

TOASTMASTER®

June 2011

Speak and Be Heard

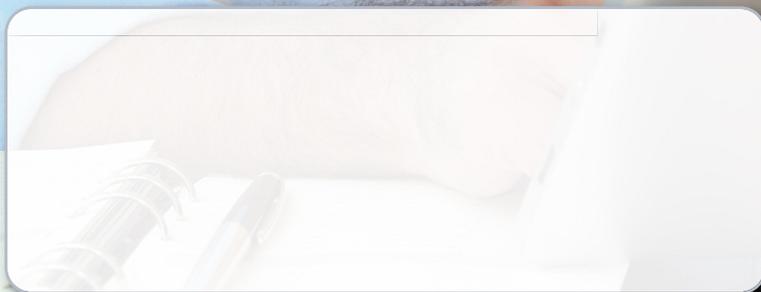
Best microphones for speakers.

How to Muzzle the Yakker

Know anyone who talks too much?

Presentations To Go

A review of apps for speakers' mobile devices.





What's Your Legacy?

Recently, I've been reflecting on my leadership style. I want to look beyond any immediate, short-term successes. I want to understand how choices I make *now* will impact the future. I want to know what my legacy will be.

I ask myself: "What do I stand for? What do I really believe in?" One question leads to another: "Am I living my life with purpose? How will I be remembered as a leader?" These are fascinating questions for leaders to ask ourselves; they are also important because the answers determine our lasting legacies.

When we, as leaders, make the choice to turn dreams into realities, the future fills with exciting opportunities. Big dreams stretch us and pull us forward while providing focus and meaning in our lives. Because ambitious goals are often outside our comfort zones, they challenge us to show a greater degree of creativity in order to reach them.

When leaders take a stand on things that are crucial, such as ethics and values, we influence and shape our own future as well as that of others around us. All decisions and interactions make an impact. Every moment – and with each movement – consciously or not, we leave something of ourselves behind. Is the legacy we are leaving, whether accidentally or purposely, something for which we want to be remembered?

If we keep our eyes on the legacy we wish to leave, we can imagine a fuller, brighter, more exciting future. If we *live* our legacy in everything we do in our Toastmasters, professional and personal lives, we choose how we influence and shape others and their futures.

There is no roadmap to guide us along the way, and therein lies the excitement! We need to imagine the bigger picture and hold on to the vision and ideals of what can be – the vision that comes from our heart. We need to move forward, toward our vision, realizing our dreams and creating our legacy.

It has been said that leadership is like trying to find a path in a field of newly fallen snow. Once we walk across the field, we have discovered our path. Our legacies are discovered in much the same manner. We answer the important questions with each step forward.

Now, I ask you to ask yourself: "What will my legacy be?"

Pat Johnson, DTM
International President

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Associate Editors	Beth Black Paul Sterman
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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 9052 • Mission Viejo, CA 92690 U.S.A.
(949) 858-8255 • Fax:(949) 858-1207
Voicemail: (949) 835-1300

www.toastmasters.org/members

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Article submission:	submissions@toastmasters.org
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A Toastmaster's Promise

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

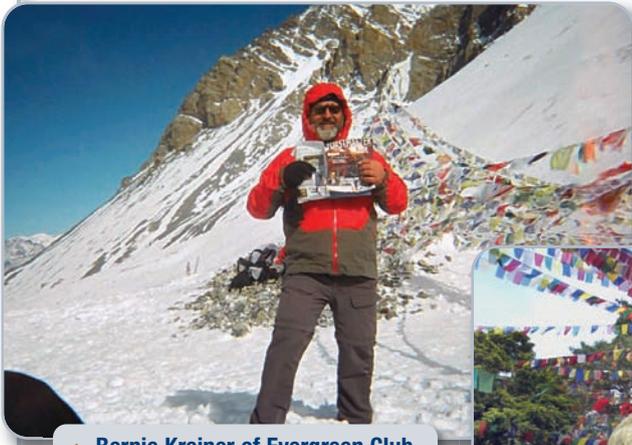
- To attend club meetings regularly;
- To prepare all of my speech and leadership projects to the best of my ability, basing them on projects in the *Competent Communication* manual, *Advanced Communication* manuals or *Competent Leadership* manual;
- To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments;
- To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations;
- To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow;
- To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so;
- To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy;
- To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers;
- To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters educational and recognition programs;
- To maintain honest and highly ethical standards during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities.



POSTCARDS

The Traveling *Toastmaster*

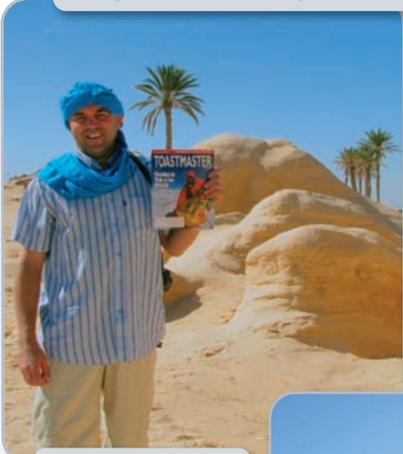
Picture yourself here! Bring the *Toastmaster* magazine with you as you travel and pose with it in your exciting surroundings. Email the high-resolution image to photos@toastmasters.org. Bon voyage!



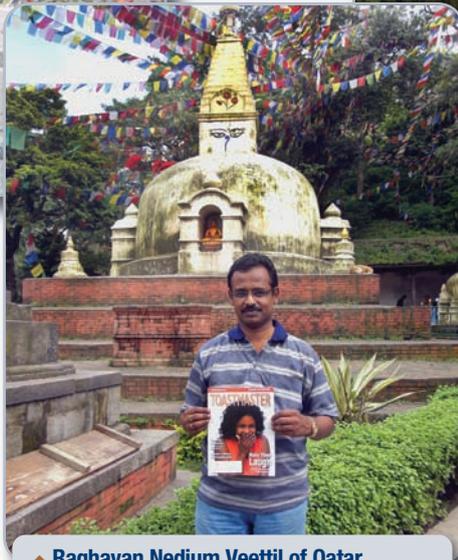
▲ **Bernie Kreiner of Evergreen Club in Hinton, Alberta, Canada, treks the Annapurna Circuit in Nepal.**



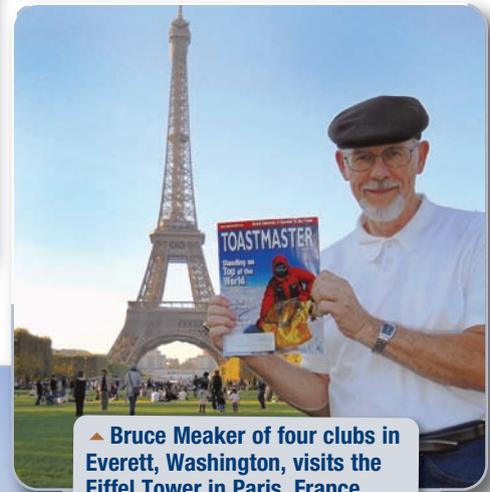
▲ **Marriam Khurram and Khurram Shahzad of Himalayan Toastmasters Club in Saudi Arabia, visit the Arctic Circle in Sweden.**



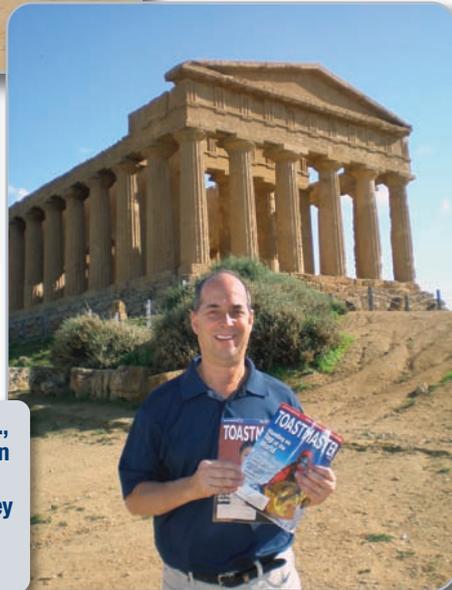
▲ **Dominique Carrasco of Rosemasters in Toulouse, France, visits the Petrified Dunes in the Sahara Desert in Tunisia.**



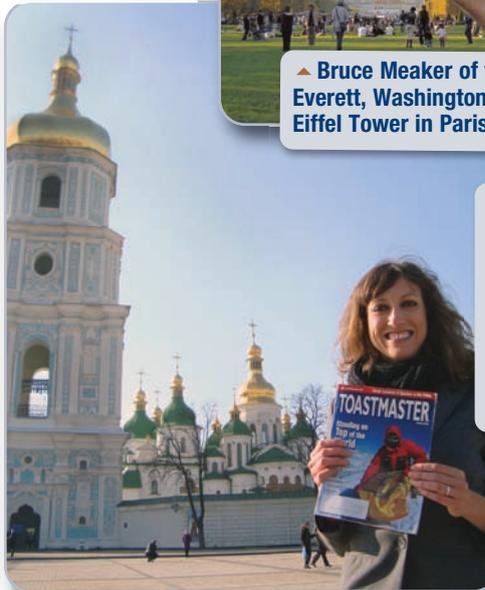
▲ **Raghavan Nedium Veetil of Qatar Toastmasters in Doha, Qatar, visits the Swayambunath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal.**



▲ **Bruce Meaker of four clubs in Everett, Washington, visits the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.**



▶ **John J. Glozek Jr., of Huntington Club in Huntington, New York, visits the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento, Sicily.**



◀ **Deborah Tepley-Ferguson of Effective Communicators in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, travels to the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, Ukraine.**



How Toastmasters helped improve my skills in a foreign language – English!

Can You Understand Me?

I As a native Spanish speaker living in the United States, I knew it was important for my career to be able to express myself correctly in English. But it was hard to find any help in learning how to do this. Approximately six years ago I worked for Hormel Foods Corporation in Austin, Minnesota, and once during a performance review I asked my boss how I could improve my English skills. She recommended Toastmasters. *What's that? And how could they help me speak better English?*

I visited our company's corporate club, Tuesday with

broken English. Ever since I was a little girl, speaking in front of others always made me cry. I told myself, in that moment of delivering the Ice Breaker, that I needed to have fortitude and to just do it. Remembering parts of my life still makes me cry, and the audience saw my pain. But it was good to get through it.

