

TOASTMASTER®

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MARCH 2013

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SPEAKER
FOR
HIRE

1+1 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN



The Toastmasters 1+1 campaign has been in effect for three months now. I am sure each of you has been busy talking with your friends about the benefits you have gained in Toastmasters. Have you taken the next step and brought your friend to a club meeting? Has your friend joined your club?

In 1990, my friend Stanley Liew told me about the benefits and value of being a Toastmaster, and how he unleashed his potential by being a member. Because of what he shared with me, I attended his club's meetings and later became a member myself. I found that the Toastmasters

program enabled me to tap into my potential and to express myself using diplomatic, gentle and appreciative words. Before joining Toastmasters, I was always nervous when conversing with anyone in authority. But after five years of active membership, I found myself not only feeling more confident when speaking with people in authority, but also more successful with my business presentations. I was able to connect better with people.

I found that the Toastmasters program enabled me to tap into my potential and to express myself using diplomatic, gentle and appreciative words.

Throughout my Toastmasters journey, I have had many experienced and knowledgeable mentors who have shared, coached, guided, inspired and motivated me to go the extra mile. My mentors always provided me with emotional support. They also helped steer me in the right direction. They asked precise questions and set very clear objectives for me to achieve. Developing the ability to align our thinking, language and behavior can result in highly effective communication skills.

Please act similarly when you bring a friend to your club meeting. And when that person becomes a member, build rapport with that new member by mentoring him or her through the communication and leadership tracks.

Very often, when someone is saying one thing, we recognize the person's body language and attitude as saying something else. If you find this happening with a fellow Toastmaster, please show that member how to match his body language to his words; teach him how to be precise and refined through better communication

I wish you the all best in sharing Toastmasters with your friends and inspiring them to be part of our global organization, where leaders are made. 1

JOHN LAU, DTM
International President

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WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
www.toastmasters.org

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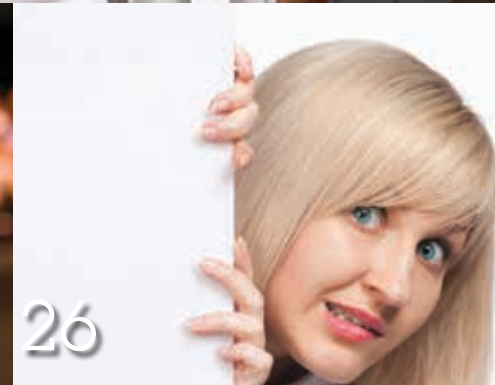
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Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men 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.



“John Cadley (‘Not My Size,’ December) was on point when he said that if there is no large-sized drink, then your medium is your large.” — Jacqueline Carr, ACG, ALB

Language Mysteries

I have felt Mr. Julian Worker’s pain (November, “Same Language, Different Country”). As a Canadian who lived in England, I was stumped by Biro’s [a type of ballpoint pen] and Tipp-Ex [a brand of correction fluid], and my colleagues had no notion of Kleenex or Scotch tape. But the biggest puzzle was a sign in a parking lot declaring “No Fly Tipping.” What could it mean?

Our imaginations ran wild, especially after a pub lunch. Most of our guesses involved clandestine meetings after dark. We finally found the courage to ask someone, and the message was not nearly as exciting as we had hoped. To translate: No Dumping.

Paul Veter
Skyway Toastmasters
Burlington, Ontario, Canada

Offending Words

I enjoyed Jenny Baranick’s article “Words We Don’t Like” (December). I wholly agree certain words should be eliminated. I wish there was some way to remove the phrases “outside the box” and “go outside your comfort zone,” or to at least classify them as trite or overused. Those are just two of my pet peeves.

Thank you for the article; it was very useful and needed.

Carey Schaller, DTM
DHS Toastmasters club
Little Rock, Arizona

Leading By Example

Katy Nims’ article “Appearing on TV—Unexpectedly” (October) was

inspiring! Her account of her “ice-breaker” moment on TV (doing an interview on a local news program to promote an upcoming Toastmasters district conference) lifted the confidence levels of many members. Her testimonial was an excellent way of motivating others to spread positive publicity about Toastmasters.

P.K. Kumar
Trivandrum Toastmasters club
Trivandrum, Kerala State, India

| Get It

I enjoyed the article “Crazy for Grammar” by Jenny Baranick (November). The *who* versus *whom* question has puzzled me for some years now, and you’ve finally clarified that for me, so thank you!

Leonie Mitaxa
Balaclava Toastmasters club
Melbourne, Australia

A Large Compliment

I enjoyed reading John Cadley’s article “Not My Size” (December). I totally agree with Mr. Cadley’s complaint about the incorrect description of drink sizes in a restaurant, and like him, I am a language curmudgeon. John was on point when he states that if there is no large-sized drink, then your medium is your large.

A well-written piece and a job well done.

Jacqueline Carr, ACG, ALB
Talk of the Town Toastmasters
Queens, New York

Family Pride

The article “It’s All Relative” (December), about family

members participating in the same Toastmasters clubs, was fun to read, especially because my son, Matt, joined my club this past year. Matt has made me so proud and I enjoy seeing him in this new light: articulate, growing, sharing and jumping in with both feet to improve his speaking skills.

His boss is very supportive of Matt’s pursuit and is even paying his membership dues. It has been a real pleasure and honor to have my son with me in my beloved club.

Deanne Wirzba, ACG, ACB
Dynamically Speaking Toastmasters
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Editor’s Note:

The Toastmaster magazine has modified its submissions policy to accept only the following: article proposals and My Turn articles (submissions@toastmasters.org). (Other than My Turn pieces, submissions should not include any complete articles.) In addition, we welcome submissions of high-resolution photos for the Traveling Toastmaster and Snapshot sections (photos@submissions.org), as well as letters to the magazine (letters@toastmasters.org).

Do you have something to say?

Write it in 200 words or less. Include your name, address and club affiliation, and send it to letters@toastmasters.org.

THE MYTH OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

How I challenged unsubstantiated statistics to uphold the value of the spoken word.

By Ann Banham

Have you heard the well-known claim that only 7 percent of any spoken message is based on verbal communication? So-called experts tell us that a full 93 percent of any message is communicated nonverbally. This contention is, of course, absolute rubbish.

The 7-percent formula is endorsed by many professional communication trainers. They tell us that of the 93 percent figure referring to nonverbal communication, 55 percent is through body language and the other 38 percent is through vocal variety or tone of voice.

I attended a communications workshop recently in which the facilitator quite confidently emphasized these statistics. I was, to put it indelicately, dumbfounded. I challenged her by asking, “Do you mean that if I stood in front of this class and spoke in Chinese, as long as my body language and tone of voice were consistent with my message, you would all understand me?” She used all the communication skills at her command to virtually slap me down. She supported her claims by quoting the research done by the eminent psychology professor Albert Mehrabian.

The rest of the class, impressed that this principle was being put forth as the result of a *scientific study* and not just as a myth or hearsay, nodded in agreement. I acquiesced, remaining unconvinced.

Being a Toastmaster, I know the importance of body language. I know

you can bring your presentation to life with fitting gestures and inspired stagecraft. But 93 percent? As we say in Australia, *Garn, pull the other one!* (Translation: Go ahead and pull my other leg, too!)

I am a lover of language and the spoken word. I cannot believe humankind bothered to develop language if it is so inconsequential in communication. Why don't we still just screech and bark at each other? What was the point of Shakespeare's plays? Why were talking films such a breakthrough when we had perfectly good silent movies? Why does every generation invent its own slang? How can we be moved to tears by a touching eulogy or sermon? Words *are* powerful.

I consulted my friend Google and did some research. Yes, experiments were conducted by Albert Mehrabian, currently professor emeritus of psychology at the University of California at Los Angeles. But the research in question was done in 1967, using *one* word at a time to gauge what the listener believed to be the *feeling* of the speaker, and to determine if the listener *liked* the speaker. The experiment was never intended to measure how well the listeners understood what the speaker was trying to communicate.

Mehrabian has published his work and findings in the book *Silent Messages*. On his website, Mehrabian states: “*Silent Messages* contains a detailed discussion of my findings on inconsistent messages of feelings and

attitudes (and the relative importance of words vs. nonverbal cues).” I found that the professor says his findings have been misquoted. Max Atkinson, a communications researcher in Wells, Somerset, United Kingdom, quoted from a personal email he received from Mehrabian (which is reproduced in Atkinson's book *Lend Me Your Ears*); in the email, Mehrabian said:

I am obviously uncomfortable about misquotes of my work. From the very beginning I have tried to give people the correct limitations of my findings. Unfortunately, the field of self-styled ‘corporate image consultants’ or ‘leadership consultants’ has numerous practitioners with very little psychological expertise.

