



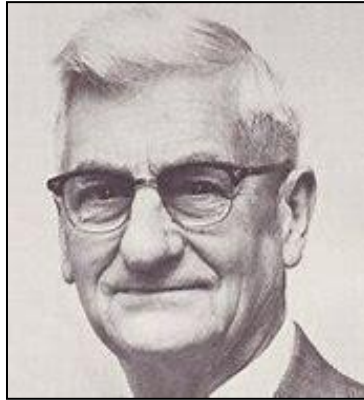
DISTRICT 13

Serving Western PA, Northern WV, and parts of Ohio and Maryland

Best Practices of Toastmasters Clubs

June 25, 2024

v.6.0



Dr. Ralph Smedley
Our Founder

"Even the best Toastmasters Club, with the Educational Committee functioning at high efficiency, will lose some members, but these losses will be negligible compared to the losses in a club where the requirements of planned, progressive, coordinated training are overlooked.

"The club whose membership is shrinking has something the matter with it."

~ Ralph Smedley
The Toastmasters Magazine, October 1946, p. 17

Best Practices of Toastmasters Clubs

v.6.0

Table of Contents

MOMENTS OF TRUTH: First Impressions	4
MOMENTS OF TRUTH: Membership Orientation	7
MOMENTS OF TRUTH: Fellowship, Variety, and Communication	10
MOMENTS OF TRUTH: Program Planning and Organization	14
MOMENTS OF TRUTH: Membership Strength	18
MOMENTS OF TRUTH: Achievement Recognition	21
Chart: MOMENTS OF TRUTH: Club Quality Standards Evaluation	24
Special Events (“Open House”) Best Practices	25



Best Practices of Toastmasters Clubs

While some Toastmasters clubs are thriving, others are not. Regardless, all can benefit from adopting various “Best Practices” to engage and excite their members about being active in Toastmasters. These Best Practices are grouped into the same categories in the Moments of Truth survey. Look at this list of ideas and select the ones to help your club achieve the next level of success.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- ❖ Guests greeted warmly and introduced to officers and members.
- 1. **Reach Out To Guests Before Meetings.** If you know guests will attend your club meeting, reach out to them before the session, providing them with the meeting agenda, an overview of what a meeting looks like (T.I. Item 472), and answer any questions.
- 2. **Greet Guests Quickly and Warmly.** Say “Hello and Welcome” to your guests and call them by name. If they don’t say their name, ask them for it. Introduce them to the members and identify who can help them join the club.
- 3. **Focus on Guests While Waiting.** Too often, club members chit-chat while ignoring their guests. If you invite or expect a guest, let your other members know and remind them to put the guests at ease while waiting for the meeting to begin.
- 4. **Ask Guests.** Ask guests for their names, how they heard about the club meeting, and what brought them here for this meeting. Ask them for their contact info if not already provided.

5. **Explain the Club Mission.** We are careful not to call ourselves a public speaking club (those words are not in our mission statement), but rather, emphasize that we are about improving our communication while developing our leadership skills.

❖ Guest book and name tags provided.

1. **Ask Guests to Sign a Guest Book.** It would be best if you had their contact info, so ask them to sign an actual Guest Book for in-person meetings or ask guests to place their contact info in the chatbox so you have a way to follow up with them.
2. **Name Tags.** Before Covid, most clubs met in person and had Toastmasters name tags for members made. Guests were asked to write their name on a “peel and stick” name tag. Now that we have online and hybrid clubs, ask guests to list at least their first name in the “screen name” box on Zoom or other platforms.

❖ Professionally arranged meeting room.

1. **Arrive Early to Arrange the Meeting Room.** Clubs that meet in person should be ready to start on time, which means someone (usually the Sgt-at-Arms) arrives early to configure the room for a meeting. Other club officers and members should help do this (and help reset after the meeting, too).
2. **Test Equipment Before the Meeting Begins.** This is usually done by the Sgt-at-Arms, whether in-person or online. Anyone sharing their screen for online meetings should test it before the session begins for obvious reasons.
3. **Test Screen Sharing.** For online meetings, the Sgt-at-Arms (or another member) helps all speakers who want to share screen test the configurations to ensure everything works when called on to speak to prevent delays.

❖ Convenient meeting location.

1. **Keep the Location Consistent.** Ideally, secure the same location six months or more in advance so guests and members are not guessing.
2. **Location Attractiveness.** Is the meeting location attractive to guests and current members?
3. **Price and Cost Effectiveness.** Can your club afford a location that charges for meeting space?

4. **Safety.** Not only is the place safe for personal protection, but how well are the exits marked? Are emergency procedures briefed for threatening weather?

❖ Guests are invited to address the club.

1. **Invite the Guests to Speak.** Have the Table Topics Master offer each guest a question, recognizing that some guests may decline to speak. At the end of the meeting, either the Meeting Toastmaster or Club President should ask the guests for feedback on the meeting and then ask them to join the club.
2. **Ask Your Guests.** Ask guests, in advance, if possible, what they would like to get out of the meeting, and then do your best to meet that request. Follow up and ask if they got out of the session what they wanted.
3. **Pair a Guest with a Member.** Adopting this practice reduces guests' stress and confusion about how our meetings are organized and flow. Guests are more willing to participate in your club meetings.

❖ Guests are invited to join.