It Worked at Work

While working in the Research and Development department at Hormel Foods, I got involved in the company's Training Committee. To inform the committee of what Research

During my experience with the Training Committee, I gave a second speech, titled "The Power of Six Sigma," to the entire Research and Development staff. At the end of the speech something extraordinary happened: Everybody stood up and applauded for me. It sounded like bells to my ears.

And you know what? This time I did not cry. Instead, I was happy to be talking in front of all those employees. Toastmasters brought many benefits to my life and my career. After four years of employment, I was promoted to the position of quality control engineer.

The Next Steps

I continued to give many more speeches. Then in 2008, I decided to participate in a speech contest. I was nervous, but I won second place in the International Speech Contest for our division. Last year, I won first place in the division contest.

I currently serve as area governor for the Southern Division in District 6. I earned my Advanced Communicator Gold and I am now working toward my DTM. I feel proud of being a Toastmaster. This organization can change the life of anyone who joins. Everyone has the potential to be successful and to become a great speaker and leader. If I can do it, you can too! 

Elsa Esquivel-Soto, ACG, ALB, is a member of the Southern Minnesota Mentors in Rochester, Minnesota, and Tuesday With Toastmasters in Austin, Minnesota. Reach her at yazimi1@live.com.

“I could not believe it – me, a second-language speaker, giving a presentation to the employees, thanks to Toastmasters.”

Toastmasters. At my first meeting I sat in a chair by the door. I was unsure what to expect. The meeting started and I watched a speaker named Eric Heneke. He was an extraordinary speaker. He showed so much confidence and talent as he presented his speech that, in that moment, I wished to be like him. But how could I do it? My first language was not English and my accent troubled me.

The breakthrough moment happened when I gave my first speech, the Ice Breaker. I could not think of a title, so I called it "The Ice Breaker." I was so nervous my stomach hurt. This nervousness was more of a challenge than my

and Development does, I gave a PowerPoint presentation. Afterward, committee members asked me to give the presentation to other company employees. I thought, *Me? They are crazy!* Then I remembered that Toastmasters would help me give this presentation.

I read my first Toastmasters manual and organized my presentation following these steps: Define the problem, explain the objectives, give your conclusions and make your recommendations. Then I did it! I gave the speech. I could not believe it – me, a second-language speaker, giving a presentation to the employees, thanks to Toastmasters.

Moscow Free Speakers club celebrates freedom of speech.

From Glasnost to Russia Today

What is the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions Russia to you? I bet it is something like “*Perestroika*,” “domed buildings covered with snow” or colorful nesting dolls. While all of those things exist in my country, there is also another truth: Toastmasters in Russia! Picture a group of positive, goal-oriented people holding bi-weekly meetings all year round, speaking English to each other, presenting high-quality speeches and mentoring each other. I belong to the only English-speaking Toastmasters club in the biggest country in the world.

Long, Long Ago

Let’s travel back to the stormy Moscow of the late 1980s to see how this story started. You might remember that the period from the late ’80s to the early ’90s were years of great change in the world. The Iron Curtain that kept capitalist and communist camps apart was gradually lifting; for Russia it was a full-scale revolution.

In the middle of these uncertain times, in a country that was brimming with energy and ideas, three Toastmasters club “babies” were born. Robert Meyerson, an American, fathered two of the clubs, including the very first one, which was started in one of the most open-minded universities in the country, at Lomonosov Moscow State university. One of the club members

was Gennady Gerasimov, Mikhail Gorbachev’s foreign ministry spokesman; he helped start the second “child” at another university, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO).

And Then There Was One

The chaotic Moscow of the early ’90s proved challenging for Toastmasters, and only one club managed to survive – the youngest one. Its name was just the right fit for the times: Moscow Free Speakers (MFS). Meyerson says, “There was not yet freedom of speech in Russia, but I was giving the club members back then a goal to aim for and a title that would remind each member of that goal, no matter how difficult or how far away it seemed.”

For 15 years, the only surviving Toastmasters club in Russia took its time to develop and grow. In the past few years, our club’s more noticeable increase in size has been marked by the awards it has received: MFS was a Select Distinguished club in 2007-2008 and earned President’s Distinguished status in 2009-2010.

The club’s 2009-2010 president, Valeria Kholodkova, has been one of the most important contributors to its success. “I loved the club from the first meeting, and I wanted to make MFS a more interesting and joyful place to visit and join,” says Kholodkova.

Noting that it is the sole English-language club in the country, she

says MFS needs to be the “best example of the Toastmasters community in Russia.” Despite the club’s success, Kholodkova has even higher expectations for the future. “I am sure that this year will be more successful, and we will continue to grow higher and hopefully spread wider in our country,” she says.

Speaking Freely Then and Now

Moscow Free Speakers currently has 45 members and is regularly full of guests wishing to join or at least catch a glimpse of the life of the club. The language of the meetings is strictly English, so people from different countries and nations are able to participate and be a part of the community.

“In this club I make new friends from different countries who speak the same language – English!” says member Syahnaz Akhtar Mat Ali, who came to work in Moscow from Malaysia. “Moscow Free Speakers is the club that makes me feel at home, because of its friendly environment.”

Club members range in age from 20 to 80, in occupations from students to business professionals and scientists. And what talented members we have! They don’t just rest on their laurels, but compete and even set the pace for the younger members.

“I was amazed to see rather senior people being so involved, active and creative in their presenta-



Moscow Free Speakers, the only English-speaking Toastmasters club in Russia, earned President's Distinguished status in 2009-2010.

tions,” says Dmitry Chebotarevsky, an active new member. “The more I attended club meetings, the bigger my respect grew for those experienced members; for their dedication, open-mindedness and energy.”

An excellent example is Professor Henry Norman, who has been a club member since 1994. Norman knew from the start that the Moscow Free Speakers would help him – including boosting his career in science. “My impression was definitely favorable. I understood and appreciated the club’s learn-by-doing system,” he says. “I improved my public speaking skills remarkably and applied them at scientific conferences, meetings, negotiations and banquets. My speaking skills in private communications became much better as well. My writing skills became better too.”

Norman didn’t stop at developing himself; he also shares his experience with the young scientists of his team. “My public speaking skills help me to increase both my income and the income of my young collaborators,” he says. “I do my best to increase their public speaking skills in both English and Russian.”

Another distinguished club member is Alla Oganova, who joined

Toastmasters in 1998. Oganova is an English teacher at one of the Law Institutes in Moscow, and she uses her Toastmasters experience in her professional life.

Club Benefits Continue

To benefit from the club, you don’t have to be a member for a long time. Oleg Petrov, a new member and a project manager in informa-

tion technology and telecommunications, found that being active in the club helped him “arrange and clean up not only my speech, but also my mind when taking part in business and private meetings, especially within a large group of people. Moreover, our Toastmasters projects help to improve another crucial skill – time management.”

Members gain a broad set of useful skills and ideas for work, but that is not the only thing that

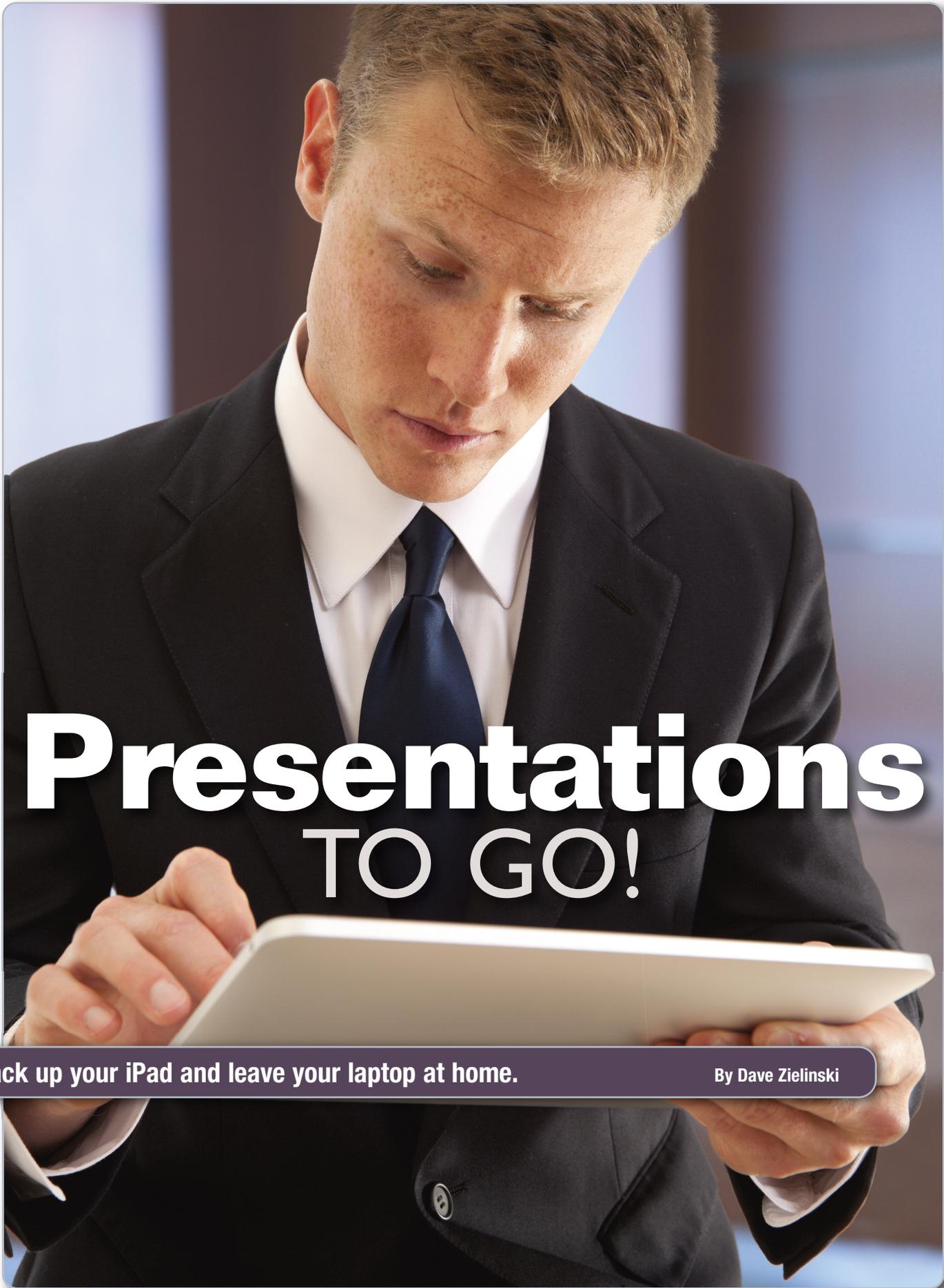
attracts people to the club. It’s also about how people feel about themselves and how they are treated. “I’m in the place where I want to be, where I can express myself,” says Maxim Tsvetov, one of the most active young club members.