I learned an important lesson from that workshop I attended. I learned to not swallow what some people call “facts” without careful examination of how the so-called facts were obtained, especially the ones that on the surface seem unintuitive.

Let's challenge the experts who rely on unsubstantiated statistics or use them in ways they were never intended to be used. 🗨️

Ann Banham is vice president public relations of the National Australia Bank Toastmasters club in Melbourne, Australia. She recently retired from her position as publications manager for an international Australian company.

AROUND THE GLOBE

▶ INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

HUGS MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND



Hugging is a near-universal gesture of love enjoyed by the old and young alike. It also has proven health benefits, such as reducing blood pressure and heart rate, and increasing oxytocin, a hormone known to reduce stress.

In fact, University of North Carolina researchers found in one study that the cardioprotective effects of oxytocin may be higher for women. But men all over the world enjoy sharing a hug.

For example, in many Latin cultures, male friends like to hug and playfully slap each other on the back when they greet each other.

In contrast, some American men use a more physically distant form of hugging, known as the “bro hug.” It consists of a one-armed embrace while shaking hands, with only the shoulders briefly touching.

▶ WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO **A** VISIT A TOASTMASTERS MEETING, AND **B** JOIN A CLUB?

Members contributed to the discussion on the Facebook Official Toastmasters International Members Group:

“A friend invited me to a ‘bring-a-friend’ night at a local club. What drew me in that evening was a humorous speech one member gave about a talking dog—that was 23 years ago.”

— IAN MURRAY, CC, CL
ELSTERNWICK TOASTMASTERS, ELSTERNWICK, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

“My girlfriend invited me to visit her club. It was the self-development aspect, and the supportive environment, that spurred me to join Toastmasters.”

— ROBERT VAN DER MEER
TOASTMASTERS MAASTRICHT CLUB, MAASTRICHT, NETHERLANDS

“I wanted to find a way to use my words and experiences to make a difference. I googled Toastmasters and found a club in my hometown. I shared my story without knowing an Ice Breaker speech existed.”

— JEFF HUBBARD, ACB, CL
DENTON TOASTMASTERS CLUB, DENTON, TEXAS

▶ SNAPSHOT



Denise McCluskey, DTM, from University Place, Washington, visited a classroom in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Her tour guide decided to go back to school and look for a local Toastmasters club after being inspired by the *Toastmaster* magazine.

BOTTOM LINE

Renew Your Dues

Contact your club officers to ensure your dues get paid by April 1. In March, officers can go to www.toastmasters.org/DuesRenewals for more information.

Attend Your District Conference

Consider attending a conference to gain valuable tips and to network. Check your district’s website at www.toastmasters.org/DistrictWebsites for the date of your next conference.

Free Brand Resources

The Brand Portal offers newsletter templates, stationery, fliers and logos at no cost. www.toastmasters.org/BrandPortal

▶ LANGUAGE TIP

SAY YES TO SAYING NO

Many people find it difficult to say no to an invitation or request, in spite of their ever-growing responsibilities and full schedules. Learn to master the delicate skill of saying no by keeping these tips in mind:

- **Be polite.** Don't cut off someone who is talking. Listen to the full request before answering no.
- **Decline an invitation in person,** if possible, to avoid miscommunication, which is common in email or phone discussions.
- **Offer options.** For example, if a co-worker asks you to help out on a big project, you may not have time, but you might know someone else who can assist.
- **Think of the bigger picture.** Saying no might make you feel like a bad person temporarily, but consider your reputation—it might suffer if you can't follow through on a promise or meet a deadline.

MEMBER MOMENT

EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

Mike Douse, who has a Ph.D. in education, works with governments of developing countries, advising them on major education projects. During 2012 alone, he advised on educational planning in Somalia, primary schooling in Sudan, and literacy and numeracy learning in Tanzania. Over the last three decades, Douse's work has taken him to 64 countries. A member of the Ennis Toastmasters in Ennis, County Clare, Ireland, he has blended his devotion to international education with his passion for spoken communication. For example, while working in Australia early in his career, Douse helped initiate the World Schools Debating Championships—now an annual event for secondary-school students, with more than 40 countries competing.



Mike Douse

As an educator, how has Toastmasters helped you?

Spoken communication is crucial to everything I do. In November I had to get some information across, through an interpreter, to more than a hundred villagers, none of whom spoke English. I have also had to draft speeches for government ministers in developing countries.

With all your traveling, do you visit Toastmasters in other countries?

Recently, my wife and I visited Toastmasters in Brisbane, Australia, and in Nairobi, Kenya. I thought very seriously about getting some people together in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and helping them to form a club (there are no clubs in Tanzania), but time was against me.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

I have always enjoyed speaking in public and, although there is always more to learn, I concentrate now on advising others, as sensitively and creatively as I can. I am especially keen on encouraging youngsters to stand up and speak and to listen creatively.

Convention Countdown Begins

The 2013 International Convention will be held August 21–24 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Check this section next month for more information.

Marvelous Mentors

Do you know an exceptional mentor who has positively influenced you or other Toastmasters? Send a 200-word description and photo (1 MB or larger) to MentorMoment@toastmasters.org.

Videos Offer Tips

Have you seen the Toastmasters video series of time-tested tips for improving communication? Watch the videos at www.toastmasters.org/Videos.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

IN THIS MONTHLY COLUMN, Accredited Speakers and Toastmasters World Champions of Public Speaking share lessons learned.



Jana Barnhill, DTM, AS, a member of the Lubbock Professional club in Lubbock, Texas, served as Toastmasters International President in 2008–2009.

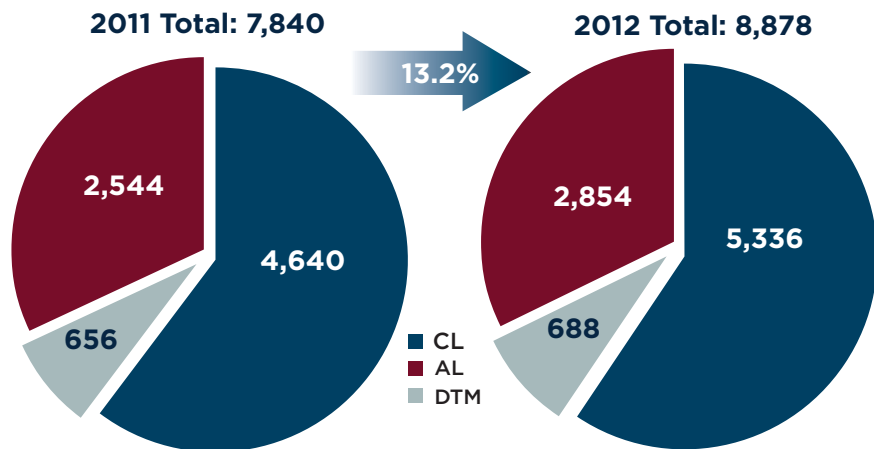
What should you do with your hands when giving a speech?

For many, it feels awkward to simply allow their hands to rest freely at their sides when, in fact, that's perfectly acceptable and effective. Hands should be used *purposefully and naturally* to emphasize a point and *complement* the message. While you might be more comfortable clasping your hands in front of or behind you, or placing them in your pockets or on your hips, those actions can actually detract from your message. Learn to relax and not feel that you must “do something” with your hands throughout the speech.

FACTS WORTH KNOWING

MORE MEMBERS BECAME LEADERS IN 2012

Toastmasters leadership is on the rise! In 2012, members earned 13.2 percent more leadership awards as compared to 2011.* Congratulations to all new leaders!



*Data represents a comparison of awards earned July 1–December 31, 2011, and in the same period in 2012.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Members introduce prospective visitors to Toastmasters using pre-PowerPoint-era visual aids, such as this three-sided display board.

MENTOR MOMENT

No one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Jill Peabody, a member of the Friendly Persuasion Toastmasters club in Haverhill, Massachusetts, shares how she has benefited from a mentor.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

I am a certified public accountant and I work with clients daily. Before joining Toastmasters, I would often clam up while attempting to speak in one-on-one conversations as well as in group settings. I decided to make a change. I knew Toastmasters would help me, both professionally and personally, and it has!

