

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | MARCH 2024

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



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Make an Impact by Mentoring

Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, founder of Toastmasters International, once said:

We realize that the two most important factors in Toastmasters are mentoring and evaluations. There is no doubt that if these two are done well, your club will be filled with spark plugs ready to fire upon request. Mentoring and evaluations create enthusiasm, and once you light that fire the only thing it needs is some kindling.

Ralph Smedley was a smart man.

What about you? Do you want a mentor, or do you have one? Are you a mentor to someone else?

Recently a club member asked me to mentor him for a specific project. Together we discussed the principles of effective mentoring.

1. Be available

Like any relationship, mentoring requires you make time for each other. With a new member, you might spend time getting to know the person before exploring and setting goals. With someone you know, you can dive right in.

2. Set boundaries

Setting boundaries around your availability, clarifying your preferred methods of communicating, and explaining the limits of what you can and can't do matter equally whoever your mentee is.

3. Listen effectively

Active listening is key. When mentoring, it is vital to hear what the other person says, check your understanding, help your mentee test their boundaries, and reflect back on what you heard.

4. Promote independent thinking

While you can give your mentee suggestions, the aim is to point them toward their own conclusion. My mentee wanted to be creative, so we discussed different formats to approach. I could see his reaction but deliberately didn't express a preference. You want to release your mentee to the world of possibilities and help them push their own boundaries.

If you're interested in becoming a mentor, the Pathways Mentor Program has plenty of valuable tools, such as a mentee success plan, a self-assessment, and an evaluation of the mentoring experience by both mentee and mentor. (Note that this program is distinct from the Level 2 "Introduction to Toastmasters Mentoring" project.)

Moving beyond our comfort zone shows us possibilities and grows our skills and confidence. If you don't have a mentor, ask your club leaders for help finding one. If you've never mentored or haven't mentored for a while, I encourage you to choose the mentoring project. Mentoring can be just for a season, just for a project, or for an indefinite time period. However long it lasts, mentoring matters because mentoring makes a difference.

Morag Mathieson, DTM
2023-2024 International President

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Snapshot



Over 100 members of District 80 (Singapore) gather to celebrate Toastmasters International's 99th anniversary in October 2023. The celebration also included recognizing club renewals and member achievements.



Traveling Toastmaster



FOLUSHO ALAMINA of Port Harcourt, Rivers, Nigeria, overlooks the Rocky Mountains in Banff, Alberta, Canada.



LUKAS CALAFELL of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, holds the digital magazine while visiting Machu Picchu in Peru.

Win Them Back!

Re-engaging members in your Toastmasters club.

By Diane Windingland, DTM

You've seen the signs: empty seats at club meetings and decreased participation. When renewal time comes around, some members don't renew. As club leaders watch membership numbers drop, they plan ways to recruit new ones. It can feel a little like trying to fill a continually leaking bucket. But there are ways to fix the leak. Or at least reduce the outflow.

While some attrition is inevitable due to members moving or having schedule conflicts, there can be other reasons that members leave. Do you know why they leave? Do you try to win them back?

Reach Out

Does your club reach out to members who don't attend meetings, letting them know they were missed?

If your club doesn't already have a member communication plan, create one that includes contacting members who miss a meeting (without communicating their absence ahead of time) or if their participation wanes (most obviously, if they stop giving speeches). The Vice President Membership often follows up with these members, but mentors or other members can also do so.

Phone calls, video meetings, or in-person communication can be most effective, as tone of voice and facial expressions convey empathy and care more than text-based, asynchronous communication.

When reaching out, tread lightly. Open a dialogue with empathy. Ask about their initial goals in joining Toastmasters and if those have changed. Inquire about their current needs and how the club can support them. Remember, the key is to listen, not to pressure.

Some phrases you can use:

- “[Name], we missed you at the meeting yesterday.”
- “I always enjoy [something you enjoy about the member or their participation].”
- “I hope to see you at the next meeting.”
- “Do you have challenges with attending or a change in your schedule?” (Gently probe for reasons why they didn't attend; if they don't offer a reason, try to determine if there are any ongoing issues.)

If they indicate that the meetings aren't a fit for them anymore, try some of these phrases:

- “What were your goals when you joined?”
- “Have your goals changed? Are there new goals we can help you achieve?”
- “Is there anything we're missing?”
- “How can we help you get the most out of your membership?”
- “What would need to change [for you to stay/participate more]?”

Rekindle Interest

Rekindle interest by reminding members of what drew them to Toastmasters. John Barrett, of Toastmasters On A STick (TOAST) in Saint Paul, Minnesota, suggests keeping former members on the weekly email list to regularly remind them of the club and inviting them to share their Toastmasters testimonials in the newsletter.

“Keep in touch with members who've dropped out,” adds Harry Wolfe, a member of Audible Talkers Toastmasters in Phoenix, Arizona. “Welcome them to attend as guests.”

For many former members, timing is an issue. Priorities change and can lead people to seek out Toastmasters again.

“My professional career was the reason I left and the reason I came back,” says Accredited Speaker Stephanie Angelo. “I left in 2004 because I was starting out as a professional speaker, and the time it took me to create Toastmasters speeches conflicted with what I was doing as a professional speaker. I didn't have time to do them both. I came back in 2017 because I could use Toastmasters speeches as opportunities to practice short segments of my speeches for clients.”

10 Strategies for Engagement (and Re-Engagement)

In addition to checking in with members, you can be proactive in keeping them engaged by taking the following actions:



Re-engaging members is a continual process of adaptation, communication, and recognition.

9 Encourage participation by all members at every meeting.

Speaking of Table Topics, ensure that the Topicsmaster knows to first call on people who do not have speaking roles in the meeting. Try to have this goal: Everyone speaks at every meeting. “Make sure Table Topics is suitable for both online and in-person attendees,” says Abrahamson. “Make everyone feel included in meetings.”

10 Recognize accomplishments inside and outside of Toastmasters.

Encourage members to tell stories about how Toastmasters has helped them achieve professional or personal goals. Your club could highlight a member at a meeting, on your website, on social media, or in a club newsletter.

Know When to Let Go

Sometimes, despite best efforts, members may choose to leave. Respecting this decision is crucial, as forcing engagement can be counter-productive.

“If your club can’t be what they need, encourage them to visit other clubs,” says Andrea Tantillo, DTM, of Timmons Talkers in Houston, Texas. “Even though we are all structured similarly, club culture can vary from club to club, and what may be a good fit for some may not be the best fit for others.”

Ultimately, re-engaging members in Toastmasters is about creating a community where each member feels valued and fulfilled. It’s a continual process of adaptation, communication, and recognition. By focusing on these areas, clubs can retain members and inspire them to grow and contribute actively to their club and the Toastmasters community.

Diane Windingland, DTM, is a presentation coach from Spring, Texas, and a member of three clubs: *Frankly Speaking Toastmasters in Spring, Texas*, and *PowerTalk Toastmasters and Readership Toastmasters*, both in Minnesota. Learn more at virtualsepeechcoach.com.

1 Vary meeting elements.

Consider adding roles, such as Quiz Master (asking questions about the speeches or other aspects of the meeting) or Joke Master, to engage more members in roles and inject fun in the meeting. Also, consider implementing a few unique meeting themes or [other engaging formats](#), like a backward meeting.