Now, in 2011, adjusting to the pace of Moscow life, our club has quickly become known as a vibrant and dynamic place with a highly

“Moscow Free Speakers currently has 45 members and is regularly full of guests wishing to join or at least catch a glimpse of the life of the club.”

positive atmosphere and an irresistible desire to grow within the country. And I am happy to tell you, fellow Toastmasters, that even in snowy Russia you will always find a warm place to come, speak and feel at home. 

Denis Shevchuk is a member of Moscow Free Speakers Club in Moscow, Russia (moscowfreespeakers.ru). He can be reached at d.shevchuk82@gmail.com.



Presentations TO GO!

Pack up your iPad and leave your laptop at home.

By Dave Zielinski

Promptster



Promptster is a teleprompter application that allows speakers to project and scroll text on iPads or other mobile devices. A product of application developer Dante Varnado Moore, Promptster is designed to help users practice and deliver public speeches, lectures and sermons, and to narrate corporate videos.

Promptster has two modes: *Edit* mode for writing speech scripts and *Prompt* mode for speaking. In *Edit* mode, speakers can write and edit documents or import text documents from popular word processors like Microsoft Word. Users can also copy and paste content from email or from any application on a smartphone that contains text.

This app allows you to scroll speech text at variable speeds on your mobile device screen, adjust the font sizes on the fly and “tap” your screen to start and pause scrolling text at anytime, all while tracking elapsed speaking time. Promptster has recently added an audio recording feature that enables you to listen to and critique your speaking style using a mobile device’s built-in microphone.

Promptster costs \$9.99 and is available for iPhone, iPad and Android phones. For more information, visit dantemoore.com or look for Promptster in the iTunes app store in the business category at itunes.com.

ProPrompter

The ProPrompter app, from well-known teleprompter manufacturer Bodelin Technologies, enables you to use your iPad, iPhone or iPod touchscreen to read text for corporate video, speeches, presentations or video podcasting.

Speakers can create their scripts directly in the app, or paste a script in an email and send it to themselves. Key software features include remote scroll control, allowing speakers to touch another iPad, iPhone or iPod to control the text scroll speed and re-cue forward or backward in a script projecting on another mobile device. Speakers can also use asterisks to set cue points in scripts and jump to the exact spot in the speech that you need. This software supports the use of international language characters like Chinese, Japanese, Russian and more. Finally, an all-caps option helps your copy stand out better for easier reading.

ProPrompter costs \$9.99. For more information or to watch a short video of how the application works in action, go to apps.bodelin.com/promprompter/producer/.

SpeechPrompter

Remove the stress from speechmaking with SpeechPrompter, another teleprompter app for mobile devices. SpeechPrompter allows you to create and edit speeches and then set a preferred font size, style and color to play the text for easiest viewing while speaking. You also can load text into the app from an existing speech.

A finger swipe on your screen controls scrolling speed of text, and a timer helps speakers watch the clock. Like other apps mentioned here, users can also set cue points in SpeechPrompter, enabling them to jump to particular sections of script with a couple quick finger taps. For more information on SpeechPrompter, go to gwhqproductions.com/speechprompter or visit the business category of itunes.com, where SpeechPrompter is available for \$7.99.

Dictation Applications

Dragon Dictation



For Toastmasters who prefer to use their voice rather than typing out ideas or notes for upcoming speeches on the small keyboards of their smartphones, Dragon Dictation voice recognition software for the iPhone and iPad is an attractive option.

Dragon Dictation is a product of Nuance Communications, creator of the popular software program Dragon Naturally Speaking. It translates your spoken words into text, and has a reputation as the most accurate voice-to-text translator on the market. Nuance claims the voice-driven app creates text five times faster than typing.

The iPad version of Dragon Dictation quickly saves dictated text, which can be viewed and managed at a later time. It also has a “Notes” feature that lets users speak and then save drafts of speech-related documents, emails, to-do lists and more. Voice recordings are currently limited to 30 seconds in length on the iPhone, and 60 seconds on the iPad, so you will have to record thoughts in small segments, one after the other. Dragon Dictation 2.0 also features multilingual capabilities, giving you the option to switch among various languages.

The Dragon app remains free for a limited time from itunes.com. To learn more, visit dragon.mobileapps.com. 

Dave Zielinski is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster*.

Using Keynote's media browser, speakers can add tables, charts, photos or video clips from a stored library for business presentations. Creating regular slide animations is also relatively painless, since the app does much of the work for you. There also are ample on-screen guides to help you design slides.

When finished with a presentation, you can project your slides to small audiences directly from the iPad's full-screen view by tapping to play and "swiping" to move forward or backward in the presentation. For presentations to larger audiences, an optional adapter is available to connect the iPad to a monitor, LCD display or TV in a conference room, with speakers viewing slides from the presenter display.

Some speakers find Keynote for iPad best suited to one-on-one presentations, where they can import and project presentations built earlier in PowerPoint. The

"Speakers around the globe are increasingly making their mobile devices serve double duty as teleprompters."

only drawback to this app has been solved with newer versions of the iPad, and the addition of a built-in USB port. In the first generation of iPads, the missing port – that would be available for a remote control – has made it difficult to advance slides remotely, meaning speakers have to place the iPad on a podium and stand behind it to deliver a speech.

The Keynote for iPad app is \$9.99 and can be found in the business category of the iTunes application store at itunes.com.

Documents to Go



Did you forget your laptop at home but still need to edit or view an important PowerPoint or Keynote presentation? Documents to Go is a mobile app that enables you to open – and with some versions, edit – your presentations on a smartphone or tablet. Even if you're not a fan of using the smaller keyboards on smartphones, it's typically not a big headache if you only need to make last-minute tweaks or changes to presentations, add speaking notes or rearrange slides. You might even start creating a new presentation, then complete it when you get home to your laptop or desktop.

The *native support* feature of Documents to Go means you'll be able to open files regardless of how you transported them to your mobile unit, be it email, Bluetooth or a media card. The app also ensures that file formatting will be retained once you've edited a PowerPoint file and forwarded it to someone else.

The application is compatible with Apple, Blackberry, Palm and Android devices. The standard edition costs \$9.99 and enables you to open and view PowerPoint files, but only the premium version, priced at the slightly higher \$14.99, enables you to edit and modify slides.

For more information about Documents to Go, visit the website of software developer Dataviz at dataviz.com.

ThinkFree Office Mobile for Android Phones

ThinkFree Office Mobile, from the ThinkFree Office Corporation, is an application designed to enhance the use of Microsoft Office documents on Android smartphones. For speakers, the biggest benefit is that ThinkFree allows you to view, edit or create Microsoft PowerPoint files on a mobile device.

ThinkFree supports all the document forms of Microsoft Office 2003 and 2007, but with the added bonus of operating in web browsers (Java Runtime Environment should be installed on your computer for optimum performance), and thus it can be used by Mac and Linux systems as well as Windows.

Presenters can view, edit and manage PowerPoint documents saved in My Office, for example, and upload presentations created on a mobile phone to My Office, as well as easily share presentations with others.

A review in *PC World* magazine gave strong marks to the application's PowerPoint-editing feature. The reviewer found it easy to create a PowerPoint presentation with images and bullet points, and concluded that the app worked well in OpenOffice and Google docs. "This is one of the very few mobile apps that can make a PowerPoint file with images, so kudos to ThinkFree for that," wrote reviewer Brent Hopkins.

For more information about ThinkFree Office Mobile, visit thinkfree.com.

Teleprompter Software Applications

Speakers around the globe are increasingly making their mobile devices serve double duty as teleprompters, using their screens to read from scrolling, enlarged font scripts for speeches, corporate videos, podcasts and much more. Here's a sampling of software apps designed to facilitate such use.

Whether an iPhone, iPad, Blackberry or Android smartphone, mobile devices have become the business communication tool of choice for many Toastmasters around the globe. As these devices have become ubiquitous, the quantity and diversity of software applications – or apps – designed for their use has mushroomed. Apps created for speaking and presentation scenarios are no exception.

A bevy of such programs has already been built to help speakers on the go. With these apps, a speaker can design, edit, rehearse or deliver speeches and PowerPoint presentations using their mobile devices. Given their low cost and appealing features, these devices just may convince you to leave your laptop at home for your next speech or business trip. Here are some of the most useful or intriguing of the apps.

Create, Edit or View Presentation Visuals

Present Pad



Anyone who has given a presentation to sales prospects or senior leaders knows they rarely go as planned, and Present Pad is a software application designed to help you adapt to changing speaking circumstances. This app allows you to give presentations in a nonlinear fashion, and puts additional details at your fingertips to answer tough or unexpected audience questions.

Present Pad displays presentation slides in a flexible grid so you can present them in whatever order the situation calls for, which enables you to quickly jump between different parts of a presentation. You can lay out your main presentation slides horizontally within the app, and then add detail or backup slides vertically, eliminating the need to force in backup slides at the end of a slide deck.

Present Pad makes it easy to navigate from the slide you are on to any of the four surrounding slides based on audience needs or questions.

Creating a new presentation in Present Pad is as simple as using your favorite design software (such as PowerPoint or Keynote), saving your presentation as a PDF, then importing it to Present Pad via email or iTunes. When the presentation is finished and you're speaking to a small group, use the full-screen view to present it right on an iPad. If you're presenting to a larger audience, connect the iPad to a projector and control the presentation using the presenter display.

Present Pad, from developer Scotty Allen, is available for \$4.99 and can be found in the business category of the iTunes application store, itunes.com.

SlideRocket



SlideRocket is one of a growing number of online alternatives to Microsoft PowerPoint. Available as a *software-as-a-service* (SaaS) option on the Internet, it is presentation design software you can rent on a “pay as you go” basis: Pay a monthly subscription fee for access to the software.

SlideRocket enables you to create presentation slides using your own materials or by a diversity of content found in an online marketplace, including Google spreadsheets, photos, illustrations, video clips, Twitter and more. You also can import existing PowerPoint slides into SlideRocket.

After you create a presentation in SlideRocket, you can publish it to a website, attach it to a blog post, or even share it in a Web conference with customers or colleagues. Toastmasters using SlideRocket for business purposes will find another attractive feature: The software enables you to track vital statistics regarding your slide show. You'll know who viewed a presentation – and where – on the Web, how much time each viewer spent on a particular slide and the actions they took after viewing the presentation, such as clicking through or forwarding it to others.

