

TOASTMASTER®

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POWER OF CHANGE



The sound of heavy rain pounded on the windows as the club president called our weekly Toastmasters meeting to order. Ten minutes later, the door squeaked open and a reluctant guest tiptoed inside. Our visitor, Mattie, was a dreary creature who looked more like a wet, homeless person than a typical club guest.

Mattie shuffled to the back of the room, avoiding all eye contact, and took a seat. After the meeting, she kept her eyes peeled to the floor, muttered a few self-effacing words and left as quickly as possible. Week after week, the door squeaked open with the meeting in progress, and in shuffled Mattie.

One week I was Table Topicsmaster. On the last topic of the day, I called on Mattie. “Me?” she inquired. “Yes, Mattie, this one is for you, and you can do it!” There was a deep sigh. The applause started slowly as she walked to the front and began mumbling to the floor. Her unintelligible topic response


“Her self-image was shattered by years of rejection, failure and negative self-talk ... until Toastmasters.”

was almost over when she said something funny and the audience laughed. Mattie looked up, surprised, and we saw the most beautiful smile. It was a new Mattie — refreshed and rediscovered.

That epiphany infused Mattie with new confidence. She joined our club and started speaking regularly, increasing her eye contact, vocal variety and gestures. Soon she became an outspoken leader, delivering profound and moving speeches; her presentations were funnier and funnier, until she even won the club’s Humorous Speech Contest. The transformation was remarkable.

Over time, Mattie shared how a life of drug addiction and bad relationships left her homeless, unemployed and, in her mind, unemployable. Her self-image was shattered by years of rejection, failure and negative self-talk ... until Toastmasters.

Then Mattie stopped attending our Toastmasters club, and I became worried. She called me one day to say, “Michael, I’ve been away for good reason. You won’t believe it. I have a new job!”

This month, thousands of new club and district officers assume leadership positions. Let us remember that Toastmasters is more than just titles and statistics. It is about changed lives — men and women like Mattie who gain the competence and confidence to dream, believe and achieve. You learn it all at Toastmasters: where leaders are made. 

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International President

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WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
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Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their *competence* in communication so they can gain the *confidence* to lead others.

By regularly giving speeches, gaining feedback, leading teams and guiding others to achieve their goals, leaders emerge. They learn to tell their stories. They listen and answer. They plan and lead. They give feedback — and accept it. They find their path to leadership.

Toastmasters International. Where Leaders Are Made.



“The purpose of freedom of speech — especially in a properly protected political debate — is to allow a verbal outlet in the marketplace of ideas, and to thereby avoid conflict and violence.”

Becky Hawkins
South Suburban Toastmasters
Littleton, Colorado

Targeted **Training**

Thank you for the article about the transition from speaker to trainer (March). The worst training sessions I have attended were led by people who may have had good speaking skills but knew nothing about the complexities of adult learning. There are four unique learning styles, and only 17 percent of the population responds to a lecture format.

Miles R. Wickstrom, ACB
Columbian Toastmasters
St. Helens, Oregon

Breakfast **Club(s)**

I always read the *Toastmaster* magazine from cover to cover, usually on the day it is delivered. When I got to page 6 of the April issue, I saw the line, “Congratulations to the Lake City Breakfast club on its 20-year anniversary!”

My first thought was, How could Toastmasters be so far off? Our Lake City Breakfast club was organized in July 1949.

Then I read that the Lake City Breakfast club being congratulated was in Rotorua, New Zealand. I thought readers might be interested in knowing that there is another Lake City Breakfast club.

Warren Elmer, ATM
Lake City Toastmasters
Seattle, Washington

Freedom of Speech

In an otherwise fine article, I take issue with a statement in Ruth Nasrullah’s “You’re Speaking About What?!”

(April). Under the subheading Speaking Politics, her first sentence is, “Political debate is an instigator of conflict all over the world, from the international stage to small-town government.” The author misunderstands.

The purpose of freedom of speech — especially in a properly protected political debate — is to allow a verbal outlet in the marketplace of ideas, and to thereby avoid conflict and violence. It is when dissent is *not* possible that people are driven to other means of being heard.

Becky Hawkins
South Suburban Toastmasters
Littleton, Colorado

Super-sensitive Subjects

At a recent Toastmasters meeting, a speaker opened his discourse with a question: “How many of you believe in God?” Some raised their hands and some didn’t. I didn’t feel it was a simple “yes” or “no” question. An answer required an explanation; however, the circumstances did not provide that opportunity.

After the speaker elaborated for seven minutes on why he believed in God, he closed by asking: “Now how many of you believe?” Once again, and for the same reason, I kept my hand at my side. The experience was extremely uncomfortable.

In addition to the excellent advice given in the article “You’re Speaking About What?!” (April), I would suggest that speakers with super-sensitive subjects do the following:

1. Don’t ask the audience to express their opinion before you express yours.
2. Don’t ask the audience if they were persuaded by your speech.
3. Make the topic sufficiently narrow to present a convincing argument in seven minutes.
4. Make the discussion of super-sensitive subjects a special occasion, perhaps by setting up a debate between two speakers, with each given sufficient time to adequately cover the subject in depth.

Philip Yaffe, ACB, CL
Claddagh Toastmasters
Brussels, Belgium

The Best I Ever Read

I read the International President’s *Viewpoint*, “Ready for Leadership” (March), with enthusiasm. Speech is an event and leadership is a process. That’s the best description I have seen of what Toastmasters members do and experience.

I could relate to the material because in 1999, when I joined the Colombo Toastmasters club in Sri Lanka, I was an investment analyst in a stock brokerage company. After 13 years as a Toastmaster and a DTM award, I lead the largest investment organization in Fiji Islands. Thanks, Toastmasters! The experience taught me to face challenges and succeed.

No doubt, an experience in Toastmasters will make you a great leader.

Nouzab Fareed, DTM
Capital Toastmasters Suva club
Suva, Fiji

TUNE IN WHILE YOU TALK

I thought my speech was a disaster—but I didn't *hear* the audience.

By Lisbeth L. McCarty, CC

After a few months in Toastmasters, I had gained a bit of confidence in my speaking ability. So in a speech designed to emphasize vocal variety, I decided to present a few stories from my bungled cooking experiences that would hopefully make the audience laugh. Because this was our club's last meeting before Thanksgiving, the topic seemed timely.

I brought an acquaintance as a guest, which actually made me more nervous than usual. I had become

body laugh — not even once — during my presentation. In my mind, my speech was a disaster on a monumental scale. I had embarrassed myself.

Usually, I look forward to the speech evaluation, but this time I was inwardly trembling with dread. I was so busy slogging around in self-pity that I barely listened to the evaluation of my speech. In the parts that I did hear, my evaluator said positive things and even mentioned that he liked the comical aspects of my presentation. Because I was swimming in despair,

approached me after the meeting and said, "With a little tweaking, you could enter that speech in the club's Humorous Speech Contest."

When I left the meeting with my guest, I said, "I was surprised to get the humor ribbon."

"Why?" he asked.

"No one laughed at any of my stories."

He gave me a puzzled look and said, "Weren't you listening? Everyone was laughing!"

That's when I realized that I had not been listening at all during my speech. I had only been speaking. An excellent speaker has to learn to do both. I was so involved in getting the words of the speech right that I forgot to observe the reactions of the audience.

That day I learned that good public speaking is more than using proper grammar and coherent sentences; it is also learning to observe the responses of audience members. Doing all of this together produces a speech that is whole — and one that has more punch than a memorized recitation of stories.

Now, if I can just put what I have learned into practice, I will become a much better speaker! 🗣️

"Usually, I look forward to the speech evaluation, but this time I was inwardly trembling with dread."

somewhat comfortable with my fellow Toastmasters by this time. It's wonderful to be among like-minded people. On the other hand, when you have an audience that is supportive of any speech you present, it can sometimes make you feel too comfortable as a speaker. So having a new audience member would help improve my speaking skills in front of less-familiar faces.

I gave the speech within the allotted time, had very few stumbles and no "ums," "ers" or "ahs" whatsoever. I certainly wasn't patting myself on the back, though. As I returned to my seat to the sound of applause, I was discouraged. I had hoped that my speech would be funny, but I didn't hear any-

however, I convinced myself that the evaluator was merely patronizing my attempts at humor. I viewed his nice comments as a "pity evaluation."

When the time came for the awards, I knew I didn't stand a chance of receiving the ribbon for best speech. I was right: The ribbon was awarded to an extremely polished speaker. He had shown nerves of steel and connected with the audience very well.

Next, the humor ribbon was awarded. I was nominated, then my name was called as the winner. I was in shock. If my story had been funny enough to garner a humor ribbon, why was no one laughing during my speech? My sense of shock only increased when the club president

Lisbeth L. McCarty, CC, is a member of the Sooner Toastmasters club in Norman, Oklahoma. She is the author of *I Cooked; Therefore, They Ran* and *Ours Was the House*. Reach her at cuethelight@cox.net.

AROUND THE GLOBE

▶ INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

HOW DO YOU TAKE YOUR COFFEE?



Coffee is one of the most consumed beverages on Earth. But even though people around the world sip the bitter nectar created from the same coffee plant, brewing techniques vary widely.

