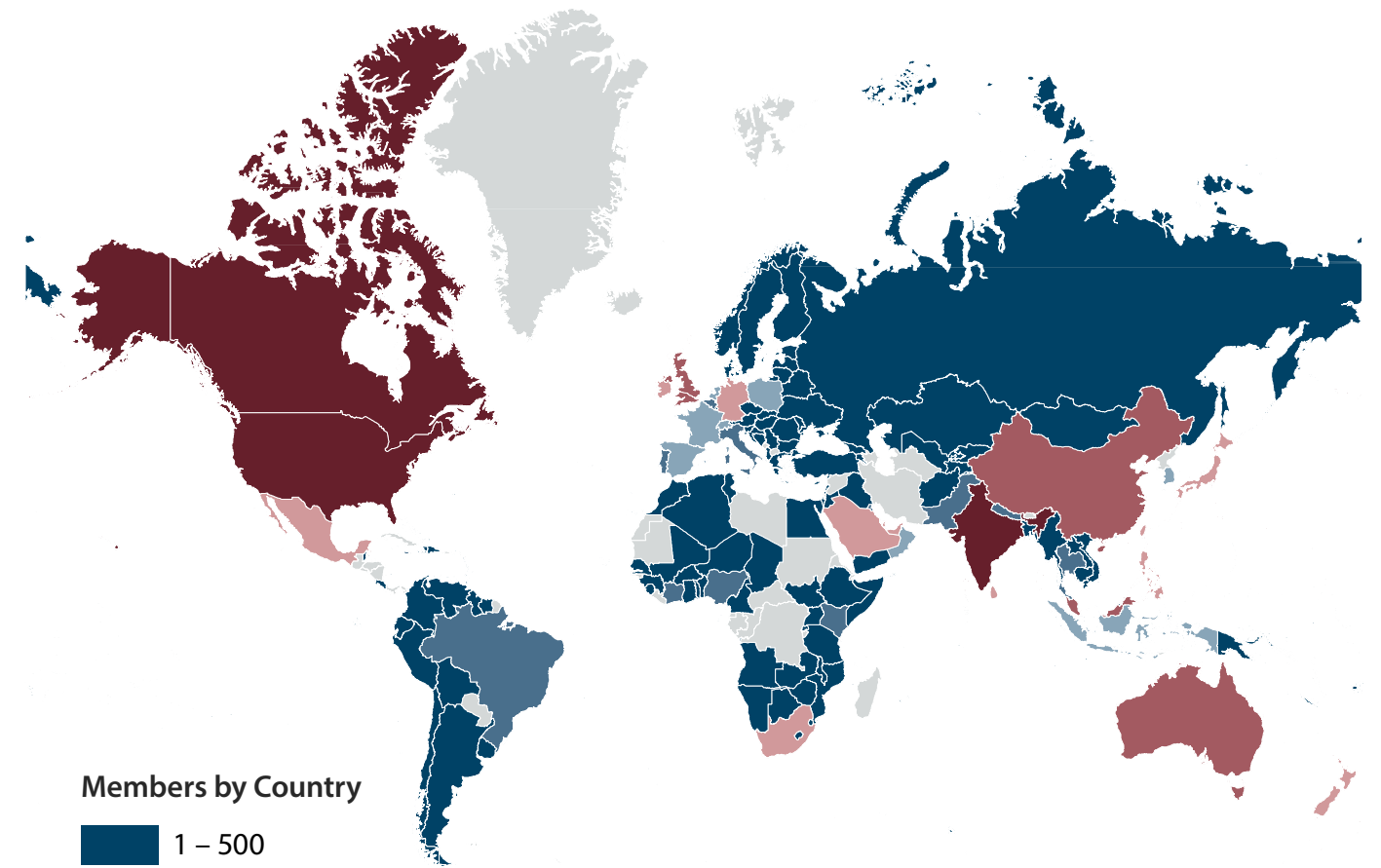
Total membership for the period ending March 31, 2021 declined compared to the same period in 2019-2020. Membership for the period totaled 300,206, a -17.6% difference from last year.

Membership Payments as of June 30, 2021

As of June 30, 2021, membership payments for the program year totaled 618,117, falling 12.8% compared to 2019-2020. Membership payments include new, charter, and renewal payments received throughout the program year.



Members by Country

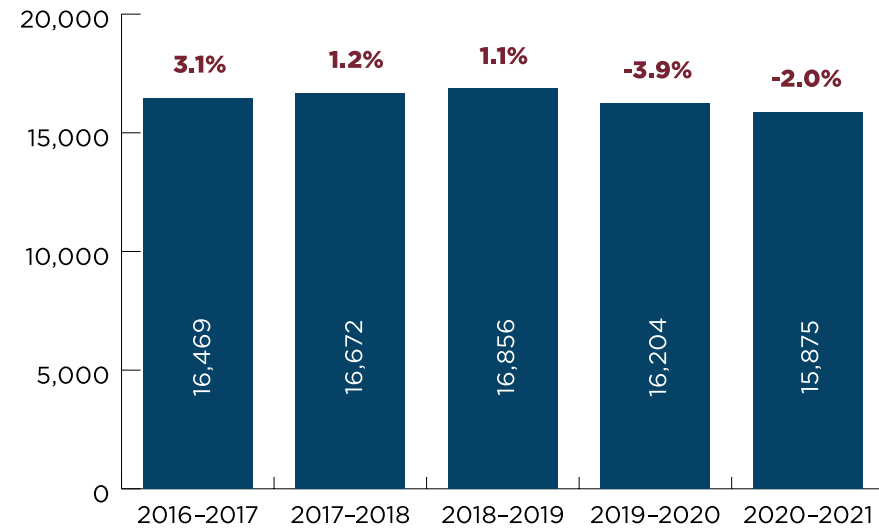


Members by Country

- 1 – 500
- 501 – 1,000
- 1,001 – 1,500
- 1,501 – 5,000
- 5,001 – 15,000
- More than 15,000
- None