2 Address member needs.

“Giving them something today that they can use tomorrow is very helpful,” says Barrett, the Minnesota member. “Most people look at things from a ‘what’s in it for me?’ mentality, so you have to provide things that are ‘in it for them.’”

3 Promote Toastmasters resources.

Include quick tips about Toastmasters resources in meetings. Show how members can get even more value from their membership. For example, demonstrate [Yoodli](#) or how to submit a level completion in Pathways.

4 Conduct a Member Interest Survey annually.

A [survey](#) can reveal members’ goals and get their input on club quality characteristics.

5 Give them a mentor.

Match mentors with new members, as well as members who may need extra guidance to get the most out of their membership or to meet a specific goal. A [mentor](#) can be a significant catalyst for re-engagement. And being a mentor can make a longtime member feel valued. “I enjoy using my skills to help others,” says Sharon Abrahamson,

DTM, who lives in Sweden. Abrahamson left Toastmasters but returned to the organization during the pandemic and participated in several online clubs based in Israel, ultimately joining Jerusalem Toastmasters. “I felt I was useful. I felt I was needed.”

6 Provide meaningful engagement.

Make everyone feel valued and needed. “No matter how small the task (e.g., distributing name badges, assembling banner stand), everyone has ‘skin in the game’ and feels important,” says Tammy Revesz, DTM, of Glass City Toastmasters in Toledo, Ohio.

7 Keep online attendees engaged in hybrid meetings.

Experiment with your [hybrid setup](#) to ensure online attendees don’t feel less important than in-person attendees. Make sure microphones and cameras are set up so that they can hear and see all participants and be heard and seen as well.

8 Create opportunities to foster friendships.

It’s hard to leave a club when you have built [friendships](#). Consider having time before or after a meeting to allow people to chit-chat. Hold social events regularly, in person or online. For virtual meetings, try having discussion-style Table Topics® in which breakout rooms are created for two or three people to discuss a topic for about 10 minutes, with one person from each group reporting on their topic to the larger group. This method allows people to get to know each other better while still practicing interpersonal and impromptu communication skills.

From Speaking Exercises to Cardio Class

How Toastmasters helped me become a better fitness instructor.

By Hongjin Du

I was standing on the stage in a fitness studio with another instructor. My mind went completely blank as I stared at the faces in the crowd. The script I had memorized disappeared from my brain. I started doing what my muscles could still remember, completely out of sync with the music, while uttering the counts of “one, two, three, four.” After what seemed like an eternity, the music ended, and the main instructor took over. Finally, I was able to take a deep breath.

This was during my first co-teaching experience as a soon-to-be Les Mills Bodystep instructor. For the last two years, I had fallen in love with this high-energy, music-filled group fitness class. It helped me lose weight, keep fit, and stay happy. I wanted to become an instructor so more people could enjoy this fun class.

At this point, I had already completed the initial instructor training. The last requirement was to record an assessment video teaching a full 60-minute class with 12 tracks of music in front of a live group of participants. But after that first class, I knew I had a long way to go.

My Toastmasters friend Jessica Lang was in the class that day. As the former President of my home club, Shanghai Xujiahui Toastmasters Club in Shanghai, China, she congratulated me and compared my teaching experience to an Ice Breaker speech. “Just like when you go onstage for the first time to give your Ice Breaker, things may happen that aren’t what you had expected. But at least you had the courage to take the first step, and I look forward to your next class!”

Her Toastmasters analogy struck me. Maybe there are more similarities between Toastmasters and fitness class coaching. Why not use what I learned on the Toastmasters stage and apply it to the stage in the fitness studio?

As a seven-year Toastmasters member, one of the first things I learned was that to conquer the fear of public speaking, we need to take every opportunity to go onstage. It’s important to start in smaller meeting roles, like the



Hongjin Du

Why not use what I learned on the Toastmasters stage and apply it to the stage in the fitness studio?

Ah-Counter, then gradually move up to Toastmaster of the Day. Applying that same principle to Bodystep teaching, I asked different instructors if I could shadow their class and later co-teach with them, starting with the warm-up, then moving up to the harder cardio workout.

In Toastmasters, we improve through feedback from our evaluators, so I asked the instructors for advice after class. Their evaluations were a good mix of encouragement and constructive feedback.

Another thing I learned in Toastmasters is that I need to record and watch my speech to

improve. So I recorded every fitness class and watched the video. At first it was harder than watching my speeches. It was glaringly obvious when the participants were not following me. I discovered beats I missed, distracting movements, and places where I needed to be clearer.

As time passed, watching the videos became easier. More and more participants could follow my instructions, and I became more confident. Eventually, I practiced all 12 of the required tracks, and two months after that first teaching experience, I recorded my assessment with a group of instructors and Toastmasters friends. Two weeks later, I became a certified Bodystep instructor.

Recently, I finished teaching my 100th solo class. It is still a learning experience. I discovered there are more things in Toastmasters that can be applied to teaching Bodystep, such as how to assess the audience and adapt to their fitness levels, and how to use vocal variety and body language to make the class engaging.

My club officer experience also helped me. I started planning the combination of tracks to teach in each class, much like I planned the club meeting programs as the Vice President Education. And like the Club President does, I strive to create a positive and supportive environment for the participants.

Members from my club now visit my classes. It’s those moments that I feel proud to use what I learned in Toastmasters to make Bodystep enjoyable for them and others. If you find yourself entering a new stage, whether it’s a stage in a fitness studio or a stage in life, think about what you’ve learned on the Toastmasters stage. You might be pleasantly surprised by how many things you can apply.

Hongjin Du is a member of Shanghai Xujiahui Toastmasters Club in Shanghai, China. She is a human resources professional by day and a group fitness class instructor at night.

Help! Our Club Needs Members

Discover where to find members in your community.

By Bill Brown, DTM

Some clubs seem to add members easily, while other clubs struggle. I've seen this in big cities, where there are millions of residents, and in small towns, where the cows outnumber the people.

Three years ago, I moved to one of those remote, small towns. Most of our residents are ranchers, mechanics, and heavy equipment operators. As you might guess, they don't do a lot of public speaking. Our town does not have large corporations either. Perhaps your situation is similar.

The question is: If you are struggling in the membership department, where can you find potential members? Are you forced to be a small club forever? Where can you find those hidden prospects who need Toastmasters? Let me make some suggestions.

While most of your locals may be in professions that do not speak or lead, there are opportunities to find members that are common to each town, regardless of size.

The first place to look is your friends and coworkers. Who do you know? And don't overlook former club members. Two of our recent new members are returning members. Invite them to visit an upcoming meeting.

Another characteristic of every town is a local government. Not only do you have people in political office who may need to work on their speaking skills, there are usually a number of boards and commissions that oversee the various functions in the community. Our county alone has 24 boards, not to mention the city and local college commissions. On top of that, you have candidates for many of the offices who will have to speak as part of their campaign. Are they ready? Or could they benefit from club membership? We have several members from this segment.

Your local political parties may have meetings where you can meet the potential candidates. Perhaps a visit is in order.

