

TOASTMASTER®

**How to create a
customer-centric club culture**

UNDERSTANDING





What Wow! Means to Me

Earlier this year, World Headquarters introduced the *Wow*Factor Project to focus on club quality. By conducting a deep analysis on areas of improvement, working together to address them and striving to help each club succeed, we hope to encourage clubs across the globe to become more uniform and top-performing.

When I consider what *Wow!* means to me, I find it helpful to break it down to three elements.

1 Why. Each member has their own individual “why.” Why did you join Toastmasters? Why did you join a specific club? Why do you choose to stay? Each guest has an individual “why” as well. To ensure quality clubs, we need to understand the “why” from each guest and member, and question whether they’re experiencing the *Wow*Factor at clubs they visit.

2 Opportunities. The opportunities in Toastmasters are truly boundless. We now have 11 specialized paths in the Pathways education program, with more than 300 competencies to learn, plus many opportunities for competitive and professional speaking development. Members also have numerous chances to practice leadership—fulfilling a club meeting role, for example, or serving as a club officer, district leader or at the international level.

3 What. What do you want to gain from your Toastmasters experience? What have you gained so far? What do you want to gain in the future? What do you want to give back to the organization?

I attended the memorial service for 95-year-old Toastmaster Frank Slane, DTM, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, in District 16. Frank, who died in January, was a member for more than 50 years. After he retired in 1975 from his career as an aviator in the Oklahoma Air National Guard, a branch of the United States Air Force, he dedicated his life to serving his community and Toastmasters. He mentored many fellow members, and his memorial service was crowded with his protégés.

The “wow” for Frank changed throughout the years. He joined for personal growth and took full advantage of the educational and leadership opportunities. He was the organization’s eighth Accredited Speaker and served as International Director between 1984 and 1986. His “why” changed from his own growth to later supporting others in theirs. For Frank, the “what” became service to members, clubs and his district.

So many members experienced the “wow” in Toastmasters because of Frank Slane. Contribute to your own club’s *Wow*Factor at every meeting by showing up and helping ensure your club is performing with high standards. Please record your *Wow*Factor video—learn more at bit.ly/TI_WowFactor—and share your inspiration with all of us.

Lark Doley, DTM

International President



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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

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Toastmasters Clubs Celebrate Milestones



Members of Toastmasters Club of Pune in Pune, India, celebrate the club's 500th meeting with a "sands of time" theme. Sands of time relates the passage of time to the sand in an hourglass—a fitting theme for an event commemorating the benefits of time spent in 500 meetings.



Tony Kowal, right, receives a certificate from club president Mitchell Kent, left, recognizing his 50 years as a member of the Oshawa Toastmasters club in Ontario, Canada. Kowal is a master storyteller and loves to recount his adventures working in the stock market, his service in the Polish Army, and the joys and challenges of immigrating to Canada.



Members of the Dublin Club celebrate the group's 60th anniversary with an event at the National Yacht Club in Dublin, Ireland.



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

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About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization teaching public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. Membership exceeds 357,000 in more than 16,600 clubs in 143 countries.

Find out more at www.toastmasters.org.



Improve public speaking skills



Build leadership skills



Maximize your potential

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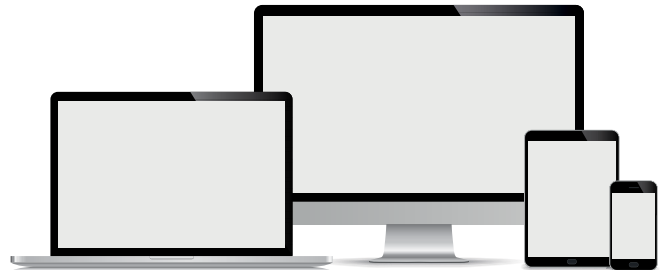
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Editor's Note: The article "Reframe Your Life in 5 Seconds" by Dave Zielinski, published in the March 2019 *Toastmaster* magazine, mistakenly attributed the "focus funnel" concept to Mark Brown. The "focus funnel" productivity technique was created by Rory Vaden in his book *Procrastinate on Purpose: 5 Permissions to Multiply Your Time*. This correction has been made in the online edition of this article.

www.toastmasters.org/Magazine

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Paving the Right Path

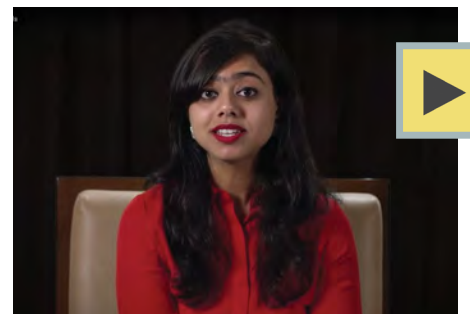
Discover how the Dynamic Leadership path helps members develop strategic thinking and leadership skills to benefit their everyday lives.

Communication Is Key

Listen for extra tips from the Toastmasters Toolbox author on how to have well-crafted communication in your club.



WEB RESOURCE



Why Do People Join Toastmasters?

Hear what members are saying about the benefits they've gained from their membership. Watch and then share this video as a marketing tool with guests and prospective members.

www.toastmasters.org/Testimonials

Technology Tips

Watch Lars Sudmann share strategies for becoming a better leader via innovation in Toastmasters, business and life.



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

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▶ MEMBER MOMENT 

Amazon's Corey Salzer Talks Technology and Professionalism

In 2017, after graduating from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, Corey Salzer was hired by Amazon to work in the company's web services division dealing with "cloud" technology. Salzer's work involves explaining highly technical concepts in a straightforward manner to the company's customers. In 2018, she joined Amazon's Toastmasters club, which draws members from multiple Amazon offices throughout San Francisco, California.

Last year, onstage in Houston, Texas, Salzer addressed more than 200 people at the Grace Hopper Celebration, an annual event for women who work in technology, held in honor of the late computer science pioneer and U.S. Navy rear admiral Grace Hopper. Salzer gave a 20-minute presentation about the Robocar, a project she worked on at Amazon, which led to the development of Amazon's DeepRacer product—a 1/8 scale self-driving car that allows software developers to practice "reinforcement learning."

Salzer, who has a degree in computer science engineering, as well as technical internship experience, was hired through the Amazon Web Services' Tech U program designed to recruit early-career talent. When she's not working or delivering speeches, the 24-year-old takes the stage to sing and play guitar.

What is it like to work at Amazon?

In my role as a solutions architect, I provide technical guidance to customers in executive roles. Earning customers' trust is critical, and being a young woman in what still tends to be a male-dominated field, I've found that striving to be articulate, confident and professional goes a long way toward building trust and bridging the gap.

Describe your first experiences at Toastmasters.

I remember feeling uncomfortable with how structured the meeting and the speeches felt, and it made me realize that I needed to work on formality and coherency. Presenting a Table Topics speech can be very similar to communicating an idea in a business meeting, and this practice has helped me become more articulate.

Tell us about your corporate club at Amazon.

When I went to my first [Toastmasters] meeting at Amazon, I remember greatly enjoying the community—everybody giving support, encouragement and coaching. Amazon's club members include people from various departments, like software engineering, program management and product development. Our club is peculiar—similar to Amazon's culture—with some funny and interesting personalities. People are not afraid to disagree on topics, and there is often healthy discourse. The membership commitment, I would say, is more unstructured. People are



Corey Salzer

coming to the meetings from different office locations and often can't attend every week.

What makes your club unique?

At the end of every meeting, we hold a group discussion for members to provide thoughts on the meeting and what could be improved. We've gotten some good suggestions and made improvements following these discussions; for example, we decided to vary the formality of Table Topics and add introductions at the beginning of meetings to help with networking.

What kinds of speeches have you delivered?

A lot of my experience has been with short and impromptu speeches. I was randomly chosen to be interviewed by a news outlet when attending the second U.S. presidential debate in 2016, which just happened to be held at my university. And, in 2016, I gave a little introductory speech in celebration of my internship at Square [a software engineering company in San Francisco] at its "Town Square" meeting.

Going forward, I hope to become a regular public speaker and give professional presentations more frequently. The presentation I gave at the Grace Hopper Celebration in September 2018 was my first major public speech. So now, in Toastmasters, I am focused on learning to give formal talks, and my club accommodates and allows me to practice my 20-minute talks during club meetings.

What advice do you have for other young professionals?

Do what you can to elevate your professionalism and boost your confidence in the workplace. Learning how to communicate in a business-like manner is a skill that takes time and repetition to develop, and Toastmasters has significantly helped accelerate my professional growth.