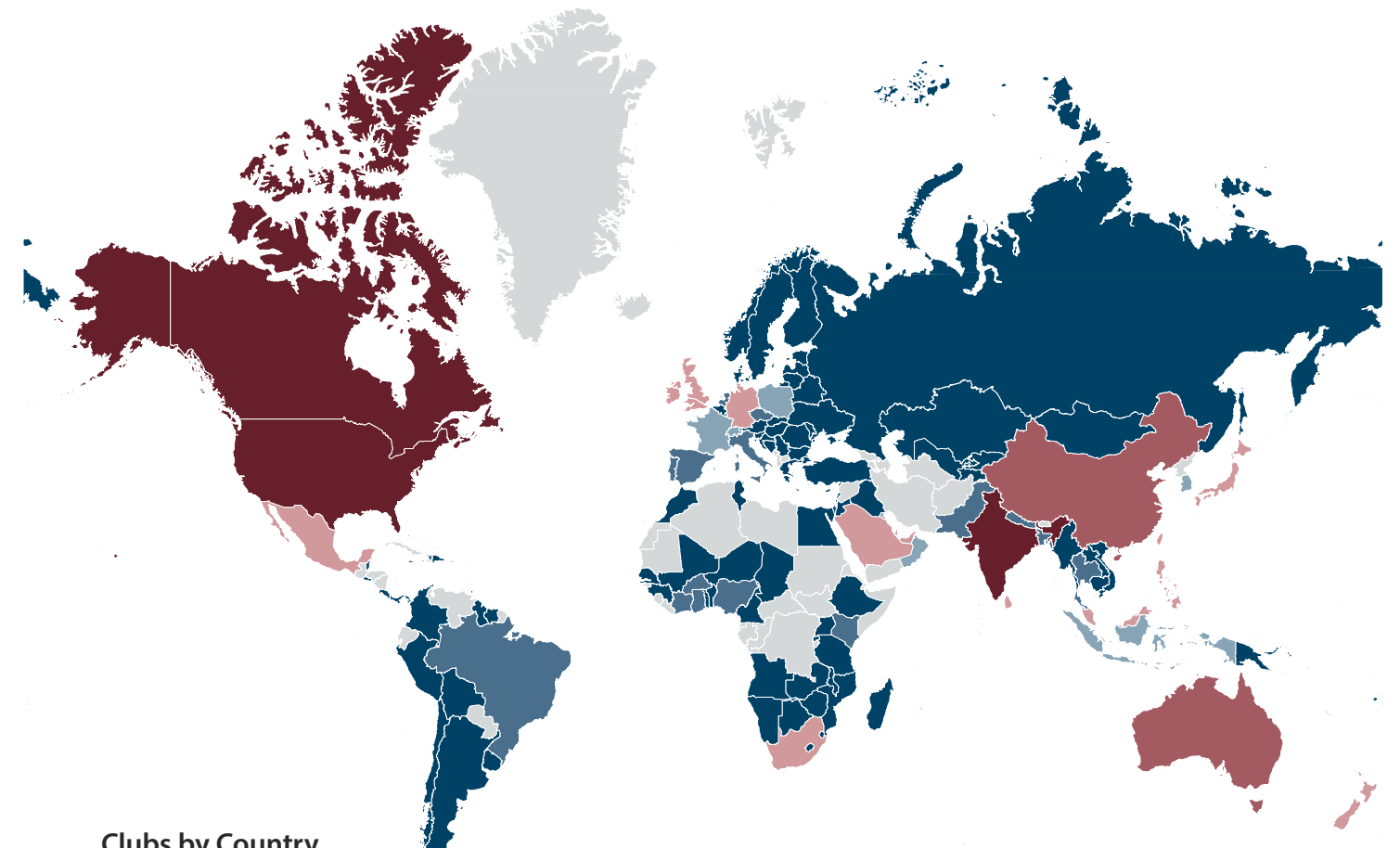
**300,206**  
Members

Paid Clubs as of June 30, 2021

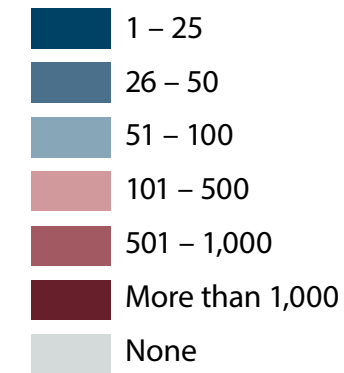


There are 15,875 total paid clubs comprising the Toastmasters ecosystem as of June 30, 2021. This is a decrease of 2.0% compared to June 30, 2020. Clubs can be found in 149 countries, and the vast majority accept online attendance.

Clubs by Country



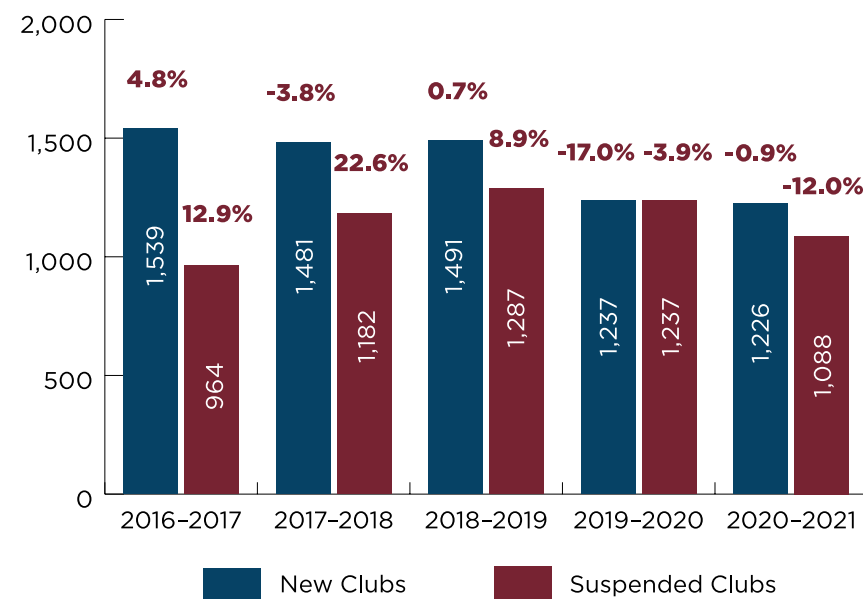
Clubs by Country



**15,875**  
Paid Clubs

Exceptional directives from the Board of Directors impacted new and suspended clubs for the 2020-2021 program year. A new club incentive began in November 2020, where new organizing clubs could elect to prepay future renewal dues and could have the charter fee and new member fees waived. This helped prompt 1,226 new clubs during the period, only 0.9% fewer than last year. Notably, there were 325 clubs that organized in June 2021; this is the highest monthly total since June 2015 (341 new clubs).

New and Suspended Clubs as of June 30, 2021



Clubs at risk of suspension were considered in good standing with a minimum of eight paid members, and clubs were afforded an additional six months to come into good standing after the October 2020 dues period. Reinstatement requirements were also modified to allow for clubs to more easily reinstate. These affordances reduced the number of clubs that suspended by 12.0%, with only 1,088 suspending during the year.

## District Reformatations

Districts 60 and 86 reformed on July 1, 2021 and new District 123 was created.

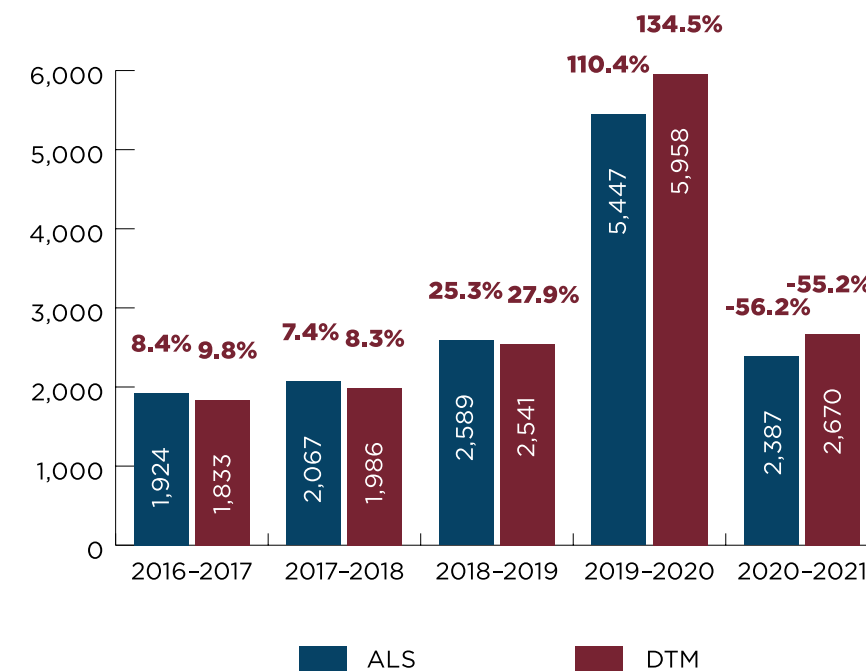
Existing District	New Districts	Geographic Region
60	60	Northern, Southern, and Eastern counties of Ontario, Canada
86	86	
	123	

In March 2021, the Board of Directors adopted a plan to align undistricted clubs to a District. This provides additional support to clubs, affords opportunities for members to participate in District leadership, and facilitates each District's ability to help build new clubs. In June, the Board approved the following, which took effect July 1, 2021:

