

Let the World Know

Public Relations Handbook





TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL
[toastmasters.org](https://www.toastmasters.org)

© 2008-2024 Toastmasters International. All rights reserved. Toastmasters International, the Toastmasters International logo, and all other Toastmasters International trademarks and copyrights and the information in this guide are the sole property of Toastmasters International and may be used only with permission.

Item 1140 Rev. 12/2024

Missions, Values, and Promises

Toastmasters International Mission

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.

Club Mission

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

Toastmasters International Core Values

- ▶ Integrity – We match our actions with our words, demonstrate honesty and trustworthiness, communicate with sincerity and thoughtfulness, have the courage to acknowledge our mistakes, and always strive to do the right thing.
- ▶ Respect – We treat all with dignity, welcome diverse perspectives, acknowledge all contributions, believe that all have positive intent, practice mutual accountability, and critique but never demean.
- ▶ Service – We strive to provide high-value, exceptional support by being responsive, attentive, and passionate in fulfilling our duties as individuals and as an organization to all.
- ▶ Excellence – We consistently strive to meet or exceed expectations by upholding A Toastmaster's Promise, nurturing a collaborative environment, innovating to deliver creative solutions, and optimizing quality to produce superior service.

A Toastmaster's Promise

As a member of Toastmasters International and my club, I promise

- ▶ To attend club meetings regularly
- ▶ To prepare all of my projects to the best of my ability, basing them on the Toastmasters education program
- ▶ To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments
- ▶ To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations
- ▶ To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow
- ▶ To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so
- ▶ To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy
- ▶ To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers
- ▶ To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters education and recognition programs
- ▶ To act within Toastmasters' core values of integrity, respect, service, and excellence during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Section 1	
An Overview of the Public Relations Function	6
What Is Public Relations?	6
Public Relations Goals	6
Who Is Responsible for the Public Relations Role?	6
Duties and Responsibilities	7
Public Relations Committee	8
Brand Stewardship: Protecting the Toastmasters Name	8
Toastmasters International Logo & Trademark Standards	8
Copyrights and Trademarks	9
Use of Outside Copyrighted Items in Toastmasters Materials	9
Section 2	
Creating an Effective Public Relations Program 10	
Make a Plan and Set Goals	10
Create Your Content Strategy	11
Section 3	
Executing Your Public Relations Plan	12
Creating Public Relations Documents	12
News Release	12
Media Advisory	14
Fact Sheet	14
Public Service Announcement	15
Newsletters	15
Photos & Videos	15
Media Kits	15
Creating a Media List	16
Crafting Your Communication	16
Making the Connection	18
Using Social Media for Public Relations	18

Section 4

Leading a PR Team 19

Attend Club and District Officer Training..... 19

Arrange for a Replacement or Assistance 19

Prepare Your Successor for Office..... 19

Conclusion 19

Sample News Releases..... 20

Introduction

Public relations (PR) is a vital function within Toastmasters International, helping to raise awareness, build credibility, and strengthen relationships with key audiences. Whether you're a club officer, District leader, or a member, understanding the role of PR is crucial to supporting the organization's goals and ensuring its continued success. By effectively telling the story of Toastmasters, you will enhance the reputation, credibility, and visibility of the organization, contributing to your club and District's success.

The Let the World Know Public Relations Handbook is your guide to understanding public relations and effectively promoting your club and District events. This manual is organized into four sections:

- ▶ Section 1 - An Overview of the Public Relations Function
- ▶ Section 2 - Creating an Effective Public Relations Program
- ▶ Section 3 - Executing Your Public Relations Plan
- ▶ Section 4 - Leading a Public Relations Team

You will also find appendices that include templates and sample news releases. While the content is primarily tailored for club-level application, Area, Division, and District leaders can adapt the information with minor adjustments.

Keep in mind that the responsibilities of club and District members may vary based on cultural practices and established procedures, so be sure to customize the suggestions in this publication to suit your specific needs.



Online resource



Additional copies of this manual can be downloaded for free at toastmasters.org/PRGuide.

If you have questions or comments about this manual, please direct them to:

Public Relations
Toastmasters International
9127 S. Jamaica Street, Suite 400
Englewood, CO 80112
USA
Phone: +1 720-439-5050
Email: pr@toastmasters.org

Section 1

An Overview of the Public Relations Function

Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds and maintains positive relationships between an organization and its various publics—such as members, the media, stakeholders, and the public. The goal of PR is to enhance the reputation, credibility, and visibility of an organization, while also attracting the attention of media and potential members and promoting important club messages and events. Public relations can be accomplished through press releases, social media, events, and various communication strategies.

