

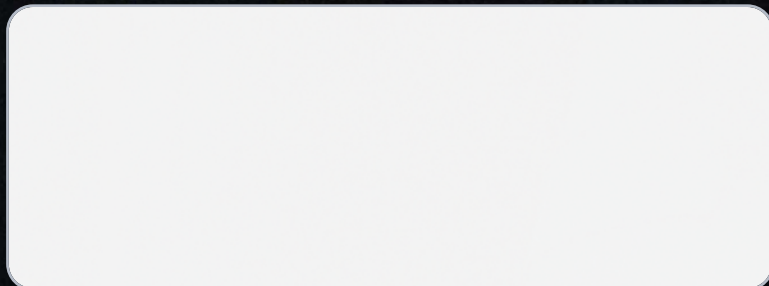
TOASTMASTER®

July 2010

Todd Newton: On Top of His Game

Lessons from
PR Disasters

Charisma:
The Magic
and the
Menace





A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Toastmasters

† One year when I was lieutenant governor, two other district leaders and I drove together across the district, attending club-officer training programs and division speech contests. We spent hours and hours in a small car, talking strategy and planning our district year. We also shared stories about our leadership experiences. We had so much fun! I never laughed so hard as when I was on those car trips – which was a challenge when I was the driver.

Now, a decade later, I still meet with these dear friends to reminisce about those memorable Toastmasters experiences. (Thank you, Beryl and Adele!)

Effective leaders have many common traits: courage, integrity, focus, passion, service and vision, to name just a few. But one of the most important qualities is to be a master of merriment. That means fun! Every leader I admire and emulate, both in Toastmasters and my profession, creates fun memories and encourages levity from their teams.

Whether it's sharing stories on car rides, hosting recognition celebrations or coordinating a unique club theme meeting, how do you create an atmosphere of fun in your club and on your leadership teams? Do you embrace gales of glee?

My Toastmasters memories all revolve around fun. I remember dressing up as Darth Vader from *Star Wars* at a district conference fun night – and everyone knew the Vader character was me before I even said a word. Or traveling to Disneyland with some Toastmasters friends and enjoying rides like “It’s a Small World,” “Enchanted Tiki Room” and “Splash Mountain.” Or attending a club holiday meeting where a Table Topics speaker uttered a sentence that kept the audience laughing for more than 10 minutes.

Having fun experiences does not diminish the respect you get as a leader. Rather, they enhance and strengthen your leadership. Building personal relationships is essential to leading others, and fun opportunities build and cement relationships.

As we begin a new Toastmasters year, where does fun fit in your agenda? Find ways to encourage creativity and novelty in all that you do. Make fun a priority in your Toastmasters, professional and personal life.

Toastmasters founder Ralph Smedley said, “We learn best in moments of enjoyment.” As a leader, plan on frivolity! Your fellow club members and high-performing teams are counting on it.

Your focus on fun begins now!

Gary Schmidt, DTM
International President

TOASTMASTER

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The Toastmasters Vision:

Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

The Toastmasters Mission:

Toastmasters International is 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.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

The Traveling Toastmaster

Picture yourself here! Are you planning to climb a mountain or cross the Sahara? Will you travel to Tokyo, Paris or Dubai? If so, be sure to take along a copy of the *Toastmaster* magazine. Pose with it in your exciting surroundings – the more challenging and far-reaching, the better. E-mail the high-quality image to photos@toastmasters.org and it might end up in the *Toastmaster* magazine or on our Web site's Photo Galleries page. **But here's the hitch: You have to have the *Toastmaster* magazine in the picture!**

Vic Juorio of Telecommunicators Toastmasters in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, relaxes at the Ice Hotel in Jukkasjärvi, Sweden.



Karen Robbins of Independently Speaking club in Independence, Ohio, visits the famous 1,100-foot-tall lone sandstone rock (aka Ayers Rock), in Uluru, Australia.



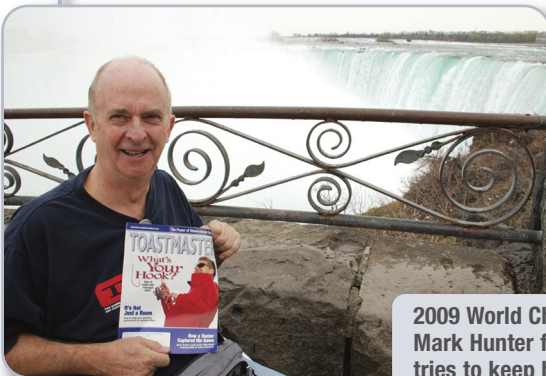
Toastmaster contributing writer Craig Harrison of Berkeley, California, admires the Aurora Borealis in the Northwest Territories of Canada.



The *Toastmaster* reaches new heights by arriving at Mount Everest Base Camp in Nepal with Sandy Robb of Inspiring Voices club in Ontario, Canada.



Mandy Sandher of Town and Gown Toastmasters in Ontario, Canada, proudly stands in front of her country's flag while volunteering with the United Sikhs for disaster relief in Haiti.



2009 World Champion of Public Speaking Mark Hunter from Queensland, Australia, tries to keep his *Toastmaster* dry at Niagara Falls in Ontario, Canada.



Marilyn Abella of El Presidente Toastmasters in Manila, Philippines, reads her *Toastmaster* while sailing around Boracay Island, Philippines.

Get Wise and Supervise

Tulgan was the 2009 recipient of Toastmasters International's most prestigious honor, the Golden Gavel Award. He spoke at the luncheon in his honor during last year's International Convention in Mashantucket, Connecticut.

† As a leader, manager, teacher or coach, or simply as a good citizen in any endeavor, you are wise to heed the old-fashioned basics of supervision. Whoever you are leading and wherever you are leading them, pay close attention to what your team members are doing and how they are doing it.

Spend time with them. Talk with them in a clear and penetrating manner. Guide them, direct them and support them.

I've been teaching these techniques to leaders and managers for many years. Over the last two years, my firm, RainmakerThinking, Inc., conducted a study to learn the most effective business strategies used by U.S. organizations during 2009's economic crisis. Our findings show that the one strategy most important to an organization's financial success was increased supervision and management of employees.

More than 1,000 managers participated in the study from different organizations in the private, public and nonprofit sectors. RainmakerThinking gathered data through surveys, questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, focus groups and seminars. Managers who used the following three strategies during the recession reported having the strongest financial results in 2009:

- **Cost cutting.** This included eliminating staff, space and resources.

- **Innovations.** Organizations found new methods of sourcing, design, production, promotion and delivery of their products and services.
- **Increased supervision.** Employees received more one-on-one training, direction and feedback from managers.

Yet among managers employing only one of those strategies, those who used increased supervision reported the top financial results by far in 2009. Cutting salaries and benefits might have been necessary, but organizations that stepped up their hands-on management were able to reward staff with perks like flexibility and working from home.

Managers who started paying closer attention to who was doing what – and why and where – were communicating more with their direct reports, and following up on their employees' job performance more often. These managers were

spelling out expectations, making the *quid pro quo* explicit and truly monitoring the production that's within the control of individual employees. Much of that involves communicating effectively. Spelling out expectations, for example, requires that managers speak clearly to employees – and use specific, instructive words.

The recession-induced realization that organizations fare better when supervisors make their expectations clear, monitor employees' progress and evaluate their outcomes has made a dent in what I call the "undermanagement epidemic." Managers are finally getting back to the basics of managing.

Human relations pros can take this positive step even further by recognizing it as a training challenge. Start pushing your organization to commit to a culture of strong leadership and to building back-to-basics management training

“Start pushing your organization to commit to a culture of strong leadership.”

better able to reward their top-performing people, and less likely to reward those who performed poorly or didn't work hard.

Managers began to view pay raises and benefits as rewards rather than as automatic or across the board. The result: They started practicing real performance-based compensation.

Most of the focus on performance-based rewards by the comp-and-benefits community has traditionally been on changing the compensation system. Yet the best system will fail miserably if managers on the ground are not doing the hard work of

into the development process for leaders at every level.

Managers who already have returned to basic supervisory practices will find it difficult to walk away from that necessity in more prosperous times, because it has been so effective during the most trying of times. †

Bruce Tulgan is the founder of RainmakerThinking, Inc., a research, training and consulting firm in New Haven, Connecticut. He is the author of *It's Okay to Be the Boss* and *Managing Generation X*. Contact Bruce at www.rainmakerthinking.com.

A culture of learning helps this global manufacturer thrive.

Caterpillar Builds a Winning Team

Hey, want to buy a knuckle-boom loader? You don't know what that is? Well, allow me to explain..."

A company that manufactures products with mystifying names such as *feller bunchers*, *skidders* and *articulated trucks* needs employees who are strong communicators. When that company is Caterpillar Inc., the world's leading producer of construction and mining equipment, it becomes even more essential to develop an educated, competent staff who can handle not only the big machines, but the big accounts as well.