- Clubs in Fiji were aligned to District 69
- Clubs in Angola and Madagascar were aligned to District 74
- Clubs in Bermuda were aligned to District 81
- Clubs in Chad were aligned to District 94
- Clubs in Russia were aligned to District 108
- Clubs in Malta and Turkey were aligned to District 109
- Clubs in Serbia were aligned to District 110
- Clubs in Burundi were aligned to District 114

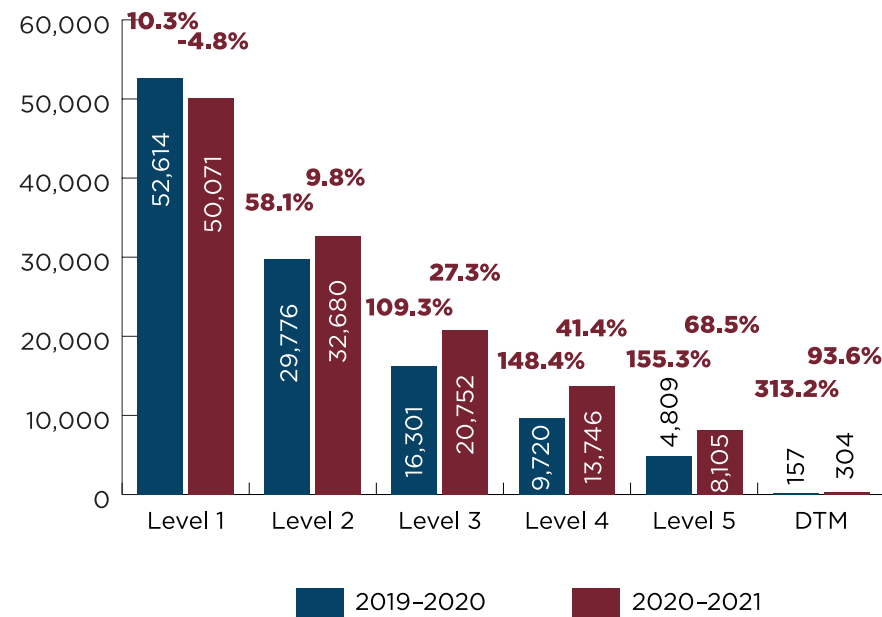
Additional areas and remaining undistricted clubs will be considered for District incorporation later this year.

## Leadership Awards



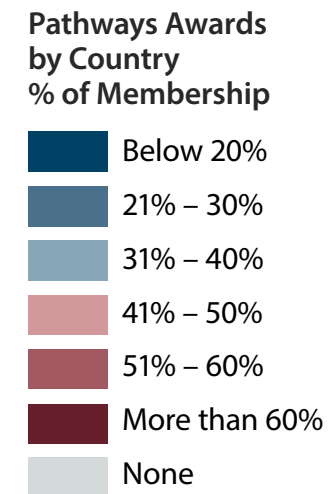
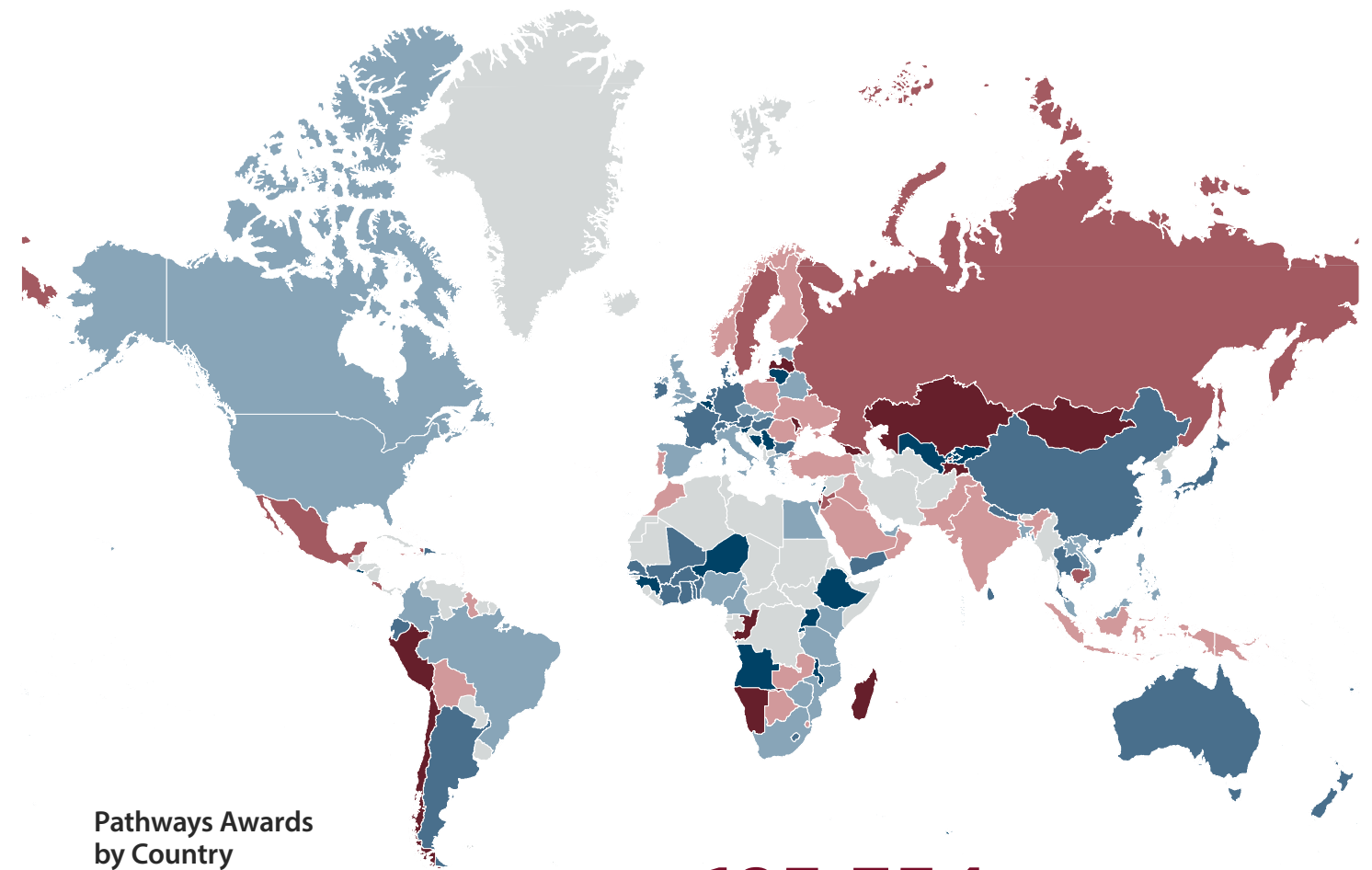
The 2020–2021 program year is the final year where eligible members could earn an Advanced Leader Silver (ALS) or a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award from the traditional education program. The program year had 2,387 ALS awards and 2,670 DTM awards submitted.

### Pathways Achievements



Members earned over 125,000 individual levels in the Pathways learning experience during the 2020–2021 program year. There were also over 300 Distinguished Toastmaster awards earned in the program, an increase of 93.6% over 2019–2020. There was strong growth in educational achievement overall, most notably an increase of 68.5% in completed paths during the year. The graph illustrates level completions earned during the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 program years.