1. **Invite the Guests to Join.** It seems obvious, but most clubs don't ask their guests to join while at the meeting! Instead, they prefer to "follow up and invite them to join later." Immediately ask them to join; do not wait!
2. **Use Breakout Rooms.** For online sessions, move the guests into a breakout room with a club officer to discuss the *Features, Benefits, and Value* of being a Toastmaster, answer any questions, and enroll them online.
3. **"Rent-a-Crowd."** Consider inviting members from other Toastmasters meetings to help "fill up" the meeting room and make the sessions more fun and engaging. Area Directors and Division Directors can provide names to contact. This is especially important for a club with few members but plans a Special Event (e.g., an Open House). Remember first impressions: your guests don't want to feel they are the only guests.
4. **Guest Info Packets.** Whether meeting in person or online, provide your guests with an info packet about Toastmasters. One document to include is *The Navigator*, created by Toastmasters, which provides a solid introduction to our organization and Pathways. You can download this from toastmasters.org.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH: MEMBERSHIP ORIENTATION

- ❖ Formal induction, including presentation of membership pin and manuals.
 1. **Induction Ceremony and Script**. You can download the New Member Induction Ceremony and Scrip (Item 1167K) from the T.I. website. It's a great way to help define what is expected of all Toastmasters.
 2. **Membership Pins and Certificates**. Are also available at the T.I. website but in the store (toastmasters.org/shop). There are three types of membership pins. You can also order Membership Certificates (Item 513) from the store.
 3. **Manuals**. Were used under our legacy curriculum, but a few more are available on the T.I. website under Resources and the Store.

- ❖ Assignment of a Mentor.
 1. **Mentoring**. Our Founder, Dr. Ralph Smedley, said, "The two most important factors in Toastmasters are Mentoring and Evaluations." Sadly, these are the two factors that are missed most often. Effective meetings have vibrant and engaging mentors. Those speakers who do not need a mentor should become a mentor to those who do.
 2. **Assignment of Mentors**. Is usually handled by the VP/E for new members. Club Mentor assignments are managed by the District Club Growth Director. Those members working in the optional *Pathways Mentor Program* choose their Proteges ("mentees" is no longer the term used) following the guidance provided in this excellent program.
 3. **List of Available Mentors**. Consider adding a list of possible mentors to your club website. The list should display their name, photo, and a few areas they would like to emphasize, giving your prospective proteges choices on their mentor. To see an example of a list, look at the Cologne, German club website:

<https://cologne-toastmasters.de/mentorship/>

- ❖ Education programs and recognition system discussed.
 1. **Education Programs and Recognition Systems**. Our online curriculum should be included in the new member onboarding discussion. Onboarding is usually done by the VP/M while explaining Pathways and helping members choose a Path, which the VP/E generally does. Both the VP/E and the VP/M should explain the

Distinguished Club Program (briefly) to new members to help them understand their speeches and active participation matter to them and the club.

2. **In-Person Meetings. Seating.** Have the VP/M or other experienced Toastmasters sit next to guests and offer to explain to the guests what is going on during the meeting. Then, invite the guest to join the club.
3. **Online Meetings. TM Wears Many Hats.** For online meetings, when a guest attends your meeting, place a copy of *The Toastmaster Wears Many Hats* in the chatbox to help them understand the various roles.

❖ Learning needs are assessed.

1. **Ask When Onboarding.** When onboarding new members, interview them to uncover what leadership and public speaking areas they want to improve. Then, show them how Pathways can help them address these areas.
2. **Give Them The Navigator.** Toastmasters published *The Navigator* booklet to provide a brief overview of the organization, how membership benefits those seeking to improve their leadership and communication, and introduce Pathways and ties in how the curriculum helps members grow.

<https://www.toastmasters.org/the-navigator/additional-resources/toastmasters-navigator-pdf>

3. **Complete the New Member Profile.** Toastmasters has also published a one-page worksheet club leaders can help their new members complete, which includes questions on what areas of leadership and communication they seek to improve.

<https://toastmasterscdn.azureedge.net/medias/files/department-documents/club-documents/online-attendance/1162f-new-member-profile-sheet.pdf>

❖ Discussed accommodations for members with disabilities.

1. **Accommodate Your Members.** Starting Point: The club should accommodate its members rather than the members accommodating the club. There are various ways to do this.
2. **Ask the Member.** If you have a member with special needs, ask them what is the best way to assist them. It may be as simple as adjusting the height of the podium, camera, and microphone for those in wheelchairs, procuring technology for those with hearing issues, and asking someone to help escort someone visually challenged.

3. **Apply for Technology Grants.** Look at these websites and Google for more information. There are many places to apply for technology grants for those with special needs.

<https://www.federalgrantswire.com/deafness-and-the-deaf-federal-grants.html>

<https://www.asha.org/public/coverage/p4AudFundingResources/>

<https://cdhh.idaho.gov/assistive-technology/>

<https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/odhh/Pages/default.aspx>

❖ Speaking role(s) assigned.

1. **Assign at the End of Each Meeting.** Before concluding the meeting, review who will be doing what for the next meeting.
2. **Assign Three Meetings in Advance.** The VP/E assigns members to fill all the roles three meetings in advance. Using an Excel file makes this process relatively simple. Publicize this list or update the club website for the next three meetings. If members can't attend, ask them to find their replacements.
3. **Ask Members What Their Goals Are.** Then, work with them to use Pathways to complete that goal. When they are ready, add them to the schedule.
4. **Have a Backup Speaker.** At all club meetings, try to have three speakers. Expect one to drop out at the last minute, so assign a fourth speaker as a backup. That way, you will almost always have four speeches. There is magic in consistently having three speeches at every meeting. Attendance improves, guests are more likely to join, and members are getting out of Toastmasters what they joined for.
5. **A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats.** This is yet another document published by Toastmasters that provides a quick overview of the various roles at each club meeting. Be sure your new members have a copy.