In Italy and France, for example, coffee exists only in variations of espresso: the bitter, rich, highly caffeinated variety served in a small cup. In American and Canadian coffee houses like Starbucks and Tim Hortons, consumers sip drip coffee from oversized ceramic mugs. The Chinese and Japanese typically prefer tea but opt for lighter, sweeter coffees such as mochas and cappuccinos.

Next time you grind, percolate or press your daily caffeine fix, think about the millions of people who share your love for this roasted beverage and enjoy it in their own way.

▶ WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN...

YOU MEET A CELEBRITY?

Members from the Moundbuilders Toastmasters club from Granville, Ohio, respond:

“If the celebrity in question had a sense of humor, I would intentionally confuse him with another unrelated celebrity.” — **DAN WOLCOTT**

“If I met a celebrity, I would ask, ‘Would you like to attend our Toastmasters meeting this Thursday?’” — **NEIL PHELPS, CC, CL**

“I would say, ‘Gee, you’re shorter than I thought you’d be.’” — **BOB KSHYWONIS, ACB**

“I would ask, ‘What two things are you most proud of?’” — **GREG GREENE, ACS, ALB**

Congratulations to the Moundbuilders Toastmasters club on its 65-year anniversary!

▶ SNAPSHOT



Toastmaster Ben Slavin from Manchester, New Hampshire, USA, took to the skies by paragliding about 5,000 feet (more than 1,500 meters) over Medellin, Colombia.

Completing a few inverted acrobatic maneuvers made Slavin remember all the celebrating he had done the night before. After a smooth landing, he rejoiced by lying on the ground for five minutes until his stomach came to a rest.

BOTTOM LINE



Videos Offer Tips

Get the help you need to master

public speaking situations with Toastmasters’ new video series. Visit www.toastmasters.org/videos.

Convention Mention

Visit www.toastmasters.org/convention

for details about speakers and their sessions. Follow #TICnv12 on Twitter for live tweets from the convention.

Celebrate the Olympics

The London 2012 Olympic Games begin on July 27.

Be sure to cheer for your country’s athletes!



► COMMUNICATION TIP

NO-FUSS FIGHTING

Disagreements with people in your professional and personal life are unavoidable. Here are some tips for turning confrontations into constructive arguments that lead to compromises.

- **BE ALLIES.** When you argue, it is usually with a teammate, colleague, partner or family member. You're not enemies so don't wage war.
- **STOP THE ABUSE.** No yelling, throwing objects, name calling, verbal attacks, threatening or slamming doors.
- **USE "I" STATEMENTS.** Talk about your feelings instead of being accusatory.
- **DON'T HOLD IN FEELINGS** or you'll explode! And don't bring up past issues. Deal with problems as they arise and move forward.
- **WALK AWAY** for five minutes if you lose patience. Take deep breaths and collect your thoughts and composure before returning to the conversation.

MEMBER MOMENT

BEST MAN GETS BETTER

Steve Preston, DTM, is a corporate trainer from Wellington, New Zealand, who uses Toastmasters as a venue to enhance his presentation skills and memory retention. A member of six clubs, Preston has held numerous district and club leadership positions. While serving as club president, he helped his club become the first in District 72 to reach President's Distinguished Club status. He plans to earn his second DTM award soon.



Steve Preston, DTM

Why did you join Toastmasters?

To brush up on my speaking skills so I could deliver a “best man’s” speech at my best friend’s wedding a few months later. I stayed on because I enjoyed the information shared and the opportunities available — Toastmasters is not only a gym for the voice but a place to make friends and network.

How did you become interested in leadership roles?

Soon after joining my first club I was asked to become vice president public relations. I accepted and found that the leadership track was just as effective, if not more so, as the communication track in improving my communication skills. Teaching and mentoring others certainly provides greater opportunities to understand the complexities of communication and leadership.

What is the most useful thing you gained from Toastmasters?

It was my wife. I met her at Toastmasters when I first joined. ... From an educational perspective, it was the power of the pause. Pausing not only eliminates nuisance fillers, it also makes people think you are more intelligent.

Contact Steve Preston at steveprestonnz@gmail.com.

The Toastmaster Earns Accolades

The magazine was recognized as a 2012 “Maggie Award” finalist — Most Improved Publication/Trade & Consumer Category — for changes made in September 2011 to reflect the brand refresh and reader feedback.



Free Resources

Download Toastmasters manuals and marketing fliers for your club or district at no cost. www.toastmasters.org/digitalcontent







DEALING WITH A DISTRACTED AUDIENCE

Don't be put off by those who text or tweet when you speak.

By Tim Cigelske

It's not easy speaking to an audience of people who appear to be distracted by their cell phones, or are clattering away on their laptops or burying their heads in their iPads. We have all been to conferences where people seemed to pay more attention to their electronic devices than to the live person on the podium. As

Let Down Your Guard

What's the first thing you normally hear when someone is giving a speech? "Please turn off all cell phones." The last thing you want is to have your cutesy ringtone interrupt the speaker. Author and social media expert Chris Brogan turns this decree on its head during his speaking ap-

"Why is it so quiet in here?" asked speaker Chris Brogan. "This isn't church. Go ahead and turn on your cell phones. Send tweets. Post to Facebook. Do what you have to do."

smartphones connect people to their busy lives, this phenomenon will only become more common.

It is tempting to address this issue by trying to ban cell phones at presentations and imposing what author and speaker Scott Berkun calls "a fantasy of obedience" on an audience. But this rarely works.

"Fundamentally, this problem is ageless," Berkun writes on his website, scottberkun.com. "It has always been very hard to keep the attention of any group of people — at any age, at any time."

The distraction epidemic calls for a different type of approach — one that can engage people, not just force them to stare silently. Here is what you can do to capture the attention of a distracted audience.

pearances. "Why is it so quiet in here?" he asked the audience at a presentation I attended in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. "This isn't church. Go ahead and turn on your cell phones. Send tweets. Post to Facebook. Do what you have to do."

This accomplished two things. First, it established a rapport between the speaker and the audience by creating an informal, friendly setting. Given the choice, most people would rather chat informally with a friend than be required to sit at attention during a speech. People tend to remember interactions with friends, so turn your speech into something that resembles that situation.

The second thing Brogan achieved was the creation of another potentially vast audience. By encouraging

USE TWITTER TO ENHANCE YOUR SPEECH

By Denise Graveline

Have you become used to an audience full of tweeters? Do you solicit questions on Twitter before your speech? Do you use Twitter to promote your presentation and share follow-up information after it's over?

That's great if you do, but Twitter can do much more to enhance your presentation and your audience's experience. Consider these steps:

▶ **Tweet audio samples from your speech.** [Mashable.com](#) lists six free services that offer ways to share audio in a tweet.

Using audio to enhance your Twitter stream before and after a speech is a natural advantage for speakers. Make sure to record yourself, tweet a couple of great audio clips after the speech, or record some thoughts to share with your followers before or after you speak.

▶ **Use Twitter for research.** [Lanyrd.com](#) is a social network that allows you to see which conferences your Twitter followers are interested in. Use this information to fill out your speaker and attendee profile so you can more easily connect with people you already follow and make sure they know about your next gig.

▶ **Encourage followers to tweet taglines from your speech.** After giving a TED talk, online organizer Eli Pariser noticed people tweeting about his talk with several creative taglines and summaries.

Look at tweets about your talk. Which ones make the best taglines or descriptors? Use them — giving credit to the creative tweeter — to give your speech legs.

Denise Graveline is the president of *don't get caught*, a communications consultancy based in Washington, D.C. Visit her blog at [eloquentwoman.blogspot.com](#), where a version of this article originally ran.

people to tweet and post on Facebook, he was expanding his reach far beyond the room. Additionally, audience members who participate this way during presentations become more engaged and attentive; they focus on conveying the speaker's main points for the digital sound bites they post for social media users.

Another benefit: By reading these posts later, the speaker gets instant

feedback and sees what was most memorable to the audience or what may have fallen flat.

Public speaking coach and trainer Lisa Braithwaite says some people learn best by doing something else while listening, whether it's doodling or using a phone. She assumes the best intentions when she spots someone on his or her phone while she's speaking.

"I tend to take a positive view that this is a person who's taking notes, [or] tweeting what a great speaker I am, or is someone who needs to do something with their hands to pay attention," she says.

Sometimes she has been surprised by what registered with people who seemed to be distracted during her speech. "The same people who didn't make eye contact or looked down would come up to me afterward and tell me they learned a lot from the presentation."

Encourage Participation

When I began researching this article, I gave a speech to my Toastmasters club and instructed audience members to act distracted — or to actually distract themselves. They excelled at this, surfing the Web and holding conversations with each other. Some even took photographs with a flash. At one point, I took a break and invited the group to discuss how a speaker might engage a distracted audience. Members were then able to focus on the topic of distraction. Requesting audience participation had helped.

"I like that you asked us to answer a question," one club member said. "It kept us engaged and comfortable."


It's a good thing to remember: When audiences are involved, they are more engaged. You want audience members to become companions as you lead them to the final destination or purpose of your speech. When I was a college freshman, one of my English professors insisted on a regular two-minute "talk break" during every 50-minute class period, no matter how busy we were. At first it seemed a little forced to stop discussing *Macbeth* or *Beowulf* to talk about our weekends with the person next to us. But over time it helped us bond, and ultimately the classroom became a better environment for learning.