While your community may not have a strong corporate base, it does have individuals that



While most of your locals may be in professions that do not speak or lead, there are opportunities to find members that are common to each town, regardless of size.

fall into the professional category. This would include certified public accountants (CPAs), financial planners, insurance brokers, and others. Some of them speak at luncheons to market their services. If they do, are they good enough speakers to gain clients? And perhaps there are a number of service providers that would speak, if they were confident enough in their abilities.

Who prepares your taxes? If you use a local tax consultant, are they interested in checking out your club? If not, who do they know? What about your local real estate agents? They are not shy about advertising, so they should be easy to contact.

Just about every community has at least one service organization that meets on a regular

basis. Not only is this a source of contacts for membership, but most groups also have a speaker at each meeting. If you attend, you will find out who is out there speaking in your community—and which ones really need your help. Also, you could be a speaker yourself, showcasing what your club has to offer.

And are you aware that Toastmasters has an [alliance](#) with Rotary International? There is already a connection there. How can you take advantage of this relationship?

Your community may also have one or more networking organizations, where business professionals and entrepreneurs connect with one another and help each other find leads. Sometimes, members stand and give a short pitch at each meeting. Again, which ones need some help?

And, finally, each community has some businesses, no matter how small. Most prominent among them are financial institutions. The husband of one of our Toastmasters club officers works at a local bank. The bank is building a new facility which, when ready, will boast a state-of-the-art conference room. We are exploring the possibility of moving our meeting space there, which would provide two benefits. It would be closer to the city center, making our location more convenient to many more people. And it would also enable us to plug into the personnel at the bank, providing another avenue for recruiting.

No matter how limited your options may seem, you have a lot more than may appear at first glance. All it takes is a little creative thinking and a willingness to reach out to those who could benefit from your club. From what I have seen, a lot of people need Toastmasters. Let's go help them.

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach in Gillette, Wyoming. He is a member of Energy Capital Toastmasters in Gillette. Learn more at billbrownspeechcoach.com.



Speaking to a Distracted Audience

Classic tips and unique twists to disengage from digital distractions.

By Elizabeth Danziger

While giving a presentation to a group of sales representatives, I noticed their phones seemed to have a magnetic effect on their hands. Some seemed to be taking notes on their computers—but I had no way to tell if they were memorializing my brilliant ideas or catching up on their emails. I was speaking to them, ironically, about communication. They were genuinely interested in my topic, but they found it hard to concentrate. They were a distracted audience.

Distraction is here to stay. Research shows that people distract themselves every few seconds. Whether they are daydreaming or feeling the urge to grab their phone, they are not fully in the moment. The universal presence of smartphones and tablets provides an endless supply of diversions, ranging from emails to articles to that old standby, Candy Crush. Gone are the days when, as in the Lincoln-Douglas political debates in 1858, the audience sat attentively for hours while each speaker presented his case. Now we are lucky to get someone to go 10 minutes without looking at their phone. So how can we capture the audience before they pick up their device?

Classic Ideas for Capturing Focus

Plan your speeches to anticipate audience distractibility and use these tips to increase the likelihood that your audience will pay attention.

Put your main point first. People are paying the most attention at the beginning of your message. Start with a hook that grabs their attention, such as a question, statistic, anecdote, or quotation. Then deliver the main message within the first two minutes to ensure it is received. Don't start with history or background. Cut to the chase.

Use clear, simple language. If you simplify your speech to a primary school level, people will find you easier to understand. Even if you know that all your listeners are college grads, if you speak at a secondary-grade level (e.g., 12th grade), they are likely to disengage.

Language level is a combination of sentence length and vocabulary. Vary the length and rhythm of your sentences but keep your average length low. Use short, familiar words in place of vocabulary that you think will make you sound smart. Instead of *utilize*, say *use*. Instead of *taking it under consideration*, say *considering*. Don't say *prior to*; instead, say *before*.

How Can We Retain Our Audience's Attention?

Even if you've prepared a knockout speech, your listeners are likely to feel twinges of distraction. Given the atmosphere we live in, how can we retain our audience's attention?

Digital Detox

Most people check their smartphones every 10 to 15 minutes, meaning they spend about five hours a day interacting with their phones. You hold a tiny computer in your hand, and you give it almost half of your attention, assuming you have a 12-hour waking day. These are devices that did not exist 25 years ago but now they rule our lives.

Dr. Anastasia Dedyukhina studies digital distraction and its effects on learning and productivity. She notes that leaping from stimulus to stimulus without pausing to process what we've learned is contrary to the brain's evolutionary path for retaining information. Dashing from email to email or text to text short-circuits the organic process of integrating information.

Smartphone distraction has become a source of anxiety and depression. Experts now recommend that people who are essentially addicted to their smartphones do a "digital detox"—a period when they are unplugged from digital devices.

To do so, first identify how much time you are currently spending on your phone. You can log your phone time for a few days or just pay attention to how frequently you check your phone.

Next, set a goal. Some people choose a certain time period, such as one or two days, to completely swear off phone usage. Others suggest reducing phone time to one hour a day.

Before you start your detox, think about what usually triggers you to check your phone. Try to eliminate or reduce your triggering situations or moments. Decide what you will do instead of checking your phone. Perhaps going for a walk or talking to someone in person would nourish your spirit.

After you finish your detox, reflect on how you feel. Are you less distracted? Less anxious? Less worried about missing out on some vital Instagram post? People who regularly take breaks from technology report higher levels of focus and calm.

You might think you can't live without your smartphone, but humans survived just fine for over 100,000 years without regularly checking email, scrolling social media, or just playing online games. You can do it, too!

—Elizabeth Danziger

First, realize that people pay attention to what they find valuable. Your audience will make a snap judgment when you begin speaking, deciding whether your material will benefit them. Demonstrate unequivocally that listening to you is the best thing they will do all day.

Even after you have won your audience members' attention, you will have to work to keep them engaged. Marianne Fleischer, speechwriter and presentation skills coach at Fleischer Communication, has decades of experience helping presenters lasso the wandering listener. She points out that most people have an "automatic guessing machine"—they believe they know what you are going to say, so they don't have to listen to you. She suggests that speakers disrupt this automatic process. Here are a few ways to re-engage your listeners.

- **Ask a big question.** Challenge your listeners by asking them a riveting question such as, "Why do you think we're here today?" or "What do you think is the biggest cause of business failures in our society today?" Get them talking and let them share a bit of their own experience—they will then be more likely to listen to you.
- **Tell a killer anecdote** tailored to the audience: Always have two great, targeted anecdotes ready to go in case you need to bring back a distracted crowd.
- **Change something.** If you're standing up, sit down. If you're sitting, pop up from your chair. Walk around the room. Walk to the other side of the podium. Say something funny. Surprise them.

These tips will help you keep your listeners on their toes. When they don't know whether you're about to pop a question or call on them, they will be more alert.

Speaking to an Online Audience

The tips listed above will help you create powerful presentations, but challenges linger when speaking online. For example, it's frustrating when people keep their cameras turned off. Speaking to a sea of black boxes does not inspire great performance.

If many people in your audience have turned off their video, point out that it is more

respectful to other group members if people turn on their cameras. If you are a manager or instructor, you can say that having the camera on is required. When I present online writing training, I always call on people without cameras to answer questions first.

