



# THE STANDARD AGENDA

## FACILITATOR GUIDE





# The Standard Agenda

## Introduction

Decision making in groups is often a difficult process as group members weigh the pros and cons of solutions. You will need to make many important decisions and solve pressing problems during the Toastmasters year. These decisions will have a significant impact on your success as a team. The following training session will provide you with a technique for making complex decisions as a group.

## Overview

The Standard Agenda is a group decision-making process developed by John Dewey. In this session, participants are introduced to the Standard Agenda decision making process and asked to consider how this technique can improve their group's teamwork.

## Objectives

After completing this session, participants will be able to do the following:

- Observe and analyze their team's decision-making behavior
- Use the Standard Agenda to make better decisions

By meeting these objectives, participants lay the foundation for a successful, efficient, and supportive team.

## Materials

- PowerPoint

## Group Size

- Any

## Setting

- Large room with ability to display the PowerPoint Presentation

## Time

- Approximately 30 minutes

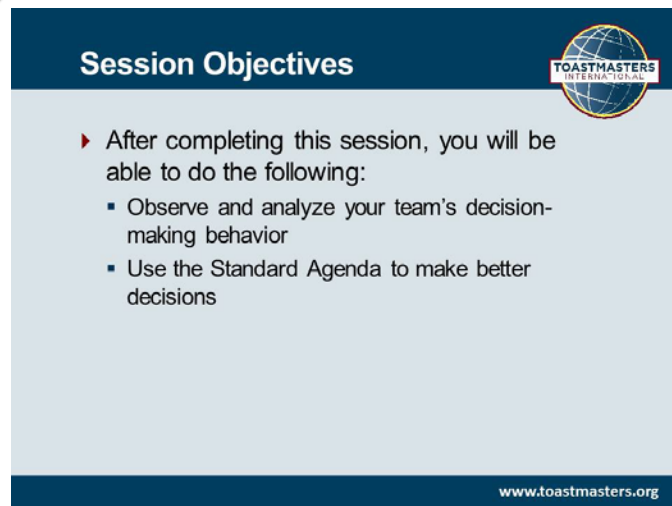
## Process



1. SHOW the Standard Agenda slide as participants enter the room.



2. SHOW the Session Objectives slide.



3. PRESENT the session objectives:
  - After completing this session, you will be able to:
    - Observe and analyze your team's decision-making behavior
    - Use the Standard Agenda to make better decisions



# The Standard Agenda

(30 minutes)

## NOTE TO FACILITATOR

In this session, District T is used to introduce participants to the Standard Agenda steps. You may choose to create and use your own appropriate example to demonstrate the steps.

### 1. PRESENT

- Outside factors can impact group decision making, such as limited time, conflicting personalities, and ambiguous information.
- Decisions that follow a process are more productive and lead to better results than unstructured discussions.
- We are going to talk about a strategy for making decisions and solving complex problems, the Standard Agenda.
- The Standard Agenda is a decision-making process that can help you make decisions or solve complex problems as a group.

### 2. SHOW the Standard Agenda Steps slide.



The slide titled "The Standard Agenda" features the Toastmasters International logo in the top right corner. The main content is a numbered list of six steps: 1) Analyze the problem, 2) Establish criteria for the solution, 3) Rank the criteria, 4) Generate solutions, 5) Evaluate solutions, and 6) Select and implement the best solution. The website address www.toastmasters.org is displayed at the bottom.



### 3. PRESENT

- There are six steps in the Standard Agenda decision-making model:
  - Analyze the problem
  - Establish criteria for the solution

- Rank the criteria
- Generate solutions
- Evaluate solutions
- Select and implement the best solution
- We will discuss each step by using an example of a problem within District T.



4. SHOW the Analyze the Problem slide.

## Analyze the Problem

- ▶ Consider the problem from all sides.
  - What is the cause of the problem?
  - Who or what is affected by it?
  - How long has it been a problem?

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5. PRESENT


- Step 1: Analyze the problem
  - In this step, consider the problem from all sides.
    - For example:
      - What is the cause of the problem?
      - Who or what is affected by it?
      - How long has it been a problem?
  - You may want to formulate the problem into an open-ended question.
  - Define any unclear terms.
  - Gather information about the problem, such as the cause.

- For example:
  - The spring conference and speech contest for District T is ten days away. District leaders receive a call from the venue. The venue is having severe plumbing problems and will not be able to host the conference.

## 6. SHOW the Establish Criteria for the Solution slide.



**Establish Criteria for the Solution**



▶ Before any solutions are suggested, establish the criteria that the solution must meet.

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### NOTE TO FACILITATOR

The Standard Agenda becomes highly effective at this step. When discussing problems, people often shortcut the conversation by immediately suggesting solutions. By establishing criteria for the solution before generating solutions, the group will make more effective decisions.