Braithwaite, who is based in Santa Barbara, California, does the same thing with her audiences if she notices that something resonates with them and they start talking among themselves. She'll encourage audience members to turn to their neighbor to

Be the Guide

A few years ago I attended a speech by someone involved in education reform. What I remember was a phrase she used: "The teacher needs to become less of the sage on the stage and more of the guide on the

For speakers, too, it is best to relax and not judge the appearance of an audience — or more precisely, the appearance of electronic devices in an audience. When you speak to a group of people, it is about making a connection and giving the audience something tangible to take away.

You can find a connection, even amid the clattering of laptops and flashes of iPhone screens. 

"Make use of [the audience's] distraction and include it in the presentation."

share a story or an example related to that particular topic. Braithwaite calls that a positive distraction.

"Make use of their distraction and include it in the presentation," she says of audience members who are chatting with each other about what you're saying. "You don't want to punish them for being interested and wanting to engage more."

side." Braithwaite reinforces that idea, saying a relaxed speaking environment is more productive and enjoyable for the audience.

"When I was in school, you got in trouble if you did anything but face forward and look at the teacher," she says, "and that's just ridiculous. It's not human."

Tim Cigelske is a member of Marquette University's Marq Our Words Toastmasters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He manages the university's social media accounts. Follow him on Twitter @TeecycleTim.

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with **Darren LaCroix & Ford Saeks**

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Elly Hard, DTM: **FROM BULGARIA TO AMERICA**

Determined mom flourishes in new role.

By Elizabeth C. Searcy, CC, CL

When Elly Hard immigrated to the United States from her native city of Sofia, Bulgaria, she held one suitcase, \$21 and the hand of her 6-year-old daughter, Eva. Bringing her young daughter to a distant country involved many challenges, not the least of which included overcoming language and cultural barriers. But Hard, always an optimist, was not deterred.

Bulgarian Beginnings

The only child of parents who were artists, Hard grew up in Sofia amid art galleries, theaters and artists' studios, and she graduated with a degree in forestry sciences from a Bulgarian university. While growing up and trekking throughout Europe, she felt comfortable speaking in her native language, Bulgarian. And with additional conversational skills in Russian and French,

taking every conversation literally in its translation," Hard explains. "Once, the bus driver told me, 'Take care.' I was very irritated! Who was he to tell me to take care of myself? Did I look like someone who could not take care of my own life?"

One day in 1997, her interest was piqued by a newspaper announcement about a Toastmasters meeting. The club was the Woodlands Toastmasters and she went for a visit, thinking it was a cooking club, especially since the meeting was held in a restaurant.

"The brand name of my kitchen toaster was 'Toastmaster,' so I thought Toastmasters was a breakfast cooking club or a food-related venue," she recalls with a laugh. "I wanted to check it out and learn how to make pancakes or something. When I saw [Club President Virginia Mullinax] at the lectern, I was very confused. I couldn't put two and two together!"

The club members greeted her so warmly and were so hospitable that she joined the club the following week. While regularly attending the meetings, she consistently participated in Table Topics and began giving prepared speeches.

"I won [a trophy] every time I spoke and was so excited that people understood my bad English," she says. "My language skills improved in many

"I thought Toastmasters was a breakfast cooking club or a food-related venue. I wanted to check it out and learn how to make pancakes or something."

When she boarded that plane for New York in 1991, it was in anticipation of realizing a lifelong dream.

"I grew up during the Communist era and we could not go anywhere," she recalls. "I thought about America all the time. It's the only place I ever wanted to live."

Today her experience can inspire others. A Distinguished Toastmaster, she is a founding member of the Spring Ahead Speakers club in The Woodlands, Texas, a club she has helped achieve President's Distinguished Club status for 10 consecutive years.

she could converse easily with Europeans. But when Hard moved to America, she did not speak a word of English, nor could she drive a car.

In time, she settled in Houston, Texas, at the invitation of a Bulgarian friend. Lacking English proficiency was problematic for Hard, but it didn't discourage her. She practiced sounding out words from television newscasts, and her daughter — who learned English in American schools — helped with her pronunciation.

Communication in those pre-Toastmasters days was bewildering and even annoying at times. "I was



► **Elly Hard (right) and her daughter, Eva Kaminskayte, immigrated to the U.S. from Sofia, Bulgaria, when Eva was 6. Elly eventually joined Toastmasters, and a few years ago Eva became a member too.**



ways. Virginia patiently taught me how to pronounce the ‘th’ sound. I listened to the grammarian and read 20 notes each time [I spoke] from members who gently corrected my phraseology.”

Springing Ahead

Hard persevered and set a goal to achieve her DTM award. When she had to fulfill the requirement to sponsor a new club, she and fellow club members who were also working on their DTM requirements teamed up on the project.

“We challenged ourselves and focused on pursuing our DTMs as a group, encouraging each other,” she says.

One member organized a Speechcraft program. Then Club President Mullinax and Hard sponsored a new club called Spring Ahead Speakers, and another member served as a mentor. The Texas club chartered in 2001.

Hard, who could not even speak English just a few years earlier, achieved her goal, earning her DTM in what she describes as “four glorious years.” She earned a second DTM while also building up the Spring Ahead club and mentoring new members. Fittingly — given Hard’s own cultural background

— Spring Ahead Speakers is now a diverse club with an international presence. Members hail from Germany, Guyana, Honduras, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

As a member of the Spring Ahead club myself, I can attest to Hard’s spirited sense of humor and infectious enthusiasm about public speaking and leadership. She is a guest speaker at conferences and other events, and she has also flourished in Toastmasters speech contests. Several years ago she won the District 56 Tall Tales contest with a story called “Bugs in the Corner Office.”

“Elly is such a positive force for the club,” says Lois Voth, DTM, past club president. “Phrases like, ‘You would be good at this!’ and ‘We can do this!’ are consistently heard from Elly — she sees no limits to what can be accomplished by members.”

Much to Hard’s delight, her daughter, Eva Kaminskayte, also joined Toastmasters and has earned her Competent Communicator award.


Distinguished Leadership

“I think Elly’s greatest quality in regard to Toastmasters is helping our club achieve President’s Distinguished Club status every year since 2001,” says Spring Ahead club member

David Dewhurst, DTM. “And she understands that it takes a team to consistently achieve the highest level of success.

“In addition to Elly’s inherent qualities as a speaker, and especially a crafter of Tall Tales, she has always led by example,” Dewhurst adds. “She has served at least once in each of the club officer positions and has never asked anyone to do what she would not do herself.”

Since arriving in the U.S. 21 years ago, Elly Hard has become a dynamic communicator, leader and businesswoman. As a sales consultant for Star Furniture in Houston, Texas, she was honored with the company’s 2011 Entrepreneur of the Year award.

“Being a Toastmaster changed my character,” she says. “I am much more tolerant than before and have become a friendlier, more compassionate person.” 

Elizabeth C. Searcy, CC, CL, is a member of Spring Ahead Speakers in The Woodlands, Texas. As owner of Celebration Career & Business Support, she specializes in strategic writing and employee placement. Reach her at celebrationcbs.com.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Create a clever tagline to describe your occupation.

By Craig Harrison, DTM

When we meet someone, the first question we are typically asked is, “What is your name?” The second question is often “What do you do?”

How do you answer the latter query? Do you simply recite your job title? Do you reply by saying you’re a clerk, programmer, driver, teacher, sales representative or receptionist? Or do you answer more descriptively? All too many people answer this question with a bland, unimaginative job title or a code that classifies certain industries. B-O-R-I-N-G!

To set yourself apart from the crowd, rethink your response to this question. Cast your profession in its most ennobling light and then focus on the benefits your work provides to others. This will help you deliver a more potent response to the age-old “What do you do?” question.

Consider Ruth Blumert Walker. When asked her occupation, the longtime receptionist for the Oakland, California, law firm of Donahue, Gallagher, Woods and Wood, Walker would proudly proclaim, “I’m the Director of First Impressions.” Indeed she was!

Walker knew that visiting a law firm is normally viewed in a negative light. Such a visit is usually made because of some kind of problem, and it can be costly, to boot. Walker understood the key role she played in her clients’ experiences, and her moniker showcased the power she possessed to make a difference.

Tag Yourself!

Replace your official title or occupation with a personal tagline that shows your pride in your profession. You’ll find that people respond positively when you tantalize them with an interesting, humorous or compelling description of what you do. Furthermore, you’ll send a message that you have a strong sense of who you are and what you do, and you will thus be deemed more interesting, engaged and employable.

Consider the following:

- ▶ The residential Realtor who describes herself as “putting people into their dream home.”
- ▶ The commercial credit specialist who smiles and tells strangers that he is “giving credit where credit is due.”
- ▶ The commercial airline pilot who informs people she meets that she is “shrinking the globe to reunite families and loved ones.”
- ▶ The midwife who proudly proclaims she is “bringing new life into this world.”

In each case, these professionals share some of the magic of their professions. It can be a powerful conversation opener, whether you’re in a networking event, a job interview or a casual discussion.