What Is Public Relations?

Public relations is the practice of managing and shaping the perception of an organization through strategic communication. It encompasses techniques and strategies designed to inform the public—especially the media—about important organization news and events.

There is common confusion about the differences between PR, marketing, and advertising. PR is about managing perceptions and relationships, while marketing is focused on driving potential customers and promoting products through advertising and other efforts. PR efforts are based on building relationships and generating goodwill, while marketing efforts are aimed at converting interested individuals into engaged customers. A successful marketing plan incorporates PR strategies as one of its key tactics.

Another key difference between PR and advertising is cost. Public relations rely on earned media, such as coverage from journalists, mentions in articles, and customer reviews, which incurs no direct costs. Advertising involves paid media.

Just like many things, there is some grey area here. One example would be paying for a press release distribution service, which could be considered both PR and advertising. However, the goal of promoting a press release is to create a connection with an earned media source, so it still falls within the PR umbrella.

Public Relations Goals

The main goal of public relations is to generate positive awareness of the Toastmasters brand to attract and retain members. It requires keeping the public fully informed of club or District activities through effective communication and media relations. Overall, good PR will:

- ▶ Build membership
- ▶ Gain public recognition
- ▶ Enhance perception

Who Is Responsible for the Public Relations Role?

Overall, effective PR is a collaborative effort that involves multiple stakeholders within the organization. It is important to understand that each member is an ambassador of Toastmasters and your club, and how they present themselves is an element of public relations. To do this, public relations requires a strong leader or leaders to establish the PR program. The titles of those officers are as follows:

1. **Club: Vice President Public Relations (VPPR).** As VPPR, you are responsible for coordinating an active public relations and publicity program in your club. By establishing and maintaining lines of communication between the club and its members, as well as between the club and the public, you will work toward increased awareness of Toastmasters through local news and social media.

2. **District: Public Relations Manager (PRM).** As PRM, you are responsible for coordinating an active public relations and publicity program in the District. By establishing and maintaining lines of communication between the District and its clubs, as well as between the District and the public, you will work to increase awareness of Toastmasters through local news media. You are also responsible for training the VPPRs in clubs within your District.
3. **Toastmasters International World Headquarters:** Toastmasters International World Headquarters Public Relations provides the organization overall PR support that clearly communicates the Toastmasters International mission, vision, and values. This includes providing press release templates, training resources, and organization-wide PR efforts, such as Board of Director announcements and International Convention coverage. Another role for World Headquarters is to connect any media inquiries with the appropriate club or District.



Please refer to Toastmasters online **Media Center**.

Duties and Responsibilities

As a steward of the organization's image and reputation, your goal is to develop a public relations program that generates positive publicity. This effort will help your club and District raise awareness and attract new members.

Once your term begins, your responsibilities may include:

- ▶ Protecting the Toastmasters brand and enforcing brand use within your club or District
- ▶ Developing a public relations program
- ▶ Promoting Toastmasters and your club or District through the local news media
- ▶ Collaborating with other clubs and District leaders on activities or initiatives
- ▶ Monitoring the status of your committee goals and reporting committee activities and progress to the club or District
- ▶ Using Toastmasters' key messages when speaking in public
- ▶ Creating and maintaining a website and/or newsletter
- ▶ Managing social media engagement
- ▶ Collaborating with other leadership teams
- ▶ Planning and conducting regular committee meetings and activities.

These responsibilities are important to your success as the PRM or VPPR. It's also important to know what you are *not* responsible for so you can focus on your public relations job.

The following are *not* part of your role or responsibilities:

- ▶ Developing outreach and retention efforts within existing community and corporate clubs or new markets
- ▶ Creating a marketing plan
- ▶ Developing or implementing marketing projects
- ▶ Managing recognition activities
- ▶ Managing the Club Coach Program
- ▶ Recruiting, training, or supervising the club-building team
- ▶ Recruiting, training, or supervising club sponsors, mentors, or coaches
- ▶ Appointing public relations committee members to chair marketing committees

Public Relations Committee

The tasks involved in a public relations program can be too great to do alone. That is why you have the option to form a public relations committee to assist you in developing and implementing your program.

If you decide to organize a committee, you should do so as soon as you are elected to the public relations role. The committee should also be involved in brainstorming and developing an action plan at the beginning of your official term. Create a plan that will address the target audience, strategies and tools, and events and activities to promote.