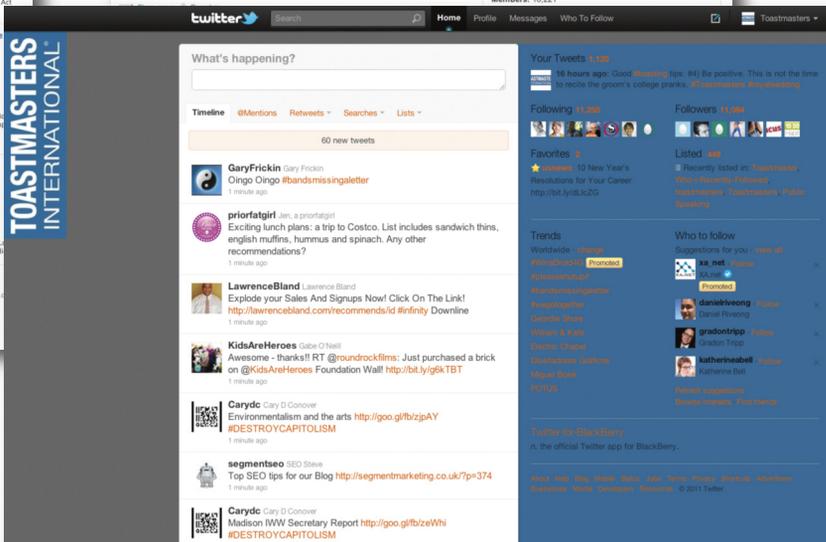
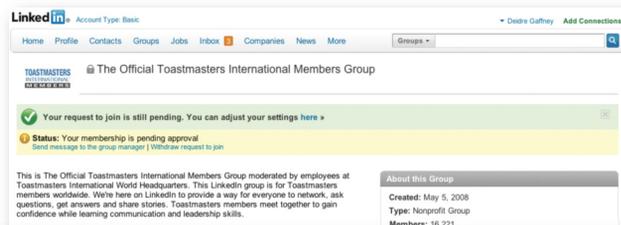
For more information about SlideRocket, visit sliderocket.com.

Keynote Presentation Design Software



Apple developed Keynote presentation design software as an alternative to Microsoft PowerPoint for use on desktops and laptops. Now Apple presents a Keynote app designed specifically to create presentations using an iPad.

With a tap or drag of your finger on the iPad touch screen, you can use Keynote to create or edit presentation slides. The application's document manager serves as a master organizer, enabling you to scroll through already created slides, tap to open a slide, add new ones, and delete or reorganize them. There are a number of Apple-designed, themed templates to choose from to launch your presentation design, and a *Magic Move* feature allows you a subtle method of animating your images by moving each from an initial position on one slide to different positions on subsequent slides.



Chris Brogan

How to leverage social media to build strong clubs.

By Jack Vincent, CTM, CL

Toastmasters 2.0

The social media landscape evolves so rapidly that even marketers of major brands struggle to harness its true power.

As Toastmasters clubs embrace social media to engage with members and potential members, they face the same challenges as large corporations, but have more difficulty overcoming them because they have far fewer resources. Chris Brogan, expert of social media and Web entrepreneurship, best-selling co-author of *Trust Agents* and popular blogger at chrisbrogan.com, recently spoke with the *Toastmaster* magazine about taking full advantage of your club's social media efforts.

"Many organizations jump into social media with both feet but with no real strategy," says Brogan. "In the process, they waste precious resources and don't get the full benefit."

Irina Kremin, a member of Toastmasters of the Hague in The Netherlands, echoes Brogan. "Getting the most out of any social media initiative

requires focus," she says. "It's a matter of doing a few of the right things, and then integrating small doses of social media into your daily life."

Kremin, a Toastmaster since 2005, runs KGS (Knowledge Goes Social), which organizes business conferences and events. She uses social media extensively in her business. In fact, KGS (kgsglobal.com) hosted Brogan at the Berlin conference, "B2B Marketing Europe," where we caught up with him.

Not surprisingly, the conference was among the top European events trending that week on Twitter, the micro-blogging platform. From this, another informal event took root at a Berlin social venue that attracted nearly 100 tech-savvy Berliners, all through tweets, blog posts and mobile messaging.

Making Social Media Pay Off in Toastmasters

So how can Toastmasters clubs reap the greatest return on invested effort

from social media? How can clubs do the right things *and* do them well, in terms of generating publicity and attracting new members?

Brogan stresses the importance of setting clear and reasonable objectives from the outset. Broad statements of goals can be inspiring, he says, but a statement such as "Build the image of our club, while attracting guests and engaging existing members" is not enough to keep key officers and contributing members focused.

So in addition to following the club mission statement, a club should set measurable goals that are time-bound.

For example:

By June 1 of next year, our club's social media activity will focus on:

- Persuading two or more local journalists to write about the club and its members.
- Attracting 20 first-time guests to the club as visitors.

- Enabling 10 members to provide content or photos for the club blog.

Such goals will help club officers and contributors prioritize their efforts.

It may be worthwhile to set up a blog, a Facebook fan page and a Twitter account. “But doing so without a clear strategy,” Brogan says, “is like creating icebergs.” Icebergs drift independently in the high seas, with no cohesive link to other icebergs or the mainland.

Twitter, for example, can be incredibly powerful. But tweeting only with the purpose of promoting the club may not help you achieve your objectives and, therefore, can drain your club of precious resources – your time! It’s vital, therefore, to create synergies among your club’s different “online assets” so that the *whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts*. Here is how:

Keep Your Strategies Simple

Brogan is more than a social media guru. He’s a strategic advisor and the best strategies are simple. For organizations such as Toastmasters clubs, Brogan recommends a “Home Base and Outpost Strategy” in which one of your online assets –

perhaps your website or your blog – is chosen as your foundation, your hub... your home base. All your other assets – perhaps your photo page, video page or Twitter profile – should be considered satellites, as outposts that *capture* attention, engage visitors and drive traffic back to your home base.

Here are a few simple considerations to help you with this strategy:

Determine Your Home Base

This should be your website.

- This is where you want to direct most users, especially potential guests, once you “capture” them.
- This should be the platform where you are most likely to secure a first commitment in the “new member acquisition process” – e.g., where visitors are most likely to confirm their attendance for an upcoming meeting.

Design Your Outposts

- First and foremost, these assets should be designed to capture attention and engage your community.
- They should then encourage visitors and members to link to the

home base for more information, such as club meeting location, time and agenda. Or they might link to another exciting platform, which *then* links to the Home Base. For example, a Twitter post might mention a video and link to it. Yet the video itself should refer to the home base/website, with a link back to it, and the Twitter profile should link to it, as well.

- Outposts must be exciting and engaging. They should establish “social proof,” or credibility and attractiveness to your target audience.

Establish Social Proof

Social proof is similar to “street credibility.” It means making people want what you have. To grasp the concept, imagine that you and a few friends enter a restaurant along a city sidewalk on a Thursday evening, and you’re a bit early. A savvy restaurateur will seat you in the window to show passers-by that the restaurant is busy.

Similarly, night clubs purposely make patrons wait at the door. The line sends a message that the club is in high demand, that it’s trendy.

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Social Media Tool Kit for Toastmasters Clubs

By Jack Vincent

1. Establish simple but clear goals and objectives.

- Write specific objectives that are time-bound and measurable.

2. Outline which online assets your club wishes to manage.

- List the online assets you could manage, then create a smaller list of the ones you can start managing over the next two weeks.

3. Determine your Home Base.

- In most cases, this will be your website or blog.

4. Establish your Outposts. Clubs should consider:

- A blog. This is where your personality comes through.

- Facebook fan page. Whatever opinion you have of Facebook, many people are socializing there.

- Twitter. You can follow many conversations on Twitter, and if your topic gets hot, it can become red hot and your message will spread like wildfire.

- YouTube/Vimeo/Etc. Open a video account in the club’s name, and cite the club’s Home Base URL.

- Flickr/Kodak/Etc. These are similar to video sites, but don’t underestimate the power of photos.

5. Stay positive.

- Blogs and tweets usually receive the most comments when they’re positive.

Toastmasters 2.0

(Continued from page 13)

This is social proof, and it works in social media as much as it does in society itself.

Social proof establishes you as cool, relevant, educational or whatever you want your brand to be – but certainly attractive to your target audience. For example, Toastmasters Zug in Switzerland – a club located in Zug, a small city about 30 minutes from Zurich – uses the slogan “Enjoy Speaking!” Showing members and guests having fun as they speak is therefore a must in all the club’s online photos, videos and blog posts.

“Toastmasters clubs should not only monitor the comments on their own websites and blogs, but also pay attention to broader conversations within their geographic communities.”

To manage your brand and ensure social proof, be selective. Quality and image matter!

Unleash Social Media’s Real Power

To view social media simply as a promotional vehicle is to sell one’s efforts short right from the start. “What the real leaders in this space have figured out is that you can re-humanize businesses and create loyal communities using these kinds of tools,” Brogan says.

Social media goes far beyond promoting a product, a company or even a Toastmasters club. The real strength of Web 2.0 is enabling conversations. As Toastmasters, we know that listening is as important as speaking.

Grow Bigger Ears

Where Web 1.0 was about websites that transmit messages one way, as is the nature of publishing and broadcasting, Web 2.0 broadly refers

to platforms that enable discussions and commentary – not only between the host and its users, but *among* users on the host’s platform.

Brogan is frequently quoted for the term “grow bigger ears.” This is his way of telling marketers that they should “listen” to the online conversation and that they should pay attention to other sites, including the media (online or otherwise). By doing this, marketers can gain an understanding of current trends and will more likely uncover opportunities.

Toastmasters clubs, therefore, should not only monitor the comments on their own websites and blogs, but also pay attention to

broader conversations within their geographic communities. By growing bigger ears and thinking creatively, clubs can find opportunities where they otherwise might not.

Seize Opportunities

Social media is an enabler. You must still take initiative and seize opportunities. For example, let’s say that a prominent artist is going to open an exhibit at a nearby university, on the same day as an upcoming club meeting. Why not invite her to your meeting? Perhaps you can extend the invitation right on her own blog, in her “comments” section. She’ll not only be grateful for the invitation, she’ll be grateful for the activity on her blog. All bloggers are!

If she accepts, why not build it into an event, promote it online and reach out to the media?

As an entrepreneur, Toastmaster Kremin knows how to identify and leverage opportunities. Helping

others win at the same time is one of the golden rules of social media, and Kremin helped both Brogan and a prominent Berlin venue succeed online.