When people work on multiple screens as you speak, it's tough to keep their attention. Multitasking is rampant despite research showing that it ultimately makes people less productive. People *feel* more productive when they are juggling six balls in the air, and they may be unwilling to let their other work wait while they listen to you. If I see someone looking down at their phone or at another screen, I call on them,

People pay attention to what they find valuable.

asking them to answer a question or comment on something I have just said. We need to keep bringing them back to our presentation.

By accepting that some people are bound to be distracted during your presentation and preparing to deal with distractions, you will find it easier to keep your cool when someone in your audience pulls their phone out of their pocket and starts scrolling while you're speaking. Provide solid value, put toes in your voice, and keep the audience on its toes: You'll win back your listeners' attention.

Elizabeth Danziger is founder of *Work-talk Communications Consulting*, a Los Angeles, California-based company that teaches effective writing. She is the author of four books, including *Get to the Point!* 2nd edition. For more information and to sign up for *Writamins* monthly writing tips, visit worktalk.com.

When Women Speak—Listen

Some standout female orators draw on qualities typically associated with their gender.

By Caren S. Neile, Ph.D.

Years ago, my father-in-law consulted a hearing specialist. His problem: discerning women's voices—which the doctor said could easily be remedied. Dad replied, "No need!"

He was joking. But historically, women's efforts to be heard have too often been stymied. That situation has changed, as people recognize that many female orators are extraordinarily effective. One reason for this success may be that they frequently use rhetorical devices that highlight rather than neutralize the qualities traditionally associated with their gender.

In a *Harvard Business Review* article, Judy B. Rosener noted that while early female leaders used to adopt the managerial styles of men, the next wave used techniques much closer to home.

"They are succeeding because of—not in spite of—certain characteristics generally considered to be 'feminine' and inappropriate in leaders," she wrote in the 1990 article. These stereotypical female traits include cooperation, emotion, empathy, nurturance, humility, and connection.

Why do these qualities prevail when women enter a so-called man's world? Perhaps because they tend to reflect their audience's expectations for them. Or maybe because they reflect ways of being that come naturally to many—although by no means all—women.

Let's look at how these qualities played out with a couple of famous female leaders on the global stage.

Queen Elizabeth II

As England's longest-reigning monarch, Queen Elizabeth II rarely spoke to her country apart from her annual Christmas speeches. A notable exception was her coronation in 1953, when the new queen remarked, "Although my experience is so short and my task so new, I have in my parents and grandparents an example which I can follow with certainty and with confidence." She added that she would always remember the people's love and affection, for which she thanked them "with a full heart."

Thus, Elizabeth acknowledged her familial and public relationships. Her use of humility and feeling echo the work of groundbreaking social theorist Carol Gilligan and others regarding the differing tendencies toward empathy and relationships between women and men. (Gilligan maintained that women prioritize an "ethics of care" revolving around interpersonal relationships, while men's moral code is tied more to an "ethics of justice.")



Queen Elizabeth II spoke about Princess Diana's death in a 1997 address.

Queen Elizabeth II understood that the British public need their queen to behave like a caring, grieving grandmother as well as a monarch.

In 1997, Elizabeth briefly addressed the nation after her much-criticized silence on the death of Princess Diana. She responded to her detractors early on, explaining: "We have all been trying in our different ways to cope. It is not easy to express a sense of loss, since the initial shock is often succeeded by a mixture of other feelings, disbelief, incomprehension, anger, and concern for those who remain."

With these few words, the queen defended her silence as an understandable, emotional reaction. She then reinforced her closeness to the tragedy through her grandchildren. Also, certainly aware of the headlines about the poor relationship she had with her former daughter-in-law, she

declared that she shared the public's admiration for Diana:

"So what I say to you now as a queen and as a grandmother, I say from my heart: First, I want to pay tribute to Diana myself. She was an exceptional and gifted human being. In good times and bad, she never lost her capacity to smile and laugh, nor to inspire others with her warmth and kindness. I admired and respected her—for her energy and commitment to others, and especially for her devotion to her two boys."

Elizabeth understood that the British public need their queen to behave like a caring, grieving grandmother as well as a monarch. The following day, when the coffin passed her at Princess Diana's funeral, she bowed her head. That was a crucial gesture, observed *The Washington Post*: "The woman accustomed to being bowed to by the world now lowered her head and humbly honored the princess. More than anything, it was the bow that broke the fever of anger directed at the queen and her family."

Once more, when Elizabeth displayed traditional female humility and love, she prevailed.

Angela Merkel

Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany from 2005 to 2021, received resounding applause during her 2019 commencement address at Harvard University. Her speech highlighted the qualities of cooperation and connection, stressing the importance of breaking down barriers, and of countries—and individuals—working together.

She began her 35-minute address on a personal note, citing a quote from an iconic German writer while discussing her own post-graduation life and the world she came from.

"In all beginnings dwells a magic force for guarding us and helping us to live.' These words by Herman Hesse inspired me when I completed my physics degree at the age of 24," Merkel said. "That was back in 1978. The world was divided into East and West, and it was in the grips of the Cold War. I grew up in East Germany, in the GDR [the German Democratic Republic], the part of my country which was not free at that time, in a dictatorship."

She next spoke about how the East German government, afraid that people would flee, built the Berlin Wall, and she grew up behind the infamous Iron Curtain. In this way, she demonstrated another point that Rosener made in her *Harvard Business Review* article: how, unlike

men, female leaders tend not to draw a line between business and private life.

When Merkel then addressed a painful topic for her American audience, Germany's Nazi past, she did so with humility and an eye toward cooperation and peace.

"My country, Germany," she said, "had brought unimaginable suffering on Europe and the world. The victors and the defeated could easily have remained irreconcilable for many years, but instead, Europe overcame centuries-old conflicts. A peaceful order based on common values rather than national strength emerged."

Finally, the then-chancellor challenged listeners to act on the concerns of their generation, such as the digital transformation and climate issues, once more emphasizing cooperation.

"Therefore, we can and must do everything humanly possible to truly master this challenge to humankind," she remarked. "It's still possible. However, each and every one of us must play our part."



Angela Merkel, then the German chancellor, delivered a well-received commencement address at Harvard University in 2019.

Merkel's final words in the speech struck an optimistic note: "Above all, nothing can be taken for granted. Everything is possible." And for female speakers, at last, everything is.

Caren S. Neile, Ph.D., writes frequently for the magazine and has presented at three Toastmasters International conventions. Visit her at carenneile.com.

Celebrating International Women's Day

March 8 is [International Women's Day](#). The annual celebration marks the many achievements of women around the world. It also points to challenges they face in their daily lives, particularly when it comes to equity and opportunity.

Spotlighting the benefits of diversity, the 2024 theme is "Inspire Inclusion." Women's networks, companies, educational institutions, and other organizations will hold a variety of festivities for International Women's Day, which first began in 1911. These events include conferences, exhibitions, concert performances, speakers, and online digital programs.

When it comes to women in Toastmasters, there's an awful lot to celebrate right now. The organization's top three International Officers for 2023–2024 are women: International President Morag Mathieson, DTM; International President-Elect Radhi Spear, DTM; and First Vice President Aletta Rochat, DTM. In addition, women captured the top three spots in the 2023 World Championship of Public Speaking®: Jocelyn Tyson, first place; Nisha Shivram, DTM, second place; and Maryam Ganni, third place.