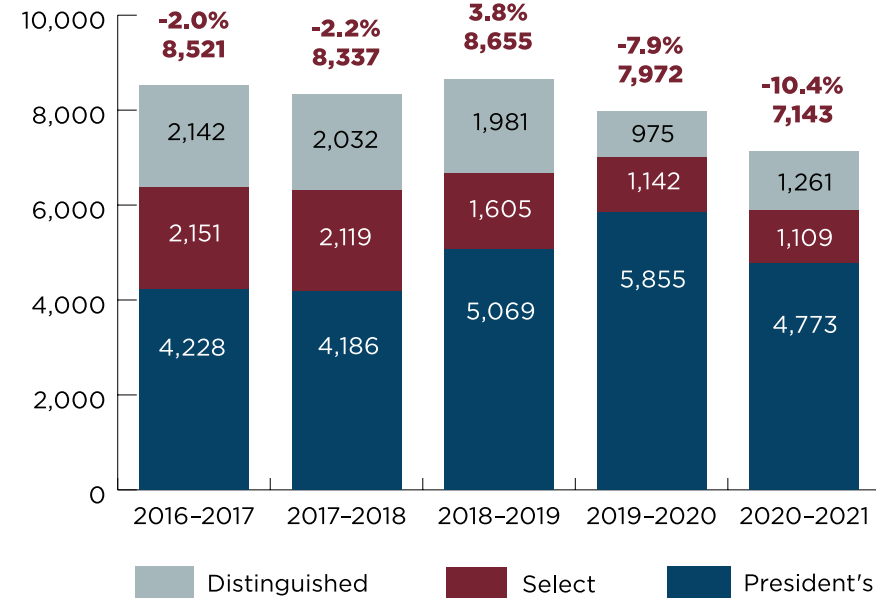
### Pathways Awards by Country



**125,354**  
Level Awards Earned

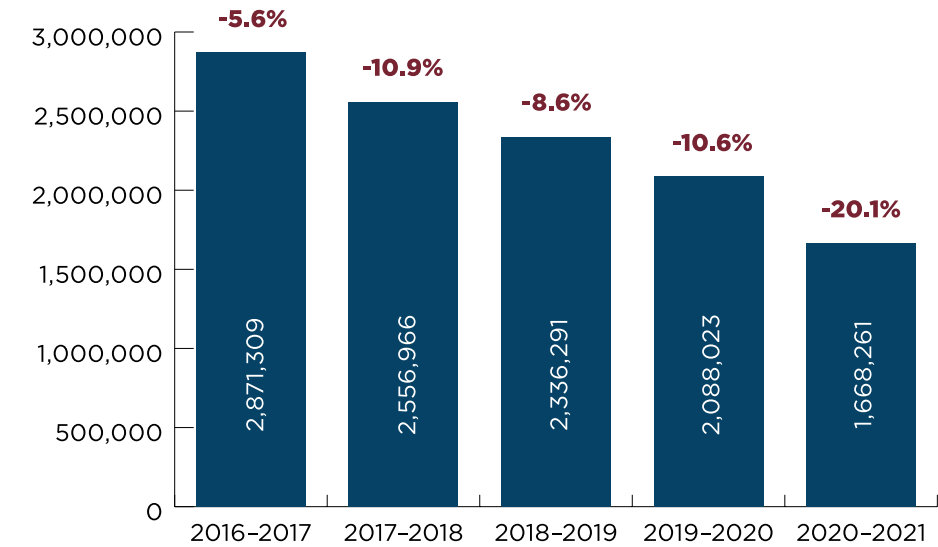


Distinguished Clubs as of June 30, 2021



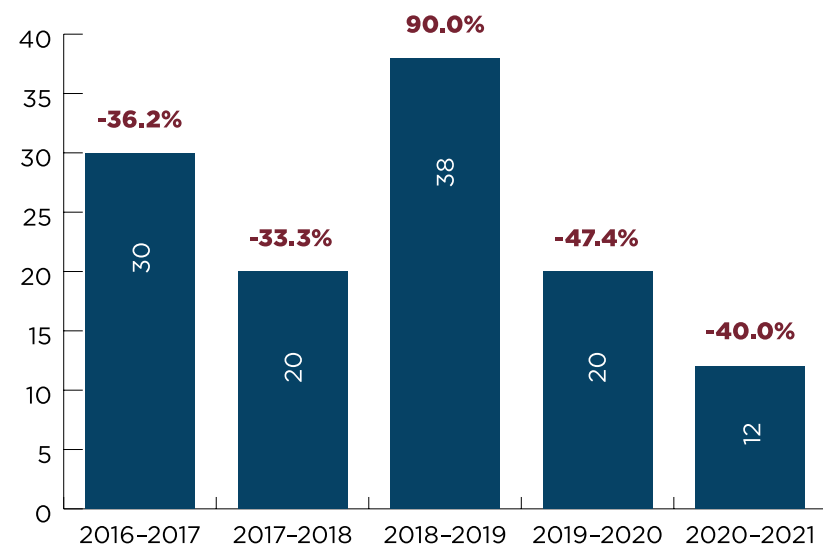
A total 45.0% (7,143) of all paid clubs succeeded in the Distinguished Club Program during the 2020–2021 program year, becoming Distinguished, Select Distinguished, or President’s Distinguished. This is an overall decrease of 10.4% compared to 2019–2020, where 49.2% of paid clubs were Distinguished.

Education and Product Sales as of June 30, 2021



Total education and product sales for 2020–2021 declined compared to 2019–2020 by 20.1% to \$1,668,261 USD. This category was influenced by a free path offer for eligible members who renewed membership for the October 2020–March 2021 period.

