

TOASTMASTER®

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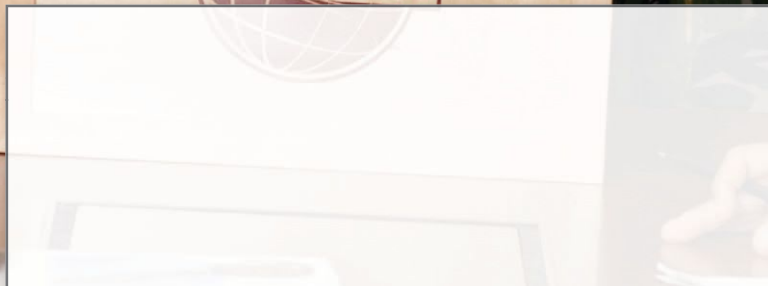
16 HOW WE BENEFIT
FROM CHANGE

20 QUOTES, TOASTS
AND FUN FACTS

24 MEET INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT MICHAEL
NOTARO, DTM

WELCOME TO THE NEW BRAND

Telling the world who we
are and why we matter
Page 8



BUILD A BETTER BRAND



Nike, Starbucks, Apple, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Toastmasters. Those are just a few of the brand names we encounter each day. We live in a branded world – brands have personalities and mean something; we recognize the ones we like and seek them out like old friends.

There is one brand on display every single day that is often snubbed, overlooked and ignored. That brand is you! Me Inc. Whether or not you realize it, every day your brand tells the world who you are, what you stand for and what you can offer.


Corporations spend millions of dollars building an identity. For less than the price of a cup of coffee, you can build your brand at your local Toastmasters club. By delivering manual speeches and holding leadership positions, your personal brand emerges. Here are some tips for making that experience a successful one:

Be Authentic. The essence of your brand is you – your passions, your interests and your ambitions. Why download a generic story from the Internet when your life is infinitely more interesting and engaging? Personal branding is not about creating an external image; it is about unearthing your best qualities and presenting them in an appealing way. Know yourself to grow yourself. Revealing your uniqueness immediately distinguishes you from others and makes you memorable.

Provide Audience Value. How will your speech benefit the audience? Is your talk designed to inform, inspire or entertain your audience, or is it just an excuse to get something off your chest? To deliver audience value, ask yourself this question before every speech: Would I pay money to hear me?

Be Consistent. Are you a reliable, consistent Toastmaster? Nothing kills a brand like sporadic bursts of activity, interspersed with extended absence. Fulfill your meeting roles and avoid last-minute cancellations. Live the Toastmasters promise – and watch others' perceptions of you soar.

Your brand is the reputation that precedes you. It differentiates you and provides the foundation for your personal success. It is the positive expectation people feel when you enter the room. It is the emotional connection that makes others want to work with you because of your professionalism, integrity and value.

It all happens at Toastmasters: a place where leaders are made. 

MICHAEL NOTARO, DTM
International President

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PUBLISHER Daniel Rex
EDITOR Suzanne Frey
ASSOCIATE EDITORS Beth Black
 Paul Sterman
JUNIOR WRITER Jennie Harris
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Michelle Tyler
ART DIRECTION Susan Campbell
GRAPHIC DESIGN Deidre Gaffney

TI OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
Founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley (1878-1965)

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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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

CONTACTING WORLD HEADQUARTERS

For information on joining or building a club, visit: www.toastmasters.org
 Article submission: submissions@toastmasters.org
 Letters to the Editor: letters@toastmasters.org
 To change address, log in to: www.toastmasters.org/members

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WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
www.toastmasters.org

September 2011 Volume 77, No. 9

DEPARTMENTS

2 VIEWPOINT: BUILD A BETTER BRAND
BY MICHAEL NOTARO, DTM
International President

4 LETTERS

5 MY TURN: FROM FRIGHTENED TO FIRED UP
Speaking doesn't scare me.
BY MARC TARBAY

6 AROUND THE GLOBE

12 PROFILE: SUMITRA MANAMOHAN
Female DTM from India helps dyslexic students.
BY JULIE BAWDEN-DAVIS

30 FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT: ATTACK OF THE THING
A word with no zing.
BY JOHN CADLEY

31 THE TRAVELING TOASTMASTER

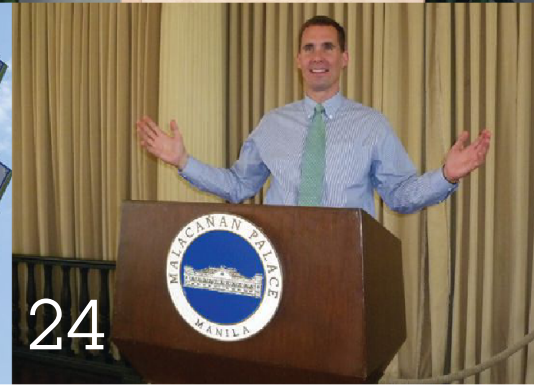
ARTICLES

15 MANNER OF SPEAKING: DISTANCE MAKES THE WORDING WANDER
British versus American grammar.
BY JENNY BARANICK

20 QUOTES, TOASTS AND FUN FACTS
These tools can help any speaker in a pinch.
BY STEVE MAGNINO

22 A VIEW FROM THE BALCONY
How does your audience see you?
BY STEVEN D. COHEN, ATMB

28 Q & A: SCOTT PLOWMAN
Successful restaurateur puts leadership on the menu.
BY MICHELLE TYLER



FEATURES

8 WELCOME TO THE NEW TOASTMASTERS LOOK!
Telling the world who we are and why we matter.
BY BETH BLACK, CC

11 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOASTMASTERS EMBLEM
How the new logo came to be.
BY BETH BLACK, CC

16 HOW TO BENEFIT FROM CHANGE
Don't let roadblocks distract from your goals.
BY DANA LAMON, DTM, AS

24 MEET MICHAEL NOTARO, DTM
Toastmasters' 2011-2012 International President is passionate about leadership and learning.

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.



How does Toastmasters help people become better leaders?

TOASTMASTERS BRAND AMBASSADORS, who are experienced Toastmasters leaders from around the world, find themselves answering this question every day. Here are some of their talking points:

Provide a **Supportive Environment**

“Toastmasters builds better leaders by providing a supportive environment in which to practice, receive feedback and improve. Our progressive leadership opportunities ensure that each member has continual growth possibilities. Come in scared, come out a confident leader.”

Dawn Miller, DTM, PID
Gibsons, British Columbia, Canada

Clear and **Concise**

“A confident demeanor, clear and concise communication, and empathetic listening are skills learned in Toastmasters. They are also the attributes of a great leader. Toastmasters is the tool that makes the transition from the led to the leader!”

Deepak Menon, DTM
Region 13 Advisor
New Delhi, India

Real-life **Training**

“The Toastmasters experience helps develop better leaders because it is real-life training, in a supportive atmosphere with effective evaluations to help a person improve. In addition, the confidence we gain through this experience helps us in all areas of our lives to go further than we thought possible – not just as a better leader but indeed a better person.”

Tammy A. Miller, DTM, PID
Port Matilda, Pennsylvania

Excellent **Training Materials**

“Toastmasters helps people become better leaders by providing members solid leadership skills from excellent training materials. Members have opportunities to practice using learned skills in supportive environments in real time.”

Tevis Thompson Jr., DTM, PID
Martinez, California

Ongoing **Mentoring**

“One of the things that separates Toastmasters from most leadership-training programs is the ongoing mentoring. Through the countless opportunities to practice leading teams, set goals and manage budgets, having a mentor helps you to stay focused and inspired.”

Giovanna Dottore, DTM
Past District 1 Governor
Tujunga, California

Irresistible Desire **To Serve**

“Toastmasters helps people become better leaders because eventually Toastmasters changes a person’s natural tendency from focusing on personal accomplishments to implementing an irresistible desire to serve, assist, encourage and share in the successes of others.”

Ted Gardner, ACB, CL
Past District 10 Governor
Cleveland, Ohio

Reach **Toward Excellence**

“Toastmasters’ leadership opportunities challenge our thinking process and comfort zone. We learn how to manage the tasks at hand and reach toward excellence. This gives rise to the ultimate discovery of our optimum talents!”

Thannimalai Letchumanan, DTM
Past District 51 Governor
Penang, Malaysia

Better Jobs **Better Relationships**

“Many people join Toastmasters to improve their speaking skills, not realizing that the leadership roles they can take on in the club can translate into better jobs and better relationships, and can open the doors to a plethora of opportunities they may have never dreamed possible.”

Greg Gazin, DTM
Past District 42 Governor
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

An **Effective Edge**

“A good communicator need not necessarily be a good leader; however, a good leader needs to be a good communicator. The edge that an effective leader needs is provided by the Toastmasters program through better listening, better thinking and better speaking.”

John Bosco Abraham
Past District 82 Governor
Bangalore, India

FROM FRIGHTENED TO FIRED UP

Speaking on the spot doesn't scare me anymore.