Tell us about your mentor. Shawn Mills, ACS, is a flight attendant for a major commercial airline. She speaks professionally outside of Toastmasters, teaching presentation skills to adults in career transition. She is motivating and sincere, and her passion for my success is inspiring. She has been a Toastmaster since 2002, and her suggestions are well-respected and appreciated.

How does Shawn give feedback? We have discussions over the phone. Shawn helps with the flow of thoughts and words, the correct use of English, ideas for making a big impact and ways to grab my audience's attention. Overall, her critiques are always positive, but she also delivers "feedback medicine" with "sugar." It's tough to give and receive negative feedback, but it is essential to growth. This trait, I believe, is what makes her most valuable.

What is your favorite thing about Shawn? Her enthusiasm and belief in the program.



Jill Peabody (right) credits mentor Shawn Mills for delivering "feedback medicine" with "sugar."

LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST ... INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS



PAULINE SHIRLEY, DTM
PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 1994-1995

Q: What inspires you?

A: True servant leaders inspire me. Being a part of something greater than I am, with results beneficial to even more people, inspires me. Watching others develop and build confidence, skills and talents that change their lives for the better, inspires me. Humble people who achieve unparalleled success and remain humble because they care for others, consider the needs of others and give generously of themselves and their resources, inspire me.

Most of all, I'm inspired by people who grow and improve and go on to accomplish great things that benefit all of mankind. In general, optimistic, enthusiastic, loyal people inspire me. On a very personal note, my eight incredible grandchildren, who are smart, creative, considerate, talented and family-loyal, inspire me and give me confidence in the future of our world.

DR. SMEDLEY SAYS

Toastmasters founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley shared many insights worth remembering, such as:

"Real communication is impossible without listening."



Dr. Ralph C. Smedley
1878-1965

TALK LIKE ME

Stuttering doesn't stop entrepreneur from public speaking success.

By Garret Garrels, CC

“Do they all t-t-talk like you in Montana?”

That jerk in the back of my college literature class wasn't the first one to make fun of my speech impediment. Ever since I

even changed the pronunciation of our last name.”

I always wondered why the rest of my family pronounced Garrels like “Charles” and we said Garrels like “barrels.” The latter was easier for my dad to pronounce, so instead

As hard as it may be to speak through our fears, trying to quietly fit in is not the way to stand up, stand proud and stand out.

was old enough for public school, I dreaded the first day of class. On that day the teacher would ask the students to “stand up and say your name and where you are from.” I feared doing this because people made fun of me every time I opened my mouth. I never had the courage to address the hecklers. Instead, I would sink back in my seat and pretend my self-confidence didn't shatter.

Stuttering ran in my dad's side of the family, and he told me, “Garret, I've carried this problem on my back for my entire life, and because of it I

of stuttering his own name, he just changed its pronunciation. He even changed the spelling of my first name: Most people spell the name with two t's at the end, but I spell it with only one. When my parents chose my name, my dad said, “My son won't have t-t-two t's in his name.”

The impediment that ran in my family may have influenced the spelling of my name, but I had to do more than just pronounce it correctly to establish a career as a professional speaker. Toastmasters helped me find the definition of my name.

A Burgeoning Business

Despite the classroom critics, the business I started while still in college—a women's fitness boxing program called Pink Gloves Boxing—grew rapidly, soon gaining international recognition. When a lesser populated state like Montana, my home state, produces an internationally recognized company, local schools and universities often ask the owners to speak to their students and share their stories. I felt my abilities as a spokesman for Pink Gloves Boxing didn't measure up.

My business partner, Nick Milodragovich, and I were invited to a Toastmasters meeting that quickly earned a spot on our weekly calendar.

My Ice Breaker seemed more like an iceberg. Just the thought of it chilled my blood. But it was the warm atmosphere of my club that really broke the ice ... not my speech. I stuttered in it, but Tonna, our club president, said in her evaluation: “You are a really funny speaker. You should compete in the Humorous Speech Contest.” The feeling of someone laughing with me must have caused me to temporarily forget



Garret Garrels, CC, the founder of Pink Gloves Boxing, started competing as a speaker after joining Toastmasters.

all the times people laughed at me; I took her advice.

I stammered on to win first place at the district level of that contest—at least, I thought I won. I overheard one of the judges say, “Garret actually took second place, but the lady in first went over time.” My first-place trophy lost its shimmer.

A Revelation

Back at the hotel room, I tossed myself onto the bed in a 200-pound pile of self-pity. I felt broken. It was at that moment that I realized the true importance of the Toastmasters speech contests. The trophy didn’t matter; it wasn’t real. I became a better speaker in the process. That was real. The knowledge and skills I gained from competing were something that no one could ever take away.

Not only did I learn how to communicate with an audience, I learned how to communicate with myself. Piece by piece, I picked up the self-confidence that had at one time shattered on the classroom floor. I gained the courage to share my

message regardless of my impediment. I stopped competing to win and started competing to grow.

In 2011 and 2012, I was fortunate enough to advance to the semifinals of the International Speech Contest. I didn’t win the contest, but I did grow. I view the speech competitions as the practice field for the most important game in life: communication. Some people play the game while others watch. If you’re looking to grow as a speaker, consider competing in your club’s next competition. You may not win, but I guarantee you won’t lose.

I may never lose my stutter, but through Toastmasters and public speaking I have found an outlet to help me improve. Perhaps my friend Leys Geddes, immediate past chair of the British Stammering Association, said it best: “Very few adult stutterers ever overcome the condition entirely, but we must still be prepared to speak *and* stutter in public. Society realizes, for example, that limping is simply a sign of difficulty with one’s leg, not a sign of a personality defect; so it should be with stuttering.”

Whether you have a speech impediment or just a fear of public speaking, you have a message that the world needs to hear. As hard as it may be to speak through our fears, trying to quietly fit in is not the way to stand up, stand proud and stand out. I’d like to end this article by saying something I never had the chance to say to my college heckler: My name is Garret—with one t—Garrels, pronounced like “barrels.” And yes ... they all talk like me in Montana. **T**

Garret Garrels, CC, is a member of the Helena Toastmasters club in Helena, Montana. He advanced to the semifinals of the Toastmasters International Speech Contest in 2011 and 2012; in 2011, he finished in second place in his semifinal contest. Garret is the author of the book *Loops 4 Life*, the founder of Pink Gloves Boxing and a professional humorous speaker. Learn more at garretgarrels.com.



GUARANTEE YOURSELF A VICTORY

Trophies aren't the only reward in speech contests.

By Jim Key, DTM

Editor's Note: Jim Key won the 2003 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking.

The winner of the contest is ...” This phrase, or something like it, concludes each Toastmasters speech contest and identifies the individual who has prevailed. Unfortunately, many people who enter contests have a “win-it-all-or-I’m-a-failure” mentality, particularly when competing in the International Speech Contest, because it culminates in the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking. By those standards, thousands of members

who enter Toastmasters contests would be deemed failures. Conversely, if speakers embrace the “everyone’s a winner” mentality, that sentiment doesn’t seem entirely connected to reality. After all, every contest awards only one first-place trophy.

Are speech contests just win-or-fail propositions, or is every contestant a winner? To determine which view is correct, perhaps we should look at contests in a different way and focus on what it means to be successful as a participant. Many members feel like Paula Howley, CC, ALB, who points out how scared she was to compete at

first. “I felt I had been successful just by *entering* the contest and facing my fear,” says Howley, of the Midtown Madness Toastmasters in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Liz Shaw, DTM, a member of three clubs in Arizona, offers another perspective, saying, “I view speech contests as the perfect personal growth experience. If I *learned* something about myself in the process of developing my speech, practicing and performing in the contest, then I am a big winner.”

These assessments of contest participation are certainly valid and part of the three different measures of

success in that area: accolades, personal growth and providing value for the audience. These successes are possible with every speaking opportunity—not just during contests.

Accolades

Accolades come in many forms. One way is winning the Best Speaker award at your club meeting; another is receiving a first-place trophy in a speech contest. Accolades can also include positive comments received

You can control your growth as a speaker, so make it a point to stretch yourself.

after a presentation. Hearing “That was excellent” or “You were great” from an audience member makes you feel successful. The effect is impossible to miss: You get an immediate affirmation that your performance was appreciated by your audience. That, in turn, builds confidence and encourages you to speak again.