Leading up to her B2B Marketing Europe conference, Kremin and KGS teamed up with the Berlin venue – called “Home Base” – and arranged for Brogan and the other conference speakers to “socialize” with Berlin-based techies and bloggers.

The outcome was that the night before the conference, Brogan enjoyed a few beers, played Ping-Pong with a few enthusiasts and talked with just about everyone. Participants had a blast. They tweeted live from the venue, posted photos on Flickr and their blogs, and posted videos on YouTube and Vimeo.

It was a win-win all the way around. KGS established social proof within a community that Kremin considers important. Brogan strengthened his own personal brand in Europe. Home Base packed the house while also strengthening its own credibility.

Start Small. Think Big

For Toastmasters clubs, the sky’s the limit with social media. However, many of us do not have abundant resources, so “don’t bite off more than you can chew.”

Understand social media’s real power – engaging and building communities. Set clear but attainable objectives. Capture attention on your Outposts and link to your Home Base.

Be selective in the quality of your photos and materials. Listen to the community at large to uncover opportunities. Approach everything with a win-win mindset.

And enjoy the journey. We’re all learning! 

Jack Vincent, CTM, CL, is a member of Toastmasters Zug in Switzerland. He is a sales consultant and the author of *Sales Pitches That Snap, Crackle n’ Pop*. Read his blog at **BraveNewSales.com**.



What do you give up when you punch that button?

By Beth Black

Technology's Toll

“For a list of all the ways technology has failed to improve the quality of life, please press three.”

– Alice Kahn

A few weekends ago, I enjoyed a mini-vacation with my friend Cindy in the rustic town of Julian, northeast of San Diego, California. We spent the day shopping and at one point, Cindy came across a selection of men's shirts. Without hesitating, she pulled her cell phone out of her purse and dialed her husband. When he answered, she filled him in on the choice of styles, asking which he'd prefer. It gave him the chance to decline the gift. Within a few minutes, we found ourselves in another store surveying different merchandise – the shirts all but forgotten. It occurred to me later that Cindy never realized the opportunities that were crushed by using the phone in her purse.

Once upon a time, personal communication devices – cell phones – were the stuff of the 1960s television show, *Star Trek*. In this show, some dramatic irony was presented in every episode,

often exploring the balance between our humanity and technology. Of course, in real life, personal communication devices are now taken for granted and it seems we've zoomed past those philosophical questions at the speed of light.

So what did Cindy trade for the expedience of contacting her husband? Plenty, according to members of Heart2Heart Toastmasters, a specialty club for couples located in Oakland, California. “Our club is all about the nuances of communication when one is in a relationship. That landscape is fraught with problems, misunderstandings and innuendo,” says Keith Patterson, DTM, of the Heart2Heart club. “It takes a special skill set to navigate those waters and successfully communicate within a relationship where your heart is deeply involved.” While technology may help in some ways, we have lost some of the benefits of old-style communication. A vital part of our shared human experience is fading fast into the recesses of history.

There are a few advantages of simpler times that may not be coming back:

- **The element of surprise.** When a couple has been married a long time, it's not easy to surprise your spouse with a gift, a token that says, “I love you. I thought about you today, even though we were apart for awhile.” It's this kind of moment that keeps spouses smiling at each other.
- **Focus on the here and now.** While on the phone, I overheard my friend Cindy getting an update on the kids' behavior, the neighbor's antics and the situation with a broken dishwasher. Some of the hard-earned rest and respite she was trying to find by driving for hours to this mountain retreat were instantly buried by a barrage of everyday problems. It took a brisk walk outside and a very unusual jewelry counter in the next store to help her lay all that aside... once more.
- **A chance to miss each other.** In a happy marriage, it's great to come home to your loving spouse. At times, it's also great to spend a few extra hours missing that person and looking forward, like the old days, to seeing your

beloved in the future. When you're in constant communication, you never have this opportunity to stand back and reflect on what you have.

- **Bringing *personal* to the interpersonal.** Some conversations and moments are best enjoyed in person. A teenager can learn from a mentor, a husband can gaze into his wife's eyes and a boss can commend an employee's performance – these things are all best done in person. While electronic substitutions exist for just about everything, nothing quite comforts a crying child like a hug from Mom or Dad.

What This Means to You

There's no denying that cell phones are a boon to communication. In emergencies, we can dial for help within seconds. Business executives are never far from the office thanks to the instant communication available via cell technology. Teenagers can call home and let worried parents know their whereabouts. And this just pertains to the speaking or texting part of mobile phones; never mind the slew of applications ("apps") and other technologies now available in pocket-size pads.

A balance is necessary, however, for all these benefits to mean anything. Sales and marketing professionals have always understood the

value of human contact. "Credibility, trust, transparency – and all the other stuff that shows who we really are and helps to influence others – naturally flourishes in the 'analog' world of face-to-face interactions," says John Young of the Sales and Marketing Executives club in Minneapolis, Minnesota. "We lose these things, and sometimes even lose our manners, in the 'digital' realm."

What This Means to Your Club

Just as individuals benefit from one-on-one communication, Toastmasters clubs build membership more effectively when they add a personal touch. Patterson's newly chartered Heart2Heart club used some of its funds on local advertising. "From all that effort, we gleaned not one new member," he says. "However, in that same time period, we added 10 new members. Every single one of them came to the club as a result of a one-on-one, person-to-person, face-to-face invitation."

With the ever-rising mountain of devices and the myriad programs available to us, it's no wonder we reach for the nearest pocket or laptop when it's time to contact a prospective member. We rarely stop to ponder if there might be another way. Lowery J. Smith of the Sales and Marketing Executives club has found success by *combining*

electronics with a personal connection when reaching out to his customers. "I do use the electronic tools of the trade but there is no substitute, in my mind, for face-to-face or personal communications," he says. "Most of my sales are of a technical nature, which takes time to personally explain and to gain the confidence of my customers."

Similarly, it may take some time to explain all the benefits and activities of Toastmasters membership. Whenever possible, sitting with a guest (or even a prospective guest) for a few minutes – chatting cordially about the club experience – may make enough difference to attract a shy newcomer. What's more, talking face-to-face will give you the opportunity to get to know this person and perhaps start a new friendship.

But don't throw away your cell phone, laptop, desktop, touchscreen, e-reader or electric toothbrush just yet. Each one of those machines glorifies human ingenuity. Bear in mind that they can be distractions or, worse yet, *replacements* for a handshake, a hug or a smile. With any luck, you have both kinds of communication within reach. Take advantage of them both and you're sure to find real power and connectivity in your life. ■

Beth Black is an associate editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine. Contact her at bblack@toastmasters.org.

The *Unplugged* Challenge

To help you get back into the "real world" habit, try this easy exercise: Turn your cell phone off for one day. To be safe, let family members and friends know how to contact you in an emergency. If a day is too long, try it for an hour. Now stash this little machine someplace safe. Then go out into the world and really look around as you walk down the street.

Force yourself to shake your cell-phone withdrawal symptoms by paying more attention to your surroundings. Try to interact more. Are flowers blooming in your local park? Take a moment to enjoy them. Greet people you meet and smile at the other people in

line when you buy lunch. Make friendly chitchat with people, and try to appreciate something great about the strangers who fill your world. Does it inspire you to write a poem? Paint a picture? Or sing a song? Great! You've just reconnected with the human race.

And if you miss the camera functions on your cell phone, even better – because now you've found a new reason to embrace technology. Perhaps now you can learn how to bring the virtual and real worlds together in a way that maximizes them both. Meanwhile, be sure to make the most of this little break from your gadgets.

Speak

and be Heard

What kind of microphone is best for speakers?

By Bill Stephens, ATM

Y*ou've prepared for weeks to give the best speech of your life. The moment has arrived; you are introduced, and you take center stage. Suddenly, as you open your mouth to speak, the audience is assaulted by "screeeeeeeech!!!!" You're not presenting anything. Instead, the sound system is presenting horrendous feedback.*

As an alternative, consider this: You are the featured speaker at the Toastmasters International Convention. You step onto the podium and the audience quiets, waiting for your message. Without saying a word, you project your thoughts directly into their minds. Although it may seem far-fetched, that kind of immediacy in communicating thoughts is a goal that every professional speaker should hope to attain.

Recording engineers use the term *transparency* when discussing how well a sound is retained as it goes through all the electronic processes to bring the performance to your ears. In true transparency, a recording of a speech

sounds like the speaker is performing right in front of you.

Filmmakers are expert at making the technology transparent. You're able to watch movies and TV shows without ever seeing the microphones used to convey the actors' words, because sound technicians make every effort to hide the machinery. Highly directional off-camera mics are augmented by more mics hidden in clothing or strategically placed in set pieces. After recording more than 40 years of Toastmasters and other groups' conventions – and in my experiences of recording tens of thousands of speeches – I've witnessed speakers giving superb presentations without the audience being aware that they were using a

microphone, thus achieving transparency with their thoughts. But I have also seen many instances where the speakers' presentations were marred by microphone problems that could have been prevented. Speakers have trouble with microphones, such as feedback, improperly placed microphones and microphones failing half-way through a speech. This results in a broken *Plane of Transparency*. The speakers' messages were interrupted by problems that could have been avoided.

As a speaker, you seldom have your choice of microphones, so knowing how to use a variety of microphones will help you to connect with your audience. If you are asked for your choice, here are some mics and the standard applications:

Hand-held Microphones

"Speak to your audience, not to the mic," is the universal wisdom shared with speakers as they become more advanced. Often, the type of microphone you hold will affect how well you carry out that axiom. The most common mic you will encounter is hand-held. It comes in both hard-wired and wireless versions, and it can also be mounted on a stand. It is usually a directional mic with a built-in "pop" filter so it can be held up close without causing annoying "p-popping" sounds from hard consonants, such as "p," "t," "k" and "b."

Comedians and singers often prefer this type of mic, because it can be held close to the lips without distortion, but also works well away from your mouth. Singers often place it right against their lips or very close, to allow the sound technician to isolate the singer from the background and have better control of the mix. A professional speaker should never use a hand-held mic in this way, unless she uses vocal sound effects or sings as part of the presentation.

To properly use a hand-held mic for speaking, the mic – hard-wired or wireless – should be adjusted so you can hold it between six to 12 inches away from your mouth. This way it does not block you from your audience. If you need to be louder, you can move it a little closer to your mouth. Hold the mic between your thumb and fingers at a comfortable balance point – not with a closed fist. Be sure to hold it lightly and remember that it is a delicate instrument. Never hold it with your hand up against the windscreen ball, the foam cover on the microphone, because doing so could change the quality of the sound and may even cause feedback.