By Marc Tarbay

Many of us don't know just how ineffective we really are at public speaking – I didn't. I thought I was okay. Three years ago I was developing a transportation/business seminar with my fiancée, Jeanette, who is an excellent speaker. Early in the planning stages, she heard me speak at one of our company's safety meetings. I wasn't good and she gently suggested Toastmasters. I joined. Six months later at our conference, I delivered a compe-


writing it in longhand, then converting it to bullet points and rehearsing. I didn't want to interfere with Jeanette's practice time, so I went exploring for a practice spot. Just down the hallway was the ice machine room; it looked like a suitable location.

After a few minutes of rehearsing, I could feel that someone was watching me. Hearing two muffled giggles, I turned to see two women standing behind me. I explained to them that

audience, delivered my five-minute speech – and nailed it. No ums, no ahs. I threw in some humor and I walked around the stage a bit. I know I still have room for improvement, but it felt pretty good.

When you deliver a knockout presentation, you will be perceived by your audience to be an expert. Can you imagine what it could do for your career if you were the “go-to person” when a major presentation was needed at your company? If you are looking to make a career change, imagine how it could make you stand out among other job candidates.

Great presentations will touch and stimulate all your senses: Use body language, move around the stage and make eye contact with members of the audience to stimulate their visual senses. Let your feelings and passion flow out to your audience to stimulate their emotions. Use planned pauses, employ words to call your audience to action and change the volume and tone of your voice so they will have an easier time receiving and retaining the information.

We are not born with these skills. They are learned. A great place to master the art of public speaking is through Toastmasters. 

Marc Tarbay is a member of the Empire Statesmen club in Syracuse, New York. Reach him at mtarbay@twcny.tt.com.

▶ “I went before the audience the next day, delivered my five-minute speech – and nailed it.”

tent 30-minute presentation. I didn't “wow” the audience as she did, but I wasn't painful to listen to.

Fast-forward to September 2010. Armed with two and a half years of Toastmasters training, I arrived at the New York State Motor Truck Association's annual convention. Jeanette was one of the keynote presenters. I was not scheduled to speak, but as I reviewed the program, I saw that I was listed as a presenter. I was still at the front desk checking in and I yelled, “Yes, I get to present!” I was jumping up and down and gave the bellman a high five. It was only a five-minute time slot to highlight our company, but I was excited.

That evening, Jeanette was in our room organizing her PowerPoint slides and practicing her presentation. I began working on my speech,

I was practicing a speech. They nodded their heads and started clapping enthusiastically. I later found out that they didn't speak English! But they still seemed to enjoy my speech, so I was ready to present the next day.

How would you react if you were given 24 hours notice to speak in front of a large group of your peers? Well, if I would have been faced with that challenge three years earlier, I would have been terrified. I would have faked illness, or death. I would have said anything not to get in front of 200 people and give a speech.

But now possessing a solid foundation of speaking skills thanks to Toastmasters, I went before the



Read it online @ www.toastmasters.org/magazine

AROUND THE GLOBE

▶ INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

DOES YOUR BODY SPEAK THE LOCAL LINGO?



Depending on where you live, the meaning behind the “V” hand sign – raising your index and middle fingers while closing the remaining three – rests on the direction your palm faces. In the United States and Canada, the “two-fingered salute” with the palm facing outward means peace. It also indicates the quantity of two.

With the palm facing toward you, this gesture signifies contempt or disrespect in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, South Africa and other countries. Ordering two beverages this way at a noisy pub in England could get you in trouble with the bartender faster than you can say, “Cheerio!”

▶ SNAPSHOT

Toastmasters from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, trek in the Annapurna mountain region in Nepal.



▶ WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN...

SOMEONE ASKS YOU ABOUT THE UPDATED TOASTMASTERS BRAND?

Toastmasters' Brand Ambassadors respond:

I was already a speaker when I joined Toastmasters; I was *made* into a leader. The new brand says exactly how Toastmasters changed my life.

MATTHEW KLEINOSKY, DTM • ST. VLADIMIR TOASTMASTERS CLUB • TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

As the pre-eminent communications and leadership organization, we need to connect with today's market and present a unified product to the world. The world is changing, and we need to re-assess our focus, direction and goals to ensure we are not left behind as a prisoner of yesterday's culture. Change is a challenge and also an opportunity.

MIKE STORKEY, DTM • WHITSUNDAY CLUB • AIRLIE BEACH, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

There has never been a more exhilarating time in Toastmasters. The purpose of the updated Toastmasters brand is to more clearly reflect the extraordinary growth in leadership taking place in the lives of members. Although you may have come to Toastmasters to become a better communicator, inevitably you blossom into a more effective leader.

MARTIE OGBORN, DTM • PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATORS CLUB • MORTON, ILLINOIS, U.S.

Visit <http://linkd.in/toastmastersinternationalofficialmembersgroup> and join the conversation.

BOTTOM LINE

Like Us

The Toastmasters International fan page on Facebook is a hit! Join the fun and “Like” it: <http://on.fb.me/ljbxZz>.



Your Dues are Due

Contact your club officers to ensure your October dues get paid. Visit www.toastmasters.org/DuesRenewals for more information.

Across the Map

Four Toastmasters districts have grown so large that they were re-formed on July 1! Welcome District 17 in Western Australia, District 20 in Saudi Arabia, District 29 in the eastern United States, and District 41 in Southern India.

▶ LANGUAGE TIP

HOW TO SPELL WORDS THAT SOUND THE SAME.

Wondering whether to use **peek**, **peak** or **pique**?

You're not alone – these are commonly confused and misused words in English. Here is how you pick the right term:

PEEK: As a verb and a noun, peek refers to a quick or secret glance. You **peek** at your speech evaluation.

PEAK: As a noun, peak refers to a pointed top of anything. Peter spoke about his climb to the **peak** of Mount Cook. As a verb and an adjective, peak means to reach or be at a maximum. He **peaked** in the Toastmasters education program by earning a DTM award. As an adjective: The district conference takes place during **peak** travel season.

PIQUE: As a verb, to pique is to arouse interest, or to cause resentment or irritation. Her curiosity was **piqued** by the offer.

MEMBER MOMENT

A SCHOLARLY SPEAKER

Amin Karbassi's background is rich with cultural diversity – and academic degrees. The 33-year-old has a Master of Science degree from Shiraz University in Iran, and a Ph.D. from the University of Quebec in Canada, both in structural engineering.

He is now completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the distinguished Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Switzerland, where he belongs to the EPFL Toastmasters club. Karbassi's Toastmasters skills serve him well in his academic presentations on topics related to earthquake safety.



Amin Karbassi

What do you enjoy about belonging to a college club?

Having a majority of members as students brings a unique environment to the club: freshness, young people with great ideas and lots of energy to experience.

You have lived in Iran, Canada and Switzerland.

How has that affected you?

It has helped me to increase my background knowledge about different issues. When I face an audience for the first time, I feel that I know more about them, because I have lived and interacted with people like them around the world.

What are your career plans?

I plan to stay in the research field and teach after I am done with my postdoctoral position.

Is the chocolate in Switzerland as good as everyone says it is?

Let me put it this way: After living in Switzerland and trying the Swiss chocolate, you will not touch any other kind.

For more information about Amin Karbassi, visit aminkarbassi.com.

Membership-building Contest

Can your club add five new, dual or reinstated members between now and September 30? Visit www.toastmasters.org/MembershipContests for details.

Meet the Board

Let's welcome our new Board of Directors. Read about them here: www.toastmasters.org/MeetTheBoard.

Sharing Stories

Do you know an interesting person to profile for the above Member Moment section? Email your suggestion to submissions@toastmasters.org.



WELCOME TO THE NEW TOASTMASTERS LOOK!

Telling the world who we are and why we matter.

By Beth Black, CC

Malaysia to Mexico, Nebraska to New Delhi, Saskatchewan to Saudi Arabia: What do all these places have in common? They all have Toastmasters clubs. Yet while more than a quarter of a million members attend approximately 13,000 club meetings each week, how they experience those meetings and describe their experiences vary widely from member to member and club to club. This phenomenon, which is not unique to Toastmasters, is often referred to as “brand confusion.”

The mission of Toastmasters International is to be *“the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality. Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening, and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.”* However, brand confusion hampers our ability to proudly and consistently explain to others what Toastmasters is and why it matters. Toastmasters International President Michael Notaro says, “In order to accomplish our mission, Toastmasters members, clubs and districts must provide one single, consistent message that demonstrates what Toastmasters is and what we offer the world.”

In a major unveiling at the Toastmasters International Convention in August, the organization launched a refreshed brand featuring a new logo, colors, fonts and a unified message

that tells the world who we are and why we matter.

So what *is* Toastmasters International’s message? Though members may join for different reasons, all members gain the same thing: confidence. Maybe you started out afraid to speak in public, or you wanted to polish skills you already possessed. Maybe the anxiety over your Ice Breaker speech made you faint, or you earned a standing ovation. Whatever your story, somewhere along the way you – along with most Toastmasters – discovered that developing your communication skills helped you to gain confidence and made you a better leader.