Personal Growth

The potential for personal growth is present in each speaking opportunity. Specifically, each time you speak, you can stretch yourself in regard to your presentation techniques. Such opportunities arise each time you speak to a larger audience or to people with whom you are unfamiliar. You can even experiment with new delivery styles. You can also bring new content into a presentation you’ve previously delivered. As you gain more experience, you will grow as a speaker.

One of my biggest areas of growth in Toastmasters was my writing. I wanted to develop my ability to craft speeches that delivered maximum value and impact. That required a focus on imagery, word choice, organization, grammar, brevity and other

important aspects of writing. Simply put, preparing for speech contests helped me become a more effective and efficient speech writer.

Colin William, DTM, of the Greater Lafayette Area Toastmasters in West Lafayette, Indiana, says, “Contest speaking has taught me how to speak and write with structure and discipline. It teaches you to be disciplined, precise and goal-directed in what you say. That skill is extremely important outside the contest.”

Regardless of what specific form your audience takes, the opportunity for personal growth is present each time you speak.

Be of Value to Your Audience

Every time you speak, you have the opportunity to offer something valuable to your audience. Precisely what that “something” is will vary from one audience to the next. One group may need to receive specific information, and another may need to consider new opinions and perspectives. Some may want to be motivated or inspired, and others may simply need to experience the stress-relieving benefits of a good laugh. Your contest speech need not be merely a display of your abilities; it can also be the vehicle through which those who are giving you their time and attention receive something beneficial in return.

Some of my most rewarding experiences came after contests I did not win. Hearing someone who experienced my speech say it was uplifting made a real difference to me. When audience members sincerely express their enjoyment of my speech—regardless of the outcome of the

contest—their remarks validate my efforts and make me feel as though I accomplished something important.

How can you be guaranteed success if you decide to enter a speech contest? The overly simplistic advice I have is this: Control what you can control. While it is wise to familiarize yourself with judging criteria for a particular contest, and to craft your speech and delivery in a way that will make victory more likely, you have no direct control over the outcome of the contest. You also have no control over any accolades you may receive in response to your speech. Instead, focus your energy on things you can control.

You can control your growth as a speaker, so make it a point to stretch yourself. Increase your focus on writing until it becomes your strength. Pay attention to how clearly you are communicating your message. Experiment with different delivery techniques until you find the ones that suit your presentation best. Provide value with your speech. Consider what listeners need, choose an appropriate and beneficial topic, and tailor your speech to accommodate audience members’ needs.

Ultimately, the phrase “The winner of the contest is ...” is followed by only one name. Your efforts may or may not result in obtaining the desired accolade, but you can use the opportunity to improve in ways that extend beyond getting that winning trophy. You can serve the audience by delivering them something that is important, valuable and lasting. If you do that, you are guaranteed to win. 🗨️

Jim Key, DTM, won the 2003 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking. A member of Lennox International Toastmasters in Richardson, Texas, he is a trainer and a professional speaker. Learn more at jimkey.com.



HOW TO TELL TALL TALES

Truthful tips about presenting preposterous stories.

By Betsy Keogan, DTM

The announcement was made: “This year, instead of a Humorous Speech Contest, District 27 will hold its first Tall Tales Contest.” Everyone in the room responded with an “Oh!” and I think we may have achieved a record for the variety of ways to say that word. Some of our club members were intrigued, some were enthusiastic ... but most were confused and concerned.

What was the cause for all this dread? After all, most of us began telling tall tales on the playground. By the age of 5, we found it easy to make a claim like, “I can kick a ball all the way to Kentucky!” or “My

dog wagged his tail so fast that my dad called the TV news to issue a tornado warning.”

If you’ve been in a Tall Tales Contest, you know the challenge is to come up with something more than just an outrageous claim—you have to write a contest-worthy story that develops and supports your claim. This can be more difficult than the deceptively simple theme suggests. The members of my club are all talented humorous speech writers, but our first efforts at writing truly clever tall tales failed. We were intimidated and only two people signed up for the contest. That

changed when our club came up with a number of creative ideas. Soon, we discovered tall tales work like potato chips—once we started writing, we couldn’t stop at just one. Here are some of those ideas.

How to Begin

▶ **Watch movies** such as *Big Fish* (2003) or *The Secret of Roan Inish* (1994) to hear a variety of tall tales being told. Your local library may have books of tall tales to use as examples, as well, but remember that your tale must be original. You cannot simply copy a story from a book and change a few minor details. Also, be sure that

your resources feature tall tales and not folk tales. They are distinctly different.

▶ **Practice coming up with ideas by using tall tales as a Table Topics theme** a month before the contest. Each participant must describe a seemingly implausible event that happened to him or her. To add an extra twist, tell the participants that they may describe a true event if they wish. Then, have the audience guess whether the story is true or a tall tale.

We discovered tall tales work like potato chips—once we started writing, we couldn't stop at just one.

▶ **Pick a random sentence from a book of famous quotations** and see what sort of tall tale you can concoct using that sentence as a punch line.

▶ **Write down five frustrating things that have happened to you recently.** List ordinary problems, such as being stuck in traffic, spilling coffee on your suit, having no time to do the dishes, and so on. Then try to come up with preposterous solutions to these problems.

How to Develop Flavor

After watching the movie *Big Fish* or one like it, **try to copy the main character's storytelling abilities.** Notice the use of tone, speed of delivery and volume, as well as the use of language.

▶ **Play around with accents ...** for a while. Then drop the phony accent but retain some of the accent's flavor. In other words, try adding a bit of drawl in places, or colorful phrases such as "Now, there comes a time in everyone's life" or "He was a most intelligent man."

▶ **Tall tales are the perfect speeches to practice alliteration, homonyms, triads and other vocal variety techniques.** Instead of saying "Ladybugs

are found in many regions," say "From Leesburg to Louisville, the ladybugs lurk." Used sparingly, rhymes can be very effective. Instead of saying "The car was damaged," say "Repairs were extensive and expensive."

▶ **Add surprises** (for example, a song, a dance, a howl or an unexpected body movement). Remember: Surprises are like pepper—a little bit adds a lot of flavor, but if you add too much you ruin the result.

▶ **Many tall tales become livelier with a little repetition.** This is especially true for any content that describes actions that can be illustrated by humorous gestures, such as: "The bear went up and down, and up and down, and up and down the mountain."

It is funny to set up a predictable sequence of events, or a predictable sequence of logic, and then twist the final link in the sequence. Among successful humorists, the "Rule of Three" is popular. First, set up a joke. Second, reinforce the setup. Third, earn the payoff with a punch line that smashes the pattern. For example, "This porridge is too cold. This porridge is too hot. This porridge is asking to meet our leader!"


Editing Helps

▶ **A good tall tale is about three to five minutes long.** After five minutes, the audience begins to lose track of the details or becomes overwhelmed by too many of them. You may find it painful to delete humorous lines—however, a day or two later, when you read the speech again, you will realize the streamlined version is in fact better.

▶ **If the story involves bragging, consider telling it in the third person.** For example, one member had a story about how dozens of fabulous men wanted to date her. The first time she told this tale, it bombed. Then she changed the story to be about the fabulous men who wanted to date her sister. This one change made the story much funnier.

▶ **Videotape yourself telling the story.** Even if you don't have access to a video camera, you might be able to do a limited amount of taping with another electronic device, such as a digital camera. Just taping a minute or two of your tall tale will help you see which parts need extra "oomph" and which need paring down.

▶ **Don't be too childish, and don't be too adult.** Tall tales are meant to amuse adults; childish language and too much fantasy (princesses, unicorns, elves, etc.) can make your story sound like a fairy tale. Don't start your story off with "Once upon a time" unless you are doing so ironically. On the other hand, tall tales work best when they have a certain wholesomeness. If you do want to keep adult humor in your tale—and there are times when this works—just remember: Any naughty references will be funnier if you tell them in the chastest manner possible. Strive for innocent phrasing. Whatever you do, don't wink at the audience; it may seem like a good idea but it comes across as sleazy.

Follow these steps and your club will soon enjoy writing and performing tall tales. It worked well for us. In the end, all 35,000 people in our club wrote tall tales. You believe me, don't you? 

Betsy Keogan, DTM, lives in Loudoun County, Virginia.

WHEN BAD SPEECHES HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE

How to recover from a disappointing presentation.