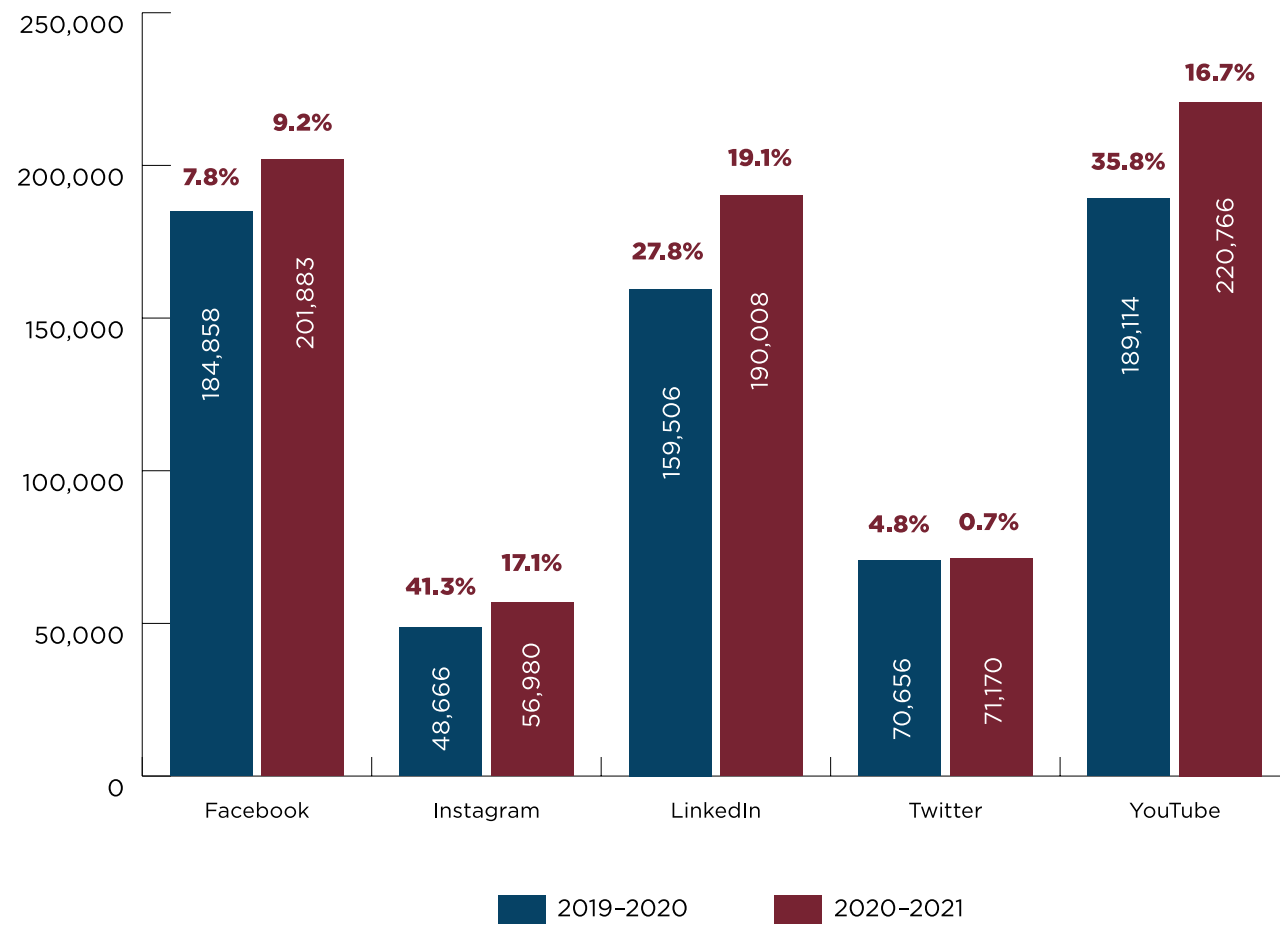
Distinguished Districts



Twelve Districts reached Distinguished, Select Distinguished, President’s Distinguished, or Smedley Distinguished in the District Recognition Program during the 2020–2021 program year. This is a difference of -40.0% compared to 2019–2020.



Social Media



Toastmasters' online footprint continues to grow. Each of the social media pages had increased following and engagement. The graph shows followers or subscribers for main Toastmasters International pages across five major social media channels. During the year, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube had the highest increase in followers or subscribers, with growth on LinkedIn surpassing all others at 19.1%.

2020-2021 Milestones

**2,974**  
Distinguished Toastmaster Awards

**50,071**  
Level 1 Awards

**15,875**  
Paid Clubs

**300,206**  
Memberships

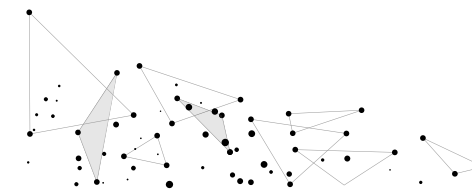
**7,143**  
Distinguished Clubs

**50.03**  
Net Promoter Score

**12**  
Distinguished Districts

**125,354**  
Pathways Level Awards

**149**  
Countries



## Interim Plan 2020 Update

As the world learned to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, so did Toastmasters International. In March 2020, the Board of Directors presented **goals and initiatives** that deviated from its previous five-year plan, directly addressing new challenges with a focus on Toastmasters' missions and strengths; the intent is to emerge as a stronger global network of clubs than ever before. Here is a summary of initiatives that are currently in process or completed, as well as a summary of initiatives that are currently in development for future work.

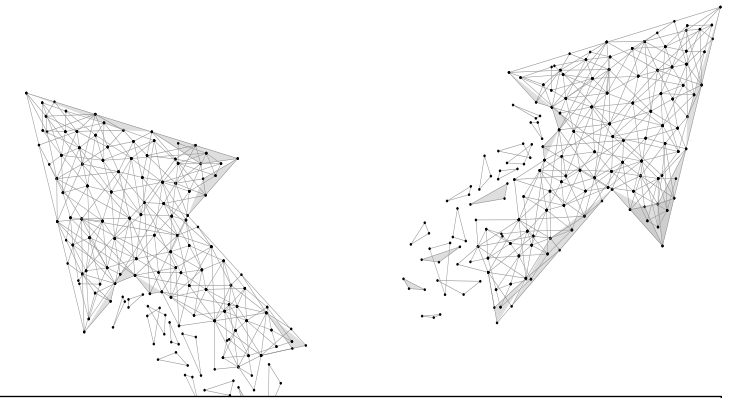
### In Process or Completed

At the beginning of the global pandemic, the Board of Directors modified Toastmasters International policy so that clubs and Districts could meet entirely online. Very quickly, World Headquarters published several resources to support online meetings, including how-to guides, instructional videos, and multiple magazine articles on the topic. A new, dedicated webpage was created for these resources. Global webinars were a new opportunity to engage members, introduce Toastmasters to other parts of the world, and position the Toastmasters brand in this new global environment. The most successful webinar reached nearly 20,000 individuals. Several items were also created to support clubs and Districts during this time, that included materials for open houses, a digital guest packet, new Mid-year Training for District leaders, and a new Brand Manual.

A new member's initial progress in Pathways sets a foundation for their later success. Several initiatives were launched this past year to support members in completing Level 1 projects. New Base Camp tutorials were published in early 2021, and targeted communications provided resources and encouraged members to move to the next stage of Level 1. New Level 1 projects are currently being designed, utilizing member feedback from recent years.

Clubs are the backbone of the organization, and a quality club experience is crucial for supporting members. At the beginning of 2021, evaluation resources were posted to the website. These included club and District leader self-evaluation forms, new 360-degree evaluations, and a 30-day new member survey to help clubs evaluate their onboarding processes. To support clubs during the pandemic, Area Directors have been encouraged to visit each club a minimum of four times during the program year. To support Area Directors with their visits moving forward, a new easy-to-use, web-based Area Director Club Visit Report was released in June 2021 that Area Directors can complete, submit, and store online. Finally, entirely new club officer training, Area Director training, and Division Director training courses were published in mid-2021 to help Districts train their leaders. Additional online sessions for new club officers, as well as for Area and Division Directors, are forthcoming.

The impact of the pandemic on Districts is undeniable, making it difficult for most Districts to achieve Distinguished status. New large-scale recognition awards were developed for both the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 program years to encourage District leaders and to show appreciation for how hard they continued to work through the pandemic. A new section of the website was released in mid-2020 to showcase these awards.



Enhancing the dialogue between members and leaders at every level of the organization is an important goal. This includes openly sharing information, addressing feedback, improving processes, and developing additional platforms to facilitate the communication between leaders (club officers, District leaders, and the Board of Directors) and members at all levels. A Fireside Chat was hosted by the Board of Directors Executive Committee in February 2021 and was joined by District leaders to discuss the impact of the pandemic and the basis for certain organizational decisions; social media is being used to solicit input from members and clubs more than ever before; and International President Richard Peck embarked on the International President World Tour and visited 141 clubs around the world. An exciting outcome of the 2020 Virtual Convention, our first-ever virtual convention, was record participation at the Annual Business Meeting. Finally, World Headquarters is piloting new types of organizational performance reports to help Region Advisors and District leaders plan for the year and evaluate their success.

A worldwide advertising and marketing program is a big initiative for increasing brand awareness, identifying effective advertising strategies, and supporting Districts in running their own advertising campaigns. Refer to the **Digital Ad Campaign** section of this CEO Report for more information on the campaign that was implemented in 17 Districts. The results of the campaign will support future District-led advertising efforts. New digital advertising guides for LinkedIn and Facebook have already been published. Informational webinars for Districts will follow, later this year.

The implementation of the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system will enable future enhancements to member service, as well as club and District automation. When completed, it will provide leaders real-time answers accessible anytime, anywhere, enable the business with real-time market data, analysis, and demographic and predictive analytics, and it will empower members, volunteer leaders, and World Headquarters with products and services to conduct business activity more efficiently and effectively. Last year, credit card processing was implemented through the Finance and Operations module of Microsoft Dynamics 365, replacing Great Plains. Next up is the Customer Engagement implementation, automating member service, club, and District data to replace Personify.