Caterpillar's senior executives are so sure of this, they founded Caterpillar University – *Cat University* – consisting of more than a dozen internal "colleges," each with a specialty area of study. The company's culture of education is emphasized on its Web site: "As Caterpillar continues to expand into new markets and our machines tackle increasingly complex challenges, our career development programs ensure every member of Team Caterpillar is prepared and ready to lead the way."

Finding Toastmasters in the Cat University Catalog is easy, as it plays an important role in the General Studies College curriculum. If clear communication is a Caterpillar employee's doorway to success, Toastmasters hands them the key.

A Record of Promoting Success

In 1974, the first Toastmasters Speechcraft program was introduced to the company, and company leaders immediately noticed the benefits. In the ensuing 36 years, Caterpillar has

sponsored many corporate clubs and encouraged employee participation.

Cat University's promotional campaigns help maintain a burgeoning club membership. Messages are posted on TV monitors at the entrances to all main buildings. Managers are regularly reminded that Toastmasters is available through Cat University. Notices are e-mailed to the employees. When an employee earns a Toastmasters educational award, the company records that accomplishment on his personnel record.

Achievements in Toastmasters and at Caterpillar often work together. Jon Greiner, DTM, is an Information Solutions Manager for Caterpillar and is active in several company-sponsored Toastmasters clubs. He has enjoyed tremendous accomplishments in Toastmasters, culminating with his term as International President in 2004-2005. Greiner can't pinpoint which dream led to the other, but says that the support of his company, while building skills in Toastmasters, helped him reach many milestones along both paths.

A Worldwide Network of Clubs

Caterpillar's offices are spread around the globe, resulting in corporate Toastmasters clubs in cities such as Singapore, Bangalore and Beijing, as well as in the U.S. states of Tennessee and Illinois, where the company is headquartered. All in all, 15 Toastmasters clubs exist to meet the communication and leadership needs of Caterpillar employees.

Balakrishnan Arasapan, who works in Caterpillar's Asia Pacific

Sales Operations Division, helped charter the Singapore Toastmasters Club in 2008 and is the club's immediate past president. Arasapan is pleased with his progress in Toastmasters and says, "It's critical in the business world to communicate as quickly and concisely as possible without creating ambiguity in the message."

Caterpillar also has equipment dealerships scattered around the globe, which also support Toastmasters clubs. All in all, Caterpillar's network of clubs offers a Toastmasters program that, Greiner says, is "pretty deeply embedded" in its educational system. The program has been around so long that managers support club membership because they were members before reaching a supervisory level. Often, these managers are willing to cover some or all of the members' dues.

Caterpillar's Reward: On-staff Communicators and Leaders

Greiner says there is a joke among Caterpillar Toastmasters that they help teach the engineers how to speak English – even those who were born speaking English. These employees habitually speak such technical language that ordinary people can't understand what they say. Their managers send them to Toastmasters club so that they can learn to speak to a lay audience.

Also, English-language learners are numerous at Caterpillar – and they avail themselves of the language skills they can build through the Toastmasters program. Those who are learning English as a



▲ Members of the Caterpillar Employees Club (#79) in East Peoria, Illinois, enjoy strong company support.

foreign language total nearly a third of the members at the Mossville, Illinois, Toastmasters clubs. Di Wang is one such Caterpillar employee. Wang's language skills made her apprehensive about participating in Toastmasters. "I didn't really understand what I was supposed to do and had trouble understanding others," she says. "I was confused and nervous."

As a result of these communication challenges, the corporation leans its support toward the basic *communication* skill-building aspects of club membership. However, Greiner and his group are working with representatives of Cat University to expand the promotion of club, area, division and district *leadership* experiences as a means to strengthen managerial skills for corporate executive positions as well.

Greiner notes, "The other group of Toastmasters members at Caterpillar is made up of those who are candidates for supervisory positions. They're working to improve their communication and leadership skills to prepare for these managerial roles."

Wang is also a skilled leader highly valued in Caterpillar's Project Management Environment. To prepare for a supervisory role at Caterpillar, she

became club president last year and is an area governor now. Currently a project manager, Wang says, "This job requires me to contact people among multiple divisions and with different backgrounds. I think I am getting more comfortable in facilitating meetings, leading discussions, clarifying problems and removing roadblocks."

Other Caterpillar leaders mention Toastmasters when discussing

position. "My ability to serve as a competent IT project manager would not be possible without effective verbal communication skills," she notes.

Andrews is also looking forward to the career achievements her training will bring in the future.

“Caterpillar’s success depends on a workforce that is constantly learning, growing and striving for excellence...”
- Caterpillar Web site

accomplishments. Linda Andrews, of the Progressively Speaking club in Peoria, Illinois, has been a full-time Caterpillar employee for 15 years and consulted with the company for the eight years prior. Her current title is IT Project Manager, though she wears many hats in the company. Andrews joined Toastmasters three years ago. She credits her Toastmasters training with the success she's enjoying in her current

"I firmly believe developing my Toastmaster skills will open the door to new opportunities," she says. "My career growth was at a dead end without verbal communication skills. As I develop the necessary communication skills, I am more confident that I am a valuable and contributing member of the Caterpillar team."

(Continued on page 15)


Caterpillar

(Continued from page 7)

Arasapan, of Singapore, values the leadership track. “Coming from a corporate club, the leadership track is a highly beneficial way of developing employees’ leadership qualities – mentoring, creating and executing a vision,” he says. “This

development is critical to preparing our employees of today to be leaders of tomorrow.”

As Cat University’s curriculum promotes an increasingly balanced combination of communication and leadership practice, benefits to the company are already emerging. Andrews says, “I am now able to speak to larger audiences composed of upper management and their

direct reports. I could never have done that successfully prior to my Toastmaster development.” Then she notes, “I also believe I do a better job leading business meetings and discussion groups.” 

Beth Black is an associate editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine. Reach her at [**bblack@toastmasters.org**](mailto:bblack@toastmasters.org).

Todd Newton:

On Top of His Game

By Julie Bawden Davis

Like many children, Todd Newton listened to the radio, but unlike his peers, he didn't tune in for the latest pop hits. "It was the voices that came on between songs that hypnotized me," says the television personality and Toastmaster. "At the age of 10, I wanted to grow up and be on the radio. Somehow I knew that I would one day speak in front of thousands of people."

Newton's youthful prediction proved true. Not only has he done extensive radio and TV work, but he is a sought-after presenter. In August, he will be the keynote speaker at Toastmasters' International Convention in Palm Desert, California.

For over a decade, Newton brought viewers face to face with Hollywood's biggest stars, hosting programs such as E! Entertainment Television's red carpet coverage of the *Academy Awards*. He has hosted a variety of TV game shows, including *Hollywood Showdown* and *Whammy!* on the Game Show Network. Currently, he's presiding over *The Price is Right Live!* at Bally's hotel in Las Vegas – it is a stage version of the famous TV game show.

The Boston, Massachusetts, resident is set to unveil a new hosting adventure, one with a cross-cultural theme. Newton is hosting *World's Wildest Game Shows*, a series debuting on the Travel Channel in late August. The program features him traveling around the world to compete in a variety of game shows.

"As a game show host, I find the series particularly fascinating because it displays differences in culture as to

Toastmaster and TV game-show veteran will keynote the International Convention in Palm Desert.

what people find entertaining," says Newton, a member of Quincy Toastmasters in Quincy, Massachusetts. "The level of competition, the varying set developments, and the extremes to which contestants are willing to go are so different from country to country.


"For instance, in our pilot episode I traveled to Japan to compete on a show. Here in the U.S., I've been on *Hollywood Squares*, *The Dating Game* and *Lingo*, but I've never had to do what I did over there. To win, I had to carry a 15-pound octopus in my mouth while completing an obstacle course on a tricycle."

The series is slated to air for five episodes, on Thursdays at 10 p.m., from August 26 to September 23.

A Nod to Nana

The 40-year-old native of St. Louis, Missouri, credits his grandmother, Eleanor Kruse, a comedienne in the St. Louis area during World War II, for inspiring in him a love of live speaking. "My Nana was one of my greatest role models," says Newton, who has her name tattooed on his right arm. "She was always able to bring out the very best in people... I also saw, through her, how wonderful it is to be able to entertain and make people smile."

Although already a media veteran, Newton became a Toastmaster in late 2007 to further improve his communication skills. "I joined because I wanted each moment on stage to be as beneficial as it could be for the listeners," he says, noting that the attention of the audience is a great gift. "As a Toastmaster you learn that a connection with your audience is the key to an effective presentation."



“There is no better organization to improve your professional and personal life.”

– Todd Newton

Todd Newton, a member of the Quincy Toastmasters in Massachusetts, will host *World’s Wildest Game Shows*, debuting in August on the Travel Channel.

He particularly appreciates the evaluation process in club meetings. “In television you don’t receive the same kind of feedback that you do in a Toastmasters meeting,” says Newton. “Or when you’re speaking to an audience of 5,000, you may get e-mails or Facebook messages if it’s well-received, but as far as getting a true evaluation, nothing compares with Toastmasters. There’s great benefit to receiving constructive criticism.”