<https://toastmasterscdn.azureedge.net/medias/files/pathways/toastmaster-wears-many-hats/1167d-a-toastmaster-wears-many-hats.pdf>

6. **Provide Feedback.** When a new member takes a new role, thank them and highlight what they did well. If there are areas to be improved, note those, but focus on what they did well.

❖ Member involved in all aspects of club activities.

1. **Full Participation.** While welcoming guest Toastmasters from outside, do not allow them to speak ahead of a member who has a prepared speech, but encourage them to be the Timer, the Ah Counter, or the “Grammarians.” Clubs that routinely do this report their guests to come back for the next meeting and then join at their third meeting.
2. **Onboarding.** The VP/M should use the new member onboarding resources available from Toastmasters.org to orient new members. The VP/E then assigns a mentor.
3. **Conduct Club Speech Contests.** While not required, having club-level speech contests is a great way to get all involved and have a lot of fun!
4. **Social Activities.** Get together just for a social event. This could be a meeting for dinner, drinks, a summer picnic, etc. Some clubs go out after the club meeting to a place to socialize. It strengthens the relationships and increases retention and participation in club meetings.
5. **Share the Burden.** The Toastmasters Club Executive Committee is comprised of seven members who are elected to serve as leaders. There are seven positions to avoid having one leader do everything. Recall that Toastmasters serves to develop both communicators and leaders. This executive committee is a wonderful platform for existing leaders to refine their skills while helping less-experienced individuals develop theirs. Effective meetings ensure that all leaders evenly share the burden of responsibility to prevent member overload and burnout.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH: FELLOWSHIP, VARIETY, AND COMMUNICATION

❖ Guests greeted warmly and made welcome.

1. **Reach Out To Guests Before Meetings.** If you know guests will attend your club meeting, reach out to them before the session, providing them with the meeting agenda, an overview of what a meeting looks like (T.I. Item 472), and answer any questions.
2. **Greet Guests Quickly and Warmly.** Say “Hello and Welcome” to your guests and call them by name. If they don’t say their name, ask them for it. Introduce them to the members and identify who can help them join the club.
3. **Focus on Guests While Waiting.** Too often, club members chit-chat while ignoring their guests. If you invite or expect a guest, let your other members know and remind them to put the guests at ease while waiting for the meeting to begin.

4. **Talk With Your Guests.** Ask guests for their names, how they heard about the club meeting, and what brought them here for this meeting. Ask them for their contact info if not already provided. Get them talking! Make them feel welcome!
5. **Make Name Tags in Advance.** For those guests who contact you ahead of time, make a name tag or tent and have it waiting for them when they arrive. That will impress them, and that may be all it takes for them to join.
6. **Have the SAA Escort Guests.** For in-person meetings, have the Club Sgt-at-Arms greet the guest(s), ask for their name, and then escort the guest(s) to a table with a few members already seated. Have the SAA introduce the guest(s) to the members and then ask the members to welcome them and explain how the meeting will unfold.
7. **Start the Session Early.** Open up your meeting 15 minutes early and have casual conversations with members, especially guests, as they arrive. Make the club seem friendly and inviting!
8. **Open Meetings With the “President’s Agenda.”** There’s a tool for recruiting members called the “President’s Agenda.” This document is a script in which the club president asks the members who have benefited from Toastmasters. The president then asked members who invited guests to stand and be recognized. It’s a way to thank those members who have extended invitations and apply a little pressure to those who have not.

❖ Enjoyable, educational meetings are planned.

1. **“One-on-One” Meetings.** Leaders in any company realize that “employees don’t leave a company—they leave their boss.” Just as this axiom is true in business, it is often true in Toastmasters—members don’t leave Toastmasters as much as they leave the club leadership team. Why? Because their needs weren’t being met and no one noticed, no one seemed to care. Influential club leaders regularly reach out individually to members to ensure their voices and needs are heard.
2. **Fun and Engaging.** Make the sessions more *fun* and engaging by visiting other Toastmasters clubs and asking the Area Directors for ideas since they visit many clubs and experience new approaches.
3. **Session Humorist.** Add the “Humor Master” or “Humorist” as a way to develop members’ abilities to inject humor and levity, where appropriate, into presentations.
4. **Bonus Meetings.** In those months, with the fifth day (fifth Tuesday, for example), schedule an optional “Bonus Meeting” to have fun and something different. For

instance, you could do a Trivia Party, a Radio Theater, a Game Night, a Karaoke Night, a Scavenger Hunt, etc.

5. **Passionate Leadership.** Any effective Toastmasters club needs a leadership team that is excited, energized, and passionate about Toastmasters. *Successful meetings have engaged, enthusiastic, and active leaders.*
6. **Club Success Plan.** Create, reference, and use your *Club Success Plan* throughout the year to incorporate the most recent Moments of Truth survey results, highlighting areas for improvement.
7. **Show Videos of Contest Winners.** If you are short of speakers for a meeting, play a video of a speech contest winner instead of having endless Table Topics. Use the search button on YouTube for the links.
8. **Themed Meetings.** Plan meetings with a theme. Announce the themes by adding them to your club's calendar as well as to the meeting agendas. Some clubs have found planning their themes months in advance very beneficial.
9. **DTM Panel Discussion.** Invite DTMs from your club and others to discuss their journey, what it took to become a DTM, how they overcame challenges, what motivated them, and how they will continue their speaking journey. It's both fun and informative.