By Christine Clapp, DTM

As a senior at a New York high school, Morgan McCauley was elated when she learned she had won a prestigious National Honor Society leadership award. But elation soon turned to terror when she found out

she would have to give an acceptance speech at a school awards assembly. Though Morgan carefully scripted and practiced her speech, things went from bad to worse when she was introduced at the event. Wearing a cast for a sprained ankle, Morgan tripped as she left her seat. Then she fell on the stairs leading from the podium to the lectern. When she finally got to the lectern, the teenager looked up at the large crowd and mumbled, “Oh my gosh, there are so many people here.” The words were picked up by the microphone; Morgan started to cry.

you hoped or that you weren’t proud of. How, then, can you recover from a bad speech and prevent the experience from eroding your confidence?

Don’t allow a bad experience to paralyze you with fear.

Put It in Perspective

As deflating as it can be, giving a bad speech is nothing more than an “off” performance. It doesn’t mean you are a bad person, a terrible speaker, a subpar employee or (insert your own putdown here). After all, bad speeches happen to good people. Remember to keep things in perspective and separate the person from the performance.

Analyze What Went Wrong ... and Right

If you need to, wallow in disappointment for a day or two. Then, focus on studying what happened during your presentation so you can learn from the experience.

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lectern. When she finally got to the lectern, the teenager looked up at the large crowd and mumbled, “Oh my gosh, there are so many people here.” The words were picked up by the microphone; Morgan started to cry.

Perhaps you have had an experience like Morgan’s, which she described as “scarring.” But even if you haven’t, you likely can empathize with giving a disappointing presentation—one that did not go as well as



As difficult as it will be, and no matter how strong the temptation to avoid thinking about the speech again, examine evidence to identify what went wrong. Lisa Braithwaite, a public speaking trainer and coach from Santa Barbara, California, encourages speakers to review their speeches in the form of video or audio. “It’s easier to analyze [your speech] when you watch or listen than to trust your memory,” says Braithwaite, adding that when we replay such a speech in our minds, “we tend to blow mistakes out of proportion and to be really hard on ourselves. It’s hard to be objective.”

But don’t stop with your analysis of what went wrong. “When we get down on ourselves, we need to remember what went right,” Braithwaite says. “Look at the

presentation and realize that a lot went well. Find the high notes and remember to repeat them next time.” If there is no recording of the speech, look to session evaluations or solicit feedback from a neutral audience member to analyze your presentation.

Also, be specific with your observations. Rather than noting the general use of filler words, identify which ones you used (“ah” and “you know”), how many times you used them (the former 12 times, the latter 10), in what context they were used (where in your sentences were they uttered?), and how the behavior impacted your presentation (e.g., It made me look unprofessional and as if I didn’t know my material). The more detail you include, the more successful you will be with your plans for improving.

Troubleshoot

After you identify what went wrong, analyze why it went wrong. Susan Trivers, past president of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the National Speakers Association, says a lack of preparation is often to blame. She urges speakers to honestly assess themselves by verifying how much time they actually spent preparing. “Try to quantify it,” says Trivers, an executive speaking coach and author of the Great Speaking Coach blog (susantrivers.com).

Other times, psychological or situational factors may be the cause of the problem. A variety of factors can influence the outcome of your speech, including speaking to a group that is larger than normal for you, being distracted by a personal problem, not getting a good night’s sleep, skipping breakfast, having a cold or running late for the presentation.

Craft a Plan

After you identify all the factors that contributed to a lackluster performance, come up with specific strategies to prevent them from recurring. Rather than saying that next time you will more carefully analyze the audience, define exactly what that means. For example, you could resolve to:

▶ Read the text on the organization's website at least two months before the presentation, especially the parts pertaining to the organization's mission and its recent work. Also, read about the conference where you are presenting.

After giving a weak presentation, consult with your Toastmasters mentor.

- ▶ Research recent news accounts written about the organization and its key members at least two months before the presentation.
- ▶ Have a conversation with the event organizer at least two months before the presentation.
- ▶ Talk to at least four audience members about their needs and interests at least six weeks before the presentation.
- ▶ Craft the thesis and main points of your presentation based on your analysis of the audience, at least a month before the presentation.

Specificity is crucial. Identify what your plan for improvement entails and when you will complete each component in preparation for your next speech. Each item should be one you can act on—and can do so within a limited amount of time.

To address a lack of preparation, Trivers recommends crafting a budget that allots more time for

practicing your next speech. For example, after determining the total amount of time you want to dedicate to the speech—say, 10 hours—block out one-hour increments on a calendar in the weeks leading up to it.

Trivers advises her clients to allocate 40 percent of their total preparation time to crafting the material and the other 60 percent to practicing and rehearsing. She defines practice as the time for the speaker to learn the material. “Talk through it out loud. Hear how it sounds,” she says. “The emphasis is getting it into the speaker's brain and body, and

making edits.” Then, rehearsal starts. “When content is flowing, think about the audience, and connecting with them,” she says. “Consider delivery style, getting comfortable looking at people, movement around the stage and vocal variety.”

Though it sounds simple, Trivers estimates that most speakers end up spending 80 percent of their time crafting material and not nearly enough on practicing and rehearsing.

Get Back on Stage

Now that you have identified what went wrong with your speech, why it happened and how you will go about preventing the same problems from occurring again, it's time to heed the advice of this timeless axiom: When you fall off the horse, get right back on the saddle. Don't allow a bad experience to paralyze you with fear. The best way to prevent this is to run, not walk, to the stage and do another speech.

It is not necessary for you—or not right away, at least—to repeat the same type of speech or speak in the same kind of situation. If you bombed a manual speech at a Toastmasters meeting, change it up at the next meeting by serving as grammarian or responding to a Table Topics question. Also, think about potential opportunities for speaking in your professional or personal life, such as providing a speech of introduction at a work conference, giving a toast or reading a passage of scripture at your place of worship.

The goal is to rebuild your confidence as a speaker. But even if it takes a series of baby steps to get you back to delivering speeches at Toastmasters or other venues, that's okay. What is important is that you start taking those steps within a few weeks of your disappointing presentation. The longer you wait, the steeper the climb.

Measure Progress

After each presentation, track your progress. Be proactive in recording your speeches and in getting feedback. Figure out which strategies you used to prevent lackluster performances in the past. Your confidence will increase as you see evidence of improvement. To become an even better speaker, identify the strategies that did not work, and modify them. Careful review of your presentations will help you identify areas that still need work.

Consider a Coach

After giving a weak presentation, consult with your Toastmasters mentor, if you have one. If you still want more help, consider hiring a speech coach. Trivers, the executive speaking coach, points to the

experience—and outside perspective—that coaches can offer.

“People focus on climbing the career ladder by getting a master’s degree or certification in their area, but they rely on speaking skills they learned in one class as an undergraduate,” she says.

Think about it in terms of any other experts you hire to improve your professional image, such as those who tailor suits, design business cards or write resumes. It is just as important, if not more so, to invest in an expert who can help you feel proud of your speeches and project more confidence every time you communicate in your professional and personal life.

Believe in Comebacks

If you are nursing a few wounds after delivering an off speech, remember: It is possible to recover from a disappointing performance, or a disastrous experience like Morgan’s. After that traumatic high school assembly, Morgan went on to earn her undergraduate degree from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, where she struggled through required class presentations. In the fall of 2012, she began her professional career as a legal assistant at a large law firm in Washington, D.C. To improve her confidence as a speaker, the young woman completed a series of small-group public-speaking classes taught by a coach.

“I’m a little more comfortable, especially in small groups, but I still get freaked out by the idea of speaking to big groups,” Morgan admits.

Her next goal: visiting a few Toastmasters clubs near her downtown office. **T**

Christine Clapp, DTM, is a member of the George Washington University Toastmasters in Washington, D.C., and president of Spoken with Authority, which develops the voice of experts who want to broaden their impact. You can follow her on Twitter @christineclapp or visit spokenwithauthority.com.



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READING YOUR AUDIENCE

Use member responses to maximize your delivery.

By Howard Scott, ACB

To connect with your listeners, you must first learn to *read* your audience. The speaker-audience connection is delicate. Audience members don't hold up signs that say "I don't like your talk." They don't often get up and walk out. They won't even yawn, if they are polite. So you must pay attention to the subtle signals provided by individual audience members, as well as to the overall vibes generated by the audience as a whole.

Whenever you feel you are not making a connection with your audience, pause and recalculate.

How can you tell if you are making an emotional connection with your audience? You'll feel an invisible exchange of give-and-take in your gut—some refer to it as "electricity." Listener responses should rise and fall appropriately with the content of your story. For instance, if you state a hard truth—"She died before she could apologize"—audience members should be wincing. If you present a puzzling phenomenon, their foreheads should wrinkle. You also should see heads turning to follow your movements from one side of the stage to the other. All these indicators will tell you whether the audience is excited, concerned, mildly interested or bored.