## In Development

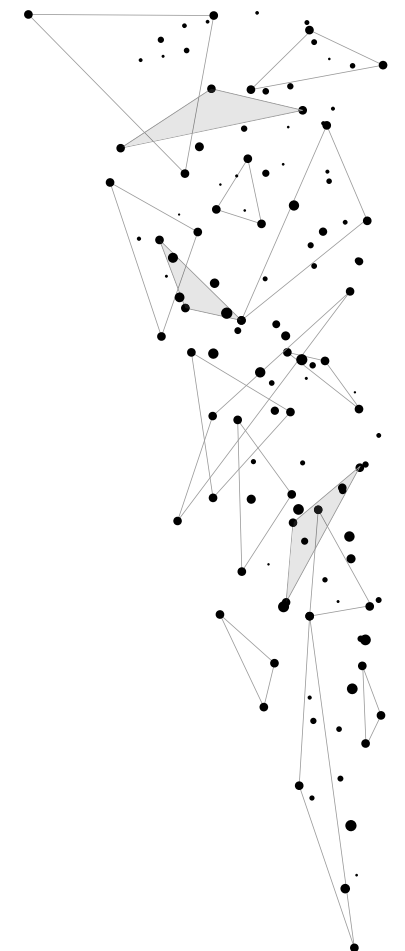
Continuing to evolve the content and instructional design of the Pathways learning experience is an ongoing initiative, based on four years of user feedback. New educational content is slated for 2022 to offer a better member experience and increase member achievement overall in the organization. Increasing engagement in the mentoring programs throughout the organization is also a near-future educational initiative.

Programs for special groups will strengthen the Toastmasters brand and increase awareness. Plans call for updating and evolving the current youth program to be deployed either directly within clubs or indirectly through strategic alliances. An educational experience with a semester-based calendar will also be developed to help college and university students preparing to enter the workplace. It is intended to not only strengthen the Toastmasters value proposition for this demographic, but also provide a channel to join a regular club upon completion.

To maintain compliance with international laws and create opportunities for easier growth of the organization, a near-future initiative will entail determining countries for immediate consideration of legal entities, potential future legal entities, and a process for determining qualifiers to register entities.

To reduce shipping costs and increase accessibility of items offered in the Toastmasters Online Store, global distribution channels will be considered in the near future to provide members, clubs, and Districts with local vendors for purchasing.

Because strategic alliances have the power to grow and strengthen the Toastmasters brand, the organization seeks to develop and maintain a pipeline of these with both nonprofit and for-profit businesses.



## International President World Tour



It was the Toastmasters tour of a lifetime: 141 countries in nine months, visiting/ participating in three, four, or five clubs a day, which were often located on opposite sides of the globe. This was only made possible by a world that learned to gather online and a leader who embraced it in the most extraordinary way. In September 2020, newly installed International President Richard E. Peck, DTM, conceived of the ambitious International President World Tour project to make members feel connected amid a pandemic.

The plan was to visit (online) one club in every country that has a Toastmasters presence, while also taking an active role in club meetings. He achieved that high standard, delivering 76 Pathways speeches (while also receiving evaluations), evaluating 41 speakers, and taking on numerous meeting roles, such as Table Topicsmaster, Ah-Counter, and Toastmaster of the Day. He also participated in numerous Q&A sessions.

Clubs responded with frolic and fanfare: The Saturday Breakfast Speakers Club in Sweden held a Nobel Prize Gala; Desert Pioneers in Kuwait organized a “Not So Late Show” themed meeting; the Addis Ababa club in Ethiopia created a theme of “Ethiopia: Land of Origins;” and the Vienna Toastmasters Club in Austria had fun with the theme “May the 4th Be With You.” Other clubs played local music or presented slideshows highlighting an aspect of their culture.

Peck’s club visits and meeting participation helped members to see him as a person rather than a title, while also allowing the International President to get back to his Toastmasters roots—meaning he is “a member at heart,” as he puts it.

It should come as no surprise that after embarking on the whirlwind tour, when Peck’s wife asked him what he most wanted to be remembered for, he responded, “as the people’s president, that’s all I care about, as long as they know I was there for them.”

**Read** more about it in the August issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine.

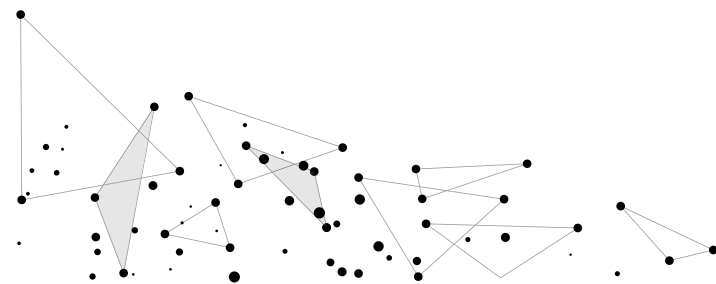
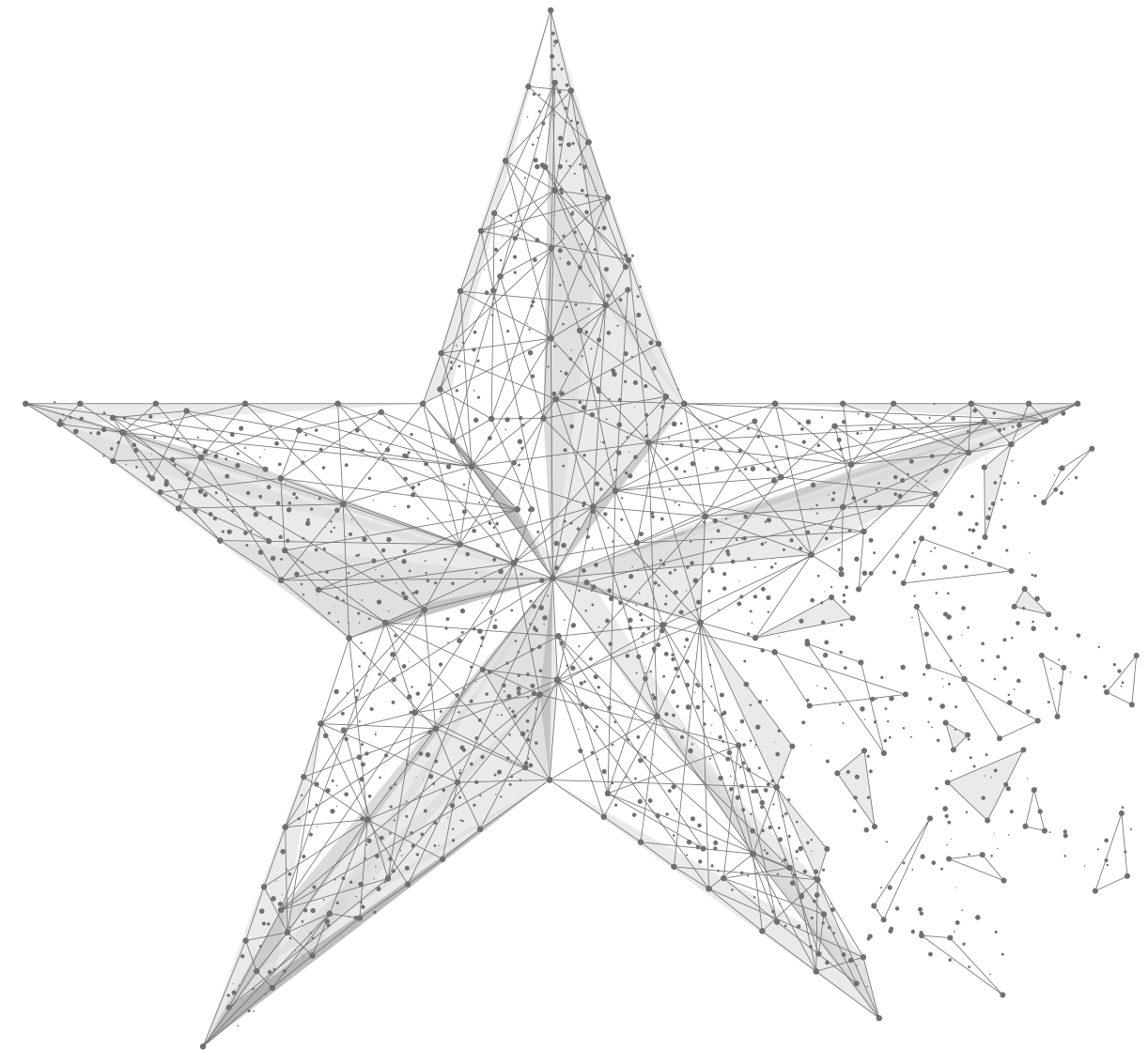
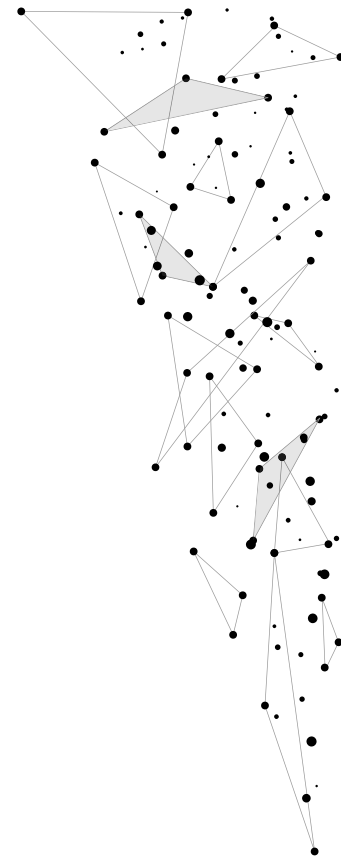
Richard Peck’s illustration was created by a member of the Jakarta Toastmasters Club.