As Dawn Miller, DTM, says, “Come in scared, come out a confident leader.” A resident of Gibsons, British Columbia, Canada, Miller joined Toastmasters in 1983 and served as a Toastmasters international director from 1993 to 1995. Toastmasters’ “progressive leadership opportunities ensure that each member has continual growth possibilities,” she says.

Think of leaders you admire. What traits do they have in common? Perhaps it is the ability to articulate a vision, or to motivate others, or to know just the right thing to say at the right time. With the ability to communicate eloquently comes the skill and confidence to lead others. Great leaders must be strong communicators. Without strong communication skills they can not achieve their goals or motivate and persuade others.

The powerful combination of strengthening one’s competence in communication and building leader-

ship skills through participating in Toastmasters – thereby gaining the confidence to lead – is what differentiates Toastmasters International from other skill-building programs. Toastmasters truly is where leaders are made.

How Did the Brand Refresh Come About?

In late 2008, the Toastmasters International Board of Directors recognized a need to analyze the Toastmasters brand. At the time, there was concern about the inconsistency in how clubs and districts around the world promoted the organization, both visually and in writing. The Board requested that the organization find a solution to the problem.

In 2009, World Headquarters and its branding partner, Innovation Protocol, conducted research to better understand Toastmasters’ position in the market. The research consisted of interviews with members and prospective members from around the world, as well as with club and district leaders and Board members. Researchers attended district conferences, club meetings and club leader trainings, analyzed the competition and conducted a thorough review of Toastmasters materials.

From this research, it became clear that the organization faced a challenge in perception control. No single, authentic message was reaching out to the larger global community. “A clear and consistent brand tells one story of an organization. An ineffective brand tells many stories, most of which are

inconsistent and inaccurate,” says Toastmasters International Executive Director Daniel Rex. Furthermore, the look didn’t reflect the global nature of the membership or the confidence and energy members exude when they achieve their goals through the Toastmasters program.

One of the most important discoveries uncovered through the research was the synergy between confidence and leadership, and the importance of this to members around the world. Rex, says, “We heard loud and clear from the members and leaders we spoke with that the Toastmasters program helped them gain the competence in communication that gave them the confidence to lead others. It is the foundation of our program.”

This realization also created the foundation for Toastmasters’ new messaging. With the knowledge that Toastmasters is where leaders are often made, a new description of the organization evolved. Read the new Positioning statement on the Table of Contents page in this issue.

Brand Refresh Has Drawing Power

This is not the first time changes have been made to Toastmasters’ logo, materials and products, but it is the first time that the organization is making such a large-scale coordinated effort. And while it’s important to note that the brand refresh does not affect or alter the organization’s core programs of communication and leadership skill-building, it will provide potential members with a clearer picture of what to expect when visiting any club in the world. As a result of receiving that authentic message in a consistent way, those seeking to build their communication or leadership skills will know where to turn for the best resource in personal development. They’ll walk into a Toastmasters club knowing what the organization is about and how they’ll benefit. These people will stay with the program longer because Toastmasters clubs will be more consistent and better equipped to meet their expectations.

Past International President Pat Johnson, DTM, believes strongly in the value of a consistent brand. “While a logo allows us to visually recognize a company or its products, its brand is something greater,” she wrote in a Viewpoint column for the *Toastmaster* magazine this past March. “A brand is the personality... behind the product, service or company.” She cited several name brands, noting that the companies are recognizable because each consistently delivers on its promise.

“The [Toastmasters] brand refresh, if executed correctly, can jumpstart our club- and membership-building efforts,” Johnson says. “It is more than an evolution of our look and feel. There is an energy and vibrancy expressed through the brand that will permeate our membership.”

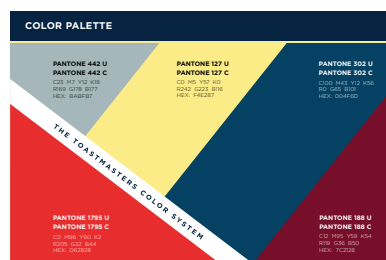
This vibrancy comes through in every element of the updated brand. But it starts with the look and feel.



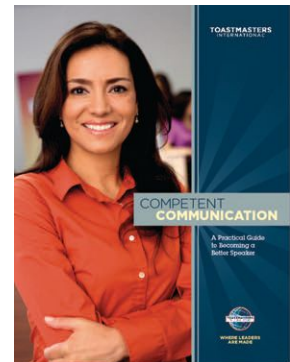
The new logo is an evolved version of the Toastmasters globe emblem. The new logo no longer shows any continents because all of them could not be represented, and instead implies momentum through the rotating longitude and latitude lines.

All Toastmasters materials you will see from now on will reflect the branded color palette as well.

These colors come together to portray a dynamic organization that is bold, solid and trustworthy. Clubs will still enjoy flexibility to pursue



their individual styles within the palette, but will also enjoy the rewards of being instantly recognizable as part of a larger, unified organization.



In addition, you’ll see new, branded images that are unique to Toastmasters and better represent all members. You’ll see a diversity of age, ethnicity and culture, much like you find in most Toastmasters clubs around the world.

Toastmasters International has implemented the updated brand identity on all resources available to members. For example, when you receive a new manual, it will have the bold colors and design.

These changes not only look more contemporary, they help Toastmasters International provide structure and support to clubs as they present themselves with a more consistent and unified message.

How Do Clubs and Districts Benefit?

With the new resources and updated materials (many are free to download on www.toastmasters.org), clubs will now be better equipped to serve their current and future members. Instead of a lone voice trying to tell others about your club, you, the member, will now be an important part of a unified chorus with a stronger voice. Your message will reach your community more effectively, because Toastmasters International’s message will touch the entire world. **T**

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

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOASTMASTERS EMBLEM



By Beth Black, CC

Toastmasters around the world know the Toastmasters emblem when they see it: that familiar circle girded by two gavel heads, the impression of a map within and the bright “T” holding center court. At the top is the word “Toastmasters,” at the bottom the word “International.” The design is familiar because it represented the organization for a long time.

Typically, corporate icons are not static; they evolve as regularly as the entities they represent. For example, Starbucks Coffee updated its logo this year – for the third time since its founding 40 years ago – by removing the company name from the design, leaving only the familiar image of the green mermaid. Company officials explained that the words “Starbucks Coffee” were removed because they limited the brand’s language to English and its focus to one beverage. The company’s new logo supports its plan for an expanded product line and a more prominent position in the international marketplace.

Like Starbucks, Toastmasters International must stay competitive and relevant on the international stage to remain successful. A fresh and consistent brand identity brings a crisp, contemporary appeal that can attract new members, supporters and media attention – a few of the many reasons Toastmasters International unveiled its brand refresh, including its new logo, in August.

To understand how this organization came to be represented by the

globe emblem, let’s visit past designs and the reasons they were fashioned as they were.

In an article for the *Toastmaster* magazine published before his death, Dr. Ralph Smedley, Toastmasters’ founder, discussed the emblem’s creation and its history through the 1940s. “Like so many other features of Toastmasters,” he wrote, “it had a beginning long ago, and it has been subjected to repeated revisions for improvement.” The rest of Dr. Smedley’s discussion detailed that early progression – with sections quoted below.


In 1928, Dr. Smedley published a mimeographed “manual” to provide information for people inquiring about Toastmasters and its benefits. For the cover, an illustration facing the title page, he designed an emblem that consisted of a gavel with the letters “T-C” entwined around it. “This was a very simple design, made simple intentionally so that it could be reproduced on the mimeograph stencil without great trouble or artistic ability,” Smedley wrote. “It served its purpose.”

In 1931, the organization’s growth required that it become more formalized. “Some Toastmasters felt the need for a distinctive emblem,” explained Smedley. In January of that year, two members presented a sketch for consideration at an executive meeting. The sketch resembled the original symbol, except that the Latin words *Oratores Omnes*, meaning “all orators,” emblazoned the top, and the

center held two letters: “T-M.”

This emblem, in blue and gold, was adopted and used for 10 years. A lapel button bearing this emblem was worn by members for several years.

In 1941, to update the emblem, The “T-M” in the center of the design was replaced with a single “T,” and the Latin words were removed. The words “Toastmasters International” were added. The result was the familiar emblem that the organization used for many years. The emblem will continue to remain the official seal of the organization.

In August, at the Toastmasters International Convention, the new logo was unveiled, but the principles behind the Toastmasters symbols and all of the organization’s branded appearance remain the same. Dr. Smedley wrote, “For the member, the TI emblem is a constant reminder of the ideals and principles of the organization. For others who observe it, the emblem suggests skill and fluency in speech.” Let every person who wears the new logo be reminded of his or her obligation to be worthy of displaying it. 

Editor’s Note: To learn more about the brand refresh, visit www.toastmasters.org/whereleadersaremade.

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

Sumitra Manamohan: BANGALORE TRAILBLAZER

Female DTM from India helps dyslexic students.