When he became a member, Newton lived in Los Angeles, so he joined a club in nearby Woodland Hills: the Dynamic Toastmasters. “I was impressed with how self-motivated and un-intimidated Todd is,” says Cookie Horwitz, a member of the club. She praises Newton’s warmth and charisma, saying, “He’s always candid about himself without hitting you over the head with his message.”

The TV host, who is also a certified life coach and runs his own coaching organization, switched to the Toastmasters club in Quincy – a city just outside of Boston – when he relocated to Massachusetts a couple of years later.

Newton has already visited a variety of Toastmasters clubs. For much of the year, he is on the road, giving speeches or working on TV projects, and he says that whatever city he’s in – Miami, Las Vegas, New York – he makes it a point to visit a local Toastmasters club. He’s seen all kinds of clubs – and he’s impressed:

“There is no better organization to improve your professional and personal life,” he says.

When working toward his Competent Communicator award, Newton gave more than half of his 10 speeches at clubs he visited. Speaking in diverse club settings is enriching, he says. “You get a different perspective when you visit other clubs. I met tons of great people.”

Radio Roots

Newton first hit the airwaves at 19, when he landed a job as a disc jockey at a St. Louis radio station. From there, his rise was rapid. He spun records at a few Midwestern stations and then held high-profile jobs in New York and Los Angeles. At one point, he was featured in *Seventeen* magazine as one of the hottest DJs in America.

Newton is grateful to his father, Jim Newton, for encouraging him to recognize and seize life’s every opportunity. This enterprising approach led Todd to TV work early in his career. When he interviewed for the DJ job in Los Angeles, he stayed in Universal City, next door to the MTV (Music Television Network) offices.

“I thought, Who knows when I’ll be back in the area?” recalls Newton. “So I walked over and asked to speak to someone regarding becoming a VJ (video jockey). The receptionist looked at me strangely, but put me through to Curt Sharp, and I owe much of my career to him.” The television programming executive, whose credits include *The Golden Globe Awards*, took the time to see Newton and referred him to his first agent.

That strategic visit catapulted Newton's career. By 1995 he was a host for E! Entertainment Television and he entered the game show arena in 1999 with *Hollywood Showdown*. While he enjoyed his red carpet work, Newton has a special affinity for game shows.

"What I love about game shows is that I literally stand next to people when they receive money or a prize that will change their lives," says Newton, who has given away \$26 million on air in cash and prizes to date. "I can also watch game shows with my children. [Game shows] are just good, clean fun."

TV producer Sande Stewart has created more than a dozen game shows and recalls the first time he met Newton. When he was auditioning to host a show, "We invited Todd in to do a run-through, which is an informal, in-office, mock playing of the game. Within minutes I knew he had everything you look for in a host. He was energetic, sympathetic and likeable, and it seemed like he would relate to the camera."

Call Him Coach

In 2006, Newton started Todd Newton Life Strategies (TNLS), a life-coaching organization that helps entrepreneurs, artists, athletes and business leaders reach new levels of personal and professional development. The

company is growing rapidly, opening several new offices throughout the U.S., he says.

"Coaching isn't therapy," he explains. "It opens up your thinking and shows you different angles and perspectives for achieving your dreams and can be more valuable than people realize – even for already-motivated individuals. When you talk with a life coach who sees your life from a different perspective and is not locked into your frame of mind, he or she can suggest you try different tactics that often turn out to be great insights. As the legendary Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry said: 'A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, who has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you have always known you could be.'"

Through his Health and Wealth seminars, Newton offers presentations by a variety of speakers on a range of topics, including his own signature presentation, "Put Your Best Into Action," urging listeners to look inward for the keys to happiness, success and fulfillment. That is the same title of his International Convention keynote speech, which will be tailored to the subject of communication skills – and how anyone can become a more compelling communicator.

Newton also works with the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's disease research and the

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“Every morning when I wake up, I ask myself what I can do that day to improve myself,” he says. “When the sun goes down, I can rest easily knowing that I helped create something worthwhile.” 

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.

Todd Newton will deliver the keynote speech at the International Convention on Wednesday, August 11, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, California. To learn more, visit www.toastmasters.org/2010convention. For more information about Todd Newton, visit www.Toddnewtononline.com.

2010 International Convention to Showcase Top Speakers

Todd Newton is part of a top-rate lineup of speakers at this year's International Convention. The four-day event in August will feature two keynoters – Newton at the Opening Ceremonies and Golden Gavel award recipient Carolyn Kepcher. Kepcher will address the audience at the Golden Gavel Dinner held in her honor Friday, August 13. A business leader, writer and television personality, she is a former executive vice president for The Trump Organization who now dispenses career advice through her new venture, **WorkHerWay.com**.

The education sessions will focus on communication and leadership, with presenters offering tips and tools that everyone can benefit from.

The presenters are:

- **Lynne Brasher, DTM** – Businesswoman and veteran Toastmaster. In “Lead On!,” Brasher will explain the importance of “servant leadership” and “emotional intelligence.”
- **Ted Corcoran, DTM** – Past Toastmasters International President. He'll co-present a session with Past International Director Tammy Miller called “Communicating for Personal and Professional Success.”
- **Mark Eaton** – Former pro basketball star, who played 12 seasons for the Utah Jazz. He'll draw on his basketball background to share “The Four Commitments of a Winning Team.”
- **Jim Key, DTM** – Toastmasters' 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking will share “Speaking and Leadership Lessons to Laugh About.”
- **Terri Langhans** – Marketing consultant and author of *The 7 Marketing Mistakes Every Business Makes (And How to Fix Them)*. She will share her expertise in “How to Make Your Marketing Stand Out and Get Better Results.”
- **Connie Merritt** – Life-balance expert and author of *Too Busy for Your Own Good*, Merritt will share time-management tips in “Too Busy for Your Own Good – Get that Spark for Life.”
- **Lance Miller, DTM** – Toastmasters' 2005 World Champion of Public Speaking will share “Finding Your Voice” and how to speak about topics you are passionate about.
- **Tammy Miller, DTM, PID** – Speech coach and author of *My Life is Just Speech Material ... And, So is Yours* will co-present with Ted Corcoran (see above).
- **Sheryl Roush, DTM** – Internationally recognized motivational speaker and a Toastmasters Accredited Speaker. In “Be Real! How to Speak with Spirit and Sparkle,” Roush will offer trademark tactics for dazzling from the podium.
- **Sasha Strauss** – This brand-strategy expert and managing director of the firm Innovation Protocol will talk about “The World of Brands: How Brand Strategy Makes and Molds Minds.”
- **Rory Vaden** – Self-discipline strategist, World Championship of Public Speaking finalist and co-founder of Southwestern Consulting. Vaden will talk about “Great Leaders are Great Speakers: Bringing Your Leadership A.L.I.V.E. through Persuasive Speaking.”

The International Convention takes place Aug. 11-14 at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, California. To learn more about the Convention and the complete schedule of events, visit www.toastmasters.org/2010Convention.

We're all winners when we grow and improve.

By Rory Vaden

My View from Number Two

If you've ever lost a contest or an election, or been turned down for a job or even a date, then you understand the agony that comes from ending up on the short end of the subjective stick. In 2007, I finished 2nd at the World Championship of Public Speaking. I was the first runner-up,

the Number One loser in the Toastmasters world. I'm now 27, and the two years leading up to that moment and the three years following it have been a wild ride.

Vikas Jhingran won that year's World Championship, and he was very deserving of the title. But what about the rest of us participants in the International Speech Contest? Were we all "losers"? To all those who have ever entered a contest and come up short, and to anyone who has ever put their heart and soul into a cause and lost, I have a message: Success is never owned, it's only rented; and whether you win or lose, the rent is still due every day.

Whether you are one of the amazing World Champions of Public Speaking or one of the thousands like me who never quite won the big one, *all* of us are still on the journey to real success. Success is not about a trophy, a title or a finish line. Success is, as the great teenage philosopher Hannah Montana says, "all about the climb."

We often convince ourselves that if we reach a certain pinnacle, then we can officially be designated as "successful" forever. It doesn't work that way, however, not even for

those who do become "champions." While the saying "no one remembers who came in second" is true, it's also true that after enough time, no one remembers who came in first, either.

For example, can you name the last five winners of the Academy Awards for Best Actor? How about the last five gold medalists in the Olympics 400-meter run? Or the last five Nobel Peace Prize recipients?

I doubt that most people could answer these questions. These were not runners-up – they were the very best, yet how quickly the world forgets about them. Competitions are truly not about whether you win or lose, but about the person you become in the process.