❖ Regularly scheduled social events.

1. **Socialize.** Spend time before and after meetings to reconnect with the other club members. With most meetings continuing to be online, the need for the personal touch is even greater than before, proving the wisdom of the axiom "High Tech requires High Touch." There are many ways to do this, such as having chit-chat before the session begins. If people don't feel connected, they may become dissatisfied and decline participation.
2. **Meet After the Meeting.** Go out after the meeting; this could be a bar, a restaurant, or a fast food establishment. It's a great way to get to know your members better and deepen their relationships.
3. **Plan Fun Events.** Whether it's an annual summer picnic, a Superbowl party, a joint meeting with another Toastmasters club, a scavenger hunt, a "wear your favorite sports team's colors, or a cultural celebration of some sort, ask your members for what special events they would enjoy, ask for volunteers to help plan it, and then have fun with it!

- ❖ Members participate in area, district, and International events.
 1. **TLI Attendance.** Clubs require strong leadership. That leadership starts with the club leadership team attending and participating in the Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) events that all Toastmasters districts host every six months.
 2. **Help with Speech Contests.** It takes many volunteers to run speech contests at all levels. Encourage your members to help out. Contests are Fun!
 3. **Club Hop Internationally.** With over 14,000 clubs in 148 countries, go visit and speak at clubs across the globe. Open “Find a Club” on the T.I. website, pick a country, fill out the “Contact Us” box, and start your international speaking journey! You will be welcomed and entranced by your experience. You might discover that they begin their club meeting with a Toast!
 4. **Help with the Spring Conference and Fall Leadership Symposium.** District 13 hosts these annual events, so there is a never-ending need for volunteers to assist in organizing and running these events. Serve as the Chair, and you can count this activity as your DTM Project.

- ❖ Inter-club events are encouraged.
 1. **Co-Host Marketing Events.** Ask other nearby clubs to participate in a local festival that allows vendors to set up booths. This is a fabulous way to recruit new members and increase awareness of Toastmasters International.
 2. **Co-Host Speech-a-Thons.** Ask other clubs to join your club in conducting special meetings dedicated solely to giving speeches/receiving feedback.
 3. **Invite Other Clubs to Your Radio Theatre.** Radio Theater is fun and a powerful way to help members become more animated and expressive as they read their roles in a script from a radio show broadcast nearly a hundred years ago. *Flash Gordon*, the *Green Hornet*, and *Dragnet* are a few of the many prevalent radio dramas that were immensely popular years ago.
 4. **Host an Online Party, a Summer Picnic, and a Winter Celebration.** Include other clubs in your Area or Division when planning an online Party (charades, “Name That Tune,” trivia, and other games. Invite them for your annual club summer picnic or winter celebration. The more the merrier!

- ❖ Club newsletter/website published and updated regularly.
 1. **Newsletters via Email.** Getting members to open and read their emails is getting tougher and tougher, so spending time creating a newsletter to be sent out via

email is probably not a long-term strategy. More and more clubs are sending out short updates using various social media tools and sending them out weekly.

2. **Newsletters via Post Office.** Believe it or not, members tell us they now prefer to have something in the mailbox, not email! Wow! Poll your members and ask what their preferences are.
3. **Time Capsule.** Did earlier members create a time capsule to be opened on a later day? Clubs in our District were surprised and delighted to discover and open a time capsule. Perhaps your club could create one now for the future.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH: PROGRAM PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

❖ The program and agenda are publicized in advance.

1. **Use the FreeToastHost Meeting Agenda Feature.** There is no need to make this complicated—upload your meeting agenda on your club website and let your members add their project information along with their speaker’s introduction. The website will automatically load the project description and accompanying speech evaluation form to the website. This makes it super easy for the meeting Toastmaster to print out the speaker introductions. There’s also a shortcut key allowing the club secretary to send the meeting agenda to everyone.
2. **Use Google Docs or Excel.** To satisfy the requirement of scheduling meeting roles in advance, some clubs upload the meeting assignment list to Google Docs. V.P./Es in other clubs plan meeting roles out three meetings in advance on an Excel sheet and then create the meeting agenda on the FreeToastHost website. Your members will be able to see their assigned roles 24/7 and prepare for them.
3. **WhatsApp as a Reminder.** With fewer and fewer members actually reading their emails, a more effective way to remind them of upcoming events is needed. Good News! WhatsApp fills the void rather nicely. Ask your members to join your WhatsApp group and then use it for your next club event.
4. **List Your Start Time in Your Time Zone & UTC.** With more and more Toastmasters from abroad joining clubs in your country, be sure to include the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) so your guests arrive on time! Include it on your club website, social media pages, and all other promotional materials.

<https://www.utctime.net/utc-time-zone-converter>

- ❖ Members know program responsibilities and are prepared to carry out all assignments.
 1. **Meeting Role Assignments.** Schedule all session roles at least three or more meetings in advance. This gives members visibility on what is expected from them for upcoming events. Doing this ensures that the shy members will present their first speech and not skip out on it—members from clubs that have adopted this practice report how the speeches and sessions are much better.
 2. **Assign a Minimum of Three Speakers** for each meeting. Clubs that consistently have three speeches are clubs that attract new members and retain current ones.
 3. **Fourth Speaker.** One way to ensure there are at least three formal speeches at every session is to schedule a fourth speaker available to jump in and fill any last-minute vacancies.
 4. **Default Roles.** Using default Functionaries simplifies last-minute changes, reduces wasted time, and facilitates more orderly meetings. Assign each club officer one or more functionary roles (Meeting Toastmaster, General Evaluator, Timer, Grammarian, etc.) as the default functionary. If the assigned Timer is a “no show,” the Sgt-at-Arms, for example, will assume this role.