## 7. PRESENT

- Step 2: Establish criteria for the solution
  - Before any solutions are suggested, establish the criteria that the solution must meet.
  - In our example, District T's committee established the following criteria:
    - The solution must be cost-effective.
    - The solution must accommodate the 300 people who have purchased tickets.
    - The solution must take into account the vendor contracts, such as catering.
    - The solution must consider the speech contestants' needs.

- The solution must allow for a productive and fun district conference.



8. SHOW the Rank the Criteria slide.

The slide has a dark blue header with the text "Rank the Criteria" in white. In the top right corner of the header is the Toastmasters International logo, which features a globe and the text "TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL". The main body of the slide is light blue and contains two bullet points, each preceded by a right-pointing triangle: "Examine each criterion and decide how impactful and important it is." and "Rank the criteria in order of priority." At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer with the website address "www.toastmasters.org" in white.

9. PRESENT

- Step 3: Rank the criteria
  - Rank the criteria in order of priority.
  - Examine each criterion and decide how impactful and important it is.



10. SHOW the Generate Solutions slide.

The slide has a dark blue header with the text "Generate Solutions" in white. In the top right corner of the header is the Toastmasters International logo, which features a globe and the text "TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL". The main body of the slide is light blue and contains one bullet point, preceded by a right-pointing triangle: "Brainstorm solutions and creative ideas." At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer with the website address "www.toastmasters.org" in white.

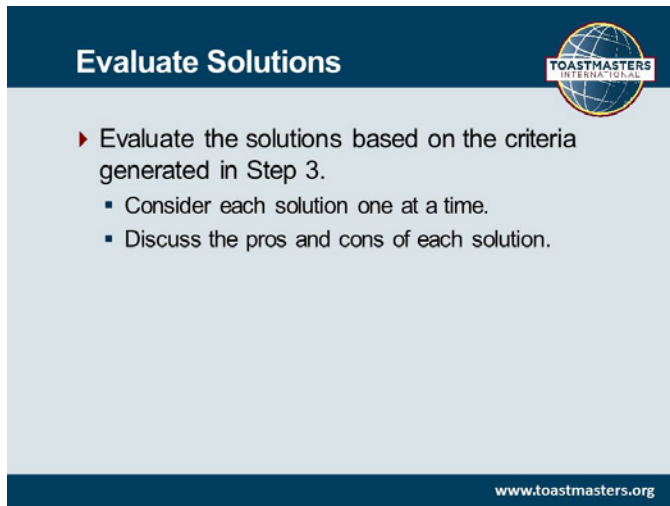
11. PRESENT

- Step 4: Generate solutions



- In this step, brainstorm solutions and creative ideas.
- Remember, do not filter or censor ideas while brainstorming.
- Once you have a list of ideas, clarify any ideas that are ambiguous and combine similar ideas.
- In our example, District T's committee generated three ideas:
  - Postpone the district conference while looking for another venue.
  - Move the event to a more expensive venue that is available.
  - Move the conference date but keep the speech contest on the scheduled date at a smaller venue.

12. SHOW the Evaluate Solutions slide.

A presentation slide titled "Evaluate Solutions" with the Toastmasters International logo in the top right corner. The slide contains a main bullet point and two sub-bullets. The website address www.toastmasters.org is at the bottom.

**Evaluate Solutions**

▶ Evaluate the solutions based on the criteria generated in Step 3.

- Consider each solution one at a time.
- Discuss the pros and cons of each solution.

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13. PRESENT

- Step 5: Evaluate the solutions based on the criteria generated in Step 3
  - Consider each solution one at a time.
  - Discuss the pros and cons of each solution.



## 14. SHOW the Select and Implement the Best Solution slide.

**Select & Implement The Best Solution**



- ▶ If you reach this step and none of the solutions meet the criteria, return to Step 3: Rank the criteria.
  - Revisit the priority list and see if anything can be adjusted
  - Continue with steps 4-6

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## 15. PRESENT

- Step 6: Select and implement the best solution
- At this point, it's possible that no solution meets all of the criteria. If you reach this step and none of the solutions meet the criteria, return to Step 3: Rank the criteria.
- Revisit the priority list and see if anything can be adjusted.
- Then continue with steps 4-6.
- District T leaders decided to move the event to a more expensive venue that is available on the conference date.



## Review: The Standard Agenda

## 1. PRESENT

- We talked about the six steps in the Standard Agenda decision-making model:
  - Analyze the problem
  - Establish criteria for the solution
  - Rank the criteria
  - Generate solutions
  - Evaluate solutions
  - Select and implement the best solution

## Conclusion

1. SHOW the Conclusion Slide.



2. PRESENT

- In this session, we examined how the Standard Agenda helps us make decisions and solve complex problems.
- Decisions made by following a process are more productive and more effective than unstructured discussions.

3. INSTRUCT participants to share something they learned from this session with another participant.