On top of all that, Toastmasters' 2023 Accredited Speakers—the organization's highest-earned designation—were also all women: Stephanie Angelo, Dale Rees-Bevan, DTM, and Verity Price, DTM (the 2021 World Champion of Public Speaking).

—Paul Sterman



TOP TIPS FOR Membership Building

20 ideas to engage your members and gain new ones.

By Laura Mishkind

It's no secret that going to your first meeting can be the scariest part of joining Toastmasters. That is, assuming you even make it through the door. Toastmasters around the world have made the confession that their first meeting didn't attract them to a club.

Lark Doley, DTM, 2018–2019 International President, was scared away after being forced to participate in Table Topics®. Brand specialist and

professional speaker Amanda Mae Gray says that she never even attended her first meeting because she couldn't find the room and was too scared to walk in late. Both are prime examples of why it is vital to create a welcoming atmosphere for guests—step one in building membership.

Growing your club doesn't just happen, it takes preparation. First, take an objective look at your club and identify any areas for improvement. Conduct the [Moments of Truth](#) evaluation to examine your club's performance in a few areas. Once you're confident that your current members are satisfied, consider what steps to take to entice guests to visit your club and ultimately, join. There are many ways to do so, and here are 20 that might be worth trying.



1 Host an open house.

The most tried-and-true way of attracting new members is to [host an open house](#), ideally at least once a year. It's a prime opportunity to have guests visit and for your club to put on the best display of what Toastmasters has to offer. Advertise the event in your community, online, and everywhere you can to ensure a large turnout. Don't forget to ask the guests to join the club at the end of the meeting!

2 Have a bring-a-friend challenge.

Encourage every member to invite a friend to a meeting. This could mean everyone brings a friend to one particular meeting, or each member brings one guest to a different meeting.

3 Respond to Find A Club inquiries.

A recent survey of prospective members uncovered that 77% of those who never visited a club didn't attend a meeting for one reason: They never received a response after contacting a club. Be sure that the email address listed on [Find a Club](#) is accurate and up to date. Then the Vice President Membership

or other officer should regularly check the inbox and respond to any inquiries received. Try creating a template to make the job even simpler.

4 Create an onboarding process to welcome new members.

Attracting guests is important, but once they've converted to members, it's vital to [get them up to speed](#) as soon as possible. Create a plan for what officer will complete each task for the new member. Who will introduce them to a mentor?

Who will add them to easy-Speak or FreeToastHost and give them a tutorial of the platform? Who will walk them through Pathways and help them navigate Base Camp? Remember, this is all new to a new member, so it's important to explain every detail—don't assume they'll just pick it up.

5 Add testimonials to your website.

One of the best ways to showcase the members of your club is by posting testimonials on your website and social media. Ask a few members to share why they joined Toastmasters and what they have gained from being part of the club. Share their short stories with a photo of the individual to draw guests in.

Membership Building Programs

Did you know Toastmasters International sponsors three [membership building programs](#) for clubs? Read on to learn about these challenges and their deadlines.

Smedley Award

To qualify to receive a Smedley Award ribbon, named in honor of Toastmasters founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, to display on your club's banner, add five new, dual, or reinstated members between August 1 and September 30. Applications and payments for members who join during the time period must be received at World Headquarters or online no later than September 30.

Talk Up Toastmasters

The Talk Up Toastmasters membership program encourages members to invite guests to a special meeting where they can learn about Toastmasters' benefits. After this event, add five new, dual, or reinstated members between February 1 and March 31, to receive a Talk Up Toastmasters ribbon to display on the club's banner. These applications and payments must be received at World Headquarters or online no later than March 31.

Beat the Clock

To finish the year on schedule and with record numbers, add five new, dual, or reinstated members between May 1 and June 30—the end of the Toastmasters program year—to participate in the Beat the Clock program and earn a ribbon. These applications and payments must be received at World Headquarters or online no later than June 30.

6 Implement a mentorship program.

It helps a new member feel more engaged if they have a go-to person for questions. A mentor can serve as that individual. So how do they get matched? That's where a [mentorship program](#) comes into play. Plan on whether club officers will discuss potential mentors for each new member or mentors will sign up to take on mentees as they join. Having the program in place before new members join will help the process go smoothly.



When speaking with a potential member or friend, tell them how Toastmasters has helped you as an individual. Everyone has a unique story to share.

7 Send out renewal reminders.

Toastmasters International fees are due twice a year, on April 1 and October 1, but busy members can easily overlook these dates. Send out reminders via email, post on social media, and make announcements at club meetings leading up to these deadlines.

those under 18, who may then join a club as adults, while Speechcraft was created to introduce nonmembers to Toastmasters and teach some basic communication skills.

8 Set up a booth at a community event.

Your local farmers market or a university club fair are just two examples of community events that offer booths or tables. Research upcoming events in your area and see if it costs to set up a booth to share information about Toastmasters with the broader community. Bring branded fliers and materials, and have club members staff the booth to answer any questions.



11 Bond through activities. Celebrate members' birthdays, organize picnics, plan hikes, visit other clubs as a group, or attend self-development seminars together. [Getting outside](#) of your regular meetings allows for members to create new memories together and become closer. Creating community makes people less likely to leave.

12 Collect guests' contact information and follow up.

Often guests will email the Vice President Membership before visiting a club, but sometimes they'll simply show up. Be prepared with a sign-in sheet to collect the guest's name and contact information. Then use that information to send a follow-up email or make a call to see what they enjoyed about your club and if they'd like more information.

13 Host a Table Topics for brainstorming recruitment tactics.

Get the club involved! The responsibility of membership building shouldn't fall only to the club officers. Ask members to share their ideas for recruiting new members in a special Table Topics session. This could make the meeting more fun and give members the opportunity to share their ideas or play off something someone else already said.

9 Conduct a member survey. [Solicit feedback](#) from your members and send out an anonymous survey to see what the club is doing well and what could be improved. It's important to ensure your current members are satisfied with their experience before introducing new members. Some of this feedback could also help you decide what to highlight on your club's social media pages or website.

10 Promote the Youth Leadership Program or Speechcraft.

Toastmasters offers benefits beyond its standard education programs and club experience. Consider sharing more information about the [Youth Leadership Program \(YLP\)](#) and [Speechcraft](#) at a community event, on social media, or during an open house. YLP benefits

14 Reach out to former members. Sometimes members leave because the timing is no longer convenient or they feel they don't have time, but circumstances change. Reach out every year to former members to see how they're doing and if they're interested in returning to the club.

Keep Your Online Members Engaged

Toastmasters clubs have the opportunity to meet in person, online, or a mix of the two—[hybrid](#). It can be challenging to ensure your hybrid club keeps the online members just as engaged and involved as the in-person attendees, but technology is the key to this.

First, ensure you have a strong internet connection. Then check out your camera options. Can the online attendees see both the audience and the speaker? Give them a feel for what it looks like being in the room. Next, focus on sound. The speaker needs to be audible and crowd noise can be a bonus for an online speaker.

Everyone (both online and in person) should be able to see and hear one another.

This way both sides can interact. Make sure online participants can still be called on or volunteer for Table Topics or hold a meeting role without disrupting the flow of the meeting. Throughout the meeting, check if they're raising their hands or laughing along to a humorous speech. Online participants should feel just as much members of the club as those attending in person.