Things We Can't Control

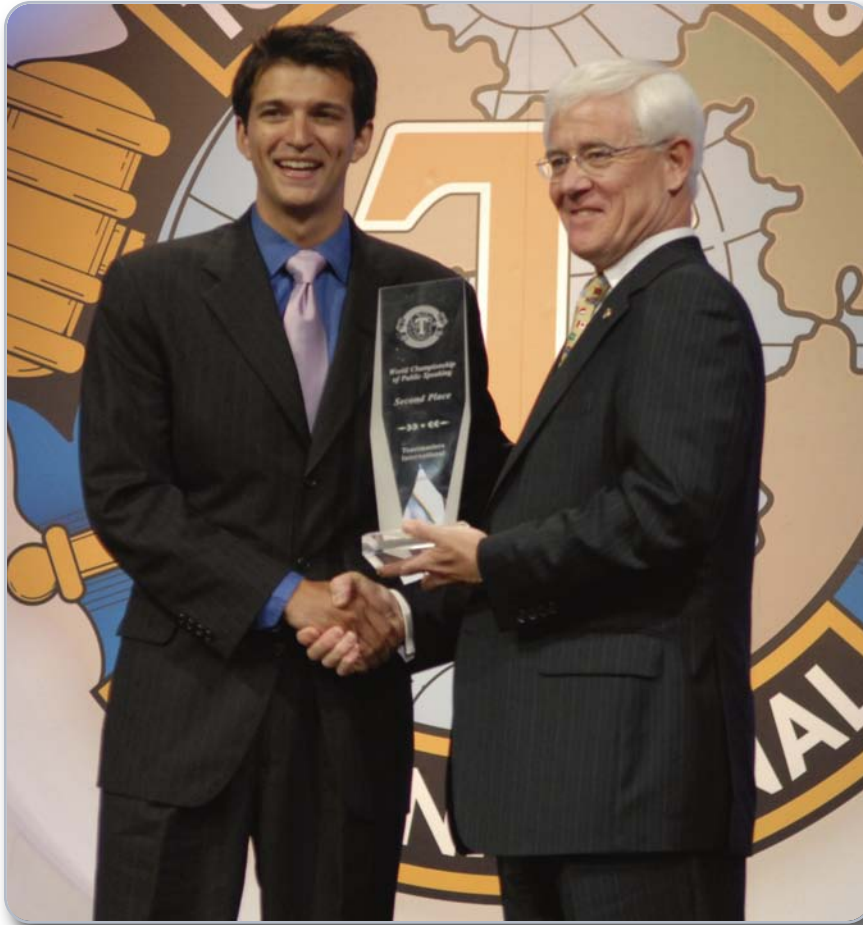
Frustration and despair set in when we're focused and concerned about things that are beyond our control. Subjective judgment in a competition is always outside the control of the competitors. We have no say in which individuals are selected to judge, where they sit or how they're feeling that day. While judges determine who goes home with the trophy, they don't determine who goes home a success.

If we as competitors allow the subjective opinions of others to determine whether or not our journey has been a success, then we have failed. If we allow circumstances outside of our control to dictate the result of our pursuits, then we have failed. But if we press on toward our goals in spite of what may happen, then we're a success. If, whether we win or we lose, we recognize the growth that is still available and we choose to persist; then we win. As Toastmasters who carry the flame of success and inspiration out into the world, we must understand this principle. We win when we realize that success is never owned, it is only rented, and the rent is due every day.

Things We Can Control

We do have control over the amount of time and effort we invest into bettering our skills and our organization. When we put our self-esteem into our work habits, the success we experience is not based on the results of any one event. We can lose almost any battle and still continue to win the war.

One of the best lessons I learned was from Darren LaCroix, Toastmasters 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking. He said, "Stage time is what matters – not age time." Since the 2007 World Championship, I've been fortunate as a professional speaker to speak with and for people like Zig Ziglar, John Maxwell and Dave Ramsey. I've



◀ **Rory Vaden (left) is congratulated by Toastmasters' then-International President Chris Ford on his 2nd-place finish at the 2007 World Championship of Public Speaking.**

been able to build a highly successful international speaking and training company, Southwestern Consulting, and I'm currently raising thousands of dollars for charity by climbing the 10 tallest buildings in the world. Because of some of these successes, many people think, "Wow, this kid's lucky he was born with so much natural talent." I'll be the first to acknowledge that I've been blessed with a great deal. But I wasn't just born a great speaker or great leader. It's the "stage time" that has made the difference.

From the day I decided to pursue the World Championship of Public Speaking – October 27, 2005 – until the day I earned that second-place finish – August 18, 2007 – I spoke on stage 304 times. The 11 trophies I won along the way did not make me a great speaker, but the stage time did. So I may be fairly young in age time but not in stage time, not in experience.

Getting Past the Discouragement

Today, people see my polished performance as a keynote speaker in front of 1,000 people and think, "Goodness, he's such a great speaker and he's only 27 years old." What they didn't see, though, was when I *bombed* at comedy clubs, got *heckled* in high schools, or performed my speech in front of two people at the back of a Denny's restaurant. What people also didn't see was how distraught I really was the night I came in *second* at the International Speech Contest.

It's a characteristic of all successful champions, though, that they are made "after hours," "behind the scenes," "off-camera," and in "training camp." Successful people know they have to pay a price to get better. They know they have total control over how much they work. And they know if they work hard enough for long enough, they'll eventually look back and

realize that somewhere along the way they've become successful.

If I can attribute my success to one element, it is discipline and getting myself to do things I don't feel like doing. Whether I win or I lose, I know that tomorrow I must get up and recommit to paying my dues. Can you bring yourself to relentlessly pursue the goals that matter most to you?

In the End

Toastmasters is not about contests, but about the preparation that we are all going through to become better communicators and leaders. It's about the people you help, the people who help you, and those people who selflessly serve to keep the clubs and our organization running week in and week out.

So to the tens of thousands of my fellow "losers" and also to our winners, I say: What sweet victory we can achieve through Toastmasters. Whether you finished first, second or dead last in any race, contest or vote, there is no one ruling that will destine you for success or failure. Success is our choice and one that we must make each and every day. The real question is, *Are you willing to pay the rent again tomorrow?*

So how's the view from Number Two? For people like you and me, it can still be very sweet. **T**

Rory Vaden, MBA, is a motivational speaker, author and co-founder of Southwestern Consulting. He will present an education session at the Toastmasters International Convention in August. For more information about Rory, visit www.roryvaden.com

Join Twitter to connect with Toastmasters members and events around the globe.

Expanding Your World with a Tweet

As Toastmasters, we love our club meetings. They are fun and educational. We get the opportunity to meet new people and learn about them. It is a rewarding environment that benefits each participant. How can we stay in touch with members away from the weekly club meeting?

Twitter can enhance your Toastmasters experience. You can connect with other members around the world and discuss clubs, projects and any other topic of importance to you. Twitter is a microblogging system that allows you to communicate with others using 140 characters or less. It lets you tell the world what's on your mind and find out what others are thinking about. Many clubs have a Twitter account that they use to spread the word about Toastmasters events and attract new members.

Getting started on Twitter is easy. You begin by creating an account. Just follow these easy steps:

1 Open your browser and navigate to <http://twitter.com>. Click the yellow "Join Today" button to begin the process.

2 You will be asked for four pieces of information on the page that comes up:

- **Full name.** Enter your real name here.
- **Username.** Enter something resembling your real name. You want to make it easy for people to remember you. I follow people who don't use their names and it's hard to remember their usernames. I have to look them up. If you decide to change your username, you can. Think twice about this, however, because your followers may not be able to find you.
- **Password.** Your password must be six characters or more. Choose a mix of upper-case and lower-case letters, digits and special characters (I have used _@ and #.) Remember: Passwords based on real words are not very safe.
- **E-mail address.** Twitter will confirm your account using this e-mail address. Moreover, if you forget your password, Twitter will be able to send you a temporary password.

3 Create your account by clicking on the "Create my account" button.

4 Prove that you are human. Unfortunately, there are people who will use computer programs to

create hundreds of accounts and then use them to send spam. To protect us from this, Twitter will show you an image displaying two words. You must type the words you see and click "Finish" to prove that a live person, not an automated system, is creating the account. If you don't enter the correct words you can keep trying. Once this is done, your account will be ready for you to begin finding others.

5 Browse topics to find people who share your interests. Following another user allows you to see their tweets (messages) in the timeline on your Twitter homepage (or cell phone). Feel free to browse the list of the topics on the left. When you click on a topic, a list of Twitter users related to that topic is displayed on the right. You can click the "follow" button to follow any of them. Once you finish browsing, click the "Next step: friends" button at the bottom of your browser Window.

Please note: Twitter will then ask for your e-mail address and password. This is intended to scan your contacts and allow you to see which friends are on Twitter. I really don't like allowing applications to access my e-mail password and contacts, so I never do this. I think it is

Follow the Convention on Twitter!

One of the best things about Twitter is you can keep track of Toastmasters members and events in real-time. A special Toastmasters Convention Twitter account has been created so that you can follow the happenings at the International Convention in August even if you can't attend. And if you are attending, you can stay abreast of the latest activities and changes by sending tweets directly to your cell phone.