Julian Worker, president of Tillicum Toastmasters in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, likes to use humor to gauge an audience's interest: "If I receive appropriate audience laughter, I know that the audience is responsive [to my message]."

Use the following techniques to take the temperature of your audience members.

1 Ask a question. Get the crowd to show you that they're following your train of thought. In a speech against public sector pensions, I asked the audience what the maximum public sector pension payment was. I knew the audience connected with my message, because I got answers rang-

ing from "There isn't a maximum" to "The same as anyone in the public or private sector can get." When one audience member approached me after my speech to tell me he was feeling angry about public sector pension payments, I knew my message had resonated with him.

If you ask a question and don't get a response, rephrase the question. If you still get no reaction, then it's time for a different approach.

In one fact-laden talk about income taxes, I determined a third of the way through the presentation that the audience was bored with my topic. I changed my approach by turning every subsequent statement into a question. I won the listeners' attention through audience participation.

2 Take note of eye aversion. If you notice people with blank expressions staring off into space, it's time to change your approach.

Lisbeth McCarty, ACB, CL, president of Sooner Toastmasters in Norman, Oklahoma, says, "If people make eye contact with me, then I take that as a sign of acceptance."

3 Make eye contact with a few people, one at a time. Do you see their eyes light up, faces redden or mouths harden when you make eye contact? If you don't get any reaction, it means your words haven't moved them. Similarly, if someone looks away when you make eye contact, it's cause for alarm. Faces reveal the mind at work; when the mind is dulled, faces lack expression.

During a previous speech, I leaned toward one man. When our eyes met, I wagged my finger in his face and delivered my main point: "If you make money your god, you will find yourself one day counting green slips of paper, and nothing else." The listener's face changed dramatically; it was as if he had seen a ghost. Not only did I have *his* full attention, I had the full attention of *all* audience members.

Whenever you feel you are not making a connection with your audience, pause and recalculate. Then, change your presentation by altering your voice, varying your slant, slowing down, asking questions or telling a personal anecdote that relates to your topic. Hone your audience-reading skills, and you'll be in command of any speaking situation. **T**

Howard Scott, ACB, is president of the South Shore Soliloquy club in Kingston, Massachusetts.

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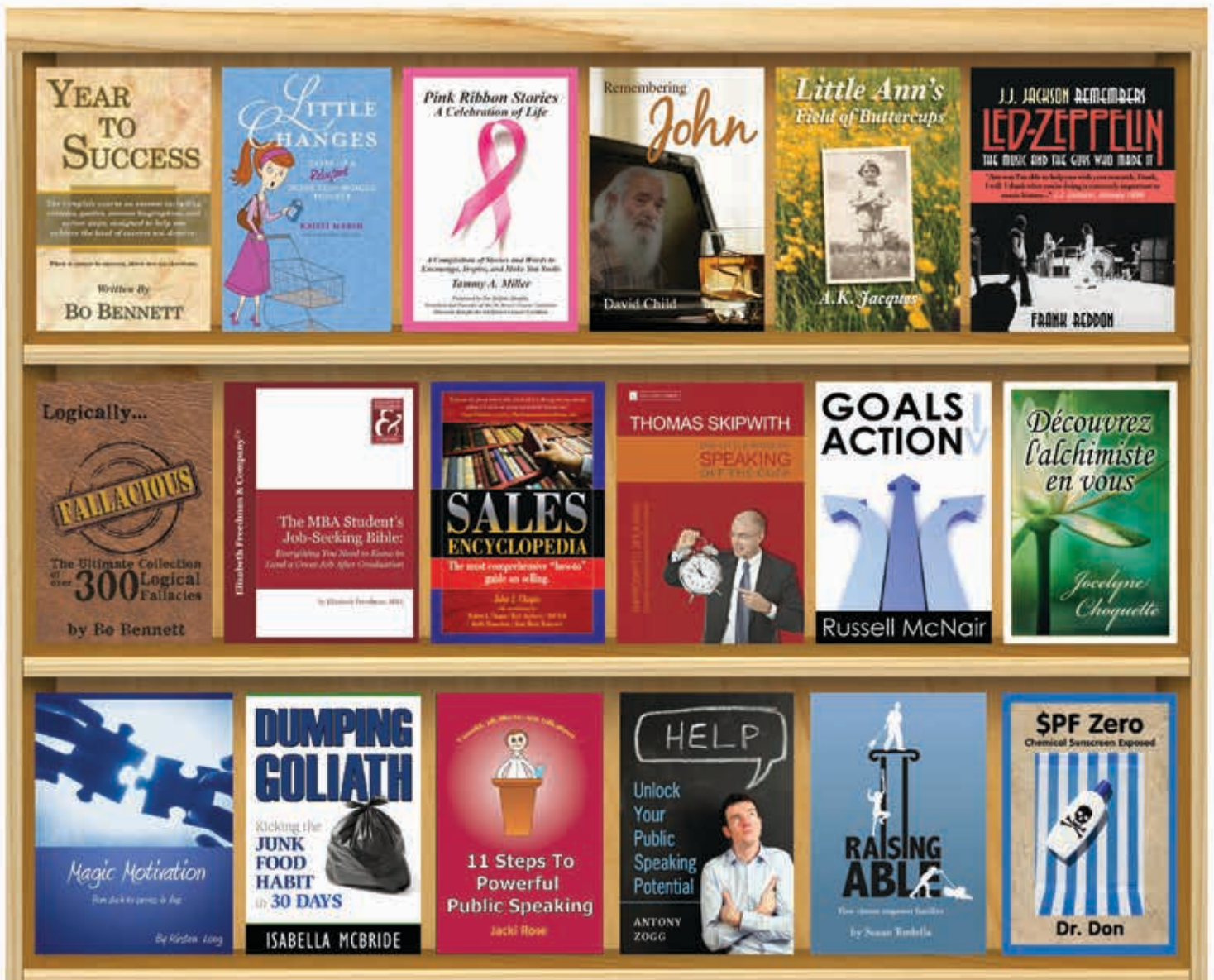
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BEYOND THE CLUB EXPERIENCE

Reap the benefits of speaking in the real world.

By Patricia Fry, ATMS

You joined Toastmasters to improve your public speaking and communication skills, but are you using what you've learned outside the club environment? While it's valuable to work within the parameters of your club, among familiar faces, there comes a time when it is important to stretch—to venture beyond the protective boundaries of your club and face the public or, as some say, “the real world.”

“Toastmasters is about you growing. Speaking outside of Toastmasters is about you helping the audience to grow.” — Conor Cunneen, DTM, AS

Whether your interests lie in stand-up comedy, expanding your involvement at work or in another organization, or promoting your business, product or service, it may be time to pursue outside speaking engagements.

Speaking in the Real World

For some, the whole point of joining Toastmasters is to prepare for public speaking engagements. As a full-time writer, I joined to learn the skills necessary to promote my books—through public speaking and one-on-one

communications. Jerry Waxler, CTM, joined Sunrise Toastmasters in Allentown, Pennsylvania, to more effectively promote his therapy practice. Other members join to gain confidence in social or work settings, and later discover they have something to say—and they want to share it. Sometimes members develop a desire to perform.

Those who venture outside the club to speak or entertain highly recommend it. Matthias Catón, CC,

a program director at the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management in Frankfurt, Germany, was giving talks and conducting workshops related to his job before he joined Esprit De Corps Toastmasters. He says, “While Toastmasters is a perfect training ground, training is not the same as the real thing.”

Accredited Speaker Conor Cunneen, DTM, member of the Windy City Professional Speakers club in Oak Brook, Illinois, speaks at marketing industry conferences. He says outside

experiences raise members' awareness about the process of public speaking, and also about a speaker's responsibility. “Toastmasters is about *you* growing,” he says. “Speaking outside of Toastmasters is about you helping *the audience* to grow.”

Speaking outside of your club is something you can ease into. Bill O'Brien, ATMS, of Ojai Valley Toastmasters in Ojai, California, suggests starting with a nonthreatening activity such as having a booth at a local event or attending a public meeting and observing others before attempting to speak on issues of concern.

What Will You Talk About?