Mary Nesfield is a freelance writer and editor. She lives in Columbia, South Carolina.

QUICK TAKES

▶ MEET MY MENTOR



Scott Bartram

Originally from South Korea, Hyun Jung Kim began working as a research scientist at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, in 2009. She met Scott Bartram, an equipment specialist, in 2015 when working in his branch and since then, they have collaborated on several projects, including a next generation telescope lens for use in space. As a seasoned Toastmaster, Scott encouraged Hyun to join the NASA Langley Club and she asked him to be her mentor. Now the two work together not only for NASA but on improving Hyun's speeches and English skills.

Why did you seek out Scott as your mentor?

I asked Scott to be my mentor to help me improve my English, as we work together outside of Toastmasters. Scott is a natural teacher and provides a supportive and positive learning experience. His teacher-like personality makes him a perfect mentor.

How has Scott helped you improve?

Scott is very helpful in my quest to better my English, communication and leadership skills. When I practice speeches, he assists by providing critical information on grammar and pronunciation, but always doing so in a supportive and positive manner. He records my speeches on video during our club meetings, which

LOOKING FOR A MENTOR IN YOUR CLUB?

Ask your vice president education who is available to mentor you. To start a mentoring program in your club, order the Club Mentor Program Kit (Item 1163) at www.toastmasters.org/Shop.



Hyun Jung Kim and her mentor, Scott Bartram, speak to a group at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia.

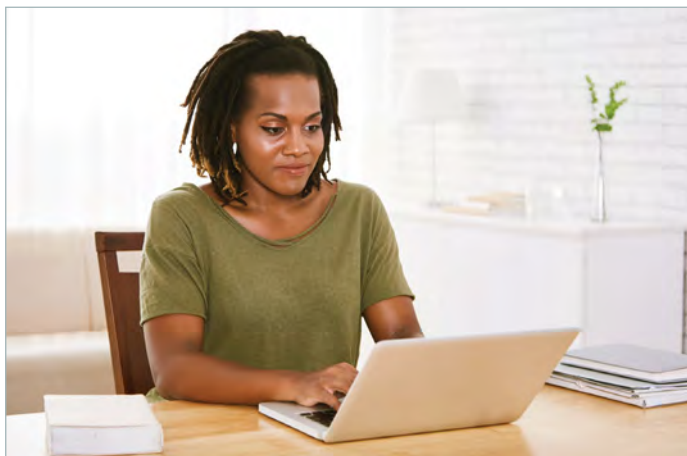
allows me to see myself more objectively. By having a video, I can evaluate the speech and look for English errors. Just by listening to myself, I get a chance to improve for my next speech.

How do you apply what you learn to your career?

As a research scientist, I regularly give technical presentations and talks and have daily interaction with colleagues and students. As most of these activities require fluent English, active communication and leadership, everything I learn from Toastmasters helps every day. Because of my mentor, I have many opportunities to learn. For example, Scott corrects my pronunciation on a daily basis, and he keeps helping me until I get it right, never giving up! All of these things help me to become a better version of myself.

Laura Mishkind is editorial coordinator for the *Toastmaster magazine*.

Want to nominate an exceptional mentor? Nominate your mentor by emailing your story and a photo (1MB or larger) to MentorMoment@toastmasters.org.



▶ NEWS FROM TI

Send Us Your Stories!

Do you have a Toastmasters success story you'd like to share about yourself or another member? Whether you're lauding an inspiring mentor, showering a deserving speaker with praise or sharing your own breakthrough, we want to hear about it! Submit an article in 300 words or fewer and send it with a high-resolution (300 dpi, 1 MB) photo to submissions@toastmasters.org. Recurring magazine features such as Member Moment, Meet My Mentor, and Club and Member Achievements provide opportunities for you to share your story of personal growth, a fellow member's success or your club's *Wow!Factor*.



Anuradhapura Toastmasters club gathers in Puranagama, Sri Lanka—a conceptual village built with traditional Sri Lankan architecture. In the Sinhalese language, Puranagama means ancient village, and this particular village provides the opportunity for tourists and locals to experience and study an ancient era. Club members immersed themselves in the culture by eating traditional food served on clay plates and lotus leaves, and participating in day-to-day activities typical of the time, like farming and cultivation.

▶ **PATHWAYS LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

Translations Reviewers Take on Tamil

Toastmasters' new education program offers a multitude of benefits to members—one of which is the availability of materials in several languages from around the world. The latest language to receive the translation treatment is Tamil, an official language in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia and Mauritius.

All educational materials in the Pathways learning experience are currently available in Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Traditional Chinese. Materials in Tamil will be rolled out two paths at a time. The first two, Presentation Mastery and Leadership Development, will be available around September. The remaining paths in Tamil will roll out every few months, with all paths expected to be completed by late 2020.

Toastmasters around the world volunteer their efforts to serve on translation review teams, who ensure that all Pathways

translations are accurate and authentic to the local culture. The teams review the professional translations, help develop Pathways glossaries and make sure the translated content reflects the Toastmasters experience.

Thank you to members of the **Tamil Translation Review Team**: Chief reviewer Ganesh Manika, lead reviewers Surya Narayanan Kalyanaraman, Mohamed Ibrahim Maricar and Subbi Mathur, and reviewers Girija Vasudevan Chari, Kannan M, Mohamed Ghouse Mohamed Saleen, Sajeev Udayakumar, Abul Kalam Azad, Venkatesan Kulandaivelu, Vijay Krishnan, Venkatakrisnan Kannan Munusamy and Shunmuga Sundaram.

Visit www.toastmasters.org/Translations to learn more about the team members, as well as other translation review teams. For more information, please email the Translations Team at World Headquarters at translations@toastmasters.org.

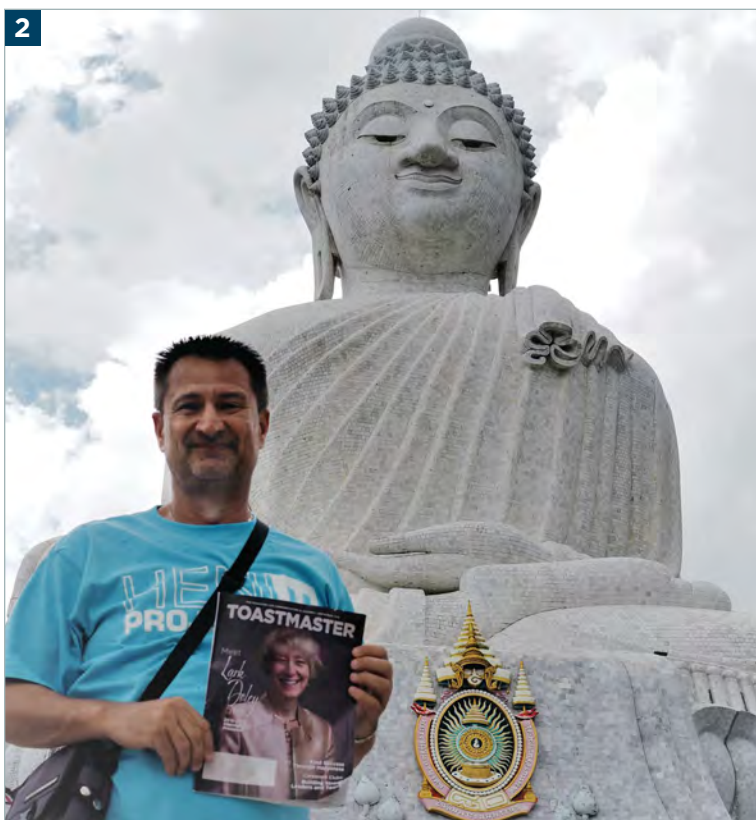


1 | LAM NGAI FUNG of Tai Po, Hong Kong, celebrates his birthday with a visit to the International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival in Harbin, Heilongjiang, China.


2 | JUHA ORAVALA of Helsinki, Finland, explores the third-tallest statue in Thailand—Big Buddha. Located in Phuket, the statue stands at 45 meters/147.6 feet high and 25.45 meters/83.5 feet wide.

3 | HOLIKA CASTILLO of Miami Beach, Florida, U.S., enjoys a gondola ride during a ski trip to Colorado's Rocky Mountains.

4 | NARCISA CARVALHO DIAS of Braga, Portugal, enjoys a scenic view high above the city of Florence, Italy.



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

 **PICTURE YOURSELF HERE!** Pose with the *Toastmaster* magazine during your travels and submit your photos for a chance to be featured in print or online. Send images 1MB or larger to photos@toastmasters.org. Bon voyage!

Eat, Pray, Speak

My time in Saudi Arabia left a lasting impression.