Often you will encounter a mic with the levels set so low that you have to hold it up to your mouth to be heard because sound technicians often will set the level, or *gain*, very low to avoid having to run back into the sound room to adjust for feedback. Also, many sound professionals come from the rock music field, where close-up use of mics is the norm. This is not acceptable for professional speakers.

Proximity and Personal Space

Have you ever experienced another person violating your personal space by standing too close and talking in a loud voice? If your microphone is too close to your mouth and you speak in a loud voice throughout your speech, you are going to wear out your audience. Be particularly careful to avoid using a hand-held mic in this way.

If, however, you are a comedian or produce vocal sound effects, you can learn how to adjust the mic. With that knowledge, you'll be able to hold it close for your purposes and then move away from it for normal speaking. It's worth the time and effort to watch seasoned entertainers to help you to develop a full understanding of professional microphone techniques.

Lapel Microphones

A lapel mic can be either hard-wired into the sound system or part of a wireless system. A wireless lapel mic consists of a small microphone with a mic clip and a wire that runs to the transmitter, also called a body pack. This is my favorite mic for public speaking. It clips to your clothes, so you never have to worry about how far to hold it from your mouth. Also, this design takes advantage of the more natural sound that your whole body produces, in much the same way that the body of an acoustic guitar provides a rich tone lost in electric versions.

It's best to clip the mic near the center of the chest – just below the second button on a man's dress shirt. If it's placed too high or too low, the sound can be muffled. The transmitter can be attached to the speaker's belt or placed in back of the wearer; if the speaker is to control the on/off switch, the transmitter should be placed on the side of the non-dominant hand to avoid accidentally hitting it or the cord, or dislodging it.

Whenever you're given the choice, use an omni-directional mic. Uni-directional mics are susceptible to problems. If it gets bumped and is no longer pointing toward your mouth, the sound quality will suffer.

You may have heard about "lavalier" microphones. Historically, a lavalier was a type of necklace that included a pendant, often with a central stone. At one time, a lavalier mic was hung like a pendant with a cord around the wearer's neck. Through the years, these mics were replaced by smaller mics with clips that attached to a speaker's lapel. While there used to be a distinction between lavalier mics and lapel mics, the word *lavalier* has since become a standard term referring to a lapel mic.

Headset Microphones

Headset mics, worn over the ear with a small boom angled toward the mouth, are great for aerobics instructors, clergy, auctioneers, stage actors, sports announcers and singers. But unless you are very acrobatic in your speaking performance – or find yourself in a situation where you are close to the loudspeakers, which may cause feedback with other

mic designs – they’re not appropriate for public speaking. They may seem glamorous and high-tech, but they can be distracting to your audience.

Do It Yourself

If you have your own wireless mic, or are planning to buy one, you should take precautions. Any wireless microphone in the 700-MHz range (698 to 806 MHz) was declared illegal by the United States Federal Communications Commission on June 12, 2010, and the frequencies have been allocated for other use. Using a wireless mic in that range may cause interference with those allocated to use that bandwidth. It may also cause unwanted interference and interruptions that will affect your microphone. For more information, go to fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones/manufacturers.html.

If you’re planning to use your own legal wireless mic at an event, it is imperative that you check in advance with the audio-visual (AV) company supplying the sound regarding the frequency that your system uses. Your meeting planner can help you with this. Be sure to speak with them, as there could be other wireless systems in use in the same room or adjacent meeting rooms that might interfere with your system.

Or your system might interfere with theirs. When two wireless systems are on the same frequency, they can cancel each other out, rendering both useless.

Have a Backup Mic Handy

If your mic should fail during your speech, it helps to have a backup microphone ready to replace the dead one immediately. In some cases, it could be the lectern mic, adjusted to the same volume levels as your own. If you are giving your speech entirely from the lectern, the mic should be set for use at six to 12 inches from your speaking position, and set low and out of the way of your face. If you are planning to speak entirely from the lectern, don’t ask for a lapel mic. In that case, a second microphone should be somewhere nearby for you to grab.

Achieving Ultimate Transparency

To achieve *ultimate transparency*, you must hide the microphone from your audience, completely. Do this by positioning a specially designed mic inside your clothing. These omni-directional mics can be hidden inside a man’s tie, or clipped to a woman’s undergarment. Experts use a “vampire” clip to hold the mic, which has earned its name with two sharp needles that slide into cloth. Since these are highly professional and expensive, you aren’t likely to find them in most audio-visual suppliers’ inventories. If you speak frequently outside of Toastmasters, consider purchasing one. Obtaining a good, reliable, dual-diversity wireless system with multiple frequencies will round out your traveling microphone setup needs.

The most effective and successful speakers have learned to deliver their messages fully by using microphones wisely and not having attention drawn to the equipment. By working to achieve transparency, you can be a more powerful and effective speaker. 

Bill Stephens, ATM, has directed the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking since 1986 and has produced all the audio and video recordings from those Conventions. A member of Washoe Zephyrs Toastmasters in Reno, Nevada, he can be reached at b.stephens@billspro.com.

Three Tips to Sound Out Your Next Speech Setup

1 When planning to speak at a meeting of any size, let your meeting planner know which type of microphone you prefer. In many cases, you may get exactly what you want. On the other hand, wireless microphone rentals may be too expensive to fit into the meeting’s budget, so be prepared to use an alternative.

2 Ask for a few minutes with the soundman, before your session, in order to conduct a microphone check. Never test mics by saying, “Testing one two three.” Instead, run through portions of your speech at its loudest and softest points to give a true indication of how you will be speaking. Move about the stage to check for feedback. If your session is being recorded, this would be a good time for those technicians to check their recording levels.

3 Always carry some fresh 9V, AA and AAA batteries in your speaking kit, and ask the soundman to put in your fresh batteries before your session. That way you’ll know that the mic won’t go dead from low batteries in the middle of your session. You may be told that they recently changed the batteries, but you are the one standing in front of the audience with a dead wireless mic. You should know that many *wired* lapel mics also use batteries.

Speaking, agrees. “A conversational style is more personal and personable. It invites the audience in and has a level of intimacy that makes the audience infinitely more engaged and receptive.”

Marie Grey, head of Africa’s leading speakers’ bureau, Marie Grey & Associates, concurs. “Keep it real,” she advises aspiring professional speakers. “Affected words only take up head space and waste time!”

2 Craft interesting titles. Yes, you can deliver an address titled, “A Critical Look at the History and Production of Fireworks.” But how much more engaging to have the emcee say, “Help me to welcome Joe, with his speech titled, ‘Bang! – Making the Fire Work!’”

One of my keynote speeches is about the topic of personal initiative. I call it “The Rules of Hamster Thinking.” Your title is an opportunity to create interest before you even stand to speak. Take the time to develop a hook.

3 Metaphors help you to sum up complex ideas quickly. Certainly, you can show a busy graph depicting the ins and outs of any idea. Or you could simply use a metaphor that captures the essence of the idea, and say, “It’s *like*...”

On the hit television show *Top Gear*, British presenter Richard Hammond once described a Porsche’s rear-mounted engine as being “a bit like building a pyramid with the pointy bit at the bottom.”

Metaphors sum up complex ideas quickly. Most of the detail in corporate presentations is superfluous, because there is a world of difference between mere information and actual message. Information requires graphs. *Message* can be done with metaphors.

Professional speakers and trained Toastmasters rarely use fussy PowerPoint graphs. They know that having information is only half of a speak-

er’s job. Communicating that information in impactful and memorable ways is the full obligation.

4 Repeat catchphrases often and your point will be remembered.

Simple. Memorable. Easy to repeat. Advertisers know the value of a good catchphrase, and top speakers understand it, too. Remember the old war-time phrase “Loose lips sink ships”? That’s the kind of easy-to-repeat mnemonic slogan you should develop and use often in your presentations.

Mark Brown says, “A catchphrase well crafted and repeated can even become one’s signature. *Just Do It*. Three simple, monosyllabic words propelled the Nike corporation to the top of its industry.”

He adds, “My friend and fellow World Champion of Public Speaking Darren LaCroix is internationally known for his mantra ‘stage time, stage time, stage time.’ Powerful!”

Graeme Codrington, a professional speaker and workplace expert, agrees. “What’s the point of taking time to speak to an audience when a few days later no one can remember what you said? Make an impact by using all the hooks and techniques you possibly can to embed your message in the minds of your audience.”

“No one knows this rule better than we comedians,” adds Rehman Akhtar, director, producer and star of “Rehman & Friends,” a stand-up comedy show that has become one of the best-known brands in Saudi Arabia’s emerging comedy scene. “A good comic can rise or fall on the strength of his catchphrases as they become an invisible bond between the performer and his audience.”

5 Rhyme is sublime and alliteration adds impact.

In one of my contest speeches, I spoke about the glib nature of self-help quick fixes. I packaged it in the following sentence: “The treadmill of self-

improvement churns out Kellogg’s Rice Competitors, Kentucky Fried Performers, Supersized McMen and Women – egos bigger than buildings.” Rhyme and alliteration add musicality to your sentences. Its rapid-fire nature also helps you create the impression of being “on a roll” when you speak, which adds to the perception of passion.

Morgan McArthur, the 1994 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking, introduced a story with this line: “There’s a Tiny Tumbleweed Town called Ledore, Idaho...”

6 Visual devices bring dry information to life. Don’t just give information. Create mental pictures. The human mind becomes more engaged when points are delivered in story form, with character, setting, emotion and the description of action. We do not “feel” a PowerPoint graph the way that we feel a story.

Use language that creates the perception that you are “re-living” the story as you tell it, and you will pin souls to seats and set fire to minds. Best of all, you will be remembered.

The next time you pen a presentation, challenge yourself to raise the bar on your use of language. Remember that Document-Speak kills speeches. High-Impact speak gives your script mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The human mind sits up and takes notice when a person speaks with passion and conviction. Take the time and trouble to design language that captures the imagination and your audiences will thank you for it. **T**

Douglas Kruger, ATMS, CL, is a member of the Sandton Toastmasters in Johannesburg, South Africa, who represented Africa in the finals of the Toastmasters International Speech Contest in 2004, 2005 and 2007. He is the author of three books, including *50 Ways to Become a Better Speaker*. Reach him at dougaskruger.co.za.



FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT!

By John Cadley

When words wander away ...