By Julie Bawden-Davis

As a fifth-grader in Bombay, India, Sumitra Manamohan transferred to a more rigorous school, where the former straight-A student struggled. She soon found herself dreading school, but endless encouragement from her mother and father inspired her to finish the year at the top of her class. With this same dedication and persistence, Manamohan has applied herself to the Toastmasters program, becoming the first

after watching *Taare Zameen Par*, an Indian film that tells the story of an academically struggling 8-year-old boy who is sent to boarding school by his parents. There, an art teacher suspects he is dyslexic and helps him reach his potential.

“I was especially impressed with how the boy’s innovative art teacher helped him gain confidence and self-esteem, and I wanted to do the same for dyslexic students in Bangalore

Commanding Respect

Fellow club member Aniket Singh says that Manamohan commands respect, noting that she is often asked to deliver keynote speeches and workshops on a range of topics. “She is an excellent role model for us all, especially the ladies, since Bangalore Toastmasters has predominantly men.”

For Manamohan, gender discrimination has never been an issue because of the way she was raised. “My father worked as a finance manager for an international company and taught me about discipline, passion for work, reading, amicability and, most importantly, gender equality,” she says. “If you think you are equal to a man, you will be treated so.” Manamohan’s father also inspired her in the area of public speaking, as he joined the Indo-American Society in Bombay to hone his public speaking skills after retirement.

Manamohan joined Toastmasters 11 years ago on the recommendation of a college faculty member. “It was love at first sight,” she says. “Toastmasters has made an impact on my attitude and brought out my humor and creativity. Membership has given me confidence, clarity of voice and a knack for impromptu speaking. Now I can address any audience, and I was able to start my own corporate

“I always tell people we use four percent of our potential. Imagine what we can achieve if we tap into the other 96 percent.”

female DTM from Bangalore, India, and one of only seven women in the entire country to earn the honor.

During her journey to DTM status, Manamohan accomplished other firsts, such as becoming the first female president of her home club, the Bangalore Toastmasters, in 2004, and becoming the first female district officer of the then-newly formed District 82, in 2006-2007. She organized and oversaw many projects, including youth leadership programs, an inter-club speech contest to build awareness about road safety, and a Speechcraft group to help dyslexic students.

Manamohan became inspired to form the Speechcraft program

by using the power of expression taught through Toastmasters,” says Manamohan, who held six Speechcraft sessions in the summer of 2010. Nine children between the ages of 6 and 16 enrolled in the program, all with varied learning disabilities related to dyslexia. For Manamohan, the experience proved especially gratifying.

“Many of the children became enthusiastic about speaking,” she says. “It was amazing to see how the Speechcraft program raised their confidence and self-esteem. Seeing the transformation in the children was a deeply satisfying experience that I truly cherish.”



Sumitra Manamohan, DTM

training business, which I've run for the last decade."

Manamohan recommends that every member experience the club president role. "I learned a great deal in the area of team building and leadership skills."

Fan Club

Singh says, "There is something about [Manamohan] that makes new members want to learn about her experience. People always flock to her networking sessions, and since she became a DTM, we've had many guests at the club."

Fellow Toastmaster Jindow Joseph, current president of the Bangalore Toastmasters, is especially impressed with Manamohan's generosity. "Sumitra never says never and has given back to the society in which she lives. The Speechcraft program she did with dyslexic students is an eye-opener for all of us who want to do the Toastmasters programs meaningfully."


On her way to DTM status, Manamohan ran into a few roadblocks, including struggling to obtain

a speaking spot because of her club's 85-person membership. All the while, however, she kept moving forward, pushed by the prospect of being the first woman in Bangalore to obtain her DTM.

Over the years, and especially during her term as president, Manamohan admits to getting so involved with the organization that her husband and two sons expressed concern for what they considered an obsession. "They couldn't wait until my term as president ended, but then something happened to change their perception," she says, recalling what transpired before her last meeting as president. She was crossing the road to buy mementos of appreciation for club officers when she was knocked down by a speeding cab. She had a minor head injury and was taken to the hospital. "My family rushed there, and when the doctors finished examining me and wheeled me into the waiting room, I was greeted by over half of the Toastmasters who attended that night's meeting. My husband and sons were overwhelmed to see the

love that the members had for me and how their camaraderie cheered me up. What's more, the entire bill was waived by the director of the hospital, who was a club member."

No doubt Manamohan's philosophy has something to do with her popularity. "I strongly believe if you feel something can happen, it will," she says. "It's all in the mind. I always tell people we use four percent of our potential. Imagine what we can achieve if we tap into the other 96 percent.

"With effective communication you can do wonders. Let your actions make a difference to people and your words will touch and open their hearts." 

For more information about the Bangalore Toastmasters Club, visit bangaloretoastmasters.org.in. Or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/62487726282.

Julie Bawden-Davis is a freelance writer based in Southern California and a longtime contributor to the *Toastmaster*. You can reach her at Julie@JulieBawdenDavis.com.

A NEW TOASTMASTER!

Take a good look at the magazine in your hands.

Notice anything different about this issue? It launches a substantial magazine makeover. Several changes in magazine design and content have been implemented to help you stay current on topics of interest to members around the world. The format is easy to read and access – both in print and in an interactive, digital format. This new design – spurred, in part, by member survey responses – will display shorter articles and more varied content than in the past. It also gives the magazine more appeal as a marketing tool.

The new look coincides with the organization's brand-refresh initiative and helps the magazine tell Toastmasters members' stories – consistently showing who Toastmasters are to anyone who reads it. The *Toastmaster* has new sections, as well as more images and profiles of Toastmasters around the world. You can also see the branded colors and fonts throughout.

Email your comments on this new look to magazine@toastmasters.org.

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DISTANCE MAKES THE WORDING WANDER

Do you know the differences between British and American grammar?

By Jenny Baranick

In the early 1600s, the pilgrims fled from England to America in pursuit of religious freedom. However, I have a theory: I believe they were also after linguistic freedom. Once those pilgrims arrived in the New World, they went wild with the English language: *Colour* became *color*, *centre* became *center* and *analyse* became *analyze*. No longer did people *ring* their *mates* on the phone; they *called* their *friends*. They didn't put groceries in the *boot* of the car; they put them in the *trunk*.

What's that, you say? Pilgrims didn't have phones or cars? Okay, maybe the English language didn't change the *instant* the first English settlers disembarked from the Mayflower, but in the past 400 years, disparities have arisen between British and American English, not only with regard to word choice, but also grammar. The differences between British and American English grammar are subtle but important to recognize – or recognise.

First of all, British English is more perfect than American English. Calm down, Americans – I don't mean that it's *better*: British English speakers simply use the present perfect tense (have/has + past participle) when expressing a past event that has current consequences. Americans will also use the present perfect under the same circumstances, but unlike the British, they also use the simple past, which is used to indicate that an action hap-

pened at a specific time in the past. For example, let's say that currently I have a sweet tooth (which I do); if I asked an American, "Can I have a cookie?" he or she might answer in one of the two following ways:

- In the simple past:
I ate the last one.
- Or in the present perfect:
I have eaten the last one.

If I asked a Brit the same question – although, I would ask for a *biscuit* rather than a *cookie* – he or she would most likely use the present perfect. Either way, I still want the cookie.

Another difference is British English makes more ado about *do* than American English. For example, if an American asked a Brit whether he or she would be attending a party, a likely response would be "I might *do*." An awkward silence would then ensue until the American finally asked, "You might *do* what?" That's because in British English *do* is often used as a substitute for a verb when replying to a question, while in American English, it's not. If an American were asked the same question, he or she would probably answer, "I might" or "I might go." The same applies for the past tense. If a Brit were told, "Make sure you RSVP," he or she would likely answer, "I already have *done*," while an American would simply answer, "I already have."

This next difference between American and British English should

be easy to remember, considering tea is England's number one drink. Not only do the British have a tea culture, they have a *t* culture. Brits tend to opt for the irregular past tense form of verbs, which ends in *t*, while Americans tend to use the regular past tense form, which ends in *ed* or *d*. The following verbs can take either the regular or irregular verb ending: burned/burnt, dreamed/dreamt, leaned/leant, smelled/smelt, spilled/spilt and spoiled/spoilt. Therefore, if a Brit *spilt* some milk, an American would have *learned* not to cry over it.

Despite these subtle differences, Brits and Americans do have one important thing in common when it comes to grammar: the need to improve their grasp of it. Studies from both countries show that job-seekers and corporate employees lack the grammatical and communication skills needed to create the emails, reports and presentations required by most careers. So, whether you're American or British, in order to land that job interview or get that promotion, make sure you listen carefully to the grammarian's report in your Toastmasters club meeting. Then practice, practice, practice – or practise, practise, practise! **T**

Jenny Baranick is an English professor based in Southern California. Reach her at jbaranick@gmail.com.



HOW TO BENEFIT FROM CHANGE

Don't let roadblocks distract you from your goals.

By Dana LaMon, DTM, AS

No matter who you were yesterday, today you are a different person. You are different because your circumstances are different. And circumstances constantly change. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus wrote in 500 B.C.: "Nothing is permanent but change."

The idea of change is not news. What may be news is that with every moment of change comes the opportunity for the best that life has to

offer. The question is, Do you have the capacity to maximize the benefit from change? Your capacity to do so can be measured by six gauges: Attitude, Desire, Vision, In-nergy, Control and Excellence.