BY BILQUIS AHMED, DTM

When I joined the Torrance (California) Chamber of Commerce club in 2003 I never envisioned I would one day join four clubs in Saudi Arabia.

I was born in Secunderabad, India, and moved to Southern California when I was 5 years old. I enjoyed languages from an early age, learning English and my native language, Urdu, simultaneously. I later learned Spanish and some Arabic. As an adult, I've taught English through community education and public-speaking courses. Toastmasters has provided me an outlet to channel my energy for teaching and mentoring people.

In 2013, my husband was hired by a prominent oil company in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. We lived in a compound, which was like a self-contained city for employees and their families. Our compound's expatriate community hailed from all over the world, including Egypt, Chile, Italy and America. I was delighted to learn that the compound had more than 15 Toastmasters clubs, both corporate and community clubs.

Within no time, I was attending seven club meetings a week. What I dubbed "Toastmasters Tuesdays" were marathon sessions of meetings in the morning, afternoon and evening. Attending meetings at Saudi clubs felt like being at a United Nations gathering. Men wore white flowing robes called *thawbs* and red-and-white patterned scarves known as *gutras*. Others wore polo shirts and jeans. Women's attire also ran the gamut: Some women wore loose black robes called *abayas* and a veil covering their faces called a *niqab*. Others wore only abayas, and some donned long skirts or slacks. They were an open-minded, friendly and hospitable group.

A chunk of the meeting time was devoted to socializing while also enjoying the lavish spread of *gahwa* (Arabic coffee), sambosas, hummus and baklava. Most meetings I attended lasted an hour-and-a-half, with an



FROM LEFT: Heidi Swan, Bilquis Ahmed and Ron Maroko proudly display their ribbons at a Torrance Chamber of Commerce club meeting in 2018.

agenda that allotted time for prayer breaks. While some prayed off to one side, others feasted. Eat, pray, speak.

Members gave rich and inspiring speeches. Alina from Romania dared everyone to dream the impossible and concluded one of her speeches by eating fire. Hamoud grew up watching the American TV sitcom *Friends* and thought he was an American adopted by Saudi parents. (He wasn't.) His speeches kept me in stitches. A young Saudi named Fatima saved the company where she worked \$85 million and proceeded to become a pioneer: the first woman to work at a Saudi oil refinery.

The first club I joined, in 2015, was the only all-female club in the compound, chartered less than a year before. Most of the women were highly educated: One woman held four degrees, another was a physician, a third was a petroleum engineer. The majority were mothers; some worked part-time.

The single-gender membership allowed women to share stories and ideas they wouldn't feel comfortable sharing in front of men. They spoke from the heart about depression, motherhood and facing fears.

The members also encouraged deepening friendships by holding monthly social events, such as "Bollywood Night," a pajama party and a trip to the bowling alley. The women also held a book club and a writing club that each met regularly.

Since leaving Saudi Arabia in the summer of 2018, I have been living again in Southern California so my daughter can attend high school in the U.S. My husband is still working in Saudi Arabia while I teach adults English as a Second Language (ESL) in Redondo Beach.

The phrase *Ma'a salaamah* means "with peace" in Arabic and is used to bid farewell and wish a safe journey to those leaving the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. When I left last year, a bittersweet feeling washed over me as I attended several *Ma'a salaamah* parties hosted by the members who enriched me beyond measure. This group of Toastmasters was like one big family; I forged deep and enduring friendships. I left a piece of my heart in Saudi Arabia. **T**

BILQUIS AHMED, DTM, is a member of Torrance Chamber of Commerce club in Torrance, California.



The Path to Dynamic Leadership

Learn to manage change and lead your team to success.

BY SHAELYN BERG

Successful leaders adapt their style to fit the groups they lead or the issues they face. If you lead teams or defuse conflict on a regular basis, or want to improve your ability to do so, the Dynamic Leadership path in the Pathways learning experience can help you hone your leadership skills and ability to handle change.

Like the other paths in the Pathways program, Dynamic Leadership develops public-speaking and leadership skills throughout the five levels of increasingly complex assignments. The first set of required projects focuses on writing and delivering speeches as well as understanding personal communication and leadership styles.

From levels 3 to 5, participants are encouraged to use these skills as they begin to develop new abilities, such as understanding when to use certain negotiation styles and how to develop and oversee a plan for managing change.

When you reach the end of the path, you incorporate the strategies you have learned into a leadership project where you lead a group for six months.

Leading in Challenging Situations

One of the focuses of the path is adapting leadership skills to fluid groups or situations, which can be a difficult skill to master. Shyam Varan Nath of Pleasanton, California, who works as director of enterprise cloud architecture for Oracle, says he chose Dynamic Leadership to improve his ability to lead groups in a fast-paced and diverse work environment.

“When we work with our partners or customers, we often have to lead in situations where we don’t have positional authority,” Nath says. “You have to dynamically adapt your leadership skills according to the situation.”

Change management is an important leadership skill, and one that is practiced in the “Manage Change” project at Level 4. Dealing with transition is always a challenge, whether it’s an individual or an organization facing change; it’s important to plan and to develop ideas for overcoming obstacles that transitions can bring. In “Manage Change,” participants learn how to anticipate change, develop a communication plan and identify roadblocks to achieving their goals.

While completing this project, Nath served as the president of a technology user group tasked with planning an annual event. On the way to the event, unexpected venue renovations posed scheduling and branding issues, requiring quick thinking and decisions. “Imagine the

Toastmasters International Convention not being held in August and being called something else,” he says. “It was a change of that magnitude.”

Nath says he was able to leverage this real-world change management experience to complete the project assignment and share what he learned in a speech to his club.

Ana Rezende, DTM, a certified project manager from Doral, Florida, also found the “Manage Change” project beneficial to expanding her professional life. Like Nath, she used a timely work event as the basis for her assignment.

Even after completing the project, Rezende continues to reap its benefits. She says she incorporated aspects of the project’s Communication Plan resource into an existing work document, making it helpful for her and desirable for her colleagues. “It’s my new go-to template. I had groups from other initiatives I’m involved in asking to use it as their checklist for other communication needs.”

LEARN MORE

Learn more about the Dynamic Leadership path at www.toastmasters.org/DynamicLeadership.

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

Learning Through Feedback and Reflection

Path projects often require feedback from others to improve your leadership abilities. For example, the Level 5 project, “Lead in Any Situation”—in which you take on a leadership role of any kind, inside or outside of Toastmasters—includes a 360-degree evaluation resource. This means you receive feedback from every direction, such as a peer or someone in a subordinate or a supervisory role. Such



you choose a minimum of three elective projects to enhance learning and diversify your expertise.

For example, you may decide to improve your one-on-one communication and leadership skills. After completing the required Level 2 project “Introduction to Toastmasters Mentoring,” you can embark on the optional Pathways Mentor Program, which includes three projects and culminates in a six-month mentorship. When you complete this program as well as one full path, you receive the Pathways Mentor designation.

Nath says the introductory mentoring project not only provided him with valuable information on how to be a successful mentor, but that it also encouraged a more formal mentor program within his club. “Now members doing their mentoring project make it more visible and it’s easier to manage the mentor program at the club level.”

Antoinette Brittenum, DTM, of Blue Nile Toastmasters in Memphis, Tennessee, says she used her “High Performance Leadership” project—a Level 5 elective—to benefit her district. The aim was to boost member participation and training in an effort to receive Smedley Distinguished status, a new level of Distinguished recognition implemented last year. As for learning from her leadership decisions, Brittenum says she found value in multiple lessons learned during meetings.

“After each club, area and division event, an evaluation meeting was held to identify challenges, barriers and concerns that hindered our goals.”

She says the Dynamic Leadership path, with its required projects and many electives, has helped her to more patiently and actively listen to her team and family members, strategically plan ahead and communicate her thoughts with clarity. **T**

Shaelyn Berg worked on the Pathways development team at Toastmasters World Headquarters and is now a freelance writer and editor.

a process helps you determine successes and areas for growth.

Rezende met with her peers at work to glean even more from their evaluations of her leadership. She says this not only encouraged more thoughtful feedback but also gave her colleagues a chance to practice their communication skills. “This set of responses was so rich!” she says. “Both for things I could improve on and things that were particularly well received but I had not seen as successful.”

Nath, who served as the social media chair for District 57 as his leadership project, received feedback from Toastmasters he worked closest with, including the district director, area and division directors, and members of the district public relations committee.

“The whole idea of social media is that it’s effective only if people observe it,” he says. “It was good to get others’ perspectives on what stuck in their minds and what didn’t—so I could change what I do in the future.”