So, Um, You Know, Here's, Like, My Column, Ya Know?

■ We have a generation of college graduates who treat the English language like a rented mule. They push, prod and poke it into submission for the lowly purposes of texting, emailing and – God help us – tweeting. Never mind the millions of years it's taken for human speech to evolve into a wondrous system of nuance and complexity. We now have an entire generation that would rather communicate like birds on a telephone wire.

The rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation are not simply ignored; they're beaten with a stick. Language has no intrinsic beauty. On the rare occasions when technology fails and these bright young minds must use the spoken word, they use a vocabulary so flea-bitten with “um,” “uh,” “like,” “you know” and “sorta” that it does, in fact, resemble the muted braying of a barnyard animal.

This is the future, ladies and gentlemen: intelligent young men and women who can master complex video games, program TiVo from their cell phones, control home appliances from their laptops, write computer code in their sleep, even graduate with honors – but who can't spell “restaurant.” As a lover of the language, I am deeply saddened. As an employer seeking to hire individuals who can express themselves clearly, I am scared out of my wits. I have nightmares of hiring a recently minted graduate and sending her out on a client presentation. The room is filled with people who could well determine the fate of my business, and standing there before them is...

Snooki from U.S. reality TV show *Jersey Shore*:

“So, like, yeah – it's, like, way cool that you're all here and I'm, you know, like, just sayin' – this is cool.”

“You're here to present the marketing plan for 2011, is that correct?”
“Yeah.”

“What is it?”

“We gotta sell more stuff.”

“What's your strategy for doing that?”

“You know, just, like, do stuff that makes people want to buy it, you know? Like, commercials and stuff.”

“What kind of commercials?”

“With stuff in it.”

“What else?”

“You know, like, ads and stuff in really serious, important magazines like, you know, *Vogue* and *Glamour*. And then, you know, like, Facebook and Twitter with lots of bling bling about how this stuff is great and how you buy it and tell all your friends 'cause they're gonna freak that they don't have it so they'll run out and get it and text everybody with pictures and stuff and then everybody'll be flippin' to buy it and you'll sell more stuff. You know, like that. Just sayin'.”

It's at this point that I wake up in a cold sweat and read a few pages of Shakespeare to reassure myself that real language has, in fact, not been annihilated during the night by an ICBM missile from New Jersey armed with monosyllables.

It's unfortunate that these young turks have to write a resume. Try as they might to appear witty and articulate, what should be a list of qualifications often turns into a litany of disqualifications. Let's start with

applying for a job as a proofreader and actually misspelling the word. *Really?* Then let's make sure we actually do proofread the resume to avoid saying that previous work experience includes “*stalking*, shipping and receiving,” or that we were “instrumental in *ruining* the entire Midwest operation of a major chain store,” or that we spent a summer in a call center “*taking odors*.”

We might also want to run the *spelling* and *grammar* functions on our computer – heaven forbid we would actually refer to a dictionary – to make sure we don't request a salary “*commiserate* with our experience,” or that we don't opine on how we feel our substantial qualifications will prove “*detrimental* to our future success.”

Logic and specificity help, too. Saying you're a “hard worker, etc.” isn't really a list of qualifications. And it's nice that your twin sister has a degree in accounting, but that doesn't tell us much about you, does it? Also, just for the record, being *bi*-lingual in three languages may be impressive, but it doesn't say much for your math skills. And finally, when I ask how large the department was that you worked in as a summer intern, “three stories” isn't the answer I'm seeking.

I know you're smart and capable. I know you'll perform well and do your parents and your employers proud. But come on, kids – would it kill you to learn how to spell *restaurant*? ■

John Cadley is an advertising copywriter in Syracuse, New York. Reach him at jjcadley@mower.com.

bluster
canine
pounce

vuvuzela
albatross
humbug



How a word lover gathers new gems to enrich her writing.

By Colleen Plimpton, ACB

Confessions of a Logophile

I settled into my chair, morning newspaper in hand. My cup of coffee sat on the adjacent table and the cat snoozed at my feet. A soft breeze wafted through the window while I rustled open the paper. And then... Eureka! In an article on municipal water supplies, my attention was drawn to a word I didn't possess in my Treasure Chest of Words: *notch*. How versatile! I could use "notch" as a verb or a noun. It had a firm, definitive quality and would lend itself to a visual or a gesture. I could see myself notching my accomplishments in a speech on weight loss or garden building.

This little jewel went immediately into the journal at my side, to be entered later into my computer file labeled "Treasure Chest."

Before I finished reading the paper, two more words grabbed me: *pounce* and *bluster*. And by dinner time, I'd secured *hokum* from a radio broadcast and *albatross* from a television commercial. All in all, it was a singular day for plucking words.

I'm a *logophile* – a word lover. I'm always questing for better

nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, as well as great similes, powerful metaphors and funny phrases. The words I capture help me express myself in Toastmasters speeches and garden lectures, as well as on my blog and the freelance articles and books I write.

Passion for Language Started Early

As the daughter of an English teacher, I've loved words since as far back as I can remember. My Toastmasters affiliation honed this affection when I realized the impact that word choice has on how a speech is crafted, memorized, delivered and retained. Whether you outline, pen your entire speech or construct something in between... Toastmasters are all writers, first. As such, we know that vigorous words are a key to memorable presentations. But how to come up with a bon mot? How to remember all the terrific words we've seen, read and heard? It's easy. Capture them where they lie.

Of course, there's no single "perfect" word for each situation, so don't search until exhaustion for

such a pearl. Your speeches are a reflection of you – your experiences and your life. A treasure chest will simply help you locate the best words to do the job. Capturing words is a time-saving device to enhance public speaking. I employ a treasure chest, but all sorts of other methods exist to select, save and use terrific words.

For example, Toastmaster Deb Grehn, of two clubs in Connecticut, characterizes herself as an "audible learner." If you caught her appearance on the TV game show *Jeopardy!* a few seasons ago, you would realize that is correct. Deb loves the sound of words, and she collects them in various ways: from conversations, her computer's "Word of the Day" and the Wordmasters at her clubs – Charter Oak Toastmasters in Glastonbury and West Hartford Toastmasters in West Hartford.

Grehn has sage advice for prospective word gatherers. "If you're unsure how a new word is pronounced, go to the computer and listen before you use it in a speech," she says. Websites like **dictionary.com** offer recorded

pronunciations of its entries. Words, Grehn notes, are too precious to mispronounce.

The Toastmasters Trove

So how else does Toastmasters membership help you appreciate and hone your word proficiency? The first 10 speeches in the *Competent Communication* manual build many skills, including introducing yourself to fellow Toastmasters, organizing your speeches, employing vocal variety, becoming comfortable with visual aids and using body language. But it's Project Four, "How to Say It," that particularly assists in grooming your speechcrafting skills. It exhorts the speaker to use "clear, simple, vivid and forceful words" to add excitement to presentations.

There's a reason Project Four appears so early in the manual: It's crucial. The simple explanations on the basics of specificity and careful selection of verbs, and the primer on similes, metaphors, alliteration and triad, help Toastmasters to be better speech writers and, thus, better speakers.

On her way to becoming a better speaker, Aletta Rochat of two clubs in Cape Town, South Africa, found that choosing the right words was a bit like finding the perfect outfit to wear. According to Rochat, her words have to fit her personality. And so she listens closely to other speeches, notes the words and phrases that appeal to her, and jots them down. A member of Cape Town Toastmasters, she practices incorporating these words into her interpersonal communication, to be used later in her speeches. Rochat, who is bilingual, also reminds us of the clout of colloquial phrasing. For instance, during the 2010 World Cup of soccer, held in Cape Town, many spectators came to understand the power (and volume!) of the Afrikaans word *vuvuzela* – a stadium horn. The sound of this memorable word hints at its trumpeting nature.

Rochat always gives her speeches the "bathroom mirror test." This is a

handy tool for uncovering words that don't *sound* as graceful as they *look* on a page. Indeed, there are clunky phrases that don't trip lightly off the tongue just as there are words that are simply not a good fit for some presentations. Any speakers who omit this test do so at their own peril.

Building a Better Trap

As these examples show, we don't need fancy equipment to find and keep words. My treasure chest was at first a simple written list, which I'd glance over when composing a speech. As it grew I divided it into nouns and verbs. With continual hunting and gathering it grew longer still, and I soon scanned the entirety into the computer, adding a category for funny words and sayings.

After several years of word collecting, the trove now stretches to thousands of entries, and has become my muse. When I'm stuck for an action word, or something that rhymes with "last," I consult my treasure chest. When I need a nudge to finish my weekly column, I pull up the pages and search for inspiration. When I need a verb starting with the letter "w", I run down the list and find the perfect choice.

It's a private file, compiled and viewed only by me, and, like Grehn and Rochat, I come across words everywhere: In the morning paper, of course, underlined in red so I can find them later. In writings and postings on the Web. In people's everyday chatter. (I keep a reporter's notebook at the ready.) On the radio, in television commercials and on signs at the market. In Sunday church sermons. Wonderful words are everywhere.

Other lessons in gathering and using potent words come from author, publicist, editorial consultant and former Toastmaster Patricia Fry, who reminds us that the best words are the familiar ones. She's immersed in a verbally rich world daily, but after many successful years in the writing business she

finds that she no longer consciously ponders word choice. She does, however, watch for redundancies, inconsistencies and typos. She also seeks out and destroys inadequate, erroneous grammar.

Fry appreciates creative sentences – identifying those that fall flat. She exhorts Toastmasters not to overuse the same word. For instance, instead of always using the word "dog" to describe a dog, try using *canine*, *furry friend* or *the animal*.

More Guidelines for Word Gathering

Gathering interesting words is an excellent way to keep speeches fresh. Practicing keeps these words applicable, and using them – whether in speeches, everyday conversation or professional enterprises – will make them yours forever. But not all words are worthy of collecting.

What is my treasure chest *not* used for? I never write down profanity. There is enough of that in the world. I try to stay away from archaic words, arcane usage, pretentious verbiage, clichés and jargon. (For example, the rest of the world probably doesn't need to hear my mangled botanical Latin.)

There is a never-ending supply of great words awaiting capture. Once caught, they always help me write speeches, deliver talks and enhance interpersonal communication.

In short, I probably couldn't be a writer without my treasure chest. And I'd certainly not be as successful in Toastmasters. With all due respect to the dictionary, thesaurus, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* and the *Metaphors Dictionary*, it's my treasure chest that comes through for me time after time. ■

Colleen Plimpton, ACB, is a member of Barnum Square Toastmasters in Bethel, Connecticut. A professional writer, coach and lecturer on gardening, her most recent book is *Mentors in the Garden of Life*. Contact her at colleenplimpton.com.

