

October is Autumn and Autumn is Harvest Time. One of the best ways to create a Toastmasters Harvest of new members is by having an Open House! An Open House is a special, fun event where a Toastmasters Club “show and tell” the value of a Toastmasters membership.

In today’s environment, your club can have a successful Open House in-person, as a hybrid or virtually, by following these five simple steps.

- 1 **Plan** – This first step is the most crucial and lays the foundation for your success. You want to engage your entire club in the process. Select an Open House Chair, assign coordinators for refreshments, decorations and setup (in-person and hybrid) and Event Host and Tech Chairperson (virtual and hybrid); Put together your timeline; Choose your speaker and members to fill meeting roles.
- 2 **Market** – When you invite them, they will come. Every club member can help fill the room with guests by inviting others. Toastmasters International makes it easy, by providing a downloadable, customizable [flier for prospective members](#) that shows images of people before and after improving their communication and leadership skills. The flier can be hung around your community, in workplaces and shared electronically.
- 3 **Have a Fun Meeting** – The meeting should be fun, explain what Toastmasters is and contain the core elements of a regular Toastmasters meeting. Toastmasters International created a presentation specifically for open house events, “[Open House PowerPoint](#)” which explains the Pathways education program and provides information on member benefits, including details on the extensive resources available to members. The featured speaker for the Open House should share how Toastmasters has benefited them and a strong evaluator should be selected to give the evaluation.
- 4 **Engage Guests** – Guest engagement is key. Be sure to welcome your guests when they enter the room; have guests sign the Guest Book (in-person) or provide contact information in the chat (hybrid and virtual); have the President or Toastmaster acknowledge each guest during the meeting; invite your guests to participate in Table Topics; provide a Guest Packet to each guest ([Purchase Guest Packet](#) in-person or [Virtual Guest Packet](#) hybrid and virtual) and allow time for a Q&A at the end of the meeting.
- 5 **Follow-up** – The success is found in the follow-up. This is where you convert a guest into a member. Send each guest a Thank You note (via email or USPS); contact them within 24-72 hours to inquire about their experience and ask them to become a member.

Open House resources and links to planning material will be available on the D13 website. If you have any questions or you are a smaller club that needs assistance planning an Open House, please email: CGD@d13tm.com