- ❖ All projects are manual projects.
 1. **Prewritten Speeches.** For Toastmasters who lack enough time to prepare a speech, dozens of already prepared speeches are available online at the Toastmasters.org website using the “Search” button. There are over three dozen speeches from the *Better Speaker*, the *Successful Club*, or *The Leadership Excellence* series.
 2. **“Speech in Your Hip Pocket.”** You are going to be giving a speech soon anyway, so why not go ahead and prepare it? It’s been a long-standing tradition in Toastmasters to encourage every Toastmaster to have a “speech in the hip pocket” to be able to jump in and fill any speaker vacancies. Having members ready to jump in with a speech ensures at least three speakers at every meeting.
 3. **TEDx Talks.** If you are short on speakers, why not play a TEDx Talk found on YouTube? There are many excellent public speaking talks from which we can all benefit.
 4. **Toastmasters World Champions of Public Speaking.** You can also find videos of the Toastmasters World Champions on YouTube. Not only is this a wonderful source of ideas and techniques we might adopt in our speaking, but watching these videos attracts and encourages our guests to join our clubs.

❖ Meetings begin and end on time.

1. **Start and End Meeting One-Minute Before the Published Time.** Perry Smith suggests in his *Rules and Tools for Leaders* that leaders should always start and end every meeting one minute before the published time. Why? To ensure you start and end your meetings on time, of course! Try it!
2. **Keep to Your Published Agenda.** Avoid being accused of a “bait and switch” by sticking to your published agenda as often and practically as possible.
3. **Start and End Meetings on Time.** Respect people’s time by starting on time, even if everyone is absent. As the meeting approaches the published end time, respect people’s time by making necessary adjustments to end on time. Ask if it is okay if you need to run longer.
4. **Have an Honest Conversation.** If your club habitually starts late, deal with the “elephant in the room” by honestly asking why the club can’t begin meetings punctually. Perhaps the club needs to slip the start time by 15 minutes.
5. **“Set the Table.”** Please don’t assume your members know we’re supposed to start and end on time in Toastmasters. Did anyone ever share that tidbit of info with them? We need to describe all of our meeting expectations not only as part of our onboarding but also as a recurring theme. We need to “set the table” [of expectations].
6. **Does Your Club Publicity Have the Correct Start Time?** It’s worth checking and not assuming. Begin with your club website, then look at social media, Bing, etc.

❖ Creative Table Topics® and activities.

1. **Try the Table Topics Spin Wheel.** Like the spin wheel on TV, this can be a fun way to find clever and challenging Table Topic questions.

<https://wordwall.net/resource/3873472/table-topics>

2. **Fortune Cookies.** They are both fun and delicious. They are as great as Table Topics because they are just ordinary things that work as conversation starters and we like to think of Table Topics as conversation starters.
3. **Visit Other TM Clubs for Ideas.** Like to club hop? Then, club hop in Toastmasters by visiting some of the 14,000 clubs we have in 148 countries. You are bound to see some fun ideas you can adopt for your club.

4. **Guinness Book of World Records.** It can offer endless topics for your club's Table Topics section.

❖ Positive and helpful evaluations.

1. **Grammarian and "Laugh Counter."** Instead of just focusing on our speakers' grammar mistakes, praise the funny things they say, the funny stories they share, and the creative expressions they describe. Let's have more laughs!
2. **"Posture Monitor."** More and more Toastmasters clubs across the globe are adding the role of a "Posture Monitor" to provide feedback at the end of the session on how the members were seen by others in the online media: how was their lighting? Camera level? Volume? Attire? Standing? Are there any distracting items behind them? Posture? Astute Toastmasters clubs help their members improve their image to enhance their self-confidence.
3. **Videos of Speeches.** When giving a formal speech, members who record themselves can map their feedback to the speech's exact point.
4. **Evaluators Introduce Speakers.** Here's a new trend in some progressive clubs: Have the evaluator introduce the speaker they are evaluating. This ensures the evaluator and speaker connect before the meeting and enables the speaker to share any areas of concern the evaluator needs to monitor.
5. **Exit Interviews.** Just as H.R. often conducts exit interviews when an employee departs, the club leadership team must seek feedback on why a member is leaving. Their input may reveal a blind spot that can be quickly addressed.
6. **Corporate Club Chartering.** When chartering a new corporate club, include the cost—if any—for the leaders to attend the next two Toastmasters Leadership Institutes/Club Officer Training sessions. This not only covers the price but, more importantly, reinforces that the leaders are expected to participate in these district-sponsored training events.
7. **Use Yoodli.ai.** It's astonishing how many Toastmasters are still not using this transformative AI-driven tool that can dramatically help us cut our filler words in as short as one month. It's also a place where we can do a dry run of our speech to see how we look, hear how we sound, and receive insightful suggestions on improving our speech/presentation.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH: MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH

❖ The club has 20 or more members.