Whatever your profession, you can create a tagline to showcase the results of your work and cast your job in a meaningful light. Here are additional examples designed to stimulate your creative juices:

- ▶ One past district governor (Cassandra Cockrill, DTM, of Oakland, California) introduces herself as “an evangelist for better speaking, better listening and better thinking!”
- ▶ An Internal Revenue Service agent says he’s a “government fundraiser.”
- ▶ A gardener says, “I turn the world green ... one garden at a time.”
- ▶ A dietician was heard saying, “I teach people how to behave in front of food.”
- ▶ A telephone customer service representative says she “has a special calling.”

Now it’s your turn. Look anew at your occupation or profession and try to identify its outcome or the effect it has on the general public. Create a descriptive tagline to entice others to learn about what you do, how you do it and what you can do for *them*.

Use the power of language to create a compelling introduction to who you are — one that gives you pride and infuses others with excitement. Tag, you’re it! 🗣️

Craig Harrison, DTM, is a past district 57 governor and member of the Toastmasters Leadership club in Oakland, California. He is a keynote speaker and principal of the training firm Expressions of Excellence!

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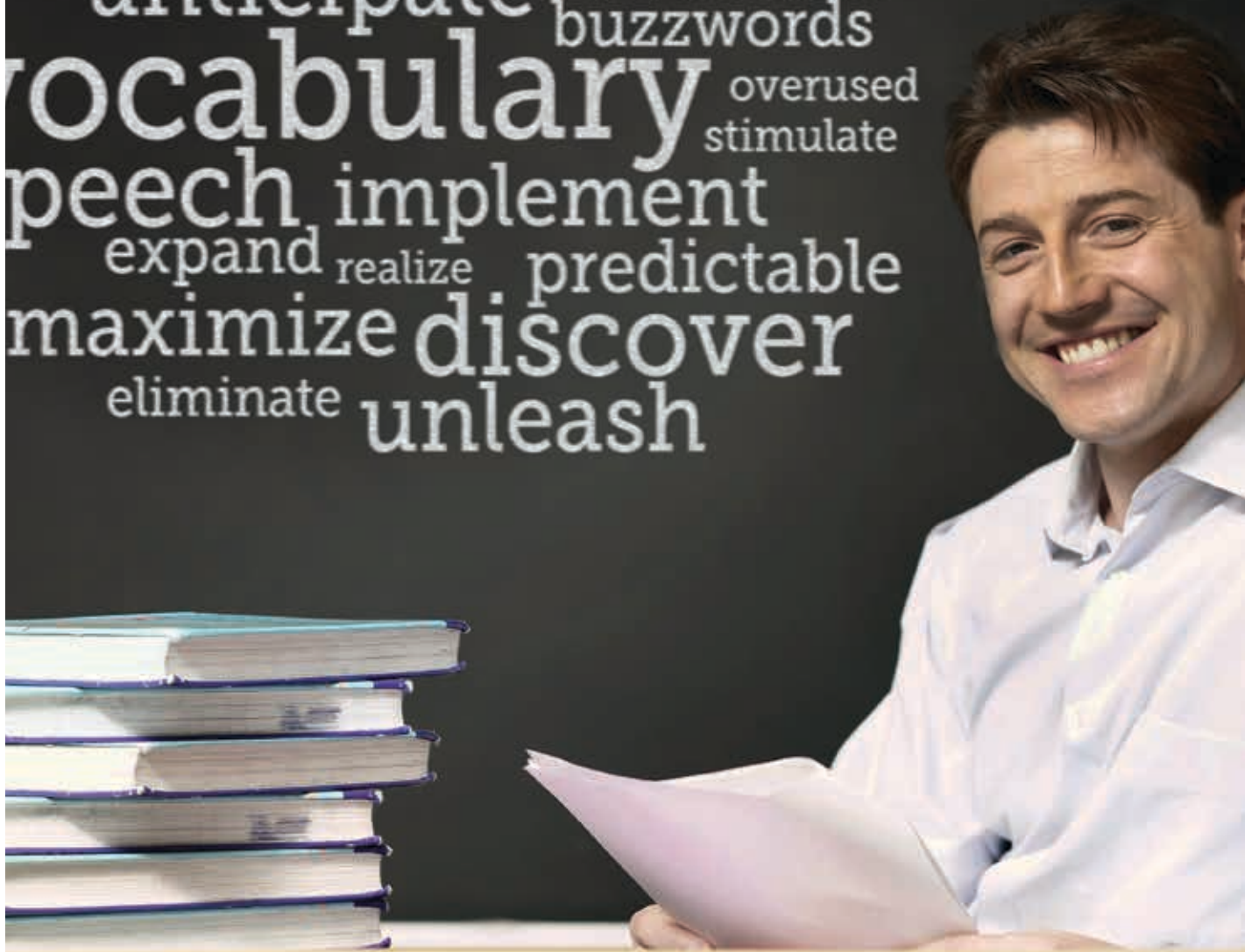
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GIVE YOUR WORDS A WORKOUT

Strengthen your speeches with energetic language.

By Linda Allen, ACS, CL

Recently I gave a speech to my club, from Toastmasters' *Better Speaker Series* (Item 269) to complete the requirements for my Advanced Communicator Silver (ACS) award. My evaluator, Marley Beem, ACS, CL, gave me high marks for content and presentation. I was pleased and excited to earn his praise, because he is an experienced Toastmaster who is tough but fair.

"Most thoughts can be expressed in simple language — in 25 words or less."

When pointing out areas to improve, however, he noted that I had used weak language in two sentences, which detracted from my message. I ended a thought with the phrase "or something like that" and talked about "various issues," which left the audience wondering what the "something" and "issues" were. Marley suggested I use "Small things do matter" in the first example and refer to specific issues in the second. He said strong, specific language would add power and meaning to my message.

Even more than his praise, I appreciated Marley's keen ear, honesty and helpful suggestions. Since then, I have paid attention to the words I choose to keep my audience — whether one or 100 — interested and attentive.

According to the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, more than 600,000 words in the English language are in current use. That number grows as new technical, environmental, medical and cultural terms are added. Linguists estimate the average person uses only ½ to 1 or 2 percent of the word possibilities and combinations available. By limiting our vocabulary, we diminish our

effectiveness as speakers as well as our ability to describe a range of emotions and life experiences.

"Words are the universal currency of humankind," says Anu Garg, CTM, CL, a member of Eastside Toastmasters in Redmond, Washington, and the author of three books on words. "The better we are with them, the better we can be in anything we do."

The Bard's Creativity

William Shakespeare was a master at maximizing vocabulary, having invented about 1,500 new words and word combinations to add to the English language, including *lackluster*, *madcap*, *quarrelsome*, *perplex*, *sneak* and *swagger*. His creative wordplay still enriches our reading and life experiences. To add color to

your speeches, check out more of the Bard's contributions in Michael Macrone's book *Brush Up Your Shakespeare!*

English is a verb-rich language. In the U.S., we pride ourselves on taking action, which is reflected in our language. Action verbs energize your words and help maintain momentum and the audience's interest in your speech. Avoid passive verbs that contain a form of the verb "to be" (like *was* and *were*); they weaken your message by taking energy out of the action. For example, "Amy photographed many houses" is more potent than "Many houses were photographed by Amy."

The famous American advertising executive Leo Burnett, who created classic advertising characters such as the Jolly Green Giant, the Pillsbury Doughboy and Tony the Tiger, recommended using more verbs than adjectives in advertising copy to grab and hold the audience's interest. It's worthy advice for Toastmasters as well. Burnett's list of the "108 Most Persuasive Words in the English Language" (writing4style.com/108word.pdf) provides a mini-thesaurus for putting action and interest in your speeches. A few of his examples are *boost*, *confront*, *eliminate* and *unleash*.

Speakers can learn from good writers. Janet Reeder, an editor of technical publications at Oklahoma State University, suggests using the ABCs

TOASTMASTER RESOURCES

The *Toastmaster* magazine has published numerous articles related to language use in recent years, including one about the grammarian's efforts in club meetings and another about how to build a personal collection of vivid vocabulary words. You can look these up in our back issues at www.toastmasters.org/pastissues.

Here are a few such articles:

"Avoid Clichés Like the Plague" by Craig Harrison, DTM (May 2010)

"Cutting Out Filler Words" by William H. Stevenson, III (February 2011)

"The Glamorous Role of Grammarian" by Lawrence Stone, ATMB (February 2011)

"Confessions of a Logophile" by Colleen Plimpton, ACB (June 2011)

"You Are a Brilliant Woman" by Tara Sophia Mohr (February 2012)

"Picking the Right Word" by Anu Garg, CTM, CL (March 2012)

of journalism to craft your speech: accuracy, brevity and clarity. "Use the shortest, most concise way of saying something," she says. "It's less likely to confuse your audience. Adjectives and adverbs add judgment and make your message less objective. Say exactly what you mean."

Most thoughts can be expressed in simple language — in 25 words or fewer. More than that confuses the audience about the subject and the action. Filler or fluff words like *really*, *actually*, *basically* and *very* clutter your message with empty meaning. When you outline or practice your speech, cut unnecessary adverbs, adjectives and overused words to tighten and improve your presentation. Choose adjectives carefully to help your audience imagine the action or description of an object or event.