Brand Stewardship: Protecting the Toastmasters Name

The most important thing to remember of the public relations role is that you are a guardian of the organization's image: the Toastmasters brand. Members rely on a high level of quality in all their interactions with the organization and its various groups. A proper brand on all your materials informs members and prospective members of the quality they can expect. It also acknowledges all the effort your group has put into running an outstanding club or District. It's important that you consider Toastmasters branding guidelines and properly brand your promotional material. Is it professional in appearance? Does it represent the Toastmasters organization at its best? Whether sending an electronic newsletter, updating your website, or communicating to the public in any other way, always consider the image you want to project for your club, District, and Toastmasters.

Toastmasters International has created materials for you to use and has posted them online. Visit the Toastmasters online Brand Portal to learn more about fonts to use or to download or copy templates for the following collateral materials:

- ▶ News release and boilerplate
- ▶ Meeting agenda
- ▶ Business cards
- ▶ Letterhead
- ▶ PowerPoint
- ▶ Meeting invitation
- ▶ Event flier
- ▶ Newsletter

Toastmasters International is a growing organization, therefore building brand recognition is a priority. The key to building brand recognition is maintaining consistency in how the organization's name and logo are used, as well as how the materials are designed and messages used to position Toastmasters in the minds of members and prospective members. When the members of the general public recognize the Toastmasters brand, it means their awareness of the organization has been raised, which ultimately helps you build clubs and recruit members.

Toastmasters International Logo & Trademark Standards

The Toastmasters International logo is an integral part of our visual identity. Apply it correctly and consistently to accelerate engagement, raise the organization's credibility, and improve awareness for generations to come. Proper logo use also helps deliver a consistent experience across our diverse and unique clubs while improving brand recall.

Be sure to visit the **Brand Portal** to read more about the appropriate use of the logo and wordmark. You can also search the term "brand" on the website for information on protecting and promoting the Toastmasters brand.

Copyrights and Trademarks

To preserve the organization's copyright and trademarks, please be aware of the following:

Toastmaster's manuals, programs, and other materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced in any form without advance written permission from World Headquarters. Items currently posted on the Toastmasters website for marketing or PR purposes, such as promotional brochures and forms, may be reproduced without written permission and may be posted on club websites (but be sure to link to the Toastmasters website so that the club has the most current document). However, any other items, such as advanced manuals, speech contest judge's guides and ballots and other contest forms and materials, in part or in their entirety, may not be photocopied or posted on websites, nor may they be reprinted or excerpted in newsletters and handouts.

The names "Toastmasters" and "Toastmasters International" as well as the logo are trademarks and cannot be printed, engraved or placed on any other items (e.g. badges, trophies, plaques, certificates, coffee mugs, clothing, etc.) without advance written approval from Toastmasters International. Any such use is a violation of trademark law and Toastmasters policy. To request permission of the, please submit a Trademark Request form found in the Brand Portal. Permission to use our trademarks has not been granted to any outside vendors, so please notify Toastmasters International of any unauthorized uses.

Use of Outside Copyrighted Items in Toastmasters Materials

When using Toastmasters-branded items or content, it's crucial to be aware of copyright laws and regulations that govern the use of copyrighted materials. Toastmasters International, like most organizations, has strict guidelines regarding the use of copyrighted materials on any official Toastmasters-branded items, including:

- ▶ Promotional materials
- ▶ Event materials
- ▶ Presentations
- ▶ Official documents

Using copyrighted content (such as music, images, text, logos, or brand names) without permission could result in legal consequences for both you and Toastmasters as an organization. Copyright infringement may result in fines or the removal of the infringing materials. Examples of copyrighted material that cannot be used without proper permission:

- ▶ Logos, brand names, and trademarks
- ▶ Music, audio clips, and video content
- ▶ Published articles, books, and written works
- ▶ Photographs and visual designs

Always use original content or content that is explicitly licensed for your intended use. For example, consider using royalty-free images or creating your own graphics.



Click [here](#) to visit the Brand Portal.

Section 2

Creating an Effective Public Relations Program

An effective public relations program requires research and planning. You must know your brand and your target audience. The community will learn about Toastmasters through the media and by what others say about the organization, so informing members and local news media about your group's activities and projects is crucial to building a strong public relations program.

Make a Plan and Set Goals

Good preparation will lead to a productive year. To prepare for your term, learn what will be expected of you by your club, your District, and Toastmasters International. Here are the three most important steps in planning:

Step 1: Do your homework.

- ▶ Read this entire manual.
- ▶ Review your club's (and/or District's) bylaws to become familiar with your club, District, and the organization's procedures and regulations.
- ▶ Meet with the departing club/District Public Relations Manager – before taking office – to discuss your new role.
- ▶ Review your club's (and/or District's) goals with the President-Elect and establish annual and long-term goals.

Step 2: Establish a plan.