Whatever your goal, you'll need to develop your content. The key is in knowing your audience. Develop an understanding of what your target audience wants to hear. Accomplish this by attending programs related to your topic; this will help you recognize good themes. Use the techniques you learned when selecting topics for manual speeches. Break down your subject matter into several viable topics—you can get ideas by reading the table of contents in books on your subject. Cunneen suggests developing five to 10 speeches within the context of your



SPEAKERS BUREAU 101

Speakers bureaus help speakers and entertainers find speaking opportunities in their community. Many event organizers seek keynote speakers, entertainers, workshop leaders, after-dinner speakers and emcees. Consider joining a speakers bureau for public speaking opportunities. You will gain experience speaking outside of your club and make contacts for future presentations.

Speakers bureaus exist for all levels of presenters. Many of them are designed to address specific topics. They are operated by various organizations. Speaker requirements vary, but they most often depend on subject matter expertise and, of course, speaking credentials. The opportunities coming from speakers bureaus generally don't pay, although honorariums are possible.

Many Toastmasters districts throughout the world offer speakers bureaus. Rich Rodgers, ACB, ALB, operates the District 16 Toastmasters Speakers Bureau in Oklahoma. He says his bureau was "established as a voluntary organization to serve businesses, civic organizations, churches and the educational community. The speakers bureau is one way that Toastmasters can reach the community."

It is important for Toastmasters who participate in district speakers bureaus to be polished, as they are considered ambassadors for Toastmasters International. Rodgers says, "We want our speakers to shine, and the bureau is another way a Toastmaster can build confidence and have a wonderful feeling of accomplishment."

Additional Venues Can Be Located at the Links Below:

- ▶ shawguides.com
- ▶ allconferences.com
- ▶ tsnn.com
- ▶ eventseye.com
- ▶ eventsinamerica.com

topic. Follow a Toastmasters manual and practice giving those speeches.

It takes time to develop topics for outside speeches. Nancy Depcik, CC, also a member of the Windy City Professional Speakers club, recalls when she lost her job and her home. She says, "I didn't know where to turn when a friend mentioned that I told good stories and that I should consider speaking as a profession. I had no idea how to do this. Several people suggested Toastmasters." After earning her CC, she figured out what she wanted to speak about. "I kept coming back to the same theme of unwelcome change and how to cope with it, so that is my current topic."

Where to Look for Speaking Opportunities

It might surprise you to learn that many community groups often look for speakers. Cunneen says service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and Optimists clubs need speakers.

Conference organizers are always looking for good speakers with excellent programs related to the theme of their events. Locate civic club and organization program directors in your area by searching online, and scour the front pages of your phone book. Look under "Local Clubs and Service Organizations" and "Places of Worship."

Cunneen suggests, "If you have a specific industry skill set, offer to

speak at local and regional conferences or workshops." Check event centers and hotels in your area to discover corporations or industries that have scheduled conventions, and then contact the convention organizers to see if they need presenters.

Kirthy Iyer, CC, a project manager at Crytek in Frankfurt, Germany, maintains, "If you are a confident speaker who is humorous, motivational, entertaining or informative, people will find you." While this may be true, we all have to start somewhere. A speakers bureau is a good place to start. Many Toastmasters districts have speakers bureaus, and you'll find ones related to specific themes and topics within your community. See the sidebar for more information.

Create Your Own Opportunities

Many speakers organize their own workshops or events related to their topics. Iyer recommends beginning by seeking opportunities with existing venues, but "if none fit your intentions, then create the ideal setting. The advantage of attending an existing setting is you won't have to worry about organizing the whole event. However, creating your own workshop allows you to have control."

This is good advice for those with something to teach. Organize your own workshop by determining a theme (e.g., family budgeting, writing, investing, parenting techniques or gardening), locating a venue and promoting the event to your audience. If you are an entertainer, organize a talent show for your friends or establish a fundraiser that features an evening of entertainment.

Tips for Speaking Outside the Club

Speaking outside the club will feel different from participating within your club where you know everyone—and they know you. You may find that butterflies have returned to

your stomach when you face a new audience in an unfamiliar setting. Choose a topic you're intimately familiar with to help overcome those jitters. It also might help to have a few Toastmasters in the audience the first few times you step outside your club. Speaking from experience, Cunneen says, "The more you get into that arena, the more comfortable you will become." In other words, keep getting back on the horse, just as you did when you first started your Toastmasters experience.

Some public speakers suggest that you avoid memorizing your material.

"When I'm giving a speech to a group other than Toastmasters, I have to deal with the waitress serving dessert, clanking dishes, people dashing in and out and a number of other distractions," says Depcik, who speaks professionally on the topic of change.

"When I speak from the heart, I'm not worried about following a written script and I'm better able to focus on my message. When you are passionate about your message, you can't help but be a great speaker."

When Waxler started speaking outside the club, he relied on handwritten notes and had trouble letting them go. He says, "My big breakthrough came when an advanced speaker told me that when he practices, his speech comes out different each time, and that's okay. This gave me permission to just be me."

But Catón, the member in Frankfurt, Germany, cautions speakers: "You need to have something really interesting to say. I don't believe you can fake substance. You need to be an expert in something unique. For example, it's hard to be a motivational speaker if you haven't

achieved anything that required the extraordinary motivation you are trying to evoke."

Speaking outside the club is not for every Toastmaster. But for those with the desire to entertain audiences, to teach what they know or to simply broaden their horizons, there's really nothing stopping you. It's just a matter of taking those natural talents and carefully honed skills you've developed in your club and expanding them. You, and your future audiences, will be glad you did. **T**

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TAME YOUR STAGE FRIGHT

An expert answers questions about speaking anxiety.

By Matt Abrahams

People would rather stand naked and on fire, on top of a 30-story building while covered with spiders and snakes, than to speak in front of an audience,” joked a student in the speech communication class I teach. And he was right. Most people experience some anxiety when speaking in front of others, both in person and remotely (in a conference call or a Web presentation, for example). The fear of presenting is palpable, pervasive and often problematic. Fortunately, with practice and persistence, you can learn to manage your anxiety rather than have it control you.

I had the honor of presenting an education session at the 2012 Toastmasters International Convention on

my area of expertise: how to manage stage fright. During the session, I shared many proven techniques for managing speaking anxiety. Afterward, I received many follow-up questions from attendees seeking guidance in this area. Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions, which I have divided into three broad categories relating to physical, psychological and practical issues.

Physical Symptoms

How can I deal with the flushing [becoming red in the face, neck or upper chest area] and shaking that often come with public speaking? Many people report multiple physiological symptoms of speaking anxiety.

Common signs of nervousness include *disfluencies* (e.g., repeating words, stuttering or using filler words, such as *uh* and *um*), lack of eye contact, fidgety arms and hands, shallow breathing, swaying and pacing, flushing, and “plumbing reversal”—in other words, what is usually wet gets dry (e.g., dry mouth) and what is dry gets wet (e.g., sweaty palms and brows). These responses are completely natural and normal. They are our inherent “fight or flight” reactions.

You can take several easy steps to combat shaking and flushing. First, take time to breathe slowly and deeply at the onset of symptoms. Also, practice “belly breathing”—filling your lower abdomen by inhaling slowly through

your nose and exhaling slowly through your mouth. Doing this will help you control your nervousness.

Second, lower your core body temperature. Just as you might place a cold compress on a child's feverish head or neck to reduce her temperature, you can lower your body temperature by holding something cold in the palms of your hands (a chilled bottle of water is ideal). Finally, calm shakiness by giving nervous energy a place to go. For example, start your presentation by stepping toward your audience while gesturing broadly. Or secretly squeeze your toes. These simple, effective activities will eliminate your shakiness by ridding you of excess energy.

One of my clients was very nervous; he would flush and shake when giving a speech. His shaking was particularly noticeable. He stopped shaking completely by subtly squeezing his pointer finger and thumb together on his non-gesturing hand while speaking. He reduced his flushing by holding a cold bottle of water before entering the stage. Knowing he had the tools to manage his anxiety symptoms bolstered his confidence considerably.

Psychological Barriers

How do I deal with the intense scrutiny and judgment I feel when speaking?

When presenting, it is easy to feel as if you are under a microscope, with your audience evaluating your every move. You can best address this “being in the spotlight” anxiety by changing your mental focus. Rather than seeing your presentation as being about you and what you want to say, put the focus on your *audience* and ask, “What does my audience need to hear?” and “How can I ensure listeners get the information they need?” The answers to these two questions move the spotlight away from you and place it on your audience. You can accomplish this audience-centric shift in three ways:

▶ **Take time to understand your audience.** Consider listeners' needs and expectations prior to constructing your presentation.