While some members experience the convenience of work or community events that coincide with projects on the

path, you often have the option to reflect on past or future leadership opportunities as you complete your assignments. Roxienne Albertina, DTM, of Kibrahacha Toastmasters club in Curacao, did just that for her Level 3 project, “Negotiate the Best Outcome.”

The project focuses on identifying negotiation styles, and finding and building common ground. It reviews different strategies for reaching an optimal negotiation and includes a video activity that demonstrates these strategies and allows you to test your knowledge.

Albertina says, after reading the project, she thought back to a negotiation and reflected on the strategies she used. “Neither party wanted to surrender to accomplish a win-win situation,” she says. “As the person who was in charge of the negotiation, I had to sadly understand that the only outcome was to walk away.”

Enhancing Learning Through Electives

Pathways lets you tailor your learning experience to your goals and interests. When completing levels 3 through 5,

Build the Club You Want

Decide how many members to recruit. Then go find them!

BY RYAN URIE

Nearly every Toastmasters club wants more members, and nearly every Toastmasters club struggles to find them. As an area director, when I mention “recruitment” or “membership building” to club officers, I’m frequently met with a groan. I get it. Getting the word out, finding potential guests, inviting them and convincing them to join is a lot of work. It’s not surprising that many clubs rely on luck to attract guests and see membership building as outside their control. Who hasn’t said or at least thought, *I sure hope more guests start showing up?* Hoping doesn’t bring in new members—taking action does.

It’s time to stop waiting for guests and new members and instead *choose* the size you want your club to be. Decide how many members you want and then go find them.

Personal Benefits of Membership Building

Take a moment to mentally list three or four leadership skills you hope to gain by being involved in Toastmasters. Now, think about the skills you need to attract new guests and build your membership. Chances are, there’s a lot of overlap in those lists.

Membership building is not a chore that Toastmasters *must* do; it *is* Toastmasters. It’s an ideal opportunity to practice persuading, communicating, planning,

strategizing and executing—all of the very skills we’re in Toastmasters to learn! You won’t find a better place to practice leadership than in membership building. And once you’ve mastered these skills of persuasion and communication, you can put them to use driving positive change in your work and volunteer activities, your community or your family life.

How to Do It

Membership building can be broken down into four steps.

1 Form a team. Leadership is not something you do by yourself. You’ll want the whole club to help eventually, but start by forming a team of three or four people to initiate the project and develop a plan.

2 Set a goal. Decide how many people you will bring into the club. A simple baseline is the number of members you need to achieve Distinguished status by the end of the current term. This gives you a specific goal as well as a hard deadline.

3 Make a plan. First, brainstorm lots of ideas for how to grow your membership. Second—and this is the hard part—pick *only one*. When you have lots of good ideas, it’s tempting to try them all to see what works. But if you do, you won’t do any of them well enough to make

a difference and you’ll tire out your volunteers. Pick the single activity most likely to achieve your goal and put the rest away for later. Finally, break your chosen idea into steps, start to finish, and determine who will do what by when.

4 Execute. Now carry out the plan and evaluate the results. Even if the first thing you try doesn’t work, you’ve still developed new confidence, skills and knowledge. Choose the next-best item on your list and try again.

Some Ideas to Get Started

You know best what the right approach will be for your unique club, but here are some ideas to consider.

Personal Invites: Focus most of your effort on face-to-face invites. Signs, fliers or social media posts are appealing because they are safe and easy. However, they don’t work near as well as the human touch. Many of us are bombarded with advertising and social media posts, and we are becoming adept at ignoring them. We only trust recommendations from real people, ideally people we know personally.

Asking someone to come to Toastmasters can be intimidating, but it’s no different from preparing for a speech. Decide who you will ask, when and where you’ll ask them and what you’ll say to open the conversation. Then find a

“Membership building is not a chore that Toastmasters *must* do; it *is* Toastmasters. It’s an ideal opportunity to practice ... all of the very skills we’re in Toastmasters to learn!”

partner in the club and role-play asking until you are comfortable with it. If you still struggle, a personalized email invitation is still an improvement on an anonymous sign.

Events: It can be a hard sell to ask a busy professional to attend yet another meeting. Holding an event creates an opportunity to invite guests with promises of fun, food and a no-pressure introduction to the club. Plus, it’s fun for current members to do something new. You might hold an open house, a viewing party for the World Championship of Public Speaking, a storytelling hour or whatever you think will excite your potential guests and current members. As mentioned, advertising often doesn’t work these days, but there is an exception: It works when it includes the words “free food.”

Target Your Recruitment: Don’t try to market to everyone or you won’t reach anyone in particular. Identify the groups in your community who are motivated to improve their leadership and speaking skills and then *go to them* instead of waiting for them to find you. Which local companies, nonprofits or civic organizations might benefit from what Toastmasters has to offer? Volunteer to speak to a human resources representative about the benefits of Toastmasters, perhaps with an offer for lunch or coffee.

Get Visible: Many people have never heard of Toastmasters, and of those



who have, many often have no clue what it’s about. We have to show them! Every so often, try meeting in a new and public place, like a restaurant, coffee shop or a park, and let people see what your club does. Make it clear that guests are welcome to observe or even participate. This might be as simple as opening the doors at your regular meeting place or inviting the public to an open house event.

Another seldom used option is speaking outside of the club. We don’t become public speakers just to give better speeches from Toastmasters’ manuals. We do it to drive change in the real world. Check with local civic organizations, schools, churches or community groups to find speaking opportunities, and after you bring down the house, be sure to mention where you honed your impressive skills.

You Can Do This

It’s easy to get discouraged, to throw up your hands up and say, “We’ve already

tried these things before!” But this is just an excuse. Even ideas that failed once might work at a different time, a different place or with a different approach. Keep trying!

Recruiting new members is a challenge. But it’s a worthwhile one. It’s the kind of challenge that drives you to learn new skills, take new risks and grow your abilities as a leader. It’s a challenge that makes you better. Stop hoping for more members. Stop waiting for more members. *Choose* how many members you want, and then make it happen. **T**

Ryan Urie, a technical editor by profession, is a District 9 area director and former president and vice president membership of SEL Toastmasters in Pullman, Washington. By following the steps in this article, SEL drew 13 prospects to an open house; seven joined, resulting in the club’s Distinguished status.

BY LARS SUDMANN

From Monologue to Dialogue:

Inviting Audience Interaction

Use tools and technologies to earn instant feedback from listeners.

As Toastmasters, we often focus on perfecting the “classic” speaking style, which is basically one-directional: a monologue on stage. This is an important skill to master. Thanks to technology, speakers now have the opportunity to take their craft to the next level and make speeches more interactive, turning monologues into dialogues with the audience.

As a result, the roles of speaker and audience are changing. “One viewpoint is as a speaker, you used to be the ‘expert’ in the room. Today you’re more of a ‘facilitator of learning,’ pulling best ideas from the audience,” says former president of the U.S. National Speakers Association Scott Friedman. “You’re not the sage on the stage, but the guide on the side. Understand that there’s more wisdom in front of you than in front of them.”

I think the truth is in the middle: True and great interaction comes when there is a combination of both the expert’s view and

his or her inspiration, as well as the collective knowledge of the audience. How can a speaker make this happen?

The standard, raise-your-hand method of audience participation will not deliver this result. Imagine asking your audience of 25 Toastmasters what they think will be the biggest impact of technology on society. You might get some people to shout a couple of words. You could ask one or two members additionally. You could ask for a show of hands to indicate a preference.... Or, with certain tools I’ll describe here, you can ask them to send one word to a certain phone number or website. And then a word cloud of all the audience members’ responses starts appearing and building up in front of everybody’s eyes. You will see some words getting mentioned more often. Other words are displayed just once. The result? A true joint creation of the speaker and the audience.

Great interaction is exactly that: a connection of your wisdom with the audience’s wisdom to create something unique for that moment. To use an analogy, it is like the interplay of a great swarm, like the murmuration of starlings that flock and create something beautiful.

To build and lead this swarm, speakers need a new kind of skill, and here technology comes into play. One example is the use of hashtags (#) on social media. Many speakers and event organizers use a specific hashtag (for instance #TMCON2018 at last year’s Toastmasters International Convention) to solicit live feedback and reactions during a presentation, or an entire conference.





“Modern technology now makes it possible for a speaker to develop thoughts and ideas together with the audience in real time.”

also during corporate meetings, live and virtually. Many services exist that let you tap into the power of radical interaction.