- ▶ Define Your PR Goals: Clearly outline the objectives for your public relations program.
- ▶ Create a Club Calendar: List important dates and events relevant to your club.
- ▶ Develop an Editorial Calendar: Schedule your PR activities, including topics, target audiences, and timing.
- ▶ Compile a Media List: Gather contacts for local media (refer to page 16 for guidance on creating media lists).
- ▶ Form a PR Committee: If possible, collaborate with the president-elect to establish a public relations committee to help execute your plan.
- ▶ Review Regularly: Plan to revisit and update these items periodically throughout the year as needed.

Step 3: Communicate the plan.

1. **PR Committee members:** Committees should regularly review and identify available resources, discuss ongoing projects and new initiatives, and develop strategies to achieve committee, club, and/or District goals.
2. **Your club:** Report your committee's activities, including action plans and progress toward goals, to your club or District.
3. **Your District:** If your committee needs guidance or information, contact your District PRM.

Create Your Content Strategy

Once you have your plan established, the next phase in your PR program is establishing what content you will promote. The following are examples of activities or announcements on club, District and area levels that should be considered:

Club level:

- ▶ A project that relates to a topic of interest for the residents and/or business members in the community
- ▶ A successful club member who used their Toastmasters speaking or leadership skills to gain job promotions or otherwise enhance his or her life
- ▶ Officer elections or installations
- ▶ Speech contests – local person moving up to a higher level after winning at the club level
- ▶ Special presentations for the public, such as Speechcraft, Success/Leadership, or Youth Leadership
- ▶ Important visitors or guest speakers
- ▶ Club anniversary
- ▶ Club demonstration meetings
- ▶ Club charter meetings

Area level:

- ▶ Area speech contest
- ▶ Area-wide events that are open to the public (special workshops, for example)
- ▶ List of clubs in local area, mentioning any specialties

District level:

- ▶ Officer elections
- ▶ District conferences
- ▶ Outstanding Toastmaster of the Year honorees
- ▶ Outstanding Area Director of the Year honorees
- ▶ Advance publicity for speech contests
- ▶ Division speech contest winners
- ▶ District speech contest winners
- ▶ Distinguished District recognition
- ▶ Presidential visit
- ▶ Director visits
- ▶ New clubs chartered
- ▶ Speakers bureau available for presentations at local groups (if one has been created)

Section 3

Executing Your Public Relations Plan

Now that you understand the foundational principles of your PR program within Toastmasters, it's time to focus on execution—how to translate your PR strategy into action and achieve your communication goals effectively. PR is an ongoing effort—the more consistent and strategic you are, the greater the impact on raising awareness, building credibility, and increasing engagement within the Toastmasters community.

Creating Public Relations Documents

Effective public relations documents are key tools for communicating your club or District's messages to various audiences and understanding how to craft these documents is an essential skill for your role. Whether you're creating a press release, media advisory, fact sheet, or newsletter, each document plays a crucial role in spreading your message, engaging your audience, and building relationships. In this section, we'll break down some of the most common PR documents.

News Release

The most widely used means of informing the media is a news release, often called a press release. With a well-crafted and written pitch, the news release alerts journalists and editors about an event and serves as the basis for a potential news story. Proper news release preparation will also improve the possibility of being accepted for use. New release templates and previously written examples can be found in the Media Center.

Ensure the release is objective, concise, and no more than 300-500 words. Don't forget to include an attention-getting headline, summary, dateline, body, quote, the Toastmasters International boilerplate, and your group's contact information.

Below is a list of tips for creating a professional **news release**:

- ▶ **Craft a Compelling Headline:** Use a clear, engaging headline that captures attention and summarizes the main point of the release.
- ▶ **Start with the Essentials:** Begin with a strong lead paragraph that answers the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your news.
- ▶ **Keep It Concise:** Aim for one page, ideally 400 words or less. Be direct and to the point, avoiding unnecessary jargon.
- ▶ **Use a Professional Tone:** Write in a formal and objective style, keeping the language simple and accessible.
- ▶ **Include Quotes:** Add quotes from key individuals (e.g., leaders, experts) to provide insight and add a personal touch.
- ▶ **Provide Context:** Offer background information that helps the reader understand the significance of the news.
- ▶ **Include Contact Information:** Provide details for a media contact who can answer questions or provide additional information.
- ▶ **Add Boilerplate Information:** Conclude with a brief section about your organization, including its mission, history, and relevant details. Please refer to the boilerplate provided by World Headquarters.
- ▶ **Use Multimedia:** If applicable, include links to images, videos, or additional resources that enhance your story.
- ▶ **Proofread Thoroughly:** Ensure there are no spelling or grammatical errors, as these can undermine professionalism. Using AI tools is an easy way to do this.
- ▶ **Distribute Strategically:** Send your news release to relevant media outlets, journalists, and online platforms that align with your audience.