Be Specific

Words that are generalities — such as *some*, *most*, *many*, *sometimes*, *sort of* and *kind of* — leave your audience wondering who, what, where, when and how much. The anonymous "they" — "They say you should ..." — receive a good deal of credit for advice, wise sayings and humor. But these generalities can cause your audience to doubt the accuracy of your information.

In addition, when you use extreme words, like *all*, *never*, *always*, *none*, *no one* and *everyone*, your audience questions your authority to declare such absolute information. Instead of speaking in generalities or extremes, be specific. It shows you have researched your topic and supports your credibility. Your audience will appreciate your attention to detail.

Buzzwords and clichés are comfortable speech habits. Including trendy phrases in your conversations shows you're up to date on world events, politics, sports and fashion, but overuse makes your speeches predictable and boring. Try using a cliché in a clever context to encourage laughs and understanding from your audience.

Be careful about creating your *own* clichés — favorite, overused words in your speech patterns. Some people consider them a signature word or phrase, but they can become annoying. When I decided to eliminate the word "problem" from my vocabulary to use more positive language, I chose "issues" as a substitute. After a while, my husband said to me, "Linda, I have issues with your issues. Everything has become an issue to you." Oops. My cliché became an opportunity to expand my vocabulary, and


my current substitute is "glitches," which I'm careful not to overuse.

Use Your Resources

Dictionaries and thesauruses are ever-popular resources to escape a word rut and improve your vocabulary. Now it is even easier to find the perfect word with phone apps and online sites. Anu Garg, the language expert, is the founder of wordsmith.org, the website for A.Word.A.Day — a mailing list that sends a daily vocabulary word and its definition to subscribers. Here's a recent word: *forte* (definition: a strong point; something in which a person excels).

Also, find a "word model" — a fellow Toastmaster who uses creative language in his or her presentations. Listen to great speakers. The Toastmasters website (www.toastmasters.org) and Ted.com offer resources to expand your vocabulary and opportunities to listen to polished presentations.

Have the Ah-Counter in your club monitor the use of clichés, filler words and redundant words. Gustavo Duarte, CC, a fellow member of the Pacesetters Toastmasters Club in Stillwater, Oklahoma, coined a creative title for the job of tracking redundant words: *redundarian*.

The Toastmasters organization claims a positive international reputation. People look to our members as keepers of the spoken language and guardians of grammar. Clear, concise and energetic language gives your message power, conveying experiences that your audiences will appreciate and remember. 

Linda E. Allen, ACS, CL, is a member of the Pacesetters Toastmasters Club in Stillwater, Oklahoma. She is a writer, speaker and trainer who specializes in cultural awareness, professional and personal development, and leadership. Reach her at lindaeallen@pldi.net.

GET CREATIVE WITH OF THE DAY



Members stretch their vocabulary skills with a challenging exercise.

By Dan Brewer, CC

The Toastmasters club


I belong to — Toasting Excellence in Salem, Oregon — thrives on fun and unusual meetings. Our experienced group of officers and leaders always finds ways to make things more interesting; for example, meetings are planned around whimsical themes such as “Wizard of Oz,” “Woodstock,” “Dr. Seuss,” “Guaca-

Each member is given a 3x5 card (handed out randomly), and on each card is a different word, its meaning and an example or two of the word used in a sentence. (If you are the grammarian, you can find many reliable vocabulary resources on the Internet or elsewhere to select multiple words for your club meeting.) Everyone is told to keep his or her

identify as many words of the day as possible.

Some words, such as *fervor*, *ardent* and *exorbitant*, were even harder to disguise, while ones like *meticulous* and *profound* seemed to fit in easily. Everyone, including the one guest present, was able to use his or her word at least once during the meeting.

Points were awarded each time members used their word of the day (provided he or she used it correctly); points were also awarded when a member correctly identified another member’s word of the day. At the end of the meeting, the member with the most points won a prize. The winner, told the club that when he read my email that morning, he took the idea a step further: He downloaded a list of other interesting words that he then used in his Table Topics presentation to “throw off” his fellow members.

The new activity made our club meeting more interesting. We all had a good time not only using our new vocabulary word but also listening for and learning other new words. We will use this idea again, since our club always strives for excellence in speaking and listening. Give it a try in *your* club meetings, as well. 

Dan Brewer, CC, is a member of the Toasting Excellence club in Salem, Oregon. You can reach him at orcip1@yahoo.com.

“Not only do members use their word; they also listen and attempt to identify others’ words as those members speak.”

mole Wars” and many others. Members and guests never know exactly what to expect.

With that in mind, I decided to do something different with the “word of the day” segment when I served as grammarian at a recent club meeting. In an effort to promote not only the use of new words but the act of listening to them, I selected a number of different vocabulary words — rather than just one — for the meeting, and I added a twist to how they could be used. (More on that later.)

On the morning of the meeting, I emailed all the club members to let them know about this new word-of-the-day activity and how it worked. Then, at the meeting, after being introduced and explaining the grammarian role, I guided the club as we carried out the exercise. Here is how it works:

word a secret. As members speak, whether it is during their prepared speech, Table Topics presentation or meeting-role description, they attempt to correctly use their word of the day as many times as possible.

Here is the twist: Not only do all speakers use their word, they also listen and attempt to identify *others’* words as those members speak.

Learning a Plethora of Words

Our members found this exercise engaging. As the meeting progressed, words like *meander*, *impetus* and *plethora* flowed through the speeches and Table Topics. The speakers attempted to weave their new words into their presentations without making it obvious, but it was difficult to “hide” anything, because everyone was listening intently to

ARE YOU CC S-M-A-R-T? Toastmasters Initials Defined

The Toastmasters world has historically been filled with initialisms — from awards and titles to nearly everything else related to the organization. Here’s a crash course on your A.B.CCs, presenting some of the most common initialisms used by members today:

INITIALS	FULL NAME	INITIALS	FULL NAME
CC	Competent Communicator	PID	Past International Director
ACB	Advanced Communicator Bronze	PIP	Past International President
ACS	Advanced Communicator Silver	AG	Area Governor
ACG	Advanced Communicator Gold	DG	District Governor
CL	Competent Leader	DSP	District Success Plan
ALB	Advanced Leader Bronze	DRP	Distinguished Recognition Program
ALS	Advanced Leader Silver	PRO	Public Relations Officer
DTM	Distinguished Toastmaster	RA	Region Advisor
VPE	Vice President Education	DCP	Distinguished Club Program
VPM	Vice President Membership	LGET	Lieutenant Governor Education and Training
VPPR	Vice President Public Relations	LGM	Lieutenant Governor Marketing
SAA	Sergeant at Arms	WHQ	World Headquarters
AS	Accredited Speaker		

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LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Put your club on the map.

By Vera Ambuehl, CC

To find nearby places, many people use handy smartphones and other mobile devices. How does that relate to Toastmasters? Well, when people ponder joining a club in their community, they can do a quick search for “Toastmasters” on their mobile device to trigger results nearby.

A local search result on a mobile device means that a list of three, five or more Place Pages appear along with a Google Map (featuring that familiar red, teardrop-shaped icon). If a club has no Place Page, then one for a club in a neighboring city may appear instead — especially if that neighboring club has claimed and optimized its location.

In 2010, one-third of Google searches done on a mobile device related to the searcher’s local environment. In 2011, this figure jumped to 40 percent. Clearly, these mobile devices are making our clubs easier for potential members to find.

A Toastmasters club with an online name, address and phone number (NAP) may already have a Place Page. If not, a new one can be claimed and optimized for good search visibility.

Follow these steps to claim a new or existing Place Page.

▶ **Claim a Place Page.** Check to see if you already have a Place Page. If so, you need to claim it. If not, claim a “new business” on google.com/places.

▶ **Get verified.** Talk with the management of the business where your meetings are held and get approval to use the address. You must use the ad-

dress of the meeting location to appear correctly on the map. Add a room or suite number to indicate a separate entity. You cannot use post office boxes on your page. Google will send your verification code on a postcard to the location where you have your meetings.

▶ **Set up a club Gmail account.**

Obtain a club-specific Google account to set up a Place Page. Someone else from your club may take over as the email account owner in the future, so it is a good idea to set up the account in your club’s name (such as **clubname@gmail.com**), rather than submitting your personal email address.

▶ **Use a long-term phone number.**

Try to use the contact phone number of someone who is willing to accept being contacted for an extended period of time. Any changes you make to your NAP will eventually spread to other sites on the Internet, so the information should be dependable.

▶ **Get descriptive.** Use the “description” and “custom attributes” fields to include information about your club. Write something simple, such as “(Club Name) is a chartered club of Toastmasters International and serves (Your Community, City, State).” A description like that seems to gain Google’s approval.

▶ **Choose your category.** In the “categories” field, type “Nonprofit Organization.” If other categories appear, you can accept them, if you like, or request they be deleted.

▶ **Make it visually appealing.** Ten photos and five videos are

allowed. The more complete your Place Page is, the higher ranking you will probably receive.

▶ **Organize the details.** Take advantage of the “details” section to share parking availability or special events.