Here are some suggestions for incorporating more real-time audience interactions:

- ▶ **Polling:** This is fundamentally a voting mechanism, similar to a “show of hands,” or a Facebook poll. It gives live results of audience reactions to a set of choices and is extremely powerful because it’s anonymous. I used it during my keynote described earlier. Programs such as Cisco Webex or **Mentimeter.com** allow your audience to vote or respond to a question posed to them.
- ▶ **Word clouds:** Audience members send their own input to a question, and a word cloud is formed by their answers. The more times the same word is mentioned, the bigger that word gets. The value of this is creating breadth and depth simultaneously: Individual input is heard, but everyone can see what the audience as a whole thinks. I experienced this where all the parents of a school were asked at a gathering to send “one word that would make the school great.” The cloud started to form and everybody in the room got an idea of what was on people’s minds.
- ▶ **Upvoting:** People ask questions and type them into an app on their phones or tablets. Those with access to the meeting app see the questions and then “upvote” them. This has the advantage of showing the speaker or moderator only the questions with high focus and votes.
- ▶ **Hashtags:** You provide a #hashtag for your event and people can see the results and what other people share in real time. This works especially well on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- ▶ **Live viewing of documents:** This low-tech technique allows the speaker to share a screen of a Microsoft Word or Excel file, for example, and then write immediately, while the audience can also see what is being written. Combine this with the above mentioned voting, upvoting and word cloud features, and you can create a document together with your audience.
- ▶ **Live discussion:** This is being used by students who create live notes documents of lectures, for instance via collectively editing a Google Document. You can see what everybody else thinks and add your thoughts and questions to it.

Whereas there used to be a clear distinction between a speaker and a moderator/facilitator, modern technology now

TED TALKS ON INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS


Mariano Sigman and Dan Ariely: “How can groups make good decisions?”

This talk is a fascinating live experiment in improving decision-making skills. Neuroscientist Sigman and behavioral economist Ariely ask a question of the audience, which everyone answers independently and anonymously. Then, they let everyone discuss the best answer to the question in groups of three, and have everyone answer again. One can see that the quality of the decision and thoughts improve as people exchange thoughts in a small circle. This shows how the use of interaction can be used to improve decision-making. Watch the full video at bit.ly/TI_Mariano.

Hans Rosling: “How not to be ignorant about the world.”

A TED Talk by the late Hans Rosling and his son, Ola, clearly shows the fun an audience can have engaging with real-time audience answers. During Roslin’s presentation, the audience learns the truth about surprising statistics as they vote with handheld voting mechanisms that instantly display their answers onscreen. Watch the TED Talk at bit.ly/TI_Hans.

makes it possible for a speaker to develop thoughts and ideas together with the audience in real time. To get started, I recommend identifying one or two areas where you are truly interested in the audience’s view and try out a technology solution. A Toastmasters meeting can be a fantastic training ground for this. Or maybe you are the club president and want to have live feedback on one of your proposals? Do it directly in the meeting.

The techniques described in this article require a new type of attitude from a speaker: someone who does not only want to have a monologue, but who also wants to explore and develop the topic with the audience. The speaker taps into the wisdom of the audience while also sharing his or her own knowledge and inspiration. This can lead to new and exciting forms of content, a new dimension of interacting with an audience. 

Lars Sudmann is a keynote speaker and author, whose TEDx Talks have been viewed more than 500,000 times. He was an education session presenter at the 2018 Annual Toastmasters International Convention in Chicago. Learn more at www.lars-sudmann.com and his newsletter, “The Power of Three.”

Handheld Help: Apps for Speakers

Try these tools to help eliminate filler words, practice pacing and ease anxiety.

BY DAVE ZIELINSKI

When Danish Dhamani studied mechanical engineering at Drexel University in Philadelphia, he realized he needed to take his communication skills to another level to achieve his career goals. One of Dhamani's first steps on that path was to create his own informal Toastmasters club at the university to begin improving his speaking skills.

But Dhamani soon found he also wanted an efficient way to practice and reinforce the skills he was learning in Toastmasters in between club meetings. After brainstorming with his college roommate, they hit upon the idea of creating an app for use on phones or tablets to help hone those budding communication skills. Thus was born **Orai**, which has grown into one of the most popular apps on the market for helping to eliminate use of filler words, improve speaking pace, enhance vocal clarity, employ energy variation and effectively use pauses.

Dhamani, who is now CEO of Orai, asked members of Toastmasters clubs around Philadelphia to provide feedback on the app when it was in development, to help improve its features and functions.

"The state of the art in speech coaching is one-on-one instruction, and we wanted a way to reproduce that kind of training and later bring it to the masses," said Dhamani in an interview with the *Toastmaster*. "The only way to do that was by using artificial intelligence in an app."

To use Orai you simply hit record, speak into the app for a predetermined time and quickly receive a detailed analysis of your performance in five key areas. A Freestyle mode allows you to practice anytime, anywhere with your phone, while a Script mode enables you to rehearse a prepared speech—simply copy and paste the speech into the app and tap record. The app also provides a transcript of recordings. "We are not just an 'um' counter," Dhamani says of Orai. "What we sell is confidence in public speaking."

Dhamani says Orai now has 150,000 users in 60 countries, with many of those users being Toastmasters members. "I get emails every day from people around the world saying they use the app to help supplement their Toastmasters' experience," Dhamani says.

"We are not just an 'um' counter," Dhamani says of Orai. "What we sell is confidence in public speaking."

Many other apps can help improve your speech performance from the convenience of a phone or tablet. Here are a few other speaking apps.

Stamp Out Crutch Words

Filler or "crutch" words—"ah," "um," "I mean," "you know" and the like—are the scourge of effective speaking but difficult for even the most seasoned speakers to banish from their language.

In addition to Orai, the app **LikeSo** from Say it Media Inc. allows you to practice eliminating filler words. The app uses voice recognition technology to record and analyze your speech "fitness," which also includes finding the right speech pacing.

By analyzing a recording, LikeSo calculates a score based on the number of filler words used and how fast or slowly you speak. It includes a FreeStyle mode to use anytime with your device's own microphone in addition to a TalkAbout mode, a conversation game that helps users eliminate crutch words.

"LikeSo has helped me eliminate filler words including 'like' and 'you know' when I give class lectures or make presentations before fellow faculty and administrators," says Rick Clancy, a professor in the communication department at Bethany College in West Virginia. "The app also has helped with my pacing. Sometimes I spoke too fast, other times too slow, and it provides good feedback on that."

An app for simulating real speaking environments is **#BeFearless** from Samsung, a technology designed to help users



Orai co-founder and CEO Danish Dhamani presents a TEDx Talk in 2017 on how he overcame his fear of public speaking.

cope with stage fright. The app helps users speak more comfortably in five different work scenarios: a presentation to management, job interview, team meeting, business lunch and a job fair. It responds to voice volume, eye contact, speaking pace and even heart rate and includes a recording function. A headset and microphone are required to optimize the voice-recognition technology.

Turning Phones into Teleprompters

A teleprompter comes in handy not just for live speeches but also when recording video narration for podcasts and more. A number of versatile apps allow you to convert your phone or tablet into a prompter rather than having to rely on cumbersome hardware or settle for pre-set text scrolling speeds.

PromptSmart has both Lite (free) and Pro (paid) app versions that use speech-recognition technology to allow your voice to control the pace of text scrolling. As you speak, the app moves the text forward, pausing when you pause; if you ad lib, the app is designed to stop and wait for you to get back on script. The Pro version includes additional features like

video recording and the ability to mirror text like a traditional teleprompter.

Parrot is another teleprompter app that is user-friendly and includes all the features needed for efficient text scrolling on a phone or tablet. With Parrot you can scroll scripts in mirrored or landscape mode, easily control your scroll speed, change text size, adjust colors and more for improved visibility and use.

Controlling Speech Anxiety

It's the rare speaker who hasn't experienced some form of stage fright, and most of us can use a dose of calm and positive thinking before we step up to the microphone. The app **Confident Public Speaking** uses guided meditation to help you release anxiety created by real or imagined bad experiences in the past. It's designed to get you in the right head space and help manage stress levels and heart rates in the lead up to speaking.

Another good way to create a sense of serenity before speaking is by using the app **Public Speaking** from Hive-Brain Software. This soothing production delivers guided meditation via your phone by using techniques of self-hypnosis and relaxation.

“Orai now has 150,000 users in 60 countries, with many of those users being Toastmasters members.”

Pace and Timing

One popular timer app is **SpeakerClock** for iOS devices, which uses large LED digits to allow you to easily see your time from a distance or when moving around a room. Just start the clock and place it somewhere in your view when giving a speech. The “traffic light” provides feedback on your progress—moving from green to yellow to red as you speak—letting you know when the finish line is approaching.