Once you have a Twitter account set up, it's easy to follow the Convention on Twitter. Simply search for **@TICConvention** in the "Find People" search box on your Twitter homepage. Alternately, you can visit the Toastmasters Convention homepage at www.toastmasters.org/2010Convention and click the Twitter button. Sign up now to receive pre-Convention tweets!



and add a photo. A photo says, "Hey, I am a real person." Twitter users like following real people. You can do this by selecting the "Profile" menu. Be sure to read the Twitter "help" section.

You can follow someone at any time, and you will see their tweets.

While it's great to find out what others are doing, it's also fun to share your activities with your friends. Toward the top of your Twitter homepage window you'll see "What's happening?" with a rectangle under it. Click in the rectangle. Now type, "This is my first Tweet!" and then click the "Tweet" button.

You have now officially tweeted. Congratulations! You're now a full-fledged member of the Twitter online community! 

Jeff Bailey is a computer consultant and trainer in Cary, North Carolina. He writes about presentation skills on his blog, *Wired Presentations*. Reach him at wiredpresentations.com or on Twitter at twitter.com/Jeff_Bailey.

best to start with a small group of friends to learn to use the system – together. So disregard that request. Instead, click "Next step: Others" and search for anyone on Twitter.

6 Search for people you know and others who interest you. Feel free to search for me. To do this, enter "Jeff Bailey" in the search field and click the "Search" button. I should be listed near the top. To follow

me, select the "follow" button to the left of the profile. Don't worry if you don't get a chance to do this: You can always find people to follow. Twitter search is easy and you can use it at any time. Now click the "Next step: You're done!" button.

Tweeting Time

You are now a Twitter user. This is just the beginning. Take some time to explore Twitter. Create a profile


Caterpillar

(Continued from page 7)

Arasapan, of Singapore, values the leadership track. "Coming from a corporate club, the leadership track is a highly beneficial way of developing employees' leadership qualities – mentoring, creating and executing a vision," he says. "This

development is critical to preparing our employees of today to be leaders of tomorrow."

As Cat University's curriculum promotes an increasingly balanced combination of communication and leadership practice, benefits to the company are already emerging. Andrews says, "I am now able to speak to larger audiences composed of upper management and their

direct reports. I could never have done that successfully prior to my Toastmaster development." Then she notes, "I also believe I do a better job leading business meetings and discussion groups." 

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



What is
charisma
and how
can you
get it?

Charisma:

The **Magic** and th

By Caren Schnur Neile, Ph.D., ATMS

You know the expression “she lights up a room”? I have a friend who does just that. If Ann is around, all eyes naturally turn to her, even if more physically attractive women are in the room. Whenever she shares a new idea for a project or an outing, her friends are eager to get involved.

She recently left her employer to set up her own company and her clients followed without the slightest hesitation. And most importantly, she makes people feel good when she's around, as if we're in the center of things, and something magical could happen at any moment.

Anne has "it": that certain combination of personality and vitality that compels us to pay attention and leaves us wanting more. That's charisma. The word comes from Greek language; the literal translation is "gift of grace."

Charisma denotes extraordinary personal charm and magnetism, an ability to connect with others physically, intellectually and emotionally. It is usually accompanied by tremendous powers of persuasion.

Clearly, charisma – used wisely – is a wonderful communication tool. But even if you don't naturally have that quality of personal magnetism, you can work on it. You can make yourself more charismatic by doing the following:

- Make a point to feel and express your emotions, rather than denying or repressing them.
- Continually improve your Toastmasters skills, such as vocal variety, eye contact and focused listening.
- Be optimistic and enthusiastic about the world around you.

"People who have that certain extra something are not sitting with a lot of negative emotion," says Margaret Page, a Toastmaster from British Columbia, Canada. "They're not carrying around this black bag of negative thoughts that is weighing them down."

Who Has Charisma?

Whether or not we can all precisely define charisma, we know it when we see it. Think of former U.S. Presidents

e Menace

Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan, or ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, all of whom were known to charm even their fiercest political opponents. Picture Elvis Presley (not surprisingly, a favorite of Clinton's), whose taped appearances are almost impossible to turn away from, whatever you think of his music. Then there are the people we all know – the boss, co-worker, family member or friend who seems to be at the center of every party or meeting she attends.

As Toastmasters, we have all seen speakers and leaders who have that certain magic spark that draws us in.

Charismatic individuals tend to hold our attention with some combination of appearance, energy and a way of making us feel special when we're around them. It's not typically something we can put our finger on – a flash of

"What's also important to remember is that charisma can be developed."

blue eyes, perhaps, or a dazzling smile. Whatever it is, by definition, few of us are immune to its power.

It should come as no surprise that charismatic people tend to be more successful and better liked than their peers. Writing about charisma a century ago, the German sociologist Max Weber noted that charismatic leaders inspire devotion in their followers, making them effective agents of change.

However, charisma is a tool, and like all tools, it can be used to fulfill a variety of goals, including malevolent ones. Many Latin American caudillos (authoritarian military leaders) and African "Big Men" greatly inspired their followers, only to wreak long-term devastation on their countries. The Rev. Jim Jones induced 900 people to kill themselves in Jonestown, Guyana. Communist leader Josip Broz Tito was responsible for a quarter million deaths in a one-year period in Yugoslavia. Charles Manson incited his "family" to murder in cold blood. Perhaps the most dramatic example in history of charisma's danger is Adolf Hitler, who sent 6 millions Jews to their deaths at the hands of his Nazi regime.

Pathos vs. Logos

Charismatic speakers effectively turn down the volume on the cognitive centers of our brains while sweeping us away in a flood of feeling. To put it in rhetorical terms, they emphasize pathos, or emotion, to the detriment of logos, or intellect.

While it can be extremely exciting to be swept away, we don't always want to cede control of our faculties in that way. That brings up the question: How can you make sure you're not persuaded by a charismatic speaker to do something you shouldn't do? You can protect yourself by following a few simple rules:

- **Before you make decisions or take action based on a charismatic speaker's appeals, step out of the situation.** Leave the room. Calm down and allow yourself to think logically outside the sway of the individual. If you are prevented from doing so, that should be a red flag that logical examination of the message could cause you to change your mind.

- **Do your research.** Check with reputable people or other sources to better judge the ethos, or credibility, of the speaker.
- **Try to get a copy of the speaker's words in writing.** That may eliminate much of your emotional connection to the speech. Next, outline the proposals, ignoring the most flowery or poetic sentiments. What is it, really, that you are being asked to buy into?

Of course, many charismatic speakers have legitimate and worthy goals. Those who do will be glad to give you the time, space and information required to pause and reflect on them.

What If I Don't Have Charisma?

First of all, don't sell yourself short: You may have charisma and simply not be particularly flashy. U.S. President Barack Obama tends to display a quiet charisma, which helped get him elected.

What's more, a lack of charisma doesn't necessarily doom us to failure. For one thing, the importance of that quality can vary, depending on the career you choose. Charisma isn't as vital for a job in the sciences, for example, as it is in politics and the arts. And even then, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and several of Australia's recent prime ministers all did quite well for

“Charismatic people are interesting in part because they are interested in us.”

themselves without being particularly charismatic. Of course, they had other gifts to compensate. Those lacking in personal charm may have qualities that charismatic folks sometimes lack: a good character and a focus on content over appearances, intellect over emotions, and, above all, old-fashioned work ethic.

But what's also important to remember is that charisma can be developed. Here are a few tips on ramping up your charisma quotient:

- Charismatic people tend to be – or at least feel – physically attractive. I'm not advocating cosmetic surgery. Rather, maintaining good health and grooming will encourage people to seek you out. Most of us will never have movie-star looks. But we can certainly learn to make the most of what we do have.
- Research shows that charismatic people in many cultures appear to feel and communicate emotions more

strongly than does the general public. (Conversely, in some cultures it is the control of deeply felt emotion that is found to be compelling. This is important to check out when you are presenting to an audience outside of your own culture.) In other words, if your culture supports this, make it a point to express joy, anger, sadness, etc., rather than denying that you are moved in certain situations.

- According to Tony Alessandra, Ph.D., author of *Seven Keys to Developing the Magnetism that Leads to Success*, the key to achieving charisma is to improve your communication skills. The speaking tools learned in Toastmasters, such as vocal variety and speaking rate, will go a long way toward enhancing your likeability and persuasiveness. Nonverbal skills, including eye contact, gestures, facial expressions – don't forget to smile – good posture, a professional wardrobe and the effective use of time and space are also part of the equation.
- Be in the moment. Margaret Page, the Vancouver-based Toastmaster, who is also an etiquette and protocol consultant, says that a key quality in people who stand out is they are truly focused on the present. “They are at ease in this particular moment,” says Page, a member of Sunshine Toastmasters in Sechelt, British Columbia. “They are fully present.”
- Good listeners are often described as good conversationalists. While this may sound counterintuitive, Toastmasters know that listening is a vital part of conversation. Charismatic people are interesting in part because they are interested in us. Who doesn't want to be around a person like that?
- Individuals who exude the spirit of optimism draw people to them. And it's not just what you say to others. When you think mostly positive thoughts, it gives you a more self-assured, appealing quality, notes Page. “I call it ‘shining from the inside out.’”
- Be informed. If people are going to want to listen to you, you must have something to say! Take a class, and keep up with current events through the Internet or other media. Before going to sleep, you might want to read a book on a subject that interests you.