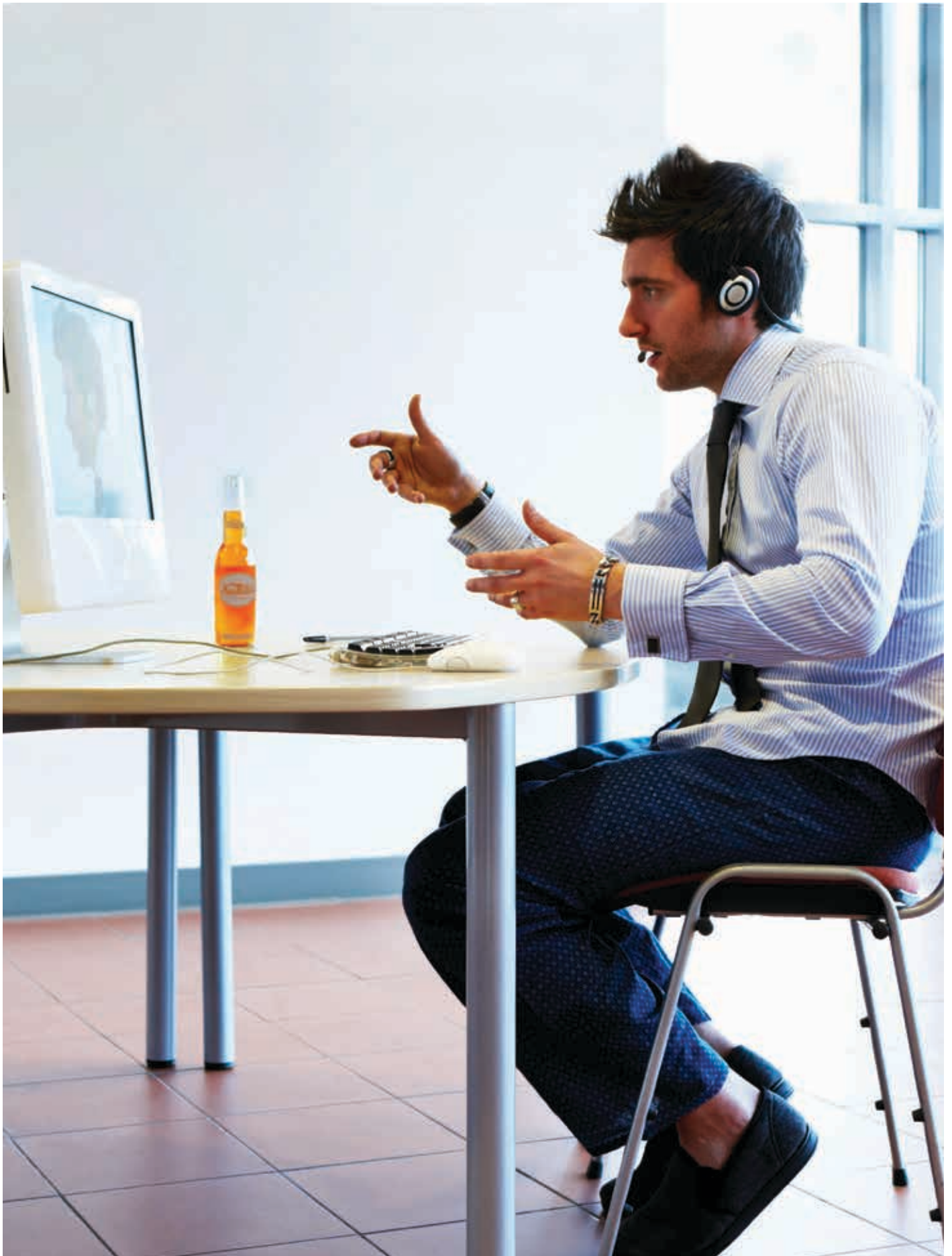
▶ **Time to submit.** Once you’ve completed your entries, click “submit,” but be patient. It can take one to two weeks to get your Place Page approved by Google. Enter the verification code in your Google Places dashboard. It may take time to become highly ranked, but because Google Maps and Google Places are free, you cannot request or pay for a better ranking.

Next time you wonder how to encourage new guests to visit your club, first make sure your meeting contact information and Place Page are up to date. If you do the work ahead of time, potential members can find you with just a few clicks on their smartphone. ⓘ

For additional assistance with your Place Page, visit support.google.com/places.

Vera Ambuehl, CC, is a member of Whidbey Sounders Toastmasters club in Oak Harbor, Washington. She is a local Internet marketing expert and can be reached at info@whidbeymarketingmaven.com.





WEBINARS AND VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS

Deliver captivating messages from the comfort of your home.

By Tom Drews, CTM

As a virtual presentations expert, I regularly receive these questions from Toastmasters and clients: “I can’t imagine not speaking before a live audience,” “How can I get started?” and “If I do embark on this adventure, how can I engage my audience?” These are among a long list of questions regarding the relatively new medium of webinars and Internet presentations.

“Polling, which most Web platforms provide, is an effective way to get people involved.”

I recently met Judy Carter for lunch following her comedy workshop at a Toastmasters district conference in Oakland, California. The renowned comedian and author of *The Comedy Bible* delivers her workshops all over the world and said she is tired of all the traveling. She asked me, “How can I make people funny worldwide without having to fight jetlag?” I suggested she deliver her workshops via Web conferencing. I’m now helping her make people funny worldwide from the comfort of her own home.

Craig Harrison, DTM, past district 57 governor, says he uses Web conferencing to help with his Toastmasters duties. “Presenting online is ideal for

holding officer meetings when you can’t meet in person,” he says. “It’s environmentally friendly, it saves time and is convenient.” Meeting online has also been invaluable for him as he convenes far-flung conference committees on a regular basis.

Presenting in the virtual environment via **WebEx.com**, **GoToMeeting.com** or any comparable tool can be an incredibly valuable means of commu-

nicating both your message and your value to the world. It fills a huge gap, somewhere between making a phone call and meeting in person. In the past several years, the demand for this medium has grown amazingly fast.

I was introduced to Web conferencing eight years ago. WebEx, a leader in Web conferencing, hired me to deliver sales presentation skills training for its sales and marketing teams. After each of my programs, a handful of people would ask, “Hey, this is great, but can you teach us how to present online using WebEx?” I realized that if the WebEx experts had a need for this, then so would everyone else. Since then, teaching people how to effectively present online has

become the majority of my business. And there is a good reason for it: Presenting in the virtual environment comes with challenges that require a new set of skills.

How to Captivate Your Audience

There is tremendous value in presenting online, but it means next to nothing if you cannot engage your audience effectively. This is a presenter’s greatest challenge. The attention span of the typical adult ranges from five to eight seconds. If you cannot get your audience’s attention right from the start, then you are likely to lose them forever. How many times have you sat in on a webinar or virtual presentation and mentally wandered off to do something else? There are endless distractions, including Twitter, Facebook, email and Internet surfing. The following best practices will help you fully engage your audience online so you can leave them with a message they will not forget.

► **Know your platform.** The first challenge most people encounter is determining which platform to use. There are more than 250 options to choose from, and it is virtually impossible to master all of them. I use WebEx and GoToMeeting, both of which provide ideal tools for engaging audiences. Both of these platforms offer free trials, so you may want to explore them and find out what best

ADD SOME HOLLYWOOD TO YOUR WEBINAR

By Tom Drews, CTM

Following my graduation from the University of Colorado Boulder, I moved to Hollywood to become an actor. I played small parts on soap operas, acted in commercials and performed improvisation. The reality is this: If you were to string together all my parts while in Hollywood, I would be lucky if they formed a complete sentence. With that said, I learned some valuable lessons on how to add some “Hollywood” to online presentations.

Instead of designing a dull, PowerPoint presentation, imagine yourself as the writer, director, producer *and* actor of your own Hollywood picture. An Academy Award-winning film consists of many images strung together to tell a story. Apply this approach to your webinar. How can you add photos and other visuals to help tell your story and illustrate your point?

I’m often asked, “How many slides should I have in my presentation?” When you present in person, you don’t need slides. When presenting online, however, your audience can only see what’s on their computer screen. Keep them visually occupied and interested with relevant photos and other graphics throughout your presentation. You are much better off having 10 very simple and entertaining slides, as opposed to one complex slide loaded with boring text. If you follow my tips, you might end up with 120 to 180 slides for a 60-minute virtual presentation.

Another effective way to add “Hollywood” to your virtual presentation is to use the live webcam, assuming your platform provides this option. This will bring you much closer to your audience while at the same time allowing you to connect via eye communication and facial expressions. Be sure to look directly into the camera, dress appropriately and create an ideal background for your audience to enjoy. Don’t hesitate to tell personal stories and include vivid characters, colorful images and interesting dialogue.



meets your needs. Once you decide on a platform, I encourage you to master it. In my early days, I inadvertently disconnected 150 people, crashed my computer and kept an audience waiting for eight minutes while I figured out how to push the start button. Get to know your Web conferencing tool inside and out.

► **Deliver genuine value.** I believe the most important strategy for engaging any audience, whether in person or online, is to present genuine value based on the audience’s most important needs. The best online presenters connect with their audience in advance to find out what their greatest challenges are and what they most would like to learn. Only then can you custom design a highly effective virtual presentation based on the audience’s needs. Patricia Fripp, CSP, CPAE, one of my virtual-presentation clients, says “The best way to engage your audience is to focus specifically on their needs. That is what matters most.” She has become very adept at delivering engaging and entertaining webinars, which she presents to clients worldwide.