I was a boy." On one occasion he recounted how his own PE teacher made him run track in the snow. His story followed our complaint that he was making us run in the rain. You cannot benefit from change if you meet it with resistance, reluctance or regret. A better attitude is the only sure way to personal growth. Welcome change, because it's inevitable. When it comes, the good news is that it will bring another opportunity for

the time I needed and wanted expert training as a new lawyer. I wasn't going to get it from him.

Take a moment to consider what you want, and write it down. For the greatest benefit, your list should be of what you want to do as opposed to what you want to be. Such an action list will provide guidelines for what to do when you approach change.

Vision. It is possible that changed circumstances place a major roadblock in your present path. To develop an alternate route, you need to have a vision of where you want to be and the best ways to get there. Change may dictate that you redraw the map you had plotted out in order to find another route to your goal. Don't be afraid to review the big picture from time to time to see how change might enhance your focus. Then use your new knowledge to rethink your plans.

Though I became blind at the age of four, I did not learn to use a cane for mobility until I was 16. When I use my cane to walk around on my own, I don't count steps; I hold a mental picture of me walking the path to where I'm going. It's a good thing I don't rely on counting steps because invariably someone will come up alongside me and ask if I'm counting my steps. If I were, I'd certainly lose my count to answer the question!

Keeping a vision of where you want to go, and knowing all the ways you might get there, will ensure that

"The force of change that might push you in a direction not of your liking can be matched by the force of will that is in the essence of your being."

you to develop into the individual you were created to be.

Desire. To know how to handle opportunity when it rides on a wave of change, you have to know what you want. Should I say "yes" to the opportunity? Should I invest now? Should I relocate? You cannot confidently answer these kinds of questions if you are uncertain about what you want.

After I passed the California bar in 1978, an attorney who was also an accountant offered me the opportunity to join him in a tax business. He wanted to do the accounting aspect and wanted me to handle the legal matters. He was direct about how he did not want to be involved in the law at all. I rejected the offer, because at

My junior high school physical education (PE) teacher, Mr. Leonard, frequently employed the phrase "when

offer. The question is, Do you have the capacity to maximize the benefit from change? Your capacity to do so can be measured by six gauges: Attitude, Desire, Vision, In-nergy, Control and Excellence.

offer. The question is, Do you have the capacity to maximize the benefit from change? Your capacity to do so can be measured by six gauges: Attitude, Desire, Vision, In-nergy, Control and Excellence.

CHANGE: Don't Fear It, Use It!

Three thoughts to turn your negatives into positives.

By Tom Richard

People fear change because it pushes them into the unknown, and one of the greatest fears in the world is the fear of the unknown. While this is natural, you can also control your fear and turn it into creativity.

Because fear is such a strong emotion, it creates an enormous amount of energy in a person. The problem with this is that the energy tends to be destructive. People who fear change often see themselves as victims. They feel unprepared and inadequate to conquer whatever may come. And when change arrives, they feel they have no control over the situation, which causes even more fear.

When people are afraid, they spew out all sorts of negative comments to others. While it may not be intentional, their fear hurts themselves and those around them.

Fear, however, does not always have to lead to negative energy. You can turn it into positive energy by choosing to do so. When everything around you changes, throw away your doubts and insecurities and control your situation by taking charge of your own emotions:

1. Be strong in your convictions.
2. Be confident in your abilities.
3. Be proud of the work that you do.

Although it may be easier to react negatively, you'll enjoy more lasting benefits if you challenge yourself to find the positive aspects and opportunities that lie within every change.

Tom Richard is a member of Winter Park Toastmasters club in Winter Park, Florida. Reach him through his website at tomrichard.com.

change does not deter or distract you from arriving at your objective.

"In-nergy." Don't bother to look the word up. It won't be in your dictionary. I coined the word because it is perfect for the point. Your capacity to benefit from change is an energy from within. The force of change that might push you in a direction not of your liking can be matched by the force of will

that is in the essence of your being.

In 1997, I went on a three-week speaking tour in South Africa and had the opportunity to speak to a group of secretaries and their bosses in Bloemfontein. In my presentation I asserted, "When you hire employees, you hire more than bodies and minds. You hire people with souls. And when they come to work, they bring their souls with them." One man approached me

after the speech to thank me for the insight he hadn't grasped before.

It is a good thing that your soul – the essence of your being – is with you at all times, because change can come at any time. In-nergy is manifested in will, resolve, determination and persistence.

Control. Attitude, desire, vision and in-nergy will not matter if you are not in control of yourself. If you are not in control, you'll be pushed in whatever direction change is moving. That's fine if it is moving in the direction of your desires and vision, but if not, you must retain control to harness its energy for the results you desire. Change is inevitable, but if you are in control of yourself, you can take advantage of changes and mold them to your benefit.

As a blind high school senior, I made an appointment with the California Department of Rehabilitation for assistance as I pursued my higher education goals. My dream was to attend Yale University. The counselor tried to direct me to a vocational training program to be a computer programmer. What did I know about computers in 1969? The counselor stated that the department had great success with blind persons becoming computer programmers. She tried to entice me with the money I would soon make because the training program was only nine months long. I would not yield. Yale was my choice, and I was looking for assistance to achieve my goal, not to have someone direct me toward their goal.

You are the one who must decide if change will be to your advantage or to your detriment. If you're not sure about something new that's coming your way, try to learn more about it. Understanding the benefits of any new situation can help you to steer your ship with the winds of change. If you remain in control of the situation and work with others to achieve your desired goal, you can ensure that

the results will be to your advantage. If you release control to the circumstances, you may become a victim of the circumstances.


Excellence. A commitment to excellence will gauge your capacity to benefit from change. Try to improve what you do in whatever circumstance you find yourself. What you are doing may be great today, but don't be content with today's greatness when tomorrow arrives.

On December 31, 1999, when seemingly the whole world was talking about the momentous change the new millennium would bring, I decided to change the type of daily messages I left on my business telephone. I had been using quotations from my first book, published two years prior. I settled on a theme of excellence. Each day in January 2000 I changed the message. I learned two weeks into the month

that people were calling my phone just to hear the message. This knowledge sparked the idea for my second book – *The Excellence Book: 104 Principles for Living and Working*.

When you have committed yourself to excellence, you are not only committed to maximizing the benefit that comes from change, but you are compelled to be a catalyst. As a catalyst for change, your attitude, desire, vision, in-nergy, control and excellence are fully engaged. A commitment to change causes you to look at the realm of possibilities to see what can happen instead of waiting to see what will happen. Of course, you don't have control over everything, but you can change the things over which you do have control.

No matter who you were when you first joined Toastmasters, today you are a different person. Your circumstances have changed. The mem-

bership of your club changed. The international organization changed. Ours is an organization about change. The reason that you put your membership fee down and pay your semi-annual dues is that you are expecting change. Fortunately, we have elected international leadership that has accepted the challenge of being catalysts for change. Don't resist or run away from it. You can maximize for yourself the benefit of the changes that will take place by taking the A-D-V-I-C-E that I offer here. 

Dana LaMon, DTM, AS, is the Toastmasters 1992 World Champion of Public Speaking. He is a member of two clubs in Lancaster, California. This article was adapted from a 2009 keynote speech he presented to District 1 Toastmasters. Reach him at dana@danalamon.com.

*"I love quotes!
These are some of the ones
that kept me inspired as I
went from Chump to Champ!*

*... you can quote me
on that!"*



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Think about it."*





QUOTES, TOASTS AND FUN FACTS

These tools can help any speaker, in prepared situations or in a pinch.

By Steve Magnino

You could never drain Lake Michigan,” the CEO said to me, dismissively. I realized in horror that he took what I said literally. He thought I actually suggested draining one of the Great Lakes! One moment I was making small talk with a few colleagues; the next I was watching my career flash before my eyes.

It happened during a corporate retreat. Everything was going well – until someone mentioned that the skeletal remains of an elephant had been found while draining a man-made lake at the resort we were staying in. As it turned out, a circus elephant died en route to a perfor-

mance. The train stopped on a bridge over the lake, and the crew shoved its carcass overboard.

So I asked: *What secrets might Lake Michigan hold?* – which backfired with the CEO. While I tried to figure out how to recover gracefully, one of my colleagues rescued me: “I don’t know, Parker,” he said to the CEO, “they did reverse the flow of the Chicago River.”

Breathing a sigh of relief, I realized the power of a fun fact to save the day. It may not be immediately apparent when or where we will need them, either in small-group conversations or impromptu speeches, but to be prepared for the unexpected, every

speaker needs to have ready a quote, a toast and a few fun facts.

Quotes

As Oscar Wilde, the 19th century Irish writer and poet observed, “Quotation is a serviceable substitute for wit.” Speakers have been quoting Wilde for over a century now, which underscores his point. And it is as true now as it was then. When you find yourself at a loss for a witty observation, remark or comeback of your own, using someone else’s is a good strategy. A quote from a celebrity or an expert can also confer credibility to your observation. But don’t overdo it. Quotes are best offered in a casual,

off-handed manner, as though you just remembered it in the moment.