As you can see, charisma is a powerful tool that most of us can acquire. Once you've got it, keep in mind your responsibility to use it wisely. And then, world, watch out! Whether you're in the office, on the podium or at a party, there'll be no stopping you. 📖

Caren Schnur Neile, Ph.D., ATMS, directs the South Florida Storytelling Project at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. She also chairs the National Storytelling Network. You can reach Caren at cneile@fau.edu.

Sharing your expertise can bring great rewards.

The Ultimate Mentor

† Imagine that you have a son and circumstances dictate you have to leave him in the care of another person for several years. This person would be entrusted with replacing you and teaching your son all he would need to know about life and how to survive on his own as an adult.

This was a task faced by Odysseus, in Greek mythology, when he left to fight the Trojan Wars. He entrusted the care and rearing of his son, Telemachus, to a wise old friend and teacher named Mentor. Thus, the term *mentor* was born. Used as a noun, *mentor* means: a wise and trusted guide, advisor or teacher. Used as a verb, to *mentor*, or *mentoring*, means: to serve as a trusted guide, advisor or teacher.

Being a mentor for newer members in a Toastmasters club is one of the organization's most-challenging, least-defined and often-neglected duties. Yet when done right, it can be one of the most rewarding, fulfilling and beneficial experiences in developing our communication and leadership skills.

If you're considering becoming a mentor, you should understand the following points:

- **Why be a mentor?** The final step in developing our skills in Toastmasters is learning how to help others become competent communicators and leaders. Being a mentor may seem like it is all for the mentee, but the real benefit comes from knowing we can help someone better their life.

- **What does a mentor do?** Take a look at people who helped and

mentored you. What qualities did they have? What was it about them that you admired?

- ▶ Chances are they were *honest* with you; if you did well, they told you so. And if you messed up, they told you so.
- ▶ You probably got the feeling that they truly *cared* about you.
- ▶ They were *interested* in you and in your success.
- ▶ They *understood* what you were struggling with.
- ▶ A mentor is a friend as well as a teacher and advisor.

- **Apply Toastmasters skills as you mentor others.** As a mentor, *observe* and *listen* to your mentee. Speech evaluation develops the ability to give concise and constructive feedback and to inspire a person to continue to improve and achieve. In mentoring, it is more important to find and reinforce what the person is doing *right* than to find what they are doing wrong. Our actions should inspire them to keep going forward.

- **Toastmasters is a process.** Toastmasters – like many of life's learning experiences – is a process. No one gets 100 percent 100 percent of the time. So as a mentor, your job is to help your assigned person continue to make gradual changes and avoid becoming discouraged.

- **Helping them identify and achieve goals.** Help the person to identify and achieve his or her own goals. Be careful not to insert your own agenda, but instead encourage the person to create realistic objectives. Empower the person to think and act.

- **Keep the big picture of Toastmasters in mind.** We all have a bad speech, lose a contest, or receive a negative speech evaluation. These can be upsetting, invalidating and discouraging. Help the person you mentor to keep the big picture of Toastmasters in focus. Toastmasters is a learning process, for everyone – including speakers, judges and speech evaluators. There is always something to learn from the experience. No matter how tough it may seem, the program prepares us to handle life outside of Toastmasters.

- **Toastmasters works if it is fun and friendly.** Keep it fun and friendly for the person you mentor. Watch their body language. Be alert for any negative issues they might experience, and help the person tackle them.

- **It is okay to not know an answer.** You don't have to have an answer for every question. Be honest, caring, interested and willing to make a mistake.

The *ultimate* benefit of Toastmasters membership is becoming someone who can help someone else become a competent leader and communicator. Are you ready to put these points into practice and discover this for yourself? †

Lance Miller, DTM, is a member of the Renaissance Speakers club in Hollywood, California. He was Toastmasters' 2005 World Champion of Public Speaking and will lead an education session at the International Convention in August. Reach him at lancemillerspeaks.com.

Recalling the explosive growth of Toastmasters clubs in Asia.

A Bamboo Bursts Through

In July, Toastmasters International's global structure will undergo a major shift. Districts and clubs worldwide will be divided into 14 regions, replacing the current system of eight North American regions and several districts not assigned to regions (DNARs). What seemed unthinkable just a decade ago – this kind of membership growth outside of North America – has become a reality. I find myself growing nostalgic as I reminisce about how it all came to be at least in my part of the world: Asia.

In the Beginning

Toastmasters came to Asia in 1952 with the chartering of the Tamaraw Toastmasters club in Manila, Philippines. Other clubs chartered in that decade that are still active today include the Hong Kong Toastmasters club in China (1954), Tokyo Toastmasters club in Japan (1954), Bangkok Toastmasters club in Thailand (1955) and Taipei Toastmasters club in Taiwan (1958).

Growth was slow. It took the clubs in the Philippines 29 years to become a provisional district (District 75). Twelve years after that, the clubs in the rest of Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia) were finally grouped together to form District 51. Clubs in Taiwan and Japan were grouped into Territorial Councils when they reached 20 clubs per country, though they were unable to build high-enough numbers to become districts for many years.

Growth

Les Brown, the 1994 recipient of Toastmasters' Golden Gavel Award, tells the story of how when planting Chinese bamboo seeds, one has to water the ground for five years – without anything growing. But if the planter is patient and diligent, after five years the bamboo will shoot out of the ground and grow to more than 100 feet tall in a few weeks. Similarly, patience paid off with Toastmasters in this part of the world. In the mid-1990s, members in Asia began to discover something new: each other.

In 1994, I was a lone visitor from the Philippines to the District 51 conference. The attitude of the conference participants blew my mind; they were all so enthusiastic! The following year, I invited Toastmasters from around Asia to attend the District 75 conference. Ten members from Taiwan and two from Japan attended. They, too, immediately realized the possibilities that had eluded them. They promised right then and there that their clubs would achieve district recognition within the decade.

New Clubs Take Off

With more visits to each other's conferences, the bamboo began to shoot out of the ground. Fueled by a surge of new clubs, Taiwan was recognized as District 67 and Japan as District 76. Districts 51 and 75 jointly chartered nearly 200 clubs in a two-year period (1996-1998).

"The most important success factor I can put my finger on is the attitude of Toastmasters in Asia,"

says Past International Director Augustine Lee of Singapore. "When we want to do something, we make sure we do it well and are recognized for it, or we don't do it at all." Clearly, the Toastmasters leaders in Asia embraced excellence, and the more they saw other Asian districts succeed, the more they wanted to succeed as well.

Another event that helped water the bamboo occurred in 2000, when the Toastmasters International Board of Directors allowed provisional districts to join district officer training at the International Convention. Along with District 59 (Central Europe), the provisional districts of Taiwan and Japan proved the Board's decision wise, as they immediately grew by leaps and bounds.

Around that same time, the clubs in India and Sri Lanka, receiving advice and support from Past International President Dilip Abayasekara (2005–2006), joined hands in forming a Territorial Council, and in short order, became District 82. Likewise, in China, Keith Ostergard (now an International Director) of Beijing, along with his ex-pat counterparts Warwick Fahy in Shanghai and Mark Pixley in Guangzhou, pushed to build enough clubs in China to form a Territorial Council. In just one year, enough clubs had formed in the country to become District 85.

Lessons Learned

Did such growth occur because people who want to learn English found an excellent avenue in Toastmasters? Yes, this reason



◀ Enthusiastic Toastmasters pose for a photo during District 51's recent Spring Convention.

▼ Members of the Kota Kinabalu Toastmasters club from Sabah, Malaysia, celebrate their 20-year anniversary at the District 51 convention.



is often cited for rising membership in countries where English is not the first language. District 85 actually gets as many as 50 calls a week from companies wanting to set up Toastmasters clubs to help their employees develop English-speaking skills.

But Past International Director Maimunah Natasha, from Indonesia, offers a contrarian view. She says that often, people don't join Toastmasters because they can't communicate well enough in English, thus "English only" clubs are sometimes a hindrance to optimal growth. In fact, much of the growth in Asia is attributable to the establishment of Toastmasters clubs where the program is conducted in Mandarin, as well as Japanese, Cantonese, Malay, Tamil, Hakka and other languages.

But there is more to it than that. The opportunity to improve regardless of the language spoken, the sense of belonging to a worldwide organization, and a strong and focused leadership all were key factors in the successful growth of Toastmasters clubs in Asia.

Past District Governor Arunasalam Balraj from Sri Lanka says the desire to learn English isn't even a factor in the rising number of clubs in Sri Lanka and India: "India is the largest English-speaking country in the world, so English

is not a problem," he says. "Instead, the need for effective and articulate communication is the one and only reason for [Toastmasters'] growth."