▶ **Make a connection with your audience** by including relevant, understandable evidence in your content.

▶ **Take questions when you are finished** speaking to allow the audience to validate their understanding of your message, and to clear up any confusion.

I recently worked with a fantastic third-grade teacher who was highly confident and engaging when presenting to her students. But when asked to speak in front of adults, she became paralyzed by fear. When I asked what made her a successful teacher, she quickly responded that she understands the needs of her students and presents her concepts in a way that meets student needs. Her epiphany came when she realized the key to containing her anxiety was to focus on the needs of older audience members. They attend her presentations to learn from her, not evaluate her. She has learned to manage her anxiety, and, rather than being nervous about presenting to adults, she now enjoys it.

Practical Concerns

What is the ideal way to prepare for a presentation?

Nothing bolsters confidence and keeps the speaking jitters away like a well-prepared and practiced presentation. To begin, identify your presentation-delivery date; then map backward to set some deadlines for yourself. Here are some suggested timeframes: Give yourself three to four full days to practice your presentation. This means your speech must be completed almost a full workweek before your delivery date.

Allow yourself at least five days to write the content. (I recommend writing an outline only, not a manuscript, to avoid the lure of memorization.) You may need to schedule more than

five days for writing if your topic requires research or if you rely on others for help (e.g., for information, to review your content or to create accompanying slides). Mark all of your deadline dates on a calendar, and meet each one by managing your time.

When practicing, verbalize your presentation. Too often, people practice in their heads and fail to speak the words. Additionally, engage in focused practice. “Chunk” your presentation into logical units such as introduction, point 1, transitions and conclusion. Chunking makes practice time and anxiety more manageable. Practice each unit separately until you feel comfortable and more relaxed with your material.

Most of my clients and students make two kinds of mistakes: One, they write a complete manuscript detailing every word they will say; and/or two, they spend countless hours creating elaborate (and often busy and confusing) slides. The memorization and time involved in these two approaches leave little time for practice and produces a scripted feel to the delivery. Audiences crave authenticity and connection, not performance and distraction. After working through the processes described above, you will feel more confident and deliver a more engaged, connected presentation.

Clinical practice and academic research have repeatedly shown that many powerful tools exist for managing speaking anxiety. I encourage you to find the ones that help you feel confident speaking up—without freaking out. **T**

Matt Abrahams is the author of the book *Speaking Up Without Freaking Out*. He teaches Strategic Communication at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business in Stanford, California, and is co-founder of Bold Echo Communication Solutions. To learn more, visit **BoldEcho.com** or **No FreakingSpeaking.com**.



2500 Club Toastmasters from Jackson, Mississippi Founded in 2010; 35 active members
The magenta band in the logo shows how the world is better when it is banded by people committed to effective leadership and communication. And the tagline, "Where Leaders Are Made," offers hope that we will become something more.

SHOW OFF YOUR BRAND!

Top clubs in branding contest show their winning spirit.

Congratulations to the winners of Toastmasters International's "Clubs: Show Off Your Brand!" contest. Throughout the second half of 2012, World Headquarters received more than a hundred photo submissions from dedicated clubs all over the world, displaying club spirit with an array of Toastmasters-branded materials and products. (Toastmasters unveiled a new

brand identity in August 2011.) The contest will be extended until June 2013.

Representatives from the clubs—located in cities ranging from Jackson, Mississippi, to Cape Town, South Africa—highlight their favorite aspects of the new brand designs.

For more information about the brand, visit www.toastmasters.org/BrandPortal.



Blue Talk Toastmasters from Smyrna, Georgia Founded in 2011; 23 active members
Our favorite thing about the brand is the emphasis it places on the international aspect of Toastmasters International. As a team, we especially like being a part of a much larger, global organization, which we promote in our recruiting efforts. In addition, we like the bold, modern look the brand is presenting.

**Aim High Toastmasters
from Kuwait City, Kuwait**
Founded in 2012; 41 active members

We appreciate the simplicity of the brand refresh. The broad range of colors to choose from makes it easier for our members who are creating marketing materials to promote Toastmasters' educational and leadership programs. Each time a different color (burgundy, yellow, red or blue) is used, there is a unique new look.



**Winelands Toastmasters
from Cape Town, South Africa**
Founded in 1989; 31 active members

The brand aids us in building credibility as a communication and leadership-development organization—not just a club. Also, the Toastmasters website gives very clear guidelines as to how the branding should be used. The explanations make it really easy to understand what to do.



**Flying Toasters Toastmasters
from Renton, Washington**
Founded in 2010; 28 active members

The globe logo signifies the true meaning of what an international organization is about. It represents how Toastmasters highlights each individual's culture, geographic location, language, profession, education and experience. No matter where we are in our journey in the world, Toastmasters International is there to help us improve in many areas of our lives.



PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK

In a world of warning labels, here's one about kids.

By John Cadley

Warning: This column contains material that may not be suitable for all readers. If you are pregnant, or intend to get someone pregnant, you may want to read some other article—one that won't give you nightmares.

I don't mean to scare you, but I had to include that warning. If you're making something for public consumption (like this column), you have to inform folks that whatever you're selling could put them in the hospital, or even in the ground. I included the warning above because I am going to tell you about the only thing that doesn't come with a warning label; it is something that can be far more injurious to your personal well-being than all the things that do cause harm.

I am speaking of children.

I intend to petition the government that when a baby is born, a warning label be affixed to the wrist so that parents can know what they've just gotten themselves into. Knowing how busy the government is solving the debt crisis, creating jobs and voting themselves pay raises, I'm even offering to write the label myself.

WARNING: This product may cause anxiety, insomnia, confusion, long-distance phone calls to your mother, and, in particularly severe cases, even calls to your obstetrician asking, "Are you sure this is my kid?" Disorientation may also result from a sudden and irreversible change in lifestyle. Those with strong narcissistic tendencies are particularly at risk

when they realize they are no longer the center of the universe. Reported reactions range from mild shock to crippling diarrhea. This baby does not come with an owner's manual because it tends to function in a highly unpredictable manner. Anything written in the manual is likely to be contradicted by the actual behavior of the child, leading to a fire hazard when you try to burn the manual at 4 in the morning. This product also emits a sonic irritant known as crying, pitched to the exact frequency which, if not responded to immediately, will drive normal people out of their minds.

Daily maintenance is essential and will be in inverse proportion to the product's size. The smaller the child, the more you will need to keep it safe, nourished and contented. Creams, salves, powders, bottles, blankets, pacifiers, monitors, cribs, car seats, diapers, tiny bathtubs, stuffed animals, teeny clothes, nose syringes and a spare phone with most of the emergency code already dialed represent the bare basics. It is also recommended that you set up a direct deposit account at this time, because in 18 years you will need \$4 million to send him or her to college.

The biochemical materials with which your child is composed will cause a rapid change from the infant stage to the toddler stage, a highly volatile and unstable condition that must be handled firmly and consistently. Failure to do so may result in your home, and possibly your entire

life, being taken over by a person weighing less than 20 pounds. This condition will pass, but will reappear in what medical researchers refer to as "the teen years," at which time it will present itself in the form of insolence, rebellion and general distaste for everything you say, think or do. Unfortunately, this stage lasts longer than the toddler phase—anywhere from four or five years to the remainder of your or your child's life, whichever comes first.

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ. This product cannot be returned for any reason. Nor can you obtain a hospital credit, which allows you to exchange your baby for another one. Furthermore, this medical institution is not responsible for the appearance of any side effects listed above. At the time when you were making your baby, there should have been a large, blinking neon sign saying **PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK.**

These warnings are required by law. However, properly cared for, this product can also provide years of happiness and satisfaction. It's rare, but it happens.

I know this warning label is a little long for a baby's wrist. Maybe it could just be included in the wedding ceremony: "I now pronounce you man and wife. However ... " **T**

John Cadley, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York.

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Girish Jain from Doha, Qatar, visits the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Jessica Zirbes from Tinley Park, Illinois, celebrates her two-year wedding anniversary at Palm Beach in Aruba.



Chris Young from Burlington, Ontario, Canada, poses on the beautiful shore of Loch Ness in Scotland.



Mark Ostra from Mill Creek, Washington, braves the cold at Mt. Rainier near Seattle, Washington.



Valerie Wagnerova from Pardubice, Czech Republic, enjoys the pandas in Chengdu, Sichuan, China.



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