Another good timer app is the **Presentation Timer Pro** for Android. It features an LED, full-screen display that turns your phone into a sophisticated timer that projects time elapsed, a countdown of time left and an easily-seen graphical indication of progress. The app also automatically silences your phone during the presentation to ensure you won't be interrupted.

For help with pacing, metronomes are a favorite tool of musicians but also can help speakers ensure their speech rates stay within normal range, so audiences find their tempo pleasing and easy to listen to.

Metronome Beats is an app that helps you set a proper speaking tempo. It has user-friendly controls for increasing and decreasing your pace and its visual beat indicators are designed to help keep you on track.

For speaking veterans and beginners alike, consider these apps when preparing for a presentation. See which are useful for practicing speeches at home and for gaining perspective on areas for improvement. **T**

Dave Zielinski is a freelance business journalist and a frequent contributor to the Toastmaster.

Give Members
and Guests a
Compelling



How well does your club deliver an outstanding (C) customer (X) experience?

BY CRAIG HARRISON, DTM

The power and immediacy of the internet has elevated user expectations and emphasized delivery and delight like never before. In a world fraught with short attention spans and adults desiring instant gratification in every field, the smart providers are accommodating this urgency and desire.

As Toastmasters, we can learn from the world of marketing to create great customer experiences during each meeting. Guests and members are likely to respond most favorably to club experiences that offer personal value, enjoyment and absorbing connections.

Introducing Customer Experience (CX)

An evolution has occurred. Where once customer service—serving customers transactionally—was the standard, today the focus is on providing powerful customer experiences through immersive products and services designed from the perspective of customers. Depending on the field, customers may be called clients, shoppers, students, guests, patients or—in Toastmasters—current and future club members. Guess what? They all desire an experience! And Toastmasters clubs that provide great experiences are leading the field.

In today's economy, "the experience is the brand," proclaims Ruby Newell-Legner, founder of 7 Star Service, a consulting company in Denver, Colorado. As a fan-experience expert whose client list includes professional sports franchises, amusement parks and resorts worldwide, Newell-Legner helps organizations understand and design their processes *from their patrons'* experience, "turning every customer into a fan." That, in a nutshell, is what customer experience is all about.

While Newell-Legner helps clients form fan-experience councils to delight and deliver, Toastmasters clubs have a built-in council—their seven-person officer team.

By studying every aspect of a club's guest and member experience, officers learn how best to seamlessly transition guests into members, leaders and mentors. Newell-Legner uses the example of a relay race, in which runners take the baton in a flawless hand-off. In this scenario, club guests and members are deftly ushered in and acculturated into the meeting and club experience. It's all about connection. As officers, what connections are you creating through your guests' and members' experiences?

Newell-Legner speaks from experience. A past president of the National Speakers Association and a Certified Speaking Professional, she cites the uncertainty of being a first-timer in any new environment and the fear that may accompany it. She encourages clubs to design events that engage, excite and inspire participants.

Drawing on the Disney Approach

"Companies in other fields spoil us by giving us such high levels of service and great experiences. Our own customers now expect the same," says Steve Cohn, a Toastmaster, certified customer experience professional and director of learning for Strativity. The company specializes in experience design and transformation. Companies like Disney, Southwest Airlines, Zappos and other customer-experience pioneers have trained us that we *can* have it our way, be the center of the universe and often receive responses, updates and delight instantaneously. Their secret, according to Cohn? "They create

Your club's
CX goal: Walk
a mile in their shoes,
so you can enhance
the experience for
guests and
members.



a customer-centric environment.” At every turn they ask, “Is it good for the customer?” and design, or redesign, accordingly.

Cohn believes Toastmasters clubs can similarly nurture members and visitors by applying the “Disney approach” of managing guest experiences. Disney, he says, always asks *What happens here? And then what happens? And then what else happens? What if it's oppressively hot? What if it rains?* Every contingency is game-planned in advance to benefit guests, because the show must go on, Cohn explains.

Borrowing from the Disney philosophy can help clubs avoid what Cohn calls “service roulette,” where meaningful interactions and “aha” moments are simply left to chance. Consistently high-performing clubs assign roles, set agendas, plan for fun and engagement, and use a full-circle approach to deftly integrate guests and new members into club culture.

Designers of great customer experiences analyze touchpoints between organizations and customers, and they use the data to plot customer reactions. Similarly, tools like Toastmasters’ *Moments of Truth* let clubs analyze many aspects of guest and member interactions. Your club’s goal: Walk a mile in their shoes, so you can enhance the experience for guests and members.

Whether you observe other clubs for ideas or interview your club’s guests and members, you’ll gather valuable insight. With this insight in hand, develop and implement improved processes to create engaging, fun and fruitful experiences for meeting participants.

Introducing Two Additional Competitors: WOW and NOW

Today’s guests looking for a club want it all NOW and they also want, and expect, to be WOWed. Your club’s magic formula for attracting new guests and future members: Provide NOW and WOW to woo and win them over.

Shoppers today use smart devices, such as cellphones, watches and tablets, to find what they want to wear, eat and experience. That’s also how they seek public speaking help. And they may be shopping 24/7. Can you NOW and WOW these prospective members? Your club’s future success depends on it. The club that’s easiest to find, most responsive and consistently engaging often wins the competition for membership.

The How of WOW

WOW begins when customer expectations are exceeded, and the real WOW happens when the delight occurs. Don’t presume all WOW requires seismic events. The right touch at the right time may be all it takes. For example, a stranger calls to announce a visit to your next meeting. Upon arrival, they find a guest badge with their name pre-printed on it. That’s a simple WOW that conveys your club’s attention to detail and hospitality.

Simply Speaking Toastmasters in Aurora, Colorado, sets up the WOW with technology to capitalize on a guest’s immediate excitement and engagement with the club.

“We electronically on-board—from check-in to sign-up—new members within 24 hours, no exceptions,” explains Will Robinson, Ph.D., DTM, club president. Often, the initial excitement of a first club visit is channeled into joining that night. Upon doing so, the newcomers “get their confirmation email quickly and discover Pathways, and we are able to see that enthusiasm of signing up continue,” Robinson explains. Then other officers take the baton to schedule roles, identify goals and usher new members into a mentoring and accountability-partnership process.

“Sell your club strengths through dynamic images ... Share it. Tweet it. Pin it.”

New Laws of Attraction

Never have so many generations worked side by side in the workplace. Your club’s membership likely mirrors this reality. It’s important to understand that each generation has different goals, motivations, preferences and approaches to joining

organizations. Yet this can make for a more vibrant and attractive club.

“If you create an experience—one that melds education with entertainment, learning with laughter—people want to repeat it. If you don’t, there are too many options for today’s young professionals,” asserts Scott McKain, a sales and customer service expert and author of *All Business Is Show Business*.

McKain notes that, contrary to popular belief, “Younger generations often *are* joiners, though their approach may be to get in, learn and get out.” He reminds leaders that millennials and subsequent generations are devoted to causes. If skills developed through Toastmasters can help them support these causes, that’s attractive.

#GettingMoreSocial

Sell your club strengths through dynamic images, video clips of live action or testimonial success stories. Share it. Tweet it. Pin it. Upload or post vibrant collateral materials to sites frequented by your prospective club members, whether online or in local business incubators, cafés, libraries, business parks or co-working spaces.

For current generations who grew up in the digital age, it’s said, “If you don’t post it to social media it didn’t happen!” Savvy clubs enable guests and members alike to post images and short videos from club meetings to share their excitement at attending, giving a speech and drawing applause.

Ron Kaufman of Singapore, author of *Uplifting Service* and 14 other books on customer service, knows the litmus test for younger generations, who are rapid joiners but leave just as quickly if their needs aren’t met. “They’ll stay as long as they find value, meaning, enjoyment, purpose, social engagement and identity in their Toastmasters experience,” he says.

Kaufman suggests catering to the newest generation entering the professional ranks by recognizing their desire for an Instagram photo, fun Facebook video or Snapchat post about their Toastmasters experience. Today’s twentysomethings are more prone to group activities, so encourage meeting guests to bring friends, which can lead to extensive sharing on social media. Make sure your club has a visual setup, such as a branded banner, lectern and backdrop. This makes it easy for guests to validate their stellar experiences on global platforms.

Tell Your Own Story

As members, we know the transformational power of the Toastmasters experience. Each of us has a success story that is more persuasive than any tagline or web banner. The credibility and sincerity of member sharing is an impressive selling point.