Past District Governor Jack Tsai from Taiwan says people in Taiwan join to improve both English and Mandarin communication skills. He suggests that networking opportunities and the feeling of camaraderie also play a big role. "Many people go to their Toastmasters club to relax and unwind after a hard day's work," adds Past International Director Christine Temblique from the Philippines, where most club meetings are held in the evening.

Past International Director Natasha cites the drive and encouragement of TI leaders: "Motivation and inspiration from leaders are very important in growing a district." International Director Ostergard, of Beijing, says of the growth of Toastmasters in China: "Had there not been the unification of the clubs [in China] to focus our direction, China would still be growing at no more than two to five clubs a year instead of its average of 20-25 annually. Leadership has been the driving force for continued development of our programs."

The Future

The formation of regions outside North America, the election of international directors from each region and the appointment of region advisers marketing will effectively unify districts into a unit focused on growth. Already, District 51 has split yet again and District 82 will soon do likewise. Districts 79 and 85 are waiting in the wings to split. The clubs in South Korea have the potential to become a Territorial Council soon. Truly, the formation of regions outside North America is a giant leap by Toastmasters International toward achieving its vision of making effective communication a worldwide reality. ■

Johnny Uy, DTM, served as Toastmasters International President in 2006–2007. He is a member of the Tai-Pan Club in Cebu City, Philippines.

How to make sure your communication isn't breaking up.

Can You Hear Me Now?

We don't know what we *don't know*, and this is why communication can be challenging. How many of us can honestly say we're 100 percent certain our messages are heard and that we're consistently perceived as confident, credible and trustworthy?

As a leader you must be able to clearly communicate your organization's strategy, vision and value. Most of us are under the blurred assumption that if we communicate a message, it's heard. In reality, your message may not have been heard at all. Worse, it may have been unclear or misunderstood.

As a communications consultant, I've worked with clients ranging from Coca-Cola to the United States Army to AT&T. In 13 years of research, I've repeatedly found that most leaders are not trained in how to communicate effectively. Most individuals continue to climb the corporate ladder for *what* they know rather than *how* they articulate to others what they know.

Suzanne Bates, the author of *Motivate Like a CEO: Communicate Your Strategic Vision and Inspire People to Act!*, says it's critical for leaders to learn the communication skills needed to be powerful motivators.

"If [leaders] aren't communicating effectively, you have bad client relationships [and] lost business opportunities," Bates said in an interview last year with *Chief Learning Officer*

magazine. "There's a real financial cost to organizations when the second- and third-tier leaders aren't good communicators."

How do you know if your communication is breaking up? You can assume it is when what you say isn't consistent with how you say it. For example, someone tells you, "I'm so excited to have this opportunity to work with you" – but says it in a monotone voice with lifeless facial expressions. If, in addition, the person doesn't look you in the eye and is fidgeting with a pen, you can safely conclude that he or she isn't sincere.

But You're Breaking Up

Your communication can also break up with the words you use. Consider the word "but" and be careful of the context you use it in. Let's say you're in the boardroom discussing how to improve sales. A team member says, "I'm really struggling in my territory because most of my clients have cut back on their budgets." You respond: "I understand it hasn't been easy, *but* we have a business to run and you need to increase sales." The tone is negative, resulting in people tuning out after they hear the word "but" ("I like you, but..."). Thus, they're not as motivated.

To be assertive and direct but not negative and critical, replace "but" with the word "and," or form two complete sentences. For

example: "I understand it hasn't been easy. We have a business to run and you need to increase sales." Do you hear the difference in tone and meaning?

Other times, people over-qualify their statements before making their points. I have a client who used to start off his statements to his team by saying, "I'm probably way off base here..." He minimized his credibility and influence with these words. Sometimes when a team member asked him a question, he'd begin his response with, "To be honest with you..." Did this mean he *wasn't* being honest with the team before? Over-qualifying your statements can undercut your authority.

Recently during my communication skills workshop, an executive opened his presentation with: "I want to ask you a question. What is the number one challenge in your role as a leader?" This executive would've had more influence had he opened his presentation immediately with, "What is the number one challenge in your role as a leader?"

People often inadvertently use qualifiers to fill the gap at the start of a sentence. These phrases prevent us from getting to the point, frustrate our listeners and minimize our ability to influence action. Here are some examples of those waffling phrases:

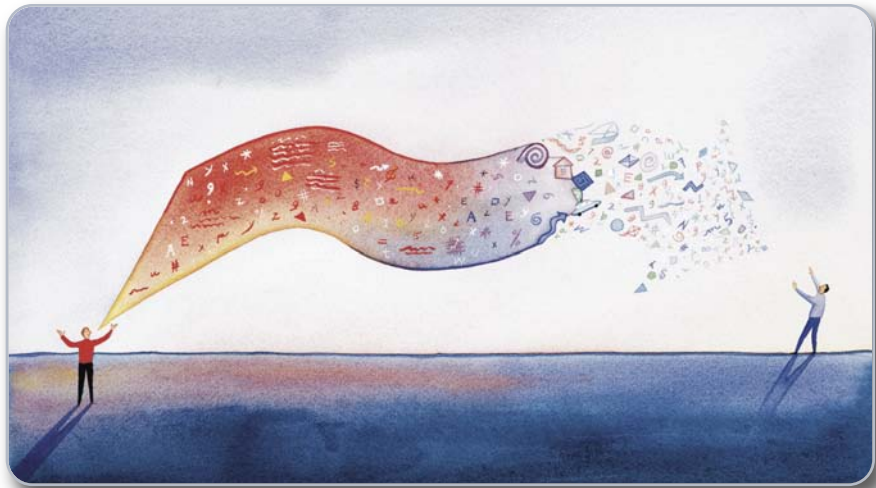
- "I was wondering if we might consider ..."

- “This might be a stupid idea but...”
- “To be honest with you...”
- “I want to ask you a question.”
- “I’d like to tell you a story.”

To communicate a message that impacts and influences people, follow these five tips:

1 Pause – Um, what perception, like, do you form, you know, of a speaker, uh, who uses words that, um, clutter their language? “Knowledgeable,” “credible” and “confident” probably don’t come to mind.

As all Toastmasters know, a key step to good communication is to replace filler words (like “um” and “you know”) with a pause. We use filler words to buy ourselves time – to think about what we want to say. But these words become distracting and your listener can misinterpret your message. Instead, give yourself permission to think on your feet by pausing. This benefits your listeners by providing them time to hear and absorb your message.



your voice needs to be at a 7 or 8 when speaking to a group of 15 or more. When speaking over the phone or to a small group, project your voice at a 4 to 5 level.

Vocal projection has nothing to do with yelling. It’s the realization that you need to use different volume levels so your voice reaches everyone in the room. No one should have to strain to hear you.

4 Gestures – Most individuals I work with fidget with their fingers, rings, hair or pen when speaking. If they don’t fidget, then they

a gesture. Remember not to overdo it: If you’re constantly using gestures, you’re not able to think on your feet and you’re creating static.

5 Get to the Point – How do you know if you’re going on too long or wandering off track? One way is to pay attention to the cues your listeners give you: Are they attentive or fidgeting? To get to the point, stay focused. When you find yourself starting to say too much, pause and put the brakes on!

To get back on track, keep your objective in mind. Think in terms of

“There’s a real financial cost to organizations [when] the second- and third-tier leaders aren’t good communicators.”

In addition, speak in shorter thoughts or sentences.

2 Eye Connection – When speaking to more than two people, connect with one individual for a complete sentence or thought. Take a moment to pause as you transition your eyes from one person to another. Only speak when you see your listener’s eyes, and pause when you look away.

3 Vocal Projection – If you want to be perceived as confident, you must speak loud enough to be heard. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being inaudible and 10 too loud,

unconsciously talk with their hands. Or they do the opposite: They hold their hands and do nothing.

Confident speakers use their gestures to add emphasis to their words. To gesture with purpose, avoid locking your elbows at your sides or creating the same repetitive gesture. Instead, expand your gestures from your sides and let your hands emphasize and describe your message. Effective gestures grab your listeners’ attention. They add energy and inflection to your voice and help you channel your nervous energy.

Add variety by relaxing your arms back to your sides after you complete

what your listeners needs to know, not what you want to tell them. Focus your message on, at most, the three most significant points; it will be easier for you to get to the point and for your listeners to remember your message.

Practice doesn’t make perfect – it makes permanent, so be careful what you practice! **T**

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T

urn the clock back one year and you'd find Toyota Motor Corp. riding high, enjoying an international reputation for high quality and reliability that was almost unsurpassed in the automotive industry. In a blink the car company's world shifted on its axis.

The tumult that's since transpired is well known, as problems with stuck accelerators, faulty brake systems and rollovers knocked Toyota from its lofty perch. These ills threaten to affect the company's reputation and sales for years to come.

What's less understood is Toyota's response to its public-relations crisis, an approach with both flaws and strengths that carries valuable lessons for any organization that suddenly finds itself under siege by the press or public. The Toyota case, along with a string of other recent cases involving celebrities such as David Letterman, companies like Domino's Pizza and Global Crossing, the banking industry and even the venerable Catholic Church, may rewrite the textbooks on how to effectively handle crisis communications in the age of social media.