15

Embrace the Rotary alliance.

Toastmasters and Rotary International formed an alliance in 2019, and members around the world have worked to build collaboration and community between the [two organizations](#). Reach out to your local Rotary clubs to see if you can present to them about Toastmasters or consider creating a club for members of both organizations to join.

16

Use social media.

Post frequently on your club's social media pages. Share photos of members and meetings, and highlight members on their birthdays. Show how supportive your club is and be sure to share any upcoming event dates or days that meetings may be canceled due to holidays. [Social media](#) is a great place to keep people informed of club happenings and show the fun you have!



bring in their favorite dish to share. Advertise the event to entice guests to come see what Toastmasters is about while enjoying a tasty, free meal.

19

Offer Toastmasters swag or gifts.

Have a raffle or provide an item from the [Toastmasters Online Store](#) as an incentive for members to attend meetings, bring guests, or sign up for a particular role. Guests may like the idea of a tangible gift, and most Toastmasters are excited for the opportunity to win a new sweatshirt or branded notebook.

17

Invite a well-known speaker to a District conference.

Your conference should benefit Toastmasters education, but some sessions may apply to the broader public. If you have a popular speaker conducting a keynote or education session, advertise the event and encourage your community members to come watch and learn about Toastmasters, too.

18

Provide free food.

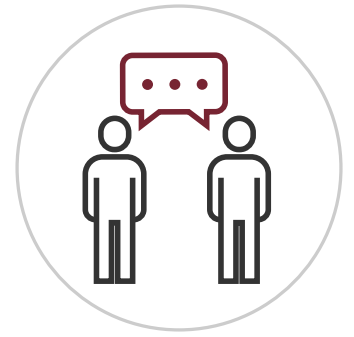
A simple incentive is offering food at a meeting. This could be a catered meal or a potluck where members

20

Emphasize membership benefits.

Toastmasters around the world are happy to share how the program has benefited their career and personal life. Many have gained confidence, been promoted, improved their communication skills, and more. Highlight that! When speaking with a potential member or friend, tell them how Toastmasters has helped you as an individual. Everyone has a unique story to share. Figure out what skills they're looking to gain and emphasize how your club can help them do just that.

Laura Mishkind is associate editor for the *Toastmaster magazine*.



District Mentoring Programs

2 Districts found innovative ways to expand their mentoring opportunities.

Mentoring is a powerful tool in Toastmasters, benefiting not only mentees, but mentors and other club members as well. Productive mentoring relationships help mentees reach their personal goals and allow mentors to share their knowledge and help members grow. A strong mentoring program strengthens a club as well, by continually engaging and challenging members in new ways.

But what happens when a club doesn't have enough mentors? Or when a mentee requires a skill that no one in their club possesses? That's when Districts can help. Here are two Districts that took different approaches to expanding the opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet each other.

By Caryl Lattof, DTM, and Nina John, DTM

District 31:

Meet Your Match!

By Caryl Lattof, DTM

In early 2022, District 31 (Northeast United States) recognized a recurring challenge: How do members find an appropriate mentoring partner when there are none available in their home club? The solution was to create a District-wide system for Toastmasters to mentor or be mentored by members from other clubs.

As the Area 94 Director at the time, I organized a team of Toastmasters with an interest in mentoring. To help members find a partner, we created Meet Your Match! The concept was to introduce potential mentors and mentees through a Zoom event and let the pairs decide if they wanted to work together. Research tells us that self-matched mentoring relationships endure longer than appointed pairs.

The Preparation

Before the event, each participant submitted an application, explaining their needs and goals. Members applying to be a mentee answered questions about their short- and long-term goals, ideal mentor expertise, and preferences for timing and frequency of meetings. Questions for the mentor focused on skills and mentoring style.

To promote Meet Your Match!, I emailed information to Division and Area Directors, Club Presidents, and Vice Presidents Education. Program information was also shared at Club Officer Trainings, on the District 31 website, and in the monthly newsletter. We decided to allow a maximum of 15 mentors and 15 mentees at the event.

In order to maximize the opportunity, once we received all applications, each mentor's qualifications were shared with mentee candidates, and vice-versa, one week prior to the event. I asked one mentor and one mentee to serve as General Evaluators, and created an agenda.

Research tells us that self-matched mentoring relationships endure longer than appointed pairs.

I reiterated that the decision to work together in a mentoring relationship was entirely up to the attendees, that the decision did not have to be made immediately, and that post-event conversation was encouraged before selecting a match.

During the Program

During the event, mentors and mentees met through a speed-dating format, with each mentor candidate in a private breakout room. Applicant mentees were allowed five minutes to chat with each mentor, asking questions that would help to decide if this person was a potential match.

In the spirit of Toastmasters, a Zoom Master and timer announced when participants needed to move to the next room. At the end of the program one mentor and mentee shared their perspectives about what worked well and where improvements could be made. Mentees were then encouraged to reach out to mentors for a longer conversation to determine compatibility.

The Results

We successfully held Meet Your Match! three times and spawned 20 mentoring pairs. The

feedback from the matched pairs has been overwhelmingly positive, and some pairs decided to extend their six-month commitment because they developed a genuine rapport that remained fruitful for both parties.

District 31 found Meet Your Match! to be a game-changer for deepening the Toastmasters experience. Effective mentoring helps to engage members by connecting them to others throughout the District to identify strengths, build com-

munity, and develop leadership skills. Sharing the wealth of talent and expertise harbored in individual clubs across an entire District allowed us to form a bigger pool of potential mentors and mentees to work together.

Caryl Lattof, DTM, is a member of Boston West Toastmasters Club in Needham, Massachusetts, and the author of *Coffee With Caryl*, a blog dedicated to sharing practices that strengthen membership and lead to highly functioning Toastmasters clubs. Learn more at caryl31.wordpress.com.

District 120:

District Mentor Pool

In 2020, District 120 (South India) suffered a double whammy. Our District formed in July of that year after District 82 divided, resulting in many of the more experienced and senior members remaining in the older District. Then came the pandemic, and like Districts around the world, we lost many members. We needed to build up our resources.

Knowing that mentoring is a core activity to encourage, motivate, and guide newcomers, we started a District Mentor Pool. We invited members from each Division who had been in their club for at least two years to join the committee. As an added incentive, those who participated in the project could simultaneously work on completing the Pathways Mentor Program.

We met weekly over Zoom and started by brainstorming questions like “What makes someone qualified to be a mentor?” and “What are the skills needed to be a mentor?”

We all agreed that the first qualification needed was an attitude of sharing and caring, of wanting to help more people benefit from Toastmasters. The second qualification focused on domain expertise—how much did each potential mentor know about Toastmasters?

Then we mapped out questions new members might have. We divided the answers into categories—is this a skill to be learned or information to be imparted? For instance, organizing a speech requires practicing and learning a skill, whereas understanding Pathways consists of taking in information.