1. **"We Want You Back Campaign."** We know from marketing that selling to current or past customers is easier, but have we considered applying this axiom to our Toastmasters club? Contact your former members and remind them of Toastmasters' features, benefits, and value. Rekindle the memories of why they first joined Toastmasters. Often, when we help stir the emotions that drove them to become a Toastmaster, we can overcome any objections and get them to renew.
2. **Use LinkedIn.** If your Toastmasters club does not have a LinkedIn page, your club is behind. With over 800,000,000 LinkedIn users worldwide, mainly catering to the professional world, there is no better tool than LinkedIn to reach your target audience. Watch this YouTube video to create a LinkedIn page for your club.

https://youtu.be/GMbQVVTwHmo?si=_yPkp886CfRJ1XY

3. **Greater Reach.** For Corporate Clubs. Ask other managers outside your group's area to send employees they believe would benefit from the Toastmasters *Pathways Learning Curriculum* and experience.
4. **Satellite Locations.** For Corporate Clubs. With HR's assistance and the necessary leadership approval, recruit employees from other corporation satellite locations to join yours.
5. **New Employee Recruiting.** For Corporate Clubs. Some clubs enroll all new employees into their Toastmasters group for the first full year to expand their professional communication and leadership skills. The new employee onboarding should include a Toastmasters live presentation reviewing the Features, Benefits, and Value of becoming an active member in the Toastmasters corporate program.
6. **Business (or Employees Resource Groups).** For Corporate clubs. Have members of your corporate Toastmasters club visit other BRG/ERG within your company and promote the club by describing your members' breakthroughs and successes.

❖ Members are retained.

1. **Onboard New Members.** Once a new member joins your club, the VP/M (or Club Treasurer) should schedule two one-hour sessions with the newbie. The first session focuses on Toastmasters in general and then the T.I. website. The second

session focuses on the club website, how to view the upcoming meeting agenda, the electronic files available as a member download, etc.

2. **Assign Mentors.** All club members should have a mentor. How often they meet, what they discuss, and how progress is measured are agreed upon between the mentor and the Protégé (“mentee” is no longer in vogue). The Pathways Mentor Program provides sound and practical guidance on how to serve as a mentor.
3. **Run the Moments of Truth Survey.** Unless you meet with your club members regularly, how do you know what they are experiencing and thinking about? This “member satisfaction” survey effectively garners club performance data. The club leadership can then make adjustments to address any weak areas.
4. **Reignite the Passion.** Effective leaders connect with members who are participating less to understand why. One way to attract inactive or former members is to have them describe why they first joined Toastmasters and attempt to reignite that interest, that passion.

Read “A Handbook for Building and Sustaining Vibrant Toastmasters Programs in Corporations” by Pat Johnson, DTM and Past International President, for further information.

❖ Promotion of club in the community or within its organization.

1. **Speak @ Rotary.** Toastmasters and Rotary formalized an alliance in January 2020. Rotary is nearly four times the size of Toastmasters, meaning there are local Rotary clubs everywhere. Find a club near you at Rotary.org, contact their club leadership, and ask to speak at an upcoming meeting.
2. **Word of Mouth.** Continues to be one of the most effective tools to recruit new members. Start sharing your Toastmasters stories today!
3. **Participate in Local Community Events.** Towns and cities usually have various annual events such as fairs, festivals, parades, etc. Some clubs arrange to have a booth at an annual event and take turns staffing it and distributing materials to those passing by. You could jazz it up by asking your speech contest winners to give their award-winning speech to attract an audience. Try having a humorous or improv demo to draw the crowds in.
4. **Speak at Your Chamber of Commerce.** Every town or city has a local chamber; larger cities have several. All have programs and are looking for speakers. Some only allow chamber members to present, while others are more welcoming. You will need to contact them in mid-summer or so: they start lining up their next year’s programs that early (or earlier!).

❖ Club programs are varied and exciting.

1. **Toastmasters Buddy.** Have members find a “Toastmasters Buddy” to swap assigned roles if they know they will miss a session and, consequently, their ability to fulfill their assigned role.
2. **Spinning Wheel for Table Topics.**

<https://wordwall.net/resource/3873472/table-topics>

❖ Toastmasters sponsoring new members recognized.

1. **Ask Members Who They Have Enrolled.** Since there is no tool to track individual sponsors of new club members, perhaps the easiest way to know who to recognize is to ask your club members. Then, decide how to identify them. A simple but effective way is to create a slide with the pictures of the sponsor and the new member. Show it at the beginning of the club meeting.

❖ Regular membership-building programs.

1. **Promo Video.** Create a short promotional video about your club's Toastmasters program if possible. Ensure there are contact info and session details for those who express interest.
2. **Website.** Use your club website's “Meet Our Members” section as a commercial for your Toastmasters club. Have your members listed why they joined and the impact it is making, and then a plea to enroll: “Want to experience the same growth? Then join our club today!”
3. **Club “Open Houses.”**
 - a. **Market as “Special Events.”** Wonder why your turnout is often poor? Perhaps you're recruiting because you call it an Open House, a dead giveaway. Instead, call it for what it really is—a Special Event.
 - b. **Schedule Three a Year:** sometime during Aug—Sep, Feb—Mar, and May—Jun. Why then? These are the windows of Toastmasters membership drives. Enroll five new members during these 60-day windows, and your club receives a ribbon for your club banner.
 - c. **Make it Special.** There are so many ways, but one way to grow in popularity is to invite speech finalists from other districts, especially winners from different countries. Then, promote this event two or three months in advance.

- d. **More Ideas.** See the last page for more ideas.

Note. Are you looking for funding for your special programs? Look at <https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/> for a database of foundations from whom you can seek donations.