## Distinguished Districts & Club Success

Through a difficult and challenging year, Districts were still able to achieve success: seven Districts earned Smedley Distinguished (Districts 81, 82, 94, 114, 116, 121, and 122); one achieved President's Distinguished (District 118); one earned Select Distinguished (District 41); and three achieved Distinguished (Districts 34, 51, 98) status.

Clubs, too, have been working hard during the pandemic, adapting to individual challenges and creating a continued club space for virtual attendance. Since so many clubs provided an online attendance option, they increased the diversity of their membership by going beyond local members and inviting members/guests from all over the world to join their meetings. Members have gone outside of their comfort zones and embraced technology, such as Zoom, Webex, and audiovisual set-ups, to name a few. While most clubs are still online or hybrid, some are beginning to discuss transitioning back to in-person attendance, and many clubs are voting to remain online or hybrid to retain their diverse membership. They also continue to participate in membership-building contests, with many clubs succeeding through new members joining/embracing the Pathways learning experience.



## Digital Ad Campaign



After a successful digital advertising pilot in the U.S. in early 2019 (with LinkedIn ads performing the best), Toastmasters launched its first international digital advertising campaign on LinkedIn only. The campaign began on January 14, 2020, in the U.S. for Region 7, District 23, and District 55. The campaign began on February 4, 2020, for Australia, France, and Japan. A total of 17 Districts participated, with ads created to support three languages: English, French, and Japanese. All ads and landing pages created for France and Japan were translated.

It was initially scheduled to conclude in May 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on in-person gatherings, the campaign was paused on March 16, 2020. Research conducted with Club Presidents in August 2020 suggested that most clubs had become confident in the online meeting format (online attendance was available in over 80% of clubs by the beginning of 2021) and were promoting meetings and accepting guests online. World Headquarters took advantage of the campaign pause by developing new ad concepts that included an online meeting component. The advertising campaign avoided the holiday season and resumed in mid-January 2021; it was completed by the end of March 2021.

The campaign delivered a total of 2,509,608 impressions, 10,259 clicks, and an overall click-through rate (CTR) of 0.41%. All Districts performed near to or well above the industry benchmark CTR of 0.37%. Across the four ad concepts, the Colorful Personality Concept featuring a single person with an empowering message, performed the best (0.50%), followed by the Online Meetings Concept featuring empowering online messages (0.46%), the Animal Concept featuring animals in a playful communications setting (0.41%), and the Microphone Concept depicting a speaker’s point of view, often in a conference room setting (0.32%).

Concept	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
Colorful Personality	425,265	2,134	0.50%
Microphone	897,438	2,828	0.32%
Animal	338,213	1,374	0.41%
Online Meetings	848,692	3,923	0.46%

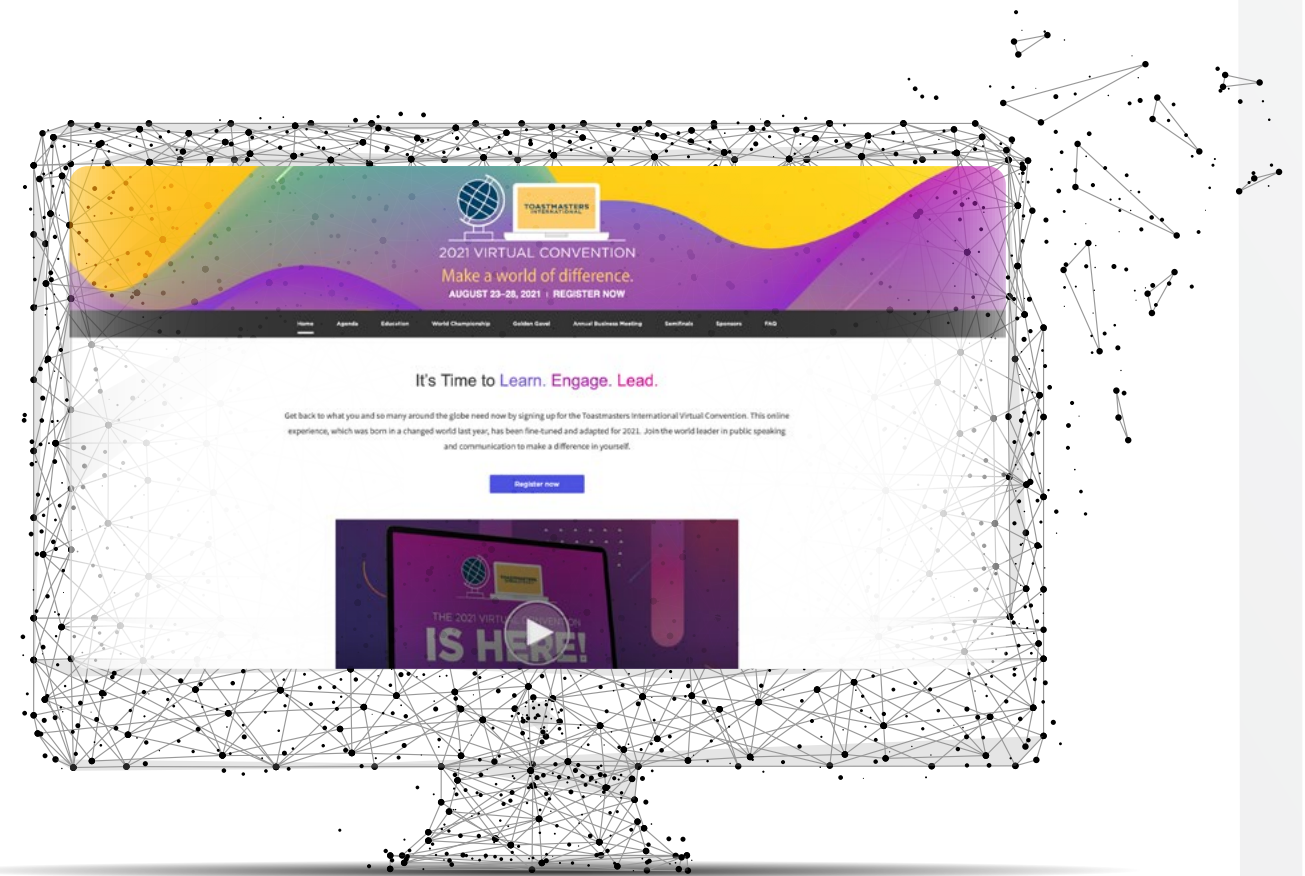
## 2021 Virtual Convention

It was one of many online business decisions made early this year. After the Toastmasters International 2020 Virtual Convention brought together more than 59,000 registrants from 203 countries, and with safety in mind once again, the Board of Directors decided to continue with an online convention experience for this August, resulting in the **Toastmasters International 2021 Virtual Convention**.