► **Have a structure.** Most people begin their presentations with an agenda, or a speech about themselves. This is boring. I suggest you open with something that will get the audience’s attention right from the start: A quote, a fact, a statistic, a provocative statement, or perhaps the biggest challenge your audience is facing right now. You also want to have a clear agenda. Include a brief elevator pitch and state your objective. Have no more than three to five points in the body of your presentation. And when you close, be sure to summarize and leave your audience with a message they won’t forget. My 25-page eBook on virtual presentations, found at

whatworks.biz/toast, provides a more detailed description of my presentation template.

▶ **Don't abuse PowerPoint.** Most of my clients' presentations contain too much information. Here is the problem: People are naturally drawn to read what is in front of them, so when they're reading your busy slide, they're not listening to you. Each PowerPoint slide should contain no more than six bullet points and six words per bullet point. That is if you even use bullet points! I recommend

"You want your audience to focus on your message, not on barking dogs or people doing dishes."

using a "build," where you bring in one point, speak to it, bring in the next, speak to it, and so on. That will prevent your audience from reading ahead while you present.


▶ **Use your voice.** When presenting in person, you can leverage eye contact, facial expressions, voice, gestures and body movement to engage your audience. When presenting online, you only have your visuals and voice to work with. Use your voice to keep your listeners' attention. Aspects of vocal variety include volume, tone, inflection, pace and articulation. Record your Web presentation and replay it for yourself and others so you can collect feedback and make an honest assessment. Avoid presenting with a speaker or cell phone because those offer poor sound quality. A cordless headset connected to a landline is a much better way to go. I use a Plantronics headphone, which I purchased at Radio Shack for less than \$30.

▶ **Use the tools.** Most Web conferencing platforms provide a variety of tools to help us develop rapport with our audiences, such as polling features, a chat room, "raise your hand" features, live video and annotation tools. Annotation tools might include pens, arrows, boxes, circles and laser pointers. The highlighter, one of the most useful tools, is essentially a pen that allows you to highlight text and other images. Using annotation tools throughout your presentation will keep your attendees involved and focused on the content.

▶ **Eliminate distractions.** I have polled literally thousands of people to learn what they find most annoying about virtual presentations, and distractions rise to the top of the list. If people in the audience are noisy, do not hesitate to mute them. Be conscious of your own background noise as well. You want your audience to focus on your message, not on barking dogs or people doing dishes.

▶ **Stand and deliver.** Wearing a cordless headset connected to a landline will allow you to have your hands free, as well as your body. If you use a remote clicker, as you would when presenting in person, you can move about the room while advancing your slides. It frees up your energy, allowing you to be your most enthusiastic self. When I was introduced to the WebEx sales team, I was intrigued by the way salespeople walked around and gestured enthusiastically while delivering virtual sales presentations.

▶ **Interact often.** Polling, which most Web platforms provide, is an effective way to get people involved. It also provides you with useful information so you can customize your presentation on the fly. You can also use the chat room to interact by posing an open-ended question such as, "What would you most like to learn from my presentation?" People love to share their thoughts, and they also enjoy hearing responses from others. You can ask and field questions on a regular basis. My top strategy for interacting with small groups is to address people by their first names early on. Interact with your audience in some way at least every three or four minutes.

Presenting in the virtual environment can be an effective way of communicating your message to your audience. Focus on value and entertain your audience. By doing so, you'll engage your listeners and have fun too. 

For additional resources on Web conferencing, visit whatworks.biz.

Tom Drews, CTM, is an expert in the field of webinars and virtual presentations who has delivered programs on sales presentation skills and time management for a variety of companies, including Cisco, WebEx, Citrix GoToMeeting and Williams-Sonoma. Reach him at tom@whatworks.biz. Visit whatworks.biz/toast to receive the complimentary 25-page eBook, *Effective Virtual Presentations*.

DON'T MISS THE 2012 CONVENTION!

Have fun while learning in beautiful Orlando, Florida.



International Speech Contest, 2011 Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada

The ultimate Toastmasters event is taking place next month. The 81st annual International Convention in Orlando, Florida, promises to be a big hit, with an expected attendance of more than 2,000 Toastmasters from throughout the world. If you haven't yet decided to attend, now is your chance to register with a discounted rate. The full convention package is available for \$595 if purchased by July 20.

"You'll be enriched by the spirit of international fellowship that permeates the convention and the Toastmasters community," says Toastmasters Executive Director Daniel Rex.

In a survey of attendees from last year's International Convention in Las Vegas, 77 percent of respondents said the event met their expectations regarding personal enrichment, education

and training, and leadership development goals. Top-ranked events include the speech contests, Opening Ceremonies, education sessions, Golden Gavel Dinner and President's Dinner Dance. But distinguished and entertaining speakers and events aside, most attendees said the highlight for them was the camaraderie and celebration with friends from around the world.

"You'll be enriched by the spirit of international fellowship that permeates the convention and the Toastmasters community."

KEYNOTE SPEAKER ANNOUNCED

Joel Manby, an accomplished business executive and leadership expert, will present at the convention's Opening Ceremonies, held at 6 p.m. Wednesday, August 15. Manby is president and chief executive officer of Herschend Family Entertainment, the largest U.S. family-owned theme park corporation, headquartered in Norcross, Georgia.

A Harvard University MBA graduate, Manby spent 20 years in the auto industry, working for brands such as Saturn, General Motors and Saab. He was instrumental as a member of the Saturn startup team that launched the company's marketing and distribution strategy. At Saab he increased sales by 67 percent and raised the company's J.D. Power and Associates quality ranking from 30th to fifth.

In 2010, Manby was featured in an episode of the American television show *Undercover Boss*, in which he demonstrated his unique approach to leadership: Lead with love instead of power. "If you treat your employees well and your guests well," Manby has said, "the profit flows from that." He shares his leadership insight and advice in his new book, *Love Works*.



Joel Manby

Your trip to Florida doesn't have to end when this summer's convention does. Why not take a day trip or extend your vacation? Consider visiting Disney World or SeaWorld or seeing a Cirque du Soleil or Blue Man Group show. For beach lovers, Daytona Beach is about 90 minutes away. Go to visitorlando.com or visitflorida.com for more information.

For convention details, visit www.toastmasters.org/convention. Enrich your convention experience and help make the event spectacular by volunteering. Visit www.toastmastersconventionvolunteers.org.

Live convention updates will be available on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. Learn more at www.toastmasters.org/socialnetworking.

Announcing Toastmasters' 2012 Golden Gavel Award Recipient: **JOHN MAXWELL**

By Paul Sterman



At the 2012 International Convention this summer in Orlando, Florida, Toastmasters International will award John C. Maxwell the prestigious Golden Gavel for his achievements in the field of leadership development. A best-selling author, celebrated motivational speaker and leadership coach, Maxwell speaks to audiences ranging from high-profile CEOs to international government leaders.

Toastmasters' Golden Gavel Award is given annually to an individual distinguished in the fields of communication and leadership. Past winners of this honor include Stephen Covey, Debbi Fields Rose, Zig Ziglar, Deepak Chopra, Art Linkletter and Dr. Joyce Brothers.

"It's quite an honor," Maxwell says of being selected as the 2012 recipient. "Toastmasters is the premier speaking organization, so to be given an award by them is to be recognized by one's peers. It doesn't get much better than that."

Maxwell's many business and self-improvement books include the well-known *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* and *Developing the Leader Within You*. He has sold more than 20 million books in all.

Over the course of his 30-year career, Maxwell has consistently explored the complex dynamics of leadership. He exhorts listeners and

readers to grow as leaders, so they can guide others to greater satisfaction and success.

"John is a visionary leader with a passion for helping people lead more productive and fulfilling lives," says Michael Notaro, Toastmasters' 2011-2012 International President. "I have benefited from his insights in my own leadership journey, and his teachings have helped many seize leadership opportunities and make a positive impact in the world."


Maxwell is the founder of EQUIP and The John Maxwell Company, organizations that have trained leaders in more than 150 countries. He regularly speaks to organizations such as Fortune 100 companies, the United Nations, the National Football League and the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Maxwell is known as a powerful and compelling speaker, but he says it took years of practice to reach that level. "The most important lesson I learned was to be myself," he says. "For me, that took a long time — about eight years of speaking every week."

He says a physical adjustment is what first spurred his speaking improvement. "I had a speaking engagement, and because of an injury, I had to sit down instead of stand up, the way I usually did," he explains. "That helped me to relax and be less

formal. As a result, I connected with the audience. It changed the way I communicated."

Maxwell's latest book is *The 5 Levels of Leadership*. "I believe it has the ability to help a lot of people become better leaders," Maxwell says of the book.

One way leaders influence others is by how they communicate. For example, Maxwell says a strong leader talks compassionately but candidly to an employee who is under-performing. "I believe people can change their attitudes and improve their abilities. And because I do, I talk to them about where they're coming up short," he writes in an article on success.com. "If you're a leader and you want to help people, you need to be willing to have those tough conversations." 

John Maxwell will speak at the Golden Gavel Dinner on August 17 at the Toastmasters International Convention in Orlando, Florida. For convention details and registration, please visit www.toastmasters.org/convention. For more information about John Maxwell, visit johnmaxwell.com.

Paul Sterman is senior editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine.