4. **Club Charter Anniversary Celebration**

- a. Why not have an anniversary party each year for your club? Vary the agenda, but use this time to enjoy each other's company, see former members, and recruit new members. There is such energy at parties that it makes others want to join the fun!
- b. Print the anniversary certificate and use an edible image printer for the bakery to place the image on the cake; many bakeries have this type of printer.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH: ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

- ❖ Award applications are immediately submitted to World Headquarters.
 1. **Accountability.** The club president and club vice president for education both receive notices when an award needs to be approved. They should hold each other accountable to ensure awards are processed quickly.

- ❖ Progress charts displayed and maintained.
 1. **Pathways Achievement Chart.** Procure the Toastmasters Pathways Achievement Chart (Item 822, Rev 3/2022) from the T.I. Store and display it at every meeting. This chart is an updated version of one from the legacy curriculum. It was very popular because members could see where they were progressing and how long it had been since they achieved an educational level.
 2. **The "Chad Challenge."** Challenge each other by having a mini-contest or challenge to see who can earn the most awards during a period (every six months or the entire year). Name it after a member of your club. Then, have a progress chart shown once a month during a club meeting.

- ❖ Member achievements are formally recognized with a ceremony.
 1. **Recognition.** For Corporate Clubs. Recognition is crucial in achieving the corporate program's strategic plan goals and objectives and is measured in

Moments of Truth. Ensure bosses know of employees' progress and breakthroughs. Since club Vice Presidents for Education must approve all educational awards, they are in a perfect position to provide updates to the company leadership, and H.R. should place a printed copy of each educational achievement in the employee's file to ensure those reviewing these folders—for promotion, for example—are aware of this self-improvement accomplishment.

2. **C-Suite Encouragement.** For Corporate Clubs. Ask the "C Suite" members to "encourage" participation in all company-sponsored Toastmasters events. Invite them to attend and even speak...maybe they will join! It happens more often than you think.
3. **Annual Reviews.** For Corporate Clubs. Requiring employees to show their progress in the Pathways Learning Experience Curriculum will increase the achievement of educational goals and, more importantly, lead to personal breakthroughs. Some corporate clubs include the employee's participation and progress in Toastmasters as part of the annual performance review process.

❖ Club, district, and international leaders are recognized.

1. **Leaders Identified on the Meeting Agendas.** Some clubs list their club, Area, Division, and District leaders on their meeting agendas. This provides instant recognition when the Area, Division, or District leader attends one of the club's events.
1. **Area Director Visits.** Area Directors are tasked to visit each club at least twice a month. Coordinate their visits in advance and ask them to help celebrate members' accomplishments. Also, ask them to give a Pathways speech and focus the content on either public speaking or Toastmasters. Use these visits as a teaching moment.

❖ Club and member achievements publicized.

1. **Use Social Media.** Many Toastmasters clubs have a Facebook page. Post pictures of those members who just earned an educational award, participated in a speech contest, or achieved some other distinction on your club's social media page (with the consent of the members, of course).
2. **Pics on Club Website.** Are you posting pictures on your club's website of members who have earned an educational award, participated in a speech contest, or achieved another distinction? It's easy to do and encourages guests who visit your club website to consider attending your next meeting. As always, get permission first.

3. **Announce in Emails.** When a member earns an award, the VP/E should work with one of the other club officers to send a brief congratulatory email to the rest of the club.
4. **Announce at Club Meetings.** At the beginning of each meeting, the club president or the vice president for education should recognize all member achievements and awards, including non-Toastmasters accomplishments, if known. Consider printing and presenting applicable certificates of recognition.
5. **Create a Video or Host a Podcast.** For the ambitious, consider creating a series of testimonies (a.k.a., “Toast-a-Monials”) of those who have completed a Path or earned their DTM, asking them to share key takeaways and a “Before and After Toastmasters” to encourage current members and attract new ones. Encourage members to try the Podcast elective in Pathways and fashion the content similarly.
6. **Let the Boss Know.** The Pathways Learning Management System asks the club leader submitting the education award if a letter should be sent to the member’s boss. If the member agrees and provides the address, the boss will be notified.
7. **Give a “Shout Out” at All Social Events.** If your club has any picnic, festival, or club birthday party, use that occasion to recognize all the members who have earned any educational or personal award. We all enjoy the spotlight, so let it shine!

❖ DCP is used for planning and recognition.

1. **“Toast-a-Monials.”** It’s been a long-standing tradition for all members to have a short testimony, which we have renamed “Toast-a-Monial,” on the benefits they have gained from being a Toastmaster. Why not include this on your website's public “Meet Our Members” portion? What a great way to generate interest in your club!

The level at which your members participate in a Toastmasters club often directly reflects the value they perceive they receive from it. If your Toastmasters club is not growing, attendance is declining, and the excitement the club once had has evaporated, members are clearly communicating they believe their time is better spent elsewhere. Using recent Moments of Truth survey results, club leaders must take actions—such as some listed above—to restore the club to one its members will eagerly embrace and support.



MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Club Quality Standards Evaluation



First Impressions

- ▶ Guests greeted warmly and introduced to officers and members
- ▶ Guest book and name tags provided
- ▶ Professionally arranged meeting room
- ▶ Convenient meeting location
- ▶ Guests invited to address the club
- ▶ Guests invited to join

Membership Orientation

- ▶ Formal induction, including presentation of membership pin and manuals
- ▶ Assignment of mentor
- ▶ Education programs and recognition system discussed
- ▶ Learning needs assessed
- ▶ Discussed accommodations for members with disabilities
- ▶ Speaking role(s) assigned
- ▶ Member involved in all aspects of club activities

Fellowship, Variety, and Communication

- ▶ Guests greeted warmly and made welcome
- ▶ Enjoyable, educational meetings planned
- ▶ Regularly scheduled social events
- ▶ Members participate in area, district, and International events
- ▶ Inter-club events encouraged
- ▶ Club newsletter/website published and updated regularly

Program Planning and Meeting Organization

- ▶ Program and agenda publicized in advance
- ▶ Members know program responsibilities and are prepared to carry out all assignments
- ▶ All projects are manual projects
- ▶ Meetings begin and end on time
- ▶ Creative Table Topics® and activities
- ▶ Positive and helpful evaluations

Membership Strength

- ▶ Club has 20 or more members
- ▶ Members are retained
- ▶ Promotion of club in the community or within its organization
- ▶ Club programs varied and exciting
- ▶ Toastmasters sponsoring new members recognized
- ▶ Regular membership-building programs

Achievement Recognition

- ▶ Award applications immediately submitted to World Headquarters
- ▶ Progress charts displayed and maintained
- ▶ Member achievements formally recognized with ceremony
- ▶ Club, district, and International leaders recognized
- ▶ Club and member achievements publicized
- ▶ DCP is used for planning and recognition

www.toastmasters.org

© 2018 Toastmasters International. All rights reserved. Toastmasters International, the Toastmasters International logo and all other Toastmasters International trademarks and copyrights are the sole property of Toastmasters International and may be used only by permission.

Printed in USA

Rev. 12/2019 Item 290B



www.toastmasters.org

Special Events (“Open House”)

Best Practices

- Don’t market your open house as an “Open House”
 - It’s too obvious that you are recruiting
 - Instead, call it a “Special Event”
 - Or, “A Showcase Meeting”
- For your “Special Event”
 - Make it special!
 - Invite a great speaker(s)
 - Why not invite a past winner of a District-wide speech contest?
 - Why not invite two or three to give demo speeches?
 - Why not invite one or two winners from another country?
 - Doing so will make it truly special
 - Consider a special program
 - Invite a comedy team
 - Invite one of the D-13 Improv Masters (Nate, Emily, others)
 - Do something else to make it an extraordinary event
- Expect a no-show rate of 50 percent or more of those *who said they would be there*
 - If you want to have 20 attendees show up at your Open House, do the math: how many will you need to invite?
 - At least 40 or more
 - You can see why this is such a heavy lift
- Have a “Rent-a-Crowd”
 - Invite a dozen or more current Toastmasters to attend to help fill the room
 - They are your “Rent-a-Crowd”
 - Make it clear you are not asking them to join—just be part of the guest audience
 - They should not make it obvious they are Toastmasters
 - The whole purpose is to make actual guests “feel strength in numbers”

- DTM Sharon Joseph succeeded in attracting 21 individuals who became charter members of the Laurel Highlands Club in Connellsville
 - And she did it in about eight weeks! Wow!
 - How? She went door-to-door to the businesses in the community, asked everyone, and stopped many people she did not know to generate interest. Congrats, Sharon!

- Consider having a multi-club event to build numbers and make the event easier to organize
 - State College does this
 - Five clubs pool their resources once a year for an event held at the downtown public library
 - They had 75+ attend in 2019
 - Most were current members
 - But many were not
 - Several of the guests joined a club that worked best for their schedules

- Ask for the sale while you are guests are there
 - Virda always did this
 - No wonder she helped take Penn Hills from 3 members to 20 in a few months!
 - Invite your guests to join and handle the enrollment right there, at that moment

- Consider varying the program
 - Pingers Club does this
 - Part of the meeting is run like a shortened demo meeting with a Meeting Toastmaster., two speakers, Table Topics, etc.
 - But then, they had a very brief panel discussion on how to overcome the fear of speaking in public
 - They next summarized how Toastmasters helps with this
 - Note they do not “push” T.M.—they push an actual tip that attendees can immediately apply
 - This whets the appetite for more T.M. experiences
 - How do you say, “New member”?
 - Some clubs abandon a formal program in favor of just having a social meeting
 - This is an excellent way to get to know each other and your guests!
 - Use a catchy title: “Crush Your Fear of Public Speaking.”
 - Try “Friends Bringing Friends.”

- Schedule during Membership Drives
 - Sometime during Aug—Sep, Feb—Mar, and May—Jun
 - Why then?
 - These are the windows of Toastmasters membership drives

- Enroll five new members during these 60-day windows, and your club receives a ribbon for your club banner
- Invite your past members
 - They joined the club for a reason...
 - ...Rekindle that reason!
- Start your planning early
 - Too many clubs wait until a few weeks before the event to start their planning
 - Then they complained they had a poor turnout...
- Send out reminders of the event the day before
 - And text messages hours before...people are busy and sometimes forget!
- Send “evites,” not “emails”
 - Fewer and fewer people read routine emails
 - But they will read an Evite (just don’t send too many!)
- Don’t forget that FreeToastHost, which hosts the vast majority of the worldwide Toastmasters club website, has a tab for former members as well as guests and prospects
 - Invite them!
- T.I. World Headquarters can provide a list of previous members
 - Must be requested by the District Director
 - Called “The 5-Year Non-Renewing List,” it is a treasure-trove of contacts
 - Currently (2024), T.I. says they can only look back one year
 - But ask anyway!