The best quotes are unique and memorable, yet general enough that they can be used in lots of different situations. These are two of my favorites:

“A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.” – Oscar Wilde

“No one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people.” – H.L. Mencken

If you think about the situations and settings in which you speak most often, it is a fairly straightforward task to come up with a couple of quotes to use.

“Quotes are best offered in a casual, off-handed manner, as though you just remembered it in the moment.”

Toasts

In some situations, you know beforehand that you will offer a toast. In a wedding party, for example, a toast at the wedding reception is typically the responsibility of the best man. You can prepare something that is specific to the situation and to the people involved.

Other times, you may be called upon to propose a toast with little, if any, warning. As with quotes, having a memorable, all-purpose toast or two in your speaker’s bag of tricks is a good idea. Here is one that typically makes the listeners feel good about themselves and each other, and by extension, you:

“We have all heard that there are four things in life that you should never do. You should never lie. You should never steal. You should never cheat. And you should never drink. But, if you must lie, may it be to save

a friend. If you must steal, may it be to steal a heart. If you must cheat, may it be to cheat death. And, if you must drink, may it always be with friends like these. Cheers!”

Fun Facts

When the New Zealand government decided to include Sir Edmund Hillary’s image on its updated five-dollar bill in 1992, he became the only New Zealander to ever have his likeness appear on a banknote during his lifetime. This was quite an honor for the first man to scale Mount Everest, which he did with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay in 1953, “because it was there.”

A fun fact like this can be used to illustrate a point, or to inspire people

with a sense of possibility. Hillary’s successes in landing himself on the top of Everest and on the face of the banknote, for example, were both unprecedented. Beyond mere trivia, a fun fact is an interesting, engaging informational tidbit that is relevant to the situation and the audience. As with quotes, be careful not to overdo it.


The opportunities to use such information will come to you; the key is to recognize these situations. Begin with three fun facts that you can use when the time is right. To cover the broadest ground, draw from three key areas: sports, music and business.

Sports: In the 1952 Helsinki Summer Olympics, Emil Zatopek, a Czech long-distance runner, won gold medals in the 5,000-meter and 10,000-meter events. But what truly marked Zatopek as a legendary runner is what he did next. Despite

having never competed in the event before, he decided to run the marathon. Zatopek is the only athlete in Olympic history to take the gold in these three races in the same year. His accomplishments highlight the importance of disciplined training and rigorous preparation; as well as the need for confidence.

Music: What 1976 hit did Barry Manilow sing but not write? The answer: “I Write the Songs.” This fun fact underscores the importance of execution. Business strategies are often carried out by people who did not write or craft them. It also affirms what most business leaders already believe: An average strategy, well executed, is preferable to a great strategy, poorly executed.

Business: In 2010, 3M celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Post-it® Note, a brand that now encompasses more than 4,000 products. The Post-it® Note was initially regarded as a failure, but a 3M scientist eventually recognized an application for the adhesive while searching for a better bookmark for his hymnal. Implicit in the brand’s success and longevity are the virtues of perspective and patience, as well as recognition of the nature of success and failure.

With a quote, a toast and a few fun facts in your speaking arsenal, you will be better prepared for those chance encounters that confront all speakers from time to time. As Louis Pasteur said, “Chance favors the prepared mind.” It favors the prepared speaker, too. 

Steve Magnino is a marketing professional, speaker, consultant and freelance writer from Arlington Heights, Illinois. Contact Steve at magnino@comcast.net.



A VIEW FROM THE BALCONY

Step back and see how your audience is observing you.

By Steven D. Cohen, ATMB

Every time you deliver a speech, you are, in fact, leading. Whether you are a student, an executive, a politician or a professor, you must lead your audience toward a particular objective. Your job isn't simply to communicate ideas to your audience members – it is to show them you are a leader.

As part of this process, you must think about how your audience members perceive you when you are standing in front of the room. You must examine what you do well and how you can improve. But how do you achieve this perspective?

In *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Lead-*

ing, Ronald A. Heifetz and Martin Linsky talk about the importance of “getting off the dance floor and going to the balcony.” It's a metaphor that emphasizes the need for leaders to step back in the middle of a situation and ask themselves, What's really going on here? The “balcony” is a place where you can see yourself clearly and observe how your audience members respond to you.

Assessing Your Performance

You can reach the balcony in many different ways. For example, you might pause for a moment after sharing an important idea and mentally observe your audience members'

reactions. Or, you might ask a couple of colleagues to watch you deliver a speech and share their observations with you. You can even videotape yourself and review your speech at a later time. Whatever strategy you choose, you'll gain insight into how to improve your performance.

Stepping onto the balcony allows you to focus on what is actually happening rather than on what you are saying. From the balcony, you can feel the emotion and capture the energy in the room. Once you more firmly understand what your audience members experience while you are speaking, you will know exactly what actions to take.

That's the key – taking action. Thinking and analyzing are the easy parts; the hard part is changing your behavior the *next time* you speak. Indeed, powerful public speaking, much like leadership, requires that you constantly assess and improve your performance.

When I was in college, I remember hearing all sorts of filler words pop out of my mouth. It wasn't until I attended my first Toastmasters meeting that I realized I had a problem. When the Ah-Counter listed the total amount of filler words I had used, I asked myself, Did I really say “um” that many times? The Ah-Counter, in a sense, helped me get on the balcony and understand what my audience was hearing. Armed with this knowl-

“Once you more firmly understand what your audience members experience while you are speaking, you will know exactly what actions to take.”

edge, I knew exactly what to do: Pause more frequently to reduce my use of filler words.

Identifying Your Default Speaking Settings

Each of us has default settings – automatic, pre-programmed behaviors that are comfortable and familiar. For example, when someone sneezes, we typically say “Bless you.” We don't stop to think about why we say it – we just say it. We also have default ways of getting dressed in the morning, preparing certain meals and walking from one place to another.

Similarly, we each have default public speaking settings – ingrained ways of communicating and interacting with our audience members. However, some of these default settings may actually impede our ability to make a powerful impact on our listeners.

To become a powerful public speaker, you must identify your ingrained speaking patterns and determine the impact that they are having on your capacity to lead. Do you nervously adjust your glasses or run your hands through your hair? Do you say “um” or “uh” every few words? Once you identify these habits, you can challenge yourself to adjust them.

Making Positive Changes

It is important to remember that making significant adjustments isn't an easy process. It may take time and the changes may feel uncomfortable for awhile, but the results are typically well worth the effort.

I often push my University of Maryland and Harvard Extension

School students to adjust their default settings in real time. At the beginning of every semester, I ask the students to stand in the center of the speaking area and introduce themselves to the class. Some students really struggle with this exercise and default to sharing impersonal, bland introductions. Here is an example:

My name is Susan. I've been in school for a couple years now, but I'm nearing the end of the road. I come from a large family in central New York and found my way here after living in a bunch of places. So, yeah. That's about it.

It's not that students like Susan don't have anything interesting to say; they just don't know *what* to say. I help them *get on the balcony* by suggesting that they ask their peers

for feedback. When they do that, the students discover they had sounded rather uninspired. I encourage them to share their passions with their listeners. When the students begin again, they instantly become more animated.

Like Susan, you must push yourself to adjust. The perfect place to do that is in Toastmasters. But you can't expect to become a powerful public speaker after attending a few club meetings. You need time to change the habits that are holding you back.

In his 2008 book *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Malcolm Gladwell discusses the fundamental importance of practice. What “distinguishes one performer from another is how hard he or she works,” writes Gladwell. “That's it. And what's more, the people at the very top don't just work harder...than everyone else. They work much, *much* harder.”

The only way to “reprogram” your speaking patterns is to embrace the art of practice. Make public speaking a hobby by seeking opportunities to speak. Ask to introduce a keynote speaker. Volunteer to speak at a company function. Fill a Toastmasters club meeting role. It doesn't matter where you speak. What matters is that you push yourself to get on the balcony over and over again.

If you commit to examining and adjusting your default public speaking settings, you will dramatically enhance your ability to lead. **T**

Steven D. Cohen, ATMB, is an award-winning speaker and a former member of Bank of America Uptown Toastmasters in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is the author of *Lessons from the Podium: Public Speaking as a Leadership Art* (2011). Contact him through his website stevendcohen.net.



MEET MICHAEL NOTARO, DTM

Toastmasters' 2011-2012 International President is passionate about leadership and learning.

Newly elected International President Michael Notaro has been an enthusiastic supporter of Toastmasters since he joined the organization as a college student. He has assumed one leadership role after another in his 26 years of membership, most recently serving as an officer on the Toastmasters Board of Directors.

To maintain his speaking skills, Notaro delivers a manual speech at his home club every month. He belongs to three clubs in Northern California.

"Prior to Toastmasters, if I said "Hi" to you, I thought we were having a big conversation."

A resident of Alameda, California, Notaro began his career as a commercial real estate broker and now practices real estate law. Notaro Law Group represents commercial real estate investors and developers throughout Northern and Central California.