“Prospective members don’t get it by osmosis,” says McKain. “Leaders, mentors and all club members need to keep telling their

“Leaders,
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—SCOTT MCKAIN

success stories about the difference Toastmasters has made in their careers and lives!”

McKain continues, “Data is important. Evidence is essential. A compelling story can be a vehicle that links the data of how people improve their lives because of membership with Toastmasters!”

When members candidly describe the organization’s transformational impact, prospects can’t help but be impressed and inspired by what’s possible for them. Hearing that you conquered your fears, found your voice and leveraged newfound confidence is music to their ears. Your track record substantiates your story: of how you broke into management, changed jobs or careers, were elected to public office or formed a new nonprofit with an assist from your Toastmasters training. Who wouldn’t want a similar return on investment for themselves?

Service Benchmarking

Traditionally, organizations scouted their direct competitors to stay relevant and competitive. Yet we’re seeing inspiration and innovation from service leaders worldwide that can be adapted to one’s own field or industry. CX experts like McKain and Newell-Legner encourage Toastmasters to search broadly for CX best practices to entice and engage members who ultimately become passionate fans of the Toastmasters experience.

Learn from the fervent loyalty of Harley-Davidson and Apple customers. Learn from the local yoga studio how create a fun, healthy and nurturing culture. Your club doesn’t have to operate like an amusement park to give devotees meaningful memories.

Are you ready to transform your club into an experiential learning lab that produces WOW moments as it transforms timid communicators and tentative leaders into confident professionals?

Design meetings and club culture in a customer-centric way and watch your members and guests flourish. **T**

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Member Achievements

Toastmasters conquer personal and professional goals.

Sandy Yong

Naturopathic Toastmasters • Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Paving the Way for Financial Literacy

I graduated from university in 2009, during the recession in Canada. I started saving my hard-earned money and purchased high-fee, high-risk mutual funds. It wasn't long before I lost a few thousand dollars. Watching my money disappear frustrated me and I decided to learn how to manage my finances myself.

I spent the past decade reading dozens of personal finance books and have become a self-directed financial and real estate investor. The knowledge I gained from those personal finance books gave me the potential to teach others to become financially independent. I decided to write a book, *The Money Master*, which is scheduled for publication in June 2019. It covers three pillars to investing: finance, real estate and entrepreneurship. In addition, I am honored to partner with a mental health awareness organization to support mental health research and families who have been impacted. A percentage of the proceeds for each book sold will be donated to the organization.

My vision is to make people feel comfortable having conversations about money and mental health since they can be touchy subjects that affect our daily lives. As a proud Chinese-Canadian author, investor and speaker, I am dedicated to helping women's organizations through fundraising and empowering young professionals to become financially secure.

I am fortunate to have been part of Toastmasters for the past three years and now speak at conferences and workshops about financial literacy. Blending my talents of writing and speaking has allowed me to share my message of financial security with the world.



Sandy Yong



Abishek P

Abishek P

Coimbatore Toastmasters Club • Coimbatore, India



50 Speeches in 50 Days

In one of his speeches, Tony Robbins, an American author and life coach, mentioned he gave speeches three times a day. The idea of giving 21 speeches a week grabbed my attention and I firmly held on. Inspired by Robbins, I challenged myself to give 50 speeches in 50 days. I worked out a plan to attend a club meeting every day of the week and not just attend but speak. I like traveling and making new friends and this complemented my goal well. Using the "Find A Club" tool on the Toastmasters website, I was able to visit 14 clubs and I made friends at each meeting. I expanded my network of contacts and in the process explored my authentic self.

Ultimately, I gave 50 speeches in 87 days, but truly benefited from this challenge. I can see the change in myself. As a child, a teacher told me my English was terrible, and that stuck with me. This challenge helped me overcome the insecurities that moment created. I was an introvert and now consider myself an extrovert. I can strike up a conversation with a stranger effortlessly and develop a strong bond in no time. I feel confident in my English, which I hadn't before. Public

speaking used to be one of my biggest fears and now it is one of my strengths. The support I've received from my new friends has lifted my confidence and instilled renewed faith in the process of self-discovery and personal improvement.

Kelly Russell

Toastmasters X-L • Ventura, California, U.S.



Kelly Russell

Crafting and Delivering a Captivating Eulogy

When I got the call that my beloved grandfather passed away, my first thought was, *I'm speaking at his funeral*. This didn't enter my mind with trepidation, but with resolve and a twinge of excitement. I was confident I could honor my grandfather with clarity and poise, even if it were through tears. My two years in Toastmasters helped me craft a eulogy that captured the essence of my grandfather—a man who spent his life mentoring hundreds of young couples and families in his community.

There were 400 people in the audience—standing room only. When I reached the podium, I paused, took it all in, took a deep breath and began speaking. I didn't even get through my introduction before tears pricked my eyes, but I kept going. I engaged my audience with compelling storytelling and well-placed humor; we laughed through our tears. I used gestures, pauses and voice inflection to drive home certain points. I was even able to inspire the audience with a strong call-to-action in my conclusion. Since my grandfather invested in so many people, I encouraged the audience to carry on his legacy.

A stream of people came up to me at the reception with tears in their eyes, thanking me for putting into words what they felt about my grandfather and his life. I even got a call from someone in the audience offering me a job. It was flattering.

Howard Hendricks says, "Experience doesn't make you better. Only evaluated experience makes you better." At the time, I was new in my role as president of Toastmasters X-L in Ventura, California. I began my term by thanking my club for all their feedback over the last two years. Toastmasters is the reason I was able to honor my grandfather with clarity, poise and confidence.



Jessica Chai Pei Shan

Jessica Chai Pei Shan

Money Mastery (Singapore) Toastmasters Club
Singapore, Singapore



Scaling New Heights

In 2014, I was runner-up in the Toastmasters International District 80 Humorous Speech Contest and the youngest female in Singapore's history to achieve this milestone. I shared a lesson that transformed my failures into an uplifting and inspiring story for others. I am passionate about speaking confidently and found my calling in motivating others through my Toastmasters experience.

Toastmasters sparked my aspirations to become a motivational speaker. I was invited on international cruises sailing across Japan, Shanghai, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore to deliver talks in English and Mandarin to audiences of 800. With my practice at Toastmasters, I learned how to curate and deliver entertaining talks to make the audience laugh.

My cruise experiences led to more speaking opportunities, and the spirit of volunteerism at Toastmasters inspired me to give my time and talent to serve the special needs community. I volunteered with the Special Olympics Asia Pacific to train regional athlete leaders in public speaking so they can speak with ease on live media interviews.

These empowering experiences enabled me to follow my dreams into a new and fulfilling career. I believe the confidence one can gain from speaking can overflow to all areas of life to build resilience, strength and tenacity. **T**

Do you have a Toastmasters success story you'd like to share about yourself or another member? Write it in fewer than 300 words and send with a high-resolution photo to submissions@toastmasters.org.

DCP Transitions in Pathways

Award program has the same aim, but format reflects new learning structure.

BY PAUL STERMAN

The Toastmasters Distinguished Club Program (DCP) helps clubs provide their members with a consistently high-quality experience. While that continues to be the purpose in Toastmasters' new education program, the DCP format is different, reflecting the structure of the Pathways learning experience.

In the traditional education program, six educational goals—and 10 altogether—comprise the DCP. The six goals represent a combination of education awards earned by club members:

Traditional DCP

TRADITIONAL PROGRAM EDUCATION GOALS
1. Two CC awards
2. Two more CC's
3. One ACB, ACS or ACG award
4. One more ACB, ACS or ACG
5. One CL, ALB, ALS or DTM award
6. One more CL, ALB, ALS or DTM

In Pathways, the educational goals take a different form. (The other four DCP goals have not changed.) The number of goals remains the same in Pathways—six—but they represent the work members do in the program's learning paths rather than in the manuals of the traditional program.

Pathways now includes 11 paths. In each one, members advance through five levels of achievement, each level building

on the previous one. The DCP educational goals in Pathways reflect this structure. For example, the first goal for a club is to have four members complete Level 1 in their respective learning paths.

The six goals in Pathways function the same as the six goals in the current DCP. For example, the fifth Pathways goal—one member completing Level 4 in a path—will earn the member's club the same amount of DCP credit as the fifth goal in the traditional format: one member earning a CL, ALB, ALS or DTM. However, it's impossible to achieve exact parity since the two education programs are structured differently.

The six educational goals in Pathways represent a combination of members completing the following:

DCP in Pathways

PATHWAYS EDUCATION GOALS
1. Four Level 1's
2. Two Level 2's
3. Two more Level 2's
4. Two Level 3's
5. One Level 4
6. One Level 5

As with the traditional program, the six goals have to be achieved by separate individuals in each category—one member can't achieve the same goal

twice. In other words, four Level 1's can't be completed by three members, only by four separate members.