How to Muzzle THE YAKKER

Strategies for stopping the serial interrupter.

By Patrick Mott

If you don't already know this one, ask your kids – or any kid, because no kid can resist pulling a fast one on an adult – to tell you the “interrupting cow” knock-knock joke:

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Interrupting cow.

Interrupting cow wh...?

Moo.

Cute, right? Gives you a little chuckle? Then what happens? You think about it a little more and before you know it you are giving some serious thought to grinding your teeth.

Why? Because we all hate to be interrupted. Or drowned out. Or conversationally dominated. We despise, secretly or otherwise, the verbal interloper. This scourge can appear in the guise of the loud talker, the close talker, the conversation hog, the story topper, the quick interjector, the extra-long joke teller or the questioner who never waits for an answer. They all share one basic infuriating aim: They want you to shut up and yield the floor, and they want you to do it right *now*.

Your first impulse might be to slip a few dozen tablespoons of hot sauce into the yakker's double decaf latte, but, being the inventive Toastmaster you are, you ponder less explosive solutions (even as you eye the Tabasco longingly).

Check out these ideas to get the more civilized wheels turning:

Learn to Listen

If we take our cues in everyday conversation from much of modern political discourse, we may come to believe that bombast equals victory and good listening equals defeat. *I shout 'em down and shut 'em up, I win; I keep my mouth shut, I lose.* But that's not conversation, that's verbal bullying.

So why do so many people do it? The late American philosopher and educator Mortimer Adler, in his book *How To Speak, How To Listen* (1983), wrote that schools do not teach listening as a skill at any academic level. This leaves many adults unprepared to engage in truly intelligent conversations.

“Is anyone anywhere taught how to listen?” Adler asked. “How utterly amazing is the general assumption that the ability to listen well is a natural gift for which no training is required.”

Fortunately, listening is one of the skills that Toastmasters International values most. It is a quality that members focus on and improve at club meetings. Toastmasters recognizes what Adler believed: Listening is a quality that needs to be honed. “While listening may seem like it should be easy to do, it can be very difficult, often requiring more mental effort than speaking,” says the Toastmasters *Competent Leader* manual.

Don't be Dominated by Interrupters

Parlor conversation is one thing. But what if you're in the bare-knuckle netherworld of the business meeting, sitting around a table waiting for a serial interrupter – the person who loves to score points through the domination of others – to strike again? How to deal with the occasionally malicious verbal counterpuncher?



No less an authority than celebrated funnyman John Cleese, of Monty Python fame, lays out a handful of semi-guerrilla tactics in a video called *Meeting Menaces* (one in a series of popular business-training videos from Cleese). First, however, he points out that not all interruptions in meetings are bad. Interjections to “save time or to correct mistakes” are fine as long as they’re quick and useful. He calls such breaks “running repairs to the discussion.”

It’s the egregious interrupting windbag who’s the true culprit. “Letting the interrupter take over isn’t the answer,” says Cleese. The initial speaker can lose control of the situation and “completely swallow the interrupter’s change of agenda.” Neither is simply telling the verbal interloper to shut up an option. Assuming the meeting is chaired, the best defense, says Cleese, is to “keep your cool, ignore the interrupter and appeal to the chair.” And if that fails? The “ultimate deterrent,” says Cleese, is to pack up and start to walk out. Severe? Yes, but “it’s very unlikely that it will ever come to that,” says Cleese, “and if it did, it would be very surprising if the chair didn’t call you back.” Timing, of course, is everything.

One stratagem that may disarm the serial interrupter before he or she can pounce, says Cleese, is to begin your floor time by stating how many points you’re going to make. This helps to close the yakker’s windows of opportunity from the start.

Quieting the Questioner Who ... Won’t ... Stop ... Talking

Another awkward and frustrating situation can occur when you give a speech – typically outside of the courteous environment of Toastmasters – and during a question-and-answer session, you’re confronted with a questioner who *goes on and on and on*. They hog the Q&A time, to the extreme irritation of other audience members. In a 2008 article for the *Toastmaster* magazine, author R.J. Stove described this kind of person as the “Never-Ending Questioner” – “or, rather, the interminable speechmaker who offers up his unsolicited biography and hopes it’ll be accepted as a question.”

Stove’s solution for handling such a boor? Say something like, “I’m sorry, I’m not quite sure what your specific concern is – could you perhaps approach me about it afterward?” “In nine cases out of 10,” notes Stove, “the Never-Ending Questioner won’t accept this implied invitation.”

Be Decisive and Confident

Interrupting can be a form of domination and, depending on the degree, sometimes needs to be dealt with instantly and decisively. “Sometimes you must return the dirty deed with a polite retort, something like, ‘Excuse me, Debbie, but I didn’t get to finish. I’d like to add that...’” writes business-communications consultant Connie Dieken in her blog, “Influential Leadership.”

Today's interrupters, writes Dieken, are a new breed. Often they aren't merely rude, but rude and in a hurry. She calls them "The Chronically Impatient."

"Buoyed by instant technology and addicted to speed, these pragmatic people are having a tough

"While listening may seem like it should be easy to do, it can be very difficult, often requiring more mental effort than speaking."

time tolerating long-winded rambles," she writes. "The Chronically Impatient value time, clarity and action, and they want you to get to the point, pronto. If you dilly dally, they'll either nudge you with a brief interjectory question or they'll outright overpower you and butt in as if your words don't matter."

How to keep them at bay? When you're speaking, be confident, don't be long-winded or hog the floor, and stop "speed talking." "If you've ever received feedback that you're a fast talker," writes Dieken, "chances are you're often interrupted. Why? After all, you're talking as fast as you can. Bingo! Some people can't digest what you're saying at a high rate of speed, so they cut in to catch up."

Dieken offers her own fail-safe weapon to use in the war of words: Keep right on talking. If you're dealing with a relentless interrupter who just won't quit, she says, then the last-ditch – and unconventional – approach is to push ahead with your own words and add more volume to them.

That, she says, "delivers a jarring and unmistakable message. It conveys that you're sick of being rudely interrupted and you're just not taking it anymore." 

Patrick Mott is a Southern California-based writer and a regular contributor to the *Toastmaster*.



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▶ Tim Lee riffs on topics like nuclear fission and quantum physics.

Former biologist now works in comedy – with PowerPoint as a stage tool!

From Science to Stand-Up

Most stand-up comedians mine their material from subjects such as relationships, politics and scandal-causing celebrities. But Tim Lee? He jokes about molecular bonding and nuclear fission. He writes punchlines built around quantum physics, and he uses PowerPoint as his comedy prop.

Lee is a trained biologist who earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Davis. He spent years in academia, developing simulation and analytical models of population dynamics before discovering that it bored him. Then something funny happened: The scientist turned his professional sights to stand-up comedy.

First, there was a small career detour. After abandoning academia, he worked as a computer programmer for Charles Schwab. But he still didn't feel fulfilled. One night he performed at an open-mic comedy event in a San Francisco Laundromat – and was instantly hooked. Lee soon found that PowerPoint was a fitting stage tool for his science-themed act.

He has since found success on

YouTube, with more than 3 million views of his videos, and is performing sold-out shows at comedy venues from New York to San Diego. Lee's corporate comedy clients include Johnson and Johnson, Genentech and Microsoft.

Here, the stand-up comic answers questions from the *Toastmaster* magazine:

When did you know that you wanted to do comedy?

After graduate school I was at a point in my life where I knew what I *didn't* want to do. I was bored with the kind of research I was doing. I gave corporate America a shot and found the work was just as boring – plus, I had to spend countless hours in meetings listening to people avoid making decisions. I had to try something new to spice up my life. I chose stand-up comedy. It was painful at first, but I could deal with honest pain easier than boredom.

What made you give up a promising career in science to stand up and tell jokes?

At some point you have to have a vision for yourself and go for it. If you don't, someone else will create that vision for you and force you to live it. By most people's standards I should have been happy with where I was, but honestly I wasn't. When comedy came along, I knew I loved it; I wasn't going to let it slip through my fingers.

Why do you use PowerPoint in your act?

My favorite professors would throw gag slides into their presentations and I decided I would as well. A few months after I started doing stand-up comedy I found an open mic [event] that had a PowerPoint set-up. I asked the emcee if I could try some PowerPoint science jokes in front of the regular audience. He agreed, and to my surprise the audience loved it!

What type of people are in your typical audience?

I perform everywhere: theaters, comedy clubs, colleges, company events. The one thing that my fans have in common is intellectual curiosity. They're generally pretty smart people. That keeps me on my toes.

How do you tailor your material to your audience?

I always work clean. I don't have to change it up for the corporate audience or the theater crowd. I decided early on that I wanted to work clean and I've stuck to that.

Do you write all your own jokes?

Yes! I like writing almost as much as performing, so I wouldn't dream of having someone do it for me.

How do you pick your topics?

I'm not an epiphany comic – i.e., most of my jokes don't just come to me. I usually sit down with a textbook, try to understand a particular topic at a deeper level, then imagine I have to teach it to a student. How could I teach it to them humorously?

Who is a bigger influence on you – comedian Dane Cook or Albert Einstein?

It depends on how you look at it. It's all relative.

It has been said PowerPoint is overused in corporate presentations. What's your opinion?

PowerPoint is the only form of torture still legal in the United States. But I believe PowerPoint can be used for good. I believe that one day the people who use PowerPoint will have a point. I believe that one day no one will read their slides aloud to an audience that has already read them in their head. I believe that one day presenters will check their figures before they present them. I believe that one day people from HR will join hands with people from engineering and say, "I understood why we had to sit through that!"

What tips would you offer to engineers and scientists about how to live up to their presentations?

No one pays attention to one topic for more than seven minutes, so you need to change it up about every seven minutes. What if I can't explain a topic in seven

minutes? It's fine to spend some time talking about one subject, then move on to another, then come back [to the first subject]. The presentation doesn't have to be completely linear. In fact, it's more interesting if it isn't.

Once you've lost the audience, you might as well not be talking, because no one is listening.

Should all speakers open their presentations with a joke?

If you are good with jokes, go for it. Jokes are very good at breaking tension and helping people relax. That opens minds a little bit. If you're not good at telling jokes, a brief personal anecdote will draw the audience in as well. You're sharing a little bit about yourself, and that gives them a reason to care about what you're saying. 

To learn more about Tim Lee, or to contact him, visit powerpointcomedian.com.

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