Chief among those lessons: Don't bury the bad news. To best limit the damage, accept responsibility and promptly communicate the information needed to address them. When possible, use social-media tools to help convey your message.

All kinds of organizations and individuals can face public relations nightmares. Will you be ready if a crisis hits?

Countering Human Nature

The biggest obstacle to handling any such crisis well is – and likely will always be – human nature. When problems emerge, organizations and individuals alike are prone to display the three Ds – *delay*, *deny* and *dismiss*.

"It's natural human instinct to try to bury the worst parts of a story, thinking they won't come out – but they almost always do," says Brad Phillips, founder and president of Phillips Media Relations, a New York-based firm that specializes

**Effective crisis
communication
helps extinguish
the media firestorm.**

PR

**Lessons
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“What you see time and again in crisis situations is that the cost of not communicating quickly and admitting error up front far exceeds the cost of taking those steps.”

- Brad Phillips, Founder of Phillips Media Relations

in crisis-communications consulting. “What you see time and again in crisis situations is that the cost of not communicating quickly and admitting error up front far exceeds the cost of taking those steps.”

Speed and transparency, two factors that can strike fear into the hearts of corporate communicators faced with a crisis, are ironically the most critical to containing public relations damage. Communicating immediately doesn’t make bad stories go away, Phillips says, but it usually makes them shorter lasting and less severe. Tackling problems with a sense of openness and directness also builds all-important credibility during a time when that trait is usually being questioned by onlookers.

Case in point: David Letterman. When the U.S. late-night talk show host became embroiled in a blackmail case that revealed he’d had inappropriate relationships with members of his staff, he wasted little time in going on air, facing the world directly, accepting responsibility and apologizing for his actions. As a result of Letterman’s head-on approach, media coverage of the story quickly died down.

“David Letterman dealt with his problem forthrightly, and only had to deal with it once,” Phillips says. “There’s a belief in crisis communications that you should hold one press conference early on, and encourage journalists to ask every question under the sun until they’re almost exhausted from inquiry. But then you are done and can move on, rather



from saasters

By Dave Zielinski

How To Do It Right: Survival Tips for Crisis Communication

While it's easy to make mistakes in the middle of a crisis, knowing how to react can help mitigate the fallout. Help your group rebuild its good name by doing the following:

- Plan for communications in potential crisis situations. Outline, in advance, what and how your group will communicate with the rest of the world.
- Respond in a timely fashion. Delaying makes it appear that you're covering something up.
- Admit any culpability, as much as you can without legal ramifications.
- Discuss how you plan to make amends.
- Send your messages out on social media platforms.
- Monitor risk factors and work to reduce all risk that exposes your group to a future crisis.

than facing the drip, drip, drip of media reports and theories that extend the story over weeks or months.”

Damage from Delay and Denial

Although Letterman benefited from having another villain in his case (the accused blackmailer), organizations that have taken the opposite tact – delaying, denying or simply hiding in a bunker as problems become known – clearly have paid the price for their evasiveness. In Toyota's case, president and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Akio Toyoda remained silent for days after problems with its cars were made public, and even allowed a lower-level executive to appear before legislative hearings to face the music. (Eventually, Toyoda did travel from Japan, where Toyota Motor Corp. is headquartered, to appear before the United States Congress.)

Cultural aspects also come into play in this particular public-relations dynamic. In contrast to the aggressive American political and media culture, Japan's customs are reserved – giving a quick and forceful response wouldn't come as naturally.

Phillips says while early media coverage about the Toyota crisis focused on the parts defects in the recalled autos, it quickly shifted to executives' questionable handling of the crisis.

“There were very serious accusations against the company. Toyota knew about them but calculated that they shouldn't talk about them publicly yet,” Phillips says. But the public tends to see a crisis through the eyes of its victims, and in this case many visualized a young

mother driving her kids to school in a Toyota vehicle. “For weeks Toyota let go unanswered the question of whether that family was at risk riding in that car, and that damaged its reputation substantially,” Phillips says.

Getting it Fast and Right

Toyota isn't the only company or individual to have reacted slowly to a crisis. When two rogue employees at Domino's Pizza posted a video on YouTube that showed them vandalizing sandwiches and pizzas prior to delivery, company executives were slow to realize how big an Internet sensation the video had become before addressing the situation. Although Domino's CEO posted his own video on YouTube apologizing for the stunt, much of the damage to the company's reputation had already been done.

Even the Catholic Church has come to see, albeit slowly, the value of communicating more openly about problems in its ranks. After going months without directly addressing the new revelations of sexual abuse that made headlines in the international press, Pope Benedict, in a May speech to reporters in Portugal, called the crisis “truly terrifying,” and suggested that high-ranking church officials who downplayed or concealed the problems were at fault.

The speech marked a significant shift in tone from earlier Vatican communications that blamed the media and perceived enemies of the church for the crisis.

In addition, the Pope indicated in the Portugal speech that the Vatican will be changing its practice of handling abuse cases inside the church instead of reporting them to civil authorities.

Says Phillips: “The crisis with the church became so big, in large measure, because of the way they tried to cover it up. They say, ‘It's not the crime, it's the cover up,’ but both were bad in this case.”

With the advent of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook, the media cycle has shrunk from 24 hours to a few hours, or even minutes, says Jason Voiovich, principal and co-founder of the Ecra Creative Group in St. Paul, Minnesota, which specializes in crisis-communication consulting. Bad news spreads like wildfire across social networks, and that chatter – regardless of its veracity – can do untold damage to brand reputations. That puts new pressure on companies to respond quickly in a crisis, but communicators still need to strike the right balance between accuracy and speed.

“Fast is good so long as fast is right,” Voiovich says. “Organizations that handle crisis the best are those that respond quickly, but that also are predictable in its communications, take control of the schedule and tell the press and public what is going to happen when [in terms of responding].”

While you don't want to start sending out tweets 20 minutes after a problem or accusation becomes known, some type of rapid communication is vital, crisis-communication experts say.

"You do have to act immediately, and the only question is what that action is going to be," Phillips says. "In Toyota's case, the immediate crisis wasn't whether its cars were truly defective or not, it was that the public was perceiving them to be defective. Once there is a public perception, you have to act quickly. It doesn't mean you have to shut down production or recall every car. It does mean there needs to be some kind of clear, directed communication to all of the company's stakeholders about the developing situation."

What Toyota Did Right: Social Media

One area where experts give Toyota high marks is in its use of social media to speak directly to customers who now rely on those channels. For example, Jim Lentz, president and CEO of Toyota Motor Sales USA, fielded questions from consumers on Twitter and Digg.com.

"What was interesting is that traditional media reporting was overwhelming negative about Toyota during the crisis, but if you look at social media it was almost two to one in support of the company," says Voiovich, who closely monitored chatter about Toyota on social media networks throughout its crisis. "Toyota did an excellent job of honing and cultivating the social media networks. They didn't egg people on, but they provided them with data and worked hard to engage them. When the traditional media whipped out its sword, Toyota used social media as a shield."

The beleaguered banking industry is also trying to marshal social media forces in its public-relations battle. As it struggles to rebuild the public's trust amid the recession, the industry is taking to the Web. For example, earlier this year Citigroup launched "New.Citi.com," a blog that features Citigroup CEO Vikram Pandit and other high-level executives (as well as low-level employees) trying fervently to win back public support. There are video testimonials, musical interludes and messages aplenty. Most notably, there is a mea culpa from the CEO himself. Pandit says in a video:

"When you look at Citi and what we've been through in the last two years, it's clear we made some mistakes coming into this environment. We have to acknowledge that, we have to take responsibility for what we didn't do correctly"

Northern Rock, a bank in the United Kingdom, was nationalized by the British government soon after it suffered the first run on a UK bank in more than century.

Its Web site reveals tabs for both Corporate Communications and a newsroom. Both contain updates on the bank's financial triumphs as well as challenges.

Don't Overlook Internal Audiences

Equally important as communicating with external audiences amid a crisis is the need to communicate openly and frequently with your own employees – and ensure consistency across those different channels. That's something that Global Crossing, the Florham Park, N.J.-based telecommunications firm, understood when it filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2002. The company, which has since emerged from that period stronger than ever, knew employees would have a high level of anxiety and uncertainty in the bankruptcy period. So CEO John Legere went out of his way to be "communicator in chief" during that trying time.


For example, the CEO held weekly worldwide open-microphone conference calls to provide financial updates and field employee questions. No inquiries were off limits, says Jerry Santos, Global Crossing's senior vice president of corporate communications.

"I can't tell you how many times our CEO was put on the spot about executive compensation and every other issue under the sun during those calls," Santos says. "That built a lot of credibility with our workforce, because he was dealing with these issues head on and not sugar coating anything."

"When the traditional media whipped out its sword, Toyota used social media as a shield."