IT'S ABOUT TIME

(and how to manage it)

By John Zimmer, CC, CL

Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time,” said Benjamin Franklin. Had he been addressing public speakers, Franklin might have modified his advice: “Dost thou love thine audience? Then go not over time.”

Speakers must stay on time. Notes Mel Kelly, CTM, CL, of the Munich Prostmasters club in Munich, Germany: “If you don’t respect time, you are not respecting your audience.” You are also not respecting the event organizer or any speakers following you.

So what can we do to stay on time? Several things, in fact.

Time your practice speech. This is a good way to know if your material is suitable (time-wise) for each specific occasion. If you can cover only half your material within your allotted time, you need to rethink the presentation’s structure or content.

Better to do so before the event rather than find yourself in an awkward situation onstage. Bear in mind, however, that your practice time and event time might not be the same. Laughter, questions and unexpected interruptions can lengthen a live presentation.

Prepare a handout. Giving audience members a document (not a copy of your slides) that contains the necessary information about your subject allows you to focus on what is most important during the presentation. You will not feel compelled to cover every possible point. Not only will this make for a better presentation, it will make for a shorter one as well. And if your speaking time is cut, you can simply state that although you will not be addressing Topic X, it is covered in the handout.

Arrive early. Make sure the room where you will speak is set up proper-

ly and that all necessary equipment is working. Having technical difficulties just before you start a presentation is not only stressful — it can cut into your allotted time.

Reconfirm your speaking time.

Before stepping onto the stage, it is always a good idea (as well as polite) to reconfirm your speaking time with your host or event planner. This person is the one who booked you, after all, and you want to make sure your appearance meets expectations.

Plan to cut material. Logistics are not always within your control and your speaking time might be unexpectedly reduced. If you are told 20 minutes before your scheduled one-hour presentation begins that you must cut it by half or one third, you must adjust quickly and smoothly.

Peter Zinn, ACB, CL, of Utrecht Toastmasters in Utrecht, the Netherlands, says: “I divide my presentation into blocks, then rehearse and time each one. That gives me the confidence to change or remove blocks on the fly and adapt to the situation on the day [of my presentation].”

If you have slides, you should also be able to open and use “slide sorter mode” (in the PowerPoint software program) or “light table view” (in the Keynote software program) and know exactly which slides to pull. You also can prepare two versions of your presentation — one long and one

“You can prepare two versions of your presentation — one long and one short. This way, you can make a quick switch if the situation calls for it.”

short. This way, you can make a quick switch if the situation calls for it. I especially recommend this approach if you have a speech or presentation that you deliver regularly.

Let the audience know. If previous speakers ran overtime and you must shorten your presentation as a result, let your audience know that you will keep your remarks briefer than scheduled. Doing so will put annoyed audience members at ease, especially if yours is the last presentation before lunch or a break. But be professional about it. Do not mention which speakers went over time or what caused the other delays. Odds are, the audience will already know anyway.

Monitor your time. Know where you should be in your presentation at a few key points, especially halfway

to the finish time. If you reach the halfway point and are behind on time, start thinking about what content you will cut. This will be less problematic if you already know what can be cut easily and have distributed a handout to the audience.

The room where you speak might not have a clock, or a clock that is easily visible. Thus, you should bring a timing device of your choice. Watches are fine, although it is not elegant to check your watch on a regular basis while speaking. It is better to place the watch on a lectern or table, where you can check it more discreetly.

Electronic devices like smartphones and tablets are another option. They have bigger faces and are easier to see from a distance. Nowadays, hundreds of timing applications are available. Pick one that suits you and place the smartphone or tablet where you can easily see it. Some speakers like to place the device on the floor or angle it against the base of the front row of seats. Just don’t step on it!

Allow time for questions. Some speakers encourage audience members to ask questions at any point during the presentation. This is good for demonstrating confidence, being responsive and building rapport with the audience. However, it can throw off your timing. If you take this approach, be sure to build in some buffer time. If you prefer taking questions at the end, stop your prepared pre-


sentation just before the conclusion to take questions. Then, while there is still time left, stop taking questions and deliver your speech conclusion so you finish on a strong note.

Speak with people afterward.

If you are running out of time but there are still questions, invite people to continue the conversation during the next break. It is simple, efficient and shows respect for the next speaker.

Seek permission for more time.

Sometimes, the audience will want to hear more from you about the subject. If you are one speaker among many, you should not exceed your time allotment. Instead, continue the conversation during the break. However, if you are the only speaker, it is polite to confirm with the organizer and audience whether continuing is permissible and, if so, for how long. You can do this while remaining on stage. If you do continue, first give people who only planned for the originally scheduled block of time the chance to leave. Then, continue with those who have stayed.

Ultimately, perhaps the best advice is also the most common. As Kelly and Zinn (both of whom are district champions and finalists in numerous speech contests) point out: You should always leave your audience wanting more. 

John Zimmer, CC, CL, is a member of the International Geneva Toastmasters club in Switzerland. He is a five-time District 59 speech contest champion. Visit his blog at mannerofspeaking.org.

FLY THE LOQUACIOUS SKIES

Let's talk about *not* talking on your next flight.

By John Cadley

Some people have a fear of flying. I have a fear of fliers, or more precisely, people who like to talk when they fly. I'm not a talker. That's why I'm a writer. I can say what I want without having to listen to what someone else thinks. Or to pretend I care. And I'm certainly not a talker on an airplane. I've just paid half my mortgage in baggage fees, dealt with an airline employee who feels overworked and underpaid, had my gate changed at the last minute, sprinted like an Olympian to catch my flight, and gone through a full body scanner

biggest urology practice in Denver. What if the conversation goes bad? What if you offend the person? You're strapped in next to him or her for the duration of the flight. Exactly how much awkward silence do you want to endure? If you must talk, then at least sit in the middle seat so if one conversation goes south, you can turn to the opposite side and try again. Maybe the guy knows your son, the urologist. Maybe he's even a patient. Maybe he's even in the midst of suing him for malpractice. See? That's the chance you take.

friend. If you hit turbulence, they'll hold on to you for dear life and when the plane lands, emergency medical technicians will be waiting to treat the claw marks on your forearm.

Another helpful hint: If someone is doing a crossword puzzle, don't say, "I think 29 across is 'acrobat.'" He doesn't want your help. He wants the crossword puzzle to last for the duration of the flight and anything you do to help solve it beforehand will be less than appreciated. Besides, what if 29 across isn't "acrobat"? Then you have to give him an eraser.

Furthermore, if someone has a book in his lap, don't ask him what he's reading — *because he'll tell you*. What if it's Dickens or Tolstoy or Jane Austen? Then what? You'll have to admit your ignorance of classic literature and feel like an idiot for the rest of the trip. And no, saying you've read all the *Harry Potter* novels will not make up for it.

A person wearing headphones is someone else to avoid. He may or may not be listening to music, but either way the message is clear: He has no intention of listening to *you*.

Finally — and this should be obvious to even the most loquacious airline traveler — don't talk to someone who's handcuffed to the seat. His reason for going to Denver is a lot different than yours and I can assure you, he doesn't want to talk about it. **T**

"Now I'm supposed to make happy talk with a complete stranger whose stomach is in my face while he stuffs his carry-on into the overhead compartment? Not so much."

so a woman from the TSA can see me naked. And now I'm supposed to make happy talk with a complete stranger whose stomach is in my face while he stuffs his carry-on into the overhead compartment? Not so much. By the time I reach my seat, all I want is a shot of sodium pentothal.

So for all those folks who think "making conversation" is a prerequisite of modern air travel, let me give you a few things to think about. First of all, you're sitting with a group of people who *don't want to be here!!!!* If they had any other way of reaching their destination they would have taken it, including the pilot and the crew. Airline passengers are not in the mood for light-hearted banter, and they don't care if your son runs the

And please, don't start with, "So, where you headed?" The sign in the boarding area said it was the flight to Denver. The gate attendant announced over a *loudspeaker* that the flight to Denver was now boarding. And the flight attendant just welcomed you aboard the flight to Denver over a *public address system*. Where do you *think* I'm headed? Don't ask me where I'm from, either, or what I do or why I'm going to Denver. For all you know I could be in the witness protection program.

I know what you're thinking: Some people are nervous fliers and they actually welcome your mindless "jibber jabber" as a distraction. They might, but trust me, you don't want these people thinking you're their new best

John Cadley, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Reach him at jcadley@twcny.rr.com.

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John Highland, CC, from DeKalb, Illinois, climbs Machu Picchu in the Cusco region of Peru.



William T. Butcher, DTM, and **Lucie Lafrance Butcher, CTM**, both from Sainte-Geneviève, Quebec, Canada, sail the waters of Iceberg Alley near St. Anthony, Newfoundland, Canada.



Marie Bibrova, ACS, from Pardubice, Czech Republic, poses on the top of Dachstein Mountain in Austria.



Mary Windsor, CC, from Ballarat, Australia, visits the Kuril Islands in Russia's Far East.



Gael Price, ACB, from Wellington, New Zealand, smiles near the Stonehenge on a cold day in England.



Audra Henry, CC, from Atlanta, Georgia, takes in the scene at the Grand Canyon in Arizona.



More photos online @ [facebook.com/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialFanPage](https://www.facebook.com/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialFanPage).

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