While all members are encouraged to work in Pathways now, clubs have about a year before the new DCP format applies to all members. The transition period, during which the traditional education program runs concurrently with Pathways, ends June 30, 2020. Members can participate in one program or the other (or both, if they choose).

In the transition period, clubs have flexibility with the DCP format. They can still aim for completing six educational goals—but they can choose from 12 options: Members can meet the six traditional program goals, the six Pathways goals or a mix of goals from both education programs. (See the chart at the bottom of the page.)

The idea is to make the switch to the DCP in Pathways as seamless as possible. Once the transition period ends, the six Pathways goals will be the official measure of DCP success for all clubs. **T**

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

For more information about the DCP in the traditional education program, see the Distinguished Club Program and Club Success Plan, item 1111 in the Toastmasters online store.

PAUL STERMAN is an editor for *Toastmasters International*.

Transition DCP

EDUCATION (SELECT 6 OF 12 GOALS)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Two CC awards	<input type="checkbox"/> One more ACB, ACS or ACG	<input type="checkbox"/> Four Level 1's	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Level 3's
<input type="checkbox"/> Two more CC's	<input type="checkbox"/> One CL, ALB, ALS or DTM award	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Level 2's	<input type="checkbox"/> One Level 4
<input type="checkbox"/> One ACB, ACS or ACG award	<input type="checkbox"/> One more CL, ALB, ALS or DTM	<input type="checkbox"/> Two more Level 2's	<input type="checkbox"/> One Level 5



Club Communication Is Key

Is your club's communication *real*, or does it just appear to be?

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

In the Toastmasters *Moments of Truth* manual (bit.ly/TI_Truth), communication is listed among six “critical moments” for a club to make a positive impression on members and guests. This should be automatic, right? After all, we are a communication organization.

But you'd be surprised. For much of my career, I have been involved with professional organizations focused on communication. Each was very different from the others, yet there was one common thread—one common complaint from each organization's members: There wasn't enough internal communication. No matter how well the leadership thought they were communicating to the members, something was lacking. The question we need to ask ourselves is: *How well is our club doing in this area?*

Let's start with the purpose of our communication—what do we want to achieve? Obviously, conveying information is key. But communication can also be used to build club camaraderie, which goes a long way toward retaining members. Let's look at a few ways to do that.

Member recognition is one. It encourages everyone to strive for the next level. My wife is affiliated with a network marketing company, where, like Toastmasters, members can attain various performance ranks. Every month the company sends out an email noting all those who “ranked up” during the previous month. She proudly showed me her name in last month's publication; she feels part of a team. You can do the same in your club. Perhaps send a special email when someone achieves a new education level

in the Pathways learning experience. Or, if you have a larger club, you might send a monthly email, listing all those who achieved a new level the previous month. We like seeing our names in print. Use this to motivate your members to achieve.

In addition, communication from club leaders is important to promote upcoming events. That includes club meetings, but also leadership training, district events and speech contests. Build excitement and participation in various events by starting your communication months in advance. Create anticipation. I am constantly amazed at how many clubs do not send a contestant to the area speech contest. And I can't help but wonder how many more members would compete if the district and club leadership promoted Toastmasters speech contests year-round, emphasizing the benefits of competing.

“Communication can be either a cold task or a warm letter to a friend.”

But, you might say, we send emails out all the time. And we have a Facebook page.

My concern is that modern technology has made communication too easy. Is communication *real* or does it just appear to be? It's easy to hammer out a quick text, and keeping a message short and sweet saves time for all. Such a text might even use friendly language. But does it communicate “family,” or does it communicate “efficiency”?

The FreeToastHost website (www.toastmastersclubs.org) that is available

to clubs and districts for building websites through Toastmasters is a great tool with many templates. But it, too, can push us toward quick, impersonal communication. I really like the idea that FreeToastHost has made sending out renewal notices easy. When I was club treasurer, I realized the system has a built-in template letter. It is well written and simple to use.

Yet what if you belong to two or more clubs that all use the same template? Won't you figure out pretty quickly that you are receiving a form letter? I don't know about you, but I don't see form letters as being personal. And if I am on the fence about renewing, which way am I going to go? I can't help but think that we might retain more members if we send a customized message emphasizing the benefits of our specific club with a personal invitation to renew.

Even if we don't use a template like that one, it is easy to create our own. I was in a club once where the vice president education sent out a weekly email about the upcoming meeting. And he used the exact same words each time—including the same joke. It, too, was obviously a form letter of sorts, and it lost its effectiveness over time.

Communication can be either a cold task or a warm letter to a friend. Technology makes it easy to do the first. It takes effort to do the second. Does your club have communication that is warm and well crafted? It's a question worth asking. ■

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of Pro Toastmasters and Ahead of the Curve Toastmasters. Learn more at www.billbrownspeechcoach.com.



Verbosity

Why do we use more words than we need to when we could say what we mean with fewer words?

BY JOHN CADLEY

I wrote the above subhead to demonstrate the very thing I wish we could all avoid—verbosity. I used 20 words when the first nine—“Why do we use more words than we need?”—would have sufficed. That leaves 11 superfluous words taking up an extra .0002 seconds of your precious time. Unforgivable.

I don’t know why we do this, but it drives me crazy. And I mean crazy. Normal people don’t scream at a newspaper when they see excess verbiage. I do and I have, sometimes in public places. Recently I was on a bus reading the local paper when I came upon the phrase “due to the fact that.” I shook the paper with both hands and shouted “*Although*, you idiot! Just say *although*! One word instead of five!” The driver asked if I needed medical assistance.

I really am quite rude about it, and I don’t care. If I hear someone say “past history,” I will say, “Yes, it’s so much more informative than future history.” Or if they begin a sentence with “At this point in time,” I will reply, “Oh, you mean, like, *NOW*?” If you want me to get really nasty, say something simple like “I’m tired,” and then follow it up with, “Do you know what I mean?” Now that’s just insulting. I would have to be illiterate to not know what “tired” means. So my only recourse is to reply in kind: “*Yes, I do know what tired means. I’ve known it since I was pre-verbal. I know it means you want to take a rest. In fact, right now I’m tired of you saying ‘Do you know what I mean?’*

and I’d like to take a rest from you. Do you know what I mean?”

Mean-spirited? Sarcastic? You bet. I won’t even tell you how I react to a person who says, “I was thinking in my mind ...” I have to be physically restrained from throttling the individual while yelling, “*If you think ‘in my mind’ is necessary then YOU DON’T HAVE ONE! Where else would you think—your elbow?!*”

“If I hear someone say ‘past history,’ I will say, ‘Yes, it’s so much more informative than future history.’”

I know some writers actually strive for prolixity because they think it creates style and personality. One of my favorite places to find this is the *Fearless Flyer*, a newsletter for Trader Joe’s grocery stores in the U.S. (fearless because the company is not afraid to sound like a 1940s newsreel). Get this one: “Protein. It’s been called one of the building blocks of life—and with good reason. Our bodies can’t function without it.” Pretty dramatic, huh? It makes Trader Joe’s ground beef sound like the invasion of Normandy. To me, it sounds like acute logorrhea. The writer smacks us in the face with a one-word “sentence”—“Protein.” Yes? What about protein? “It’s been called one of the building blocks of life.” Really? By whom? The writer has no idea, which explains the use of the

cowardly passive voice. Next comes: “And with good reason.” Thanks for telling me. I thought maybe it was called that for a bad reason. Then the grand finale: “Our bodies can’t function without it.” Splendid. We have just been force-marched through a dense jungle of melodramatic flabdoodle to finally emerge, exhausted, into the clearing where we discover the only thing we really need to know: Our bodies can’t function without protein. Now, I know Trader Joe’s is trying to build a brand personality, and perhaps its customers enjoy this mock-epic badinage. To me, it sounds like a poor soul who just can’t get to the point.

Why must we go on and on? It seems that people, like nature, abhor a vacuum. We have to fill it. The meat isn’t enough. We have to keep adding Hamburger Helper. Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician and philosopher, said, “All men’s miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone.” Note the word “quiet.” It makes us uneasy. After all, the only truly quiet people we know are dead. So we flap our gums all day and get into more trouble than we need to.

My advice: Test Pascal’s theory. Go sit in a quiet room alone. See how long it takes before you start hoping the phone rings. **T**

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

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM



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

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

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

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

We are happy to speak with you about your publishing needs.
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