With the slogan, “Make a world of difference,” the event invites member and nonmember attendees to start by making a difference in themselves. Four new education tracks were introduced—Dynamic Communication, Leadership/Professional Development, Public Speaking/Stage Presence, and Self-Improvement—each with four sessions led by diverse global speakers and panelists. Education track conclusion sessions were also created to allow attendees to personally engage with other attendees about what was learned and how to apply newfound skills and ideas, both personally and professionally.

Traditional highlights include the highly anticipated convention kickoff, featuring a digital flag ceremony, and the World Championship of Public Speaking®, where eight finalists compete for the top speaking honor of World Champion. Fun group activities, such as a Mindful Meditation, a Sing-Along, and the Ralph C. Smedley Memorial Fund® Walk Around the World, round out the agenda.

As of July 15, 2021, 4,725 members, 409 former members, and 1,960 nonmembers had signed up for this year’s convention, which offers a free Limited-Access Pass and an All-Access Pass for \$25 USD.





## Digital Transformation

As the world continues to adapt to recent global disruptions, Toastmasters continues to embrace new, digital solutions to empower membership and craft the future of the organization.

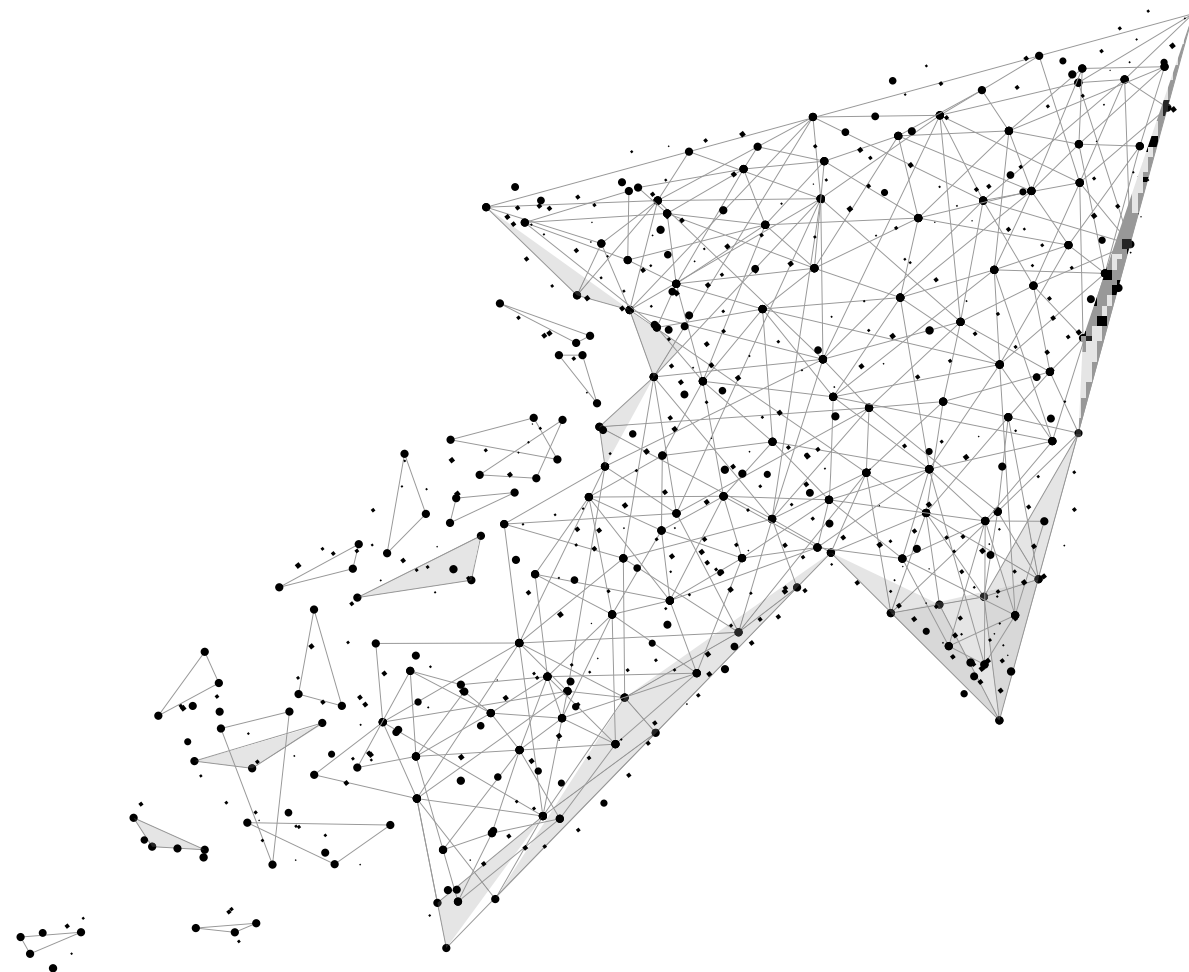
The innovative digital strategy centers upon the replacement of its core systems with a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform, Microsoft Dynamics 365. This cloud-based system not only introduces scalability, but also provides the foundation for the overall digital strategy. With the launch of the new ERP Finance and Operations platform in the fourth quarter of 2020, the organization has recently turned its focus to the migration of the Customer Relationship Management platform (Personify) to Microsoft Dynamics Customer Engagement. This system will enable new digital capabilities that were not achievable in the past. By leveraging cross-functional core teams in the architecting of both this platform and the digital capabilities it enables, Toastmasters seeks to enhance the overall member experience and provide new tools and services to its leadership.

After a successful launch of the Speechcraft digital experience in the first quarter of 2021, the program is flourishing—generating over 560 Speechcraft bundle purchases and over 460 Speechcraft events for the first half of the year.

With the start of the program year, a newly updated Club Success Plan that allows leaders to digitally store and interact with it in Club Central was launched, making it the perfect roadmap for a club's journey to recognition. The next phase will include a more dynamic interface, resulting in user-friendly fillable fields.

An all-new Area Director Club Visit Report tool, which can be accessed through District Central, was also recently unveiled. Designed for better usability, this web-based reporting tool captures more effective information and puts added focus on club support and excellence. This new system also sends automatic emails to Club Presidents and Vice Presidents Education when Area Directors schedule their visits.

World Headquarters moved to a hybrid working model by enabling “work from anywhere” capabilities, such as providing staff with flexible equipment options and increasing its security posture. These efforts rest on the foundational strategies of enterprise resource planning, digital products and services, and workplace automation. Each represents a key component in the highly anticipated, value-driven enterprise transformation, which aligns with the Toastmasters strategy, mission, and envisioned future.





## **AUGUST 2021 CEO REPORT**

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