We felt having a basic understanding of the following areas made for a more successful, effective mentor:

- **Pathways.** Understand the different paths and be able to help mentees choose a path that aligns with their goals.
- **Club Meeting Roles.** Know the responsibilities of each role, as well as what the Club Executive Committee does. Ideally, know how to conduct business meetings, and understand basic parliamentary procedure.
- **Toastmasters Hierarchy.** Know the distinctions between and responsibilities of Areas, Divisions, Districts, regions, and the Board of Directors.
- **Contests.** Understand the value of contests, the various types, and how they are conducted. Know what is involved in running a contest, including the judges' role and the ballots.
- **Speaking Skills.** Be able to offer help and insight in choosing a speech topic, speech-writing, delivery tips, and stage presence, as well as being an evaluator.
- **Advanced Opportunities.** Understand the High Performance Leadership project and the Distinguished Toastmaster designation. Be familiar with District conferences and the opportunities they provide.

Mapping out the skills in categories made it easier to find or identify potential mentors in each club and Division who were interested in and comfortable with certain areas and match them with mentees who wanted to develop those skills. For instance, we found some mentors who preferred to do only speech contest mentoring while others felt happier helping navigate a leadership journey.

We launched the District initiative by having members of the Mentor Pool Committee give a presentation to their respective Divisions

and spearhead Mentor Bootcamps if requested. Each club was required to have a Mentor Club Coordinator who would liaise with the Division Mentor Pool member.

Having a District-wide pool of mentors gave clubs greater resources to draw from rather than just doing a random pairing among club members.

All clubs were asked to match mentees (especially new members) with mentors. If the club had few mentors or none with the category of expertise needed, the Division representative would help find one based on the skills the mentee was hoping to develop.

Having a District-wide pool of mentors gave clubs greater resources to draw from rather than just doing a random pairing among club members.

Mentoring is the lifeblood of Toastmasters, something that benefits both the mentee and the mentor in equal measure, leading to lifelong friendships. There may be a learning curve along the way, but the experience is infinitely rewarding.

Nina John, DTM, is a communication catalyst and coach. She is a charter member of Chennai Toastmasters, the first club in Tamil Nadu, India. She is the former chair of the District 120 Mentor Pool Program.



Advantages of Being a

Mentor

The rewards and best practices of guiding fellow Toastmasters.

By Jennifer L. Blanck, DTM

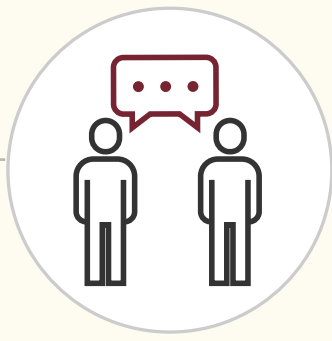
After three years in Toastmasters, Tracy Zhang completed the first 10 speeches in the former education program and achieved the Competent Communicator milestone. Then she felt stalled.

She attended an Area speech contest and was so impressed with one of the officers, Mark Hayes, DTM, she asked him to be her mentor. Zhang wanted a knowledgeable, experienced, and trusted adviser to help her get more out of her Toastmasters experience.

This was her first Toastmasters mentoring experience. At their



Tracy Zhang



“Mentoring increased my confidence that I can help other people succeed, which gives me a sense of pride and belonging.”

ANDRÉ LINS, DTM

initial meeting, she was nervous. “I was in awe of DTMs, and English is my second language,” says the Canadian member. Hayes made her feel relaxed and laid out her path to becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster. He showed her step-by-step how she could achieve it.

Zhang followed his guidance, and five years later, became a DTM. She’s now a member of two clubs in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada: Miracle Chinese English Bilingual Toastmasters, a club she helped establish, and Candu Toastmasters.

“Mentoring changed my Toastmasters journey and my life,” she says. Her mentor showed her the way to achieve something she never thought she could.

Why You Should Be a Mentor

Emotional rewards

Now Zhang serves as a mentor, trying to help and inspire others like her mentor did for her. “People walk in the door to Toastmasters and don’t realize how their lives will change,” she says. “I want to show them how great they can become.”

The opportunity to help others is a driving force for mentors. Like Zhang, many mentors also want to give back through the program that helped them, as well as enjoy meeting people.

When you serve as a mentor, you connect with members in a different way. “In club meetings, there is often little opportunity to get to know each other,” says Peter Temesvary, of Skylarks Toastmasters in Budapest, Hungary. Serving as a mentor offers time to get to know people beyond the information members share through meeting



Peter Temesvary

roles or quick conversations before or after meetings.

Mentoring also offers you new ways to build relationships and connect with the club. André Lins, DTM, formerly of Rio Toastmasters in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, says, “Mentoring increased my confidence that I can help other people succeed, which gives me a sense of pride and belonging.”



André Lins

Skill development

In addition to emotional rewards, mentors gain and strengthen their skills. By assisting someone else, you can improve your own communication, speaking, and listening skills. Depending on the relationship, you can also develop teaching, counseling, or coaching skills. You can apply these skills within your Toastmasters experience and beyond.

Lins says he mentored so many people over the years that he developed a sharp eye for quickly detecting people’s talents and true personality. “I carried this skill over to other roles in my life—mostly for hiring people in my company, as well as to entertain groups in relaxed non-business settings,” he says.

New ideas

While mentors may be more experienced in some areas, they can still learn from their mentees. Temesvary starts each mentoring relationship by hoping to grow himself. “I always ask my mentees to challenge me,” he

“It’s not your job [as a mentor] to teach them your way of doing things. You are there to hold a mirror for them as they pursue their own way.”

—PETER TEMESVARY

says. “The best mentoring relationships were the ones that turned into two-way growth. I’ve had mentees challenge me to step up in contests, take part in club or Area activities, and try new speaking styles.”



One time, Temesvary was mentoring a new member who came to the first meeting with a long list of speech topics even before the Ice Breaker. Through the relationship, Temesvary learned to write down anything that might be a good speech topic and how to look at simple events from many angles in search of a good story. Another mentee helped him transition from the former Toastmasters education program's advanced manuals to the Pathways program.

As a mentor, you can learn new ideas, gain new perspectives, and discover new methods of approaching people, topics, and situations. You can also increase your self-awareness and insight into the way others think. Because Toastmasters is a global organization, mentors often connect with people from other cultures, which helps expand their understanding of the world.

Tips for Mentors

Establish a personal connection

The mentor-mentee relationship is key to a mentee's success. It's important to develop a rapport with your mentee. To do so, Lins shares stories about his life. "You will know it is working when the mentee opens up and starts to share too, allowing you two to bond and create a friendship," he says.

Zhang remembers how much her mentor made her feel comfortable at the start of their relationship, including letting her decide how and when they should meet. She chose her favorite place to eat, which was comforting for her and calmed her nerves.

When Oyin Egbeyemi, DTM, from Eagle Club in Lagos, Nigeria, mentors a new member, she also likes to make her mentee feel comfortable and not overwhelmed by the Toast-

masters program. "This is very important to me because many people come to Toastmasters to overcome their fear of communication and public speaking," she says. "It is best to demystify any concerns or apprehension."

Understand a mentee's priorities and goals

New members might need help getting to know the Toastmasters program and the club culture, but it doesn't mean they're new to public speaking or leadership. Whether you're mentoring a new or experienced member, it's important to understand their goals and areas of focus.