1. Prewriting

Purpose: The reason of this news release is to persuade the journalist to write about a Toastmasters event.

2. Writing

Research: Collect data about the event and valuable information to present to the general public. Get quotes from important leaders or members involved.

Organize: Present the most important fact first. Explain in the body and conclude with offer of further information.

Compose: Write between 300-500 words.

3. Revising

Revise: Review and ensure all facts are correct. Revise to break up long paragraphs. Use bullets if needed.

Proofread: Double-check for any spelling or grammatical errors.

Sample News Release


Toastmasters International Logo

Lead:
Identifies 5 Ws (and H)

Quotes most important person in organization

Body: expand with additional details. Most important first, significant quotes and web link

Toastmasters International boilerplate



Media Contact:
720-439-5050
pr@toastmasters.org

New Jersey Pharmacist Wins Toastmasters' 2023 World Championship of Public Speaking

Jocelyn Tyson rises above 30,000 participants to win world's largest speech contest

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., Aug. 21, 2023 — With a motivational speech titled, "Have You Been There?" Jocelyn Tyson, a 42-year-old pharmacist from Mount Laurel, New Jersey, won the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking® on Saturday, Aug. 19 at the Grand Hyatt Baha Mar Resort and Convention Center in Nassau, Bahamas. Tyson, along with seven other final contestants, reached the championship level after several eliminating rounds that began more than six months ago with 30,000 participants from 148 countries. Watch Tyson's winning speech [here](#).

"I can't believe this is happening, it's all so surreal," said Tyson after being announced as the winner. "Thank you, Toastmasters, and the people who I have met along the way, the clubs that I got to practice with, and helped me build my speech. It was a group effort, and everyone slowly helped me build this thing and made it what it was."

Tyson's winning speech was titled, "Have You Been There?" and told the story of her overcoming a variety of obstacles to complete a triathlon in 2021. While she struggled mightily at times during the challenging race, listening to her inner go-getter led Tyson to triumph and enabled her to cross the accomplishment off her bucket list.

She inspired the audience by telling the capacity crowd, "I implore you — no, I beg you to look deep within on that next challenge. Find that inner go-getter and see how far it can push you. I've been there, have you?"

In her acceptance speech, Tyson said, "This was an amazing experience and I want to thank every person who has come across my path with a smile. I want to thank my family who are watching online. I love you. Just everyone, thank you so much."

Tyson joined Toastmasters two years ago to become a better communicator as well as network with other members of the organization. As the newly crowned World Champion of Public Speaking, she plans to continue seeking opportunities to speak in her community and will encourage others to join Toastmasters and even enter speech contests.

Speakers delivered five-to seven-minute speeches on wide-ranging topics, and were judged on content, organization, and delivery.

Montalvo claimed the title of Toastmasters' 2024 World Champion of Public Speaking during the organization's annual convention held in Anaheim, Calif., Aug. 14-17. She is the first Hispanic to win the coveted title.

Second- and third-place winners were Nisha Shivram from Doha, Qatar, with her speech titled, "[Swipe](#)" and Maryam Ganni from Laval, Quebec, with her speech, "[You Have No Idea](#)."

About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that builds confidence and teaches public speaking skills through a worldwide network of clubs that meet online and in person. In a supportive community or corporate environment, members prepare and deliver speeches, respond to impromptu questions, and give and receive constructive feedback. It is through this regular practice that members are empowered to meet personal and professional communication goals. Founded in 1924, the organization is headquartered in Englewood, Colorado with approximately 270,000 members in more than 14,000 clubs in 150 countries. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit toastmasters.org. Follow [@Toastmasters](#) on X (formerly Twitter).

###

Contact Information

Media Advisory

A media advisory is a short, concise communication used to alert journalists and the media about an upcoming event or significant development. While a press release provides in-depth information about a story or announcement, a media advisory is a brief, to-the-point notification designed to generate interest and prompt attendance or coverage. A media advisory is an excellent tool for events or newsworthy activities.

What to include in a media advisory:

- ▶ Headline
- ▶ Date and Time
- ▶ Location
- ▶ Event Details (what, when, where, and why)
- ▶ Contact Information
- ▶ Call to Action (attend, RSVP or request more information)

Fact Sheet

A fact sheet is an at-a-glance document that provides a quick overview of the club, District, or organization. It is a one-page document with the most basic and essential information. Fact sheets are often used as a supporting to another PR materials and serve as a quick reference guide for journalists, media professionals, and stakeholders who need essential details without sifting through long documents or press releases.