In his spare time, he volunteers with the United States Coast Guard Reserve(s), Kiwanis International and Alameda Hope of America. He is also a board member of the Italian American Bar Association.

A passionate advocate of the Toastmasters program, Notaro says, "Leadership means making the best of every opportunity. I am excited about making a positive impact as International President."

What first inspired you to become a better speaker?

In 1981, I was a senior in high school and spent the spring term as an intern in Washington D.C., working in the office of Florida Congressman Bill Nelson. I was fortunate to get a ticket to attend President Ronald Reagan's State of the Union Address. I sat in the top of the House of Representatives gallery, amazed at the president's ability to move people to action through the spoken word. Reagan's sincere,

personal style was new to me. I felt inspired to learn public speaking from watching a master.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

In May 1985, I was a student at the University of California at Berkeley, and one day I was walking home from a history class. I saw a flier posted on campus that read, "Stand up and Speak out! Join the CAL Toastmasters!" My interest was piqued. I needed help with future job interviews and a graduation speech, so I visited the club and joined. After graduation, I moved my membership to the City Center Toastmasters Club in Oakland, California, where I am still a member today.

What were you like before Toastmasters?

Quiet and reserved – I still am. In fact, prior to Toastmasters, if I said "Hi" to you, I thought we were having a big conversation. I was happy to listen and let others do the talking. Growing up, I was often told that I had good ideas but did not express them. Over the years, I got tired of hearing that.

What obstacles did you face as a new Toastmaster?

My Ice Breaker was a difficult experience. I froze and forgot my material. The next day, my arms were literally sore from gripping the lectern so hard. Fortunately, the club members were very supportive, and I came back to give speech Number 2.

What motivated you to seek leadership positions?

I met International President John Noonan when he visited my home district (District 57) in 1989. I was astounded that Toastmasters International could elect a young president that was so friendly and open to ordinary members. His keynote speech encouraged club members to focus on member service; I wanted to be part of it.

Later that year, I attended the International Convention in Palm Desert and met Cavett Robert, a former Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. He took a



Notaro with District 57 Governor Dave Orris, DTM.

personal interest in me, wrote me a letter and sent a customized cassette tape with words of advice and inspiration. I knew then that I belonged in Toastmasters – I even followed Cavett’s career path (real estate law). On my nightstand, I still keep a copy of Cavett’s inspirational classic *Success with People*.

“My speaking style is a compilation of all the wonderful evaluations I have received through the years.”

Why do you continue in leadership after 26 years?

I still have much to learn. To me, Toastmasters is a lifelong professional development program, and the Toastmasters highway has no speed limits. The learning never stops. I enjoy serving and inspiring other members to achieve and succeed in life.

Does your Toastmasters training benefit you as an attorney?

Yes, effective communication is crucial to all service professionals, especially attorneys. Thanks to Toastmasters, I have learned to express myself in clear, simple terms, without legalese and pompous talk. More importantly, Toastmasters leadership training has taught me how to man-

age a meeting, solve problems and delegate. These are invaluable skills in any service profession.

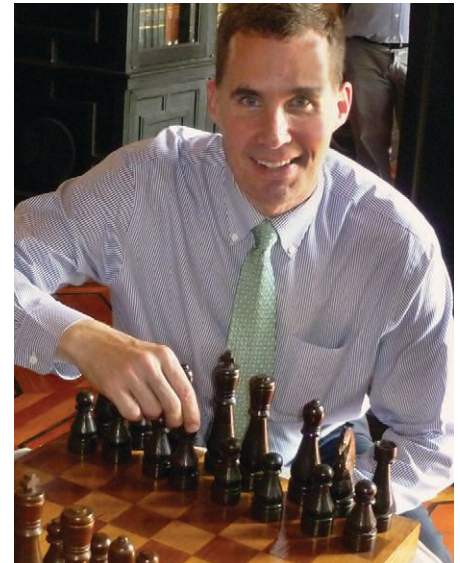
Some judges I work with know that I am a Toastmaster, which can be intimidating. They expect me to deliver an eloquent oration every time I appear in court. It does not work that way. While speaking

skills can help accent a strong case, you still need favorable facts.

What was your worst speaking experience?

Early in my legal career, I represented a San Francisco fisherman in a legal case that went to jury trial. The early days of trial went very well for me. My witnesses were clear and convincing. All our important evidence was admitted, and it seemed like the verdict was a sure thing. I started to develop a swagger in the courtroom.

Before the closing statement, the opposing attorney even approached me to say the case would be appealed. I then delivered my closing statement. As I began speaking, I could tell the jury was paying no attention to me. They were bored. Juror Number 1



Visiting the Malacañang Palace, Manila, Philippines.

was staring at ants on the ceiling. Juror Number 4 was studying cracks in the vinyl flooring. The verdict came down and I lost 11 to 1. The jurors said my speaking was too mechanical and stiff, and I learned an important lesson.

What does it take to reach success?

Persistence. This applies to both Toastmasters and life in general. Too many of our members leave their clubs too soon! The average Toastmaster stays only 12 to 18 months. Some new members give a few speeches, stop speaking, feel nervous and decide to quit. Fear returns if we do not speak frequently. I give a manual speech in my home club every month. Use it or lose it. Persist, and never give up.

What is your favorite part of Toastmasters?

I like the evaluations. An effective evaluation can change a life. An evaluation that is sincere, specific and supportive will motivate the speaker to improve and provide guidance on how to do it. It has for me. Without effective evaluations, we end up repeating the same mistakes. Good evaluations answer the question: “Did the speaker connect with the audience?” I have a file cabinet filled with helpful evaluations received from fellow Toastmasters.



Enjoying a Z06 Race Corvette at the Texas Motor Speedway, Fort Worth.

My speaking style is a compilation of all the wonderful evaluations I have received through the years.

What is your most important goal as International President?

To oversee the implementation of our strategic plan. We live in a rapidly changing world. Experts estimate the

“Some judges I work with know that I am a Toastmaster, which can be intimidating. They expect me to deliver an eloquent oration every time I appear in court.”

21st century will see 20,000 years of progress. Evolving technology, increased competition and mounting time pressure on our volunteer leaders have caused us to take a fresh look at the Toastmasters experience to ensure it is appealing, attractive and relevant.

Last year, our Board of Directors completed a historic strategic plan that assesses where we are, where we want to go and how we want to get there. As an organization, we cannot be all things to all people. Our strategic plan focuses use of our organizational resources on key priorities to maximize member benefit – enhanced educational quality, cultural adaptability, technological upgrades, leadership development and strategic



Notaro with his home club, Oakland City Center Toastmasters.

growth. [View the Strategic Plan at www.toastmasters.org/strat_plan.]

If you had one piece of advice for every Toastmaster, what would it be?

Serve as an area governor. It is the best job in Toastmasters. You learn speaking and leadership skills simul-

taneously. Furthermore, you receive training, support and assistance from district leaders while experiencing all the fun of the clubs. Your efforts provide tangible and visible benefits to our members as you help make their clubs better.

What is the significance of the phrase “Toastmasters. Where leaders are made”?

We have two educational tracks in Toastmasters – communication and leadership – but often the two flow together. For instance, our leadership program is an exercise in applied communication: Leaders speak with the express purpose of motivating educational, membership and club

growth. While we are better known for our communication track, leadership skill development is just as important and beneficial to our members. Leaders command influence, and the magic of Toastmasters is building the leaders of tomorrow through developing interpersonal and public communication skills.

What caused you to seek the International President office?

I love leadership and working with Toastmasters. The role of International President offers a unique platform to serve our members, grow the organization and shape the future. Sometimes there are frantic moments, but leadership is making the best out of every opportunity. I am excited about making a positive impact as International President.

What is the greatest benefit of Toastmasters membership?

Confidence is the most tangible benefit, but I believe it goes much deeper. The self-assurance that comes from honing your skills at Toastmasters is liberating. Our leaders learn to deal with any situation that arises. With each educational achievement, belief in one’s abilities increases. **T**

Read it online @ toastmasters.org/magazine

PUTTING LEADERSHIP ON THE MENU

Successful restaurateur dishes up answers on speaking, leadership and food.

By Michelle Tyler

Scott Plowman knows what it takes to thrive in the restaurant business. He started as a dishwasher 32 years ago and worked his way up through every position in his field. He now owns two popular restaurants: The Pelican Surf Club and the Parkway Grill and Sports Bar, both in Wichita Falls, Texas. He was also recently selected by his peers as the 2012 president of the Texas Restaurant Association.

good care of the people around me and they in turn take good care of me and the business. I firmly believe in moving up through the jobs in a restaurant, so I promote from within.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

There was a time when I had anxiety and panic attacks when speaking in front of large groups. Six years ago, after having a panic attack and not even remembering the end of a

great critiques. I've been a regular for about five years and only miss club meetings when I am out of town.

What is your Toastmasters club like?

Our club is the second oldest club in Texas. Larry Lambert has been in Toastmasters for more than 50 years. Members range in age from early 20s to late 70s. Most are dedicated and work hard to help each other. That, in my opinion, is why our club is successful.