Once Egbeyemi establishes the personal connection with new members, she asks what their life objectives

are and the role that Toastmasters will potentially play. This helps to clarify their vision and set objectives. She encourages mentees to give their Ice Breaker speech as soon as possible to minimize any build-up of anxiety. Afterward, she suggests doing one speech and one role each month, which is what her own mentor suggested to her. As her mentees gain experience, she recommends they give speeches at other clubs to challenge themselves in front of new audiences.

It's important to recognize that a mentee's priorities will change over time. For longer-term mentoring relationships, it's good to check in with mentees frequently about their goals and adapt to any changing needs.

Temesvary emphasizes that everyone has a different way of writing, practicing, and preparing a speech. "As a mentor, it's not your job to teach them your way of doing things," he says. "You are there to hold a mirror for them as they pursue their own way."



Oyin Egbeyemi

Set expectations

Many club mentoring programs have concrete timeframes for mentoring relationships, such as a specific number of months or speeches. If your relationship is outside of a formal program, it's still important to agree on a timeframe at the start. You can always revisit and adapt later.

For more experienced mentees, you could set a specific goal, such as a speech contest or work-related presentation. Whatever the focus,

“Remember the support that you got when you first joined Toastmasters and give it back to someone else. If you didn’t get the support you desired, then do your best to ensure your mentees do not share this experience.”

—OYIN EGBEYEMI, DTM

It’s important you discuss the specific parameters of the relationship to ensure the commitment is clear for both of you.

It’s also essential to talk about how, how often, and when you will meet. While some mentors and mentees might prefer getting together in person, many are using the range of technological options available to connect, including telephone and video calls, audio recordings, email messages, and shared documents.

“A good mentor needs to be flexible in terms of availability,” says Temesvary. “The pandemic was a good learning experience, which showed that online platforms are a perfectly good solution for mentoring.”

Even years before the pandemic, one of Egbeyemi’s mentees would email her audio recordings of a speech. “I found this to be a very efficient way to give feedback,” she says.

Some clubs may offer mentoring beyond the traditional mentor-mentee pairing. One example is group mentoring, where one or multiple mentors can be available to a number of mentees. Another example is an on-call mentor, who can be available for club meetings or engage with a member for a one-time advising session. It’s essential to establish expectations for these types of arrangements too.

Resources for Mentors

If you’re looking for additional guidance on how to be an effective mentor in Toastmasters, there are many resources available.

Pathways Level 2

Recognizing the importance of mentoring, every Pathways path has a required Level 2 “Introduction to Toastmasters Mentoring” speech project. You will learn all about mentoring—from the role of mentors and mentees to the traits of successful mentors to how you can be the best mentor possible.

Pathways Mentor Program

Once you complete Level 2 in your path, you have the opportunity to participate in the Toastmasters Pathways Mentor Program. This program (which is a separate program and not a part of the Level 2 “Introduction to



Toastmasters Mentoring” project) helps you hone your skills and involves two mentoring projects—one short-term and one six months in length.

Other mentors

“Remember the support that you got when you first joined Toastmasters and give it back to someone else,” says Egbeyemi. “If you didn’t get the support you desired, then do your best to ensure your mentees do not share this experience.”

You can always ask other experienced members what has worked for them. Also, mentors are never too experienced to benefit from their own mentor. Even if you’ve been a mentor for decades, there is always something you can learn—from a new speaking style to a creative topic angle to a new technology. Consider asking another member to mentor you who is strong in whatever area you’re seeking to improve.

Mentoring offers just as many benefits to mentors as it does to mentees. So, consider being a Toastmasters mentor. Whether through an official program or an informal opportunity, you can make a difference in someone’s life, as well as your own.

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International Toastmistress Clubs

This women-only group ran parallel to the men-only Toastmasters clubs.

By *Toastmaster* magazine staff

It's been more than 50 years since women were officially admitted as Toastmasters members, and with currently more women than men in the organization, it's hard to imagine a time when women weren't officially recognized.

When Toastmasters formed in 1924, most members considered their club as a source of male camaraderie. The workforce was overwhelmingly male-dominated, so the organization appealed primarily to men who shared similar workplace experiences. Many women also believed that membership in a Toastmasters club was synonymous with "men-only" interests and activities.

However, that didn't mean that women weren't interested in polishing their speaking skills. In 1926—only two years after the first Toastmasters club meeting was held—a group of wives who were attending a "ladies' night" meeting at a club in Anaheim, California, were stirred to action. They formed a speech club for themselves, calling it The Toasties.

Within a few years, women's speech clubs had sprung up in Southern California and nearby regions. Several women from these clubs met at the 1937 Toastmasters International Convention and discussed forming a permanent women's organization.

Toastmasters founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley and other leaders offered their guidance as well, and in 1938, the International Toastmistress Clubs (ITC) incorporated, with Ernestine White serving as its first President and a policy to "foster free and open discussion without bias on all subjects, whether political, social, economic, racial, or religious."

Toastmasters International seemed pleased with the group's decision. "There are decided advantages when parallel organizations are maintained," said an article in the June 1937 issue of *The Toastmaster*.

"The men's club and the women's club can hold joint meetings, exchange programs, aid with criticism, and help each other mightily."

Within a year, ITC had chartered 20 clubs, began publishing the *Toastmistress* magazine, and held its first convention, which ran alongside the 1939 Toastmasters International Convention.

ITC was organized similarly to Toastmasters International,

with regular meetings, prepared speeches, educational program manuals, and speech contests. However, the two organizations were fully independent of each other.

Toastmistress leaders emphasized that their clubs were not a frivolous female activity but rather a place to develop true communication and leadership skills.

In June 1940, the ITC President, Vera Hansen, explained the organization's benefits as such:

A Toastmistress is a woman who can preside over any kind of group meeting—not just a dinner meeting. A real Toastmistress is one who can conduct a forum, a discussion, a panel, a conference—one who knows when, where, and how to use the various forms of procedure. Speech and leadership cannot be separated. A Toastmistress is not one who makes sweet little talks about the weather or about the rise and fall of women's skirts or gives rehashed material from a magazine. When she speaks, she really says something.

By 1946, the first Canadian club was chartered, followed shortly by a club in Scotland. Continued growth resulted in the formation of regions, as well as an international headquarters in Downey, California. The 1,000th charter was presented in 1959, and the word "Toastmistress" appeared in the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

While the ITC was thriving, by the 1960s, the bond between it and Toastmasters International was quickly deteriorating. With the number of women in the workforce increasing daily, more and more women felt they would benefit from membership in a communication and leadership organization that included both genders rather than segregating them. Additionally, there simply weren't as many women-only Toastmistress clubs as there were Toastmasters clubs.

Nevertheless, the ITC continued to grow, particularly in New Zealand, Australia, Japan, and South Africa. In 1973 (the same year that Toastmasters officially allowed women members), Toastmistresses amended their bylaws to provide that clubs could not discriminate on the basis of sex.

In 1985, the International Toastmistress Clubs voted to change the name of the organization to International Training in Communication (ITC), forming a nonprofit organization of public speaking clubs open to all genders.

In honor of Toastmasters International's 100th anniversary, this is the third in a year-long series of articles commemorating historic milestones.



Ernestine White, founder of *Toastmistresses*



Winners of the 1963 *Toastmistress* Speech Contest

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM

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

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

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

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



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