Components of a fact sheet include:

- ▶ **Headline:** A clear, informative headline that summarizes the main topic.
- ▶ **Brief Description or Overview:** A few sentences summarizing the key information (e.g., company mission, product features, event overview).
- ▶ **Key Facts:** Bullet points or numbered lists that provide essential information, such as:
 - ▶ Important dates and deadlines
 - ▶ Key statistics or data points
 - ▶ Notable figures (e.g., company executives, speakers, experts)
 - ▶ Relevant locations, websites, or contact information

The Toastmasters International Fact Sheet can be found online in the Media Center.



To view an example of a fact sheet from Toastmasters International visit the **Media Center**.

Public Service Announcement

A Public Service Announcement (PSA) is a message created to inform and educate the public about an issue, cause, or event. They aim to raise awareness, promote safety, or encourage behavioral change. By utilizing PSAs strategically, organizations can effectively communicate their messages and foster positive change within their communities.

Toastmasters International has created a PSA called "Build Confidence with Toastmasters," which can be found in the Video Gallery of the Media Center. Use this PSA when you submit news releases and when promoting an event to increase awareness of the overall organization and build your credibility with an audience that is not familiar with Toastmasters.

Newsletters

Clubs and Districts can use newsletters to promote their groups to internal and external audiences. The primary functions of the newsletter are to educate, motivate, and inform its readers. A newsletter template can be found in the Brand Portal on the Toastmasters International website and should include your club or District name, meeting time, location, contact phone number, email address, and website address. Create a content calendar for your newsletter with your executive committee. Plan high-level topics that will be covered and the frequency of when your newsletter will be created.

Use the best practices below when creating your club or District newsletter:

- ▶ Follow Toastmasters International's brand guidelines
- ▶ Send as a PDF or insert the newsletter into the body of the email
- ▶ Publish unique and interesting educational articles
- ▶ Include relevant information you receive from World Headquarters, including articles from the *Toastmaster* magazine
- ▶ Inform of upcoming events and deadlines
- ▶ Confirm all information matches your website
- ▶ Post newsletter to social media channels
- ▶ Source any mentions of outside materials

Photos & Videos

Take pictures or videos of your event and make them readily available to email to a journalist. Most outlets' websites that allow you to upload a news release will also have a section for you to upload a photo or video.

General submission guidelines for photos & video:

- ▶ High resolution: Be sure the photo or video is of good quality: clear, in focus, and high resolution.
- ▶ Captions: Although you may submit the photo or video and your news release on the same subject, you must include a brief description. Your description should include the member(s) first and last name, club name, and location. For the video, include the length of the video in the caption.
- ▶ Release forms: Before you submit the photo or video, be sure to receive consent from anyone within the photo or video. Written consent is best. You can find official Toastmasters release forms online in the Vice President Public Relations section of the Club Officer Roles.

Media Kits

Media kits are traditionally a collection of materials that provide journalists, bloggers, and influencers comprehensive information about your brand, product, or event. A Toastmasters media kit should offer ample information about the Toastmasters International organization and additional information about your specific group.

You can download a Toastmasters International electronic media kit from the Media Center section of the Toastmasters website or compile your own version. You may offer the media kit as one PDF file or as a link to a shared folder with several individual components.

Here is a list of items that could be included in your media kit:

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Recent press releases
- ▶ Fact sheet
- ▶ Biographies (short bios of key team members or spokespeople highlighting their expertise and role)
- ▶ Media coverage (samples or summaries of previous media coverage)
- ▶ Images and Logos
- ▶ Contact information including social channels

Creating a Media List

Before you can pitch your message to members of the news media, you need to create a list of media contacts. Do research on who in your area covers specific stories. Search online and in printed news sources and look for the author of articles that are similar to the topic you are presenting. You can often find contact information and biographies on editors, journalists, bloggers or producers to help build your media list. Start with a small list of relevant journalists, editors, and media outlets and grow over time.

Here is a list of items that could be included in your media kit:

- ▶ Daily and weekly newspapers
- ▶ Local, regional, and national magazines
- ▶ Radio and TV stations
- ▶ Public access TV operators
- ▶ Community leaders and local influencers
- ▶ Professional bloggers and professional influencers
- ▶ Professional journals and trade publications

Crafting Your Communication

Once you've developed your contact list and prepared your PR documents, it's time to send the information out to the right people. Crafting a compelling pitch is crucial to grabbing the attention of journalists, bloggers, or influencers. A well-crafted pitch can make the difference between your message being read—or being ignored.