“Slight nervousness is always there, but I've learned to use the nervous energy and project it as enthusiasm.”

The *Toastmaster* magazine talked with Plowman about his achievements as a restaurateur, his five-year experience as a Toastmaster and the universal appeal of food.

Q. Why did you start working in the restaurant industry and what do you like best about it?

A. I was a tall skinny kid and always hungry. Once I started cooking, I discovered I liked it and could make a nice living doing it. Now I like meeting new people and helping others better themselves. I try to take

simple 20-line committee report I was presenting, my wife suggested Toastmasters. We looked it up on the Internet and found the Wichita Falls club.

After I attended a few meetings, members encouraged me and I knew I had to do something if I wanted to become better at public speaking. One of our longstanding members, Ruby Ditto, encouraged me to “fast-track” the number of speeches I did in a month. Larry Lambert, our club secretary, taught me good speech form. Tom Merritt and Penny Miller, our DTMs, encouraged me with

What are your favorite speech topics?

My topics have included the restaurant business, sports, politics, associations – and even eulogies. I have cut back on political speeches because they can be polarizing for our group. As I get closer to my presidency, the members will probably get sick of my Texas Restaurant Association speeches.

How did you overcome your panic attacks and anxiety?

Slight nervousness is always there, but I've learned to use the nervous energy and project it as enthusiasm. Toastmasters has helped because I get to practice, practice, practice. Being club president (in 2010) gave me plenty of opportunity to be on the podium. It also taught me to be prepared.

▶ **Scott Plowman, ACB, speaking at the TRA President's Gala in Dallas Texas.**



How will your Toastmasters training help you as president of the Texas Restaurant Association (TRA)?

TRA is a leading advocate for restaurants and their associates in Texas, and actively works with the National Restaurant Association. Part of the TRA duties I will take on as president include government affairs, product services and networking with other restaurateurs, associate business owners and culinary school personnel.

I will work with 20 to 300 people regularly, speaking to federal and state officials, leading meetings for and speaking to the Texas state board, and speaking at big-crowd events like the TRA Expo and the President's Gala. Most importantly, as president of TRA, I will focus on culinary education for future culinary staff.

I would not have reached this position without the important skills I continue to learn from Toastmasters and my fellow club members. I now can speak to a large group because I

know how to prepare, tell a story and get my point across.

Do you give speeches outside the restaurant business?

I am asked to speak because of my expertise and success in my businesses. I've spoken at schools, at church and to my son's Boy Scout troop. Most of my speeches of this nature are about entrepreneurship, the restaurant industry and cooking.

What are the most popular dishes at your restaurants?

Some of our great dishes are hand-breaded Chicken Fried Steak and our Littlest Skyscraper Burger, but our most unique and popular dish is our Famous Fried Cheese. It is prepared fresh daily by hand, cooked to order and is the best fried cheese that you have ever eaten.

What is your favorite food?

I like just about all foods – except beets and liver – but my favorite would be a big, juicy cheeseburger. There are so many new burger

places to try that I could never get tired of them.

Do you think food acts as a universal language for people around the world?

Absolutely – we *all* eat. How many business deals, marriage proposals and celebrations happen over a meal? Wherever you visit, every culture has a unique way to prepare and present its food.

What do you communicate with the food you serve?

To me food is hospitality, and whether I'm cooking at my house or at my restaurant, I want people to enjoy and remember the occasion fondly. T

To learn more about Scott Plowman's restaurants, visit ParkwayGrill.com and PelicanSurfClub.com, or contact Plowman at ScottyP@ParkwayGrill.com.

Michelle Tyler is the editorial assistant of the *Toastmaster* magazine. Reach her at mt Tyler@toastmasters.org.

ATTACK OF THE THING

We're having a fling with a word with no zing.

By John Cadley

I have a thing with the word “thing.” I picture the inventors of language sitting around one day saying, “Okay, that’s a lion, that’s a pineapple, and that’s...what should we call that?” They’re looking at an object they can’t think of a name for. Someone says, “That thing? I don’t know. We’ll think of it later.” Only they never did. So it stuck, leaving us with a word that was never meant to be a word, to be used when you can’t think of the word to use. Even the dictionary leaves us hanging. It defines “thing” as an “entity that cannot be specifically designated or precisely described.” Translation: The definition of this word is indefinable. Really, Mr. Webster? Somehow I expected more from you.

I didn’t know how much I truly loathed the word until someone said to me, “I’m just doing my thing.”

“Really?” I said. “And what *thing* is that?”

“You know — my *thing*.”

“I *don’t* know. That’s why I’m asking you.”

“What I do. Who I am.”

“Who are you? What *do* you do?”

“Just being me.”

“We’re all a ‘me.’ What’s so special about that?”

“That’s it! It’s the thing that *makes* you special. It’s your *thing*.”

“What makes me special is that I detest people who claim they’re special without providing any concrete evidence to that effect.”

He stopped and looked at me. “Have you got a thing against me?”

You can’t win.

Women look at a closet full of clothes and claim they don’t have a thing to wear. If you mention that fact, they say, “Oh, I don’t want to wear that old thing.” So they *do* have a thing to wear but they can’t wear it because it’s a thing. Interesting.

Barely do I recover from this nonsense when a friend informs me that iPads are “the thing” today. “What thing?”

“You know, the thing to have.”

“An iPad isn’t a thing, it’s a computer.”

“Yeah, but it’s the thing. Out of all the things you could have, this is the thing you should have.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s *The Thing!*”

Oh.

The word can also act like a virus, attaching itself to other words and rendering them useless as well. I find this most prevalent in the medical profession. Every time I go to the doctor I am assured that my complaint could be one of three things: anything, something or nothing. Really? I’ll be sure they put that in my obituary: *Mr. Cadley died of something that they thought was nothing but could have been anything.*

Could the word be any more odious? Unfortunately, yes — when some cretin adds a “y” to the end.

“Thingy.” Just writing it gives me nausea. A person who refers to an inanimate object as a *thingy* not only admits his ignorance; he revels in it. *What a cute word! How fun to say! Look everybody, I’m completely ignorant of my native tongue!* And beware. Once

“thingy” breaches the levees of intelligent discourse, a flood of even more execrable variations is sure to follow: thing-a-ma-bob, thing-a-ma-jig, and — God help us — thing-a-ma-doodle.

Oddly enough, “thing” started life with a real meaning. It comes from the Old Norse *ting*, referring to a governing assembly of free people who met at the *thingstead* to make laws, resolve disputes and elect officials. (Honest. Look it up.) So how did we get from there to a word with no discernible meaning? Perhaps the same way government always ends up as an entity with no discernible purpose. But now at least we understand how some well-worn modern phrases have entered the vernacular. Imagine two Old Norsemen on their way to the thingstead.

“Think this will be a productive meeting?”

“I’ll know a good thing when I see it.”

“I hear they’ve done some redeco-rating.”

“Yeah, it’s a pretty little thing.”

“I hear you’re leading it tonight. It’s your thing.”

“And it’s gonna be the way things ought to be.”

“How many people will be there?”

“Twenty or thirty. No big thing. Just a thingy.”

I could go on but I feel the stirrings of nausea. **T**

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

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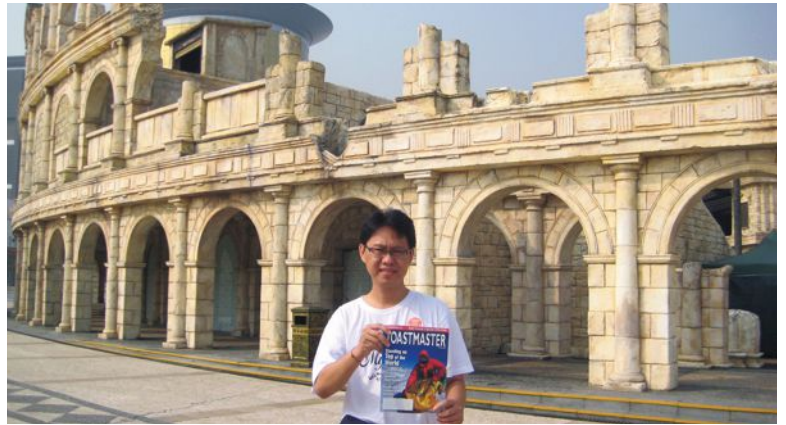
Ling-Ling Chang, CL, from Taipei, Taiwan, climbs the Dabajian Mountain in Shei-Pa National Park, Taiwan.



Johnny Kukan from Aiea, Hawaii, visits the Sydney Harbour Bridge in Sydney, Australia.



Desi Mora, DTM, from Austin, Texas, climbs higher than 120 feet at the Tree Climbers Rendezvous, Covington, Kentucky.



Chua Chong Keat, CC, ALB, from Penang, Malaysia, visits a reproduction of the Roman Amphitheatre in Macau, China.






Nobuko Sugiyama, ACS, CL, & Kazue Fujino, DTM, from Fukuoka-ken, Japan, visit Yuyuan, Shanghai, China



Leslie Harper, CC, CL, from Washington, D.C., visits Antarctica.

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