Here is a streamlined format to follow for crafting an effective PR communication, focusing on clarity and brevity:

- ▶ Email Subject Line
- ▶ Greeting/Salutation
- ▶ Introduction Paragraph
- ▶ Supporting Paragraph (tell the reader how your news will benefit listeners, readers, or viewers).
- ▶ Bulleted Points (if applicable)
- ▶ Call to Action
- ▶ Signature
- ▶ News Release (copied directly into the body of your email)

1. Prewriting

Purpose: The reason for this email is to pitch the media. Include brief but compelling information about what is in the news release below.

2. Writing

Compose: Write a concise message, ideally 200 words or less.

Organize: Present the most interesting fact or information in the introduction paragraph.

3. Revising

Revise: Review and ensure all facts are correct. Revise to break up long paragraphs. Use bullets if needed.

Proofread: Double-check for any spelling or grammatical errors.

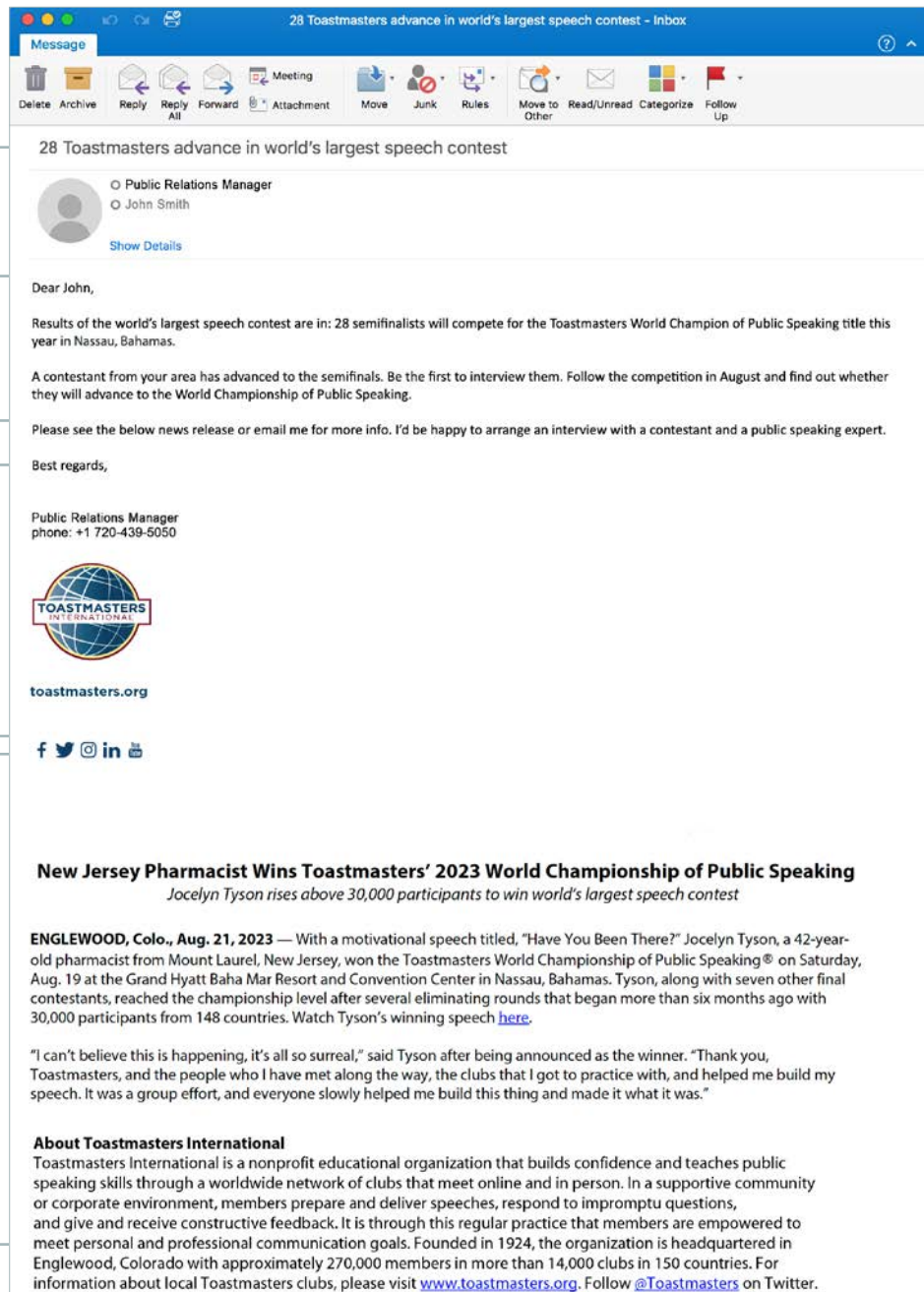
Sample Email

Subject line: Make it short and catchy.

Body: Make it short (Max 200 words)

Signature block: Include your name, email address, telephone number and a link to your website.

Include news release below signature block: not as an attachment



To access press release templates electronically, visit the Vice President Public Relations section of the Club Officer Roles.

Making the Connection

Getting the media's attention requires more than just sending out a press release. It's about building relationships, crafting a compelling story, and understanding the unique needs of journalists. Here's a guide on how to approach the media strategically:

- 1. Craft a Compelling Pitch:** A media pitch is your opportunity to grab a journalist's attention. Your pitch should be short, direct, and tailored to the individual journalist's interests. It should clearly explain why your story is relevant to their audience.
- 2. Personalize Your Outreach:** Mass emails rarely get noticed. When reaching out to a journalist, always personalize your message. Reference their previous work, explain why your story would resonate with their readers, and make the connection clear.
- 3. Offer Value: Provide Exclusive or Valuable Content:** Offering an exclusive story can be a powerful tool to get media coverage. An exclusive is a piece of news that the journalist gets before anyone else, making them more likely to cover it.
- 4. Follow Up Respectfully:** If you don't hear back after sending a pitch, a polite follow-up email is key. Wait at least 2-3 days before reaching out again and be respectful of their time.

Using Social Media for Public Relations

In today's digital age, social media is a powerful tool for public relations professionals to reach and engage with target audiences, build brand awareness, and share key messages. Social media platforms allow organizations to bypass traditional media channels and communicate directly with their audience, making it an essential component of any modern PR strategy.

Each one of your PR documents, events or general news can be posted on social channels. Remember to always reinforce the Toastmasters brand and stay professional. Social media is all about consistency, authenticity, and engagement. Stay active, be responsive, and keep your content aligned with your broader PR strategy.

If you have any questions about social networking, please email: socialmedia@toastmasters.org.

Section 4

Leading a PR Team

When you take a role in public relations, you gain the opportunity to build your leadership skills by developing open lines of communication for your club or District. Of equal importance, this role provides you with an opportunity to create an internal communications plan. At some point, you may find yourself in charge of a team that will provide your club or District with PR efforts on multiple fronts. These tips will help you lead successfully and exceed member expectations in regard to publicity, and ultimately, membership growth.

Attend Club and District Officer Training

Each District conducts club officer training. Training includes a review of each officer's responsibilities and tips for fulfilling them. On the District level, it allows club officers to meet officers from other clubs and provides an opportunity to share ideas and keep up on current information. If you are a VPPR, contact the Program Quality Director or visit your district website for information about the next training workshop. If you are a PRM, Toastmasters International sends a welcome letter with important information and has recorded a webinar for incoming leaders. This resource and other helpful items can be found online in the resource library.

Arrange for a Replacement or Assistance

Occasionally you may be unable to attend a meeting. On such occasions, arrange for someone – perhaps another leader or a former public relations manager – to carry out your duties.

Prepare Your Successor for Office

Once your successor is elected, help him or her to assume leadership. Make sure the newly elected public relations official has a manual, review the standards for the office, and remind him or her to attend leader training. Share advice and information as much as possible. You may even suggest the incoming officer observe you over several weeks.

Conclusion

Public Relations is a powerful tool for elevating your club or district, engaging with your community, and creating lasting impressions that resonate with current and potential members. As you put these PR strategies into practice, remember that Public Relations is an ongoing effort. It's about nurturing relationships, maintaining a consistent presence, and adapting to new trends and platforms as the media landscape evolves. By staying focused, creative, and proactive in your approach, you'll create a powerful PR foundation that will help your club or District thrive for years to come.

Continue your learning of PR and find helpful resources on the Toastmasters website and in the Media Center. Contact pr@toastmasters.org with any additional questions.

Sample News Releases

The following pages contain sample news releases. The fill-in-the-blanks templates provide ideas about how to promote:

- ▶ Anniversaries
- ▶ Award announcements
- ▶ Open houses and special events



You can find official Toastmasters news releases in the Vice President Public Relations section of the Club Officer Roles **here**. See current news releases issued by World Headquarters at mediacenter.toastmasters.org. Subscribe to receive automatic updates.

Mention toward the end of the email that you will provide them with information about the progress of the club and its members throughout the year and that you will be available at any time to provide further information.

Copy and paste the news release in the body of your email below your signature. Do not include it as an attachment to the email.

Remember to make sure every news release you distribute to the news media is complete and accurate, with all names spelled properly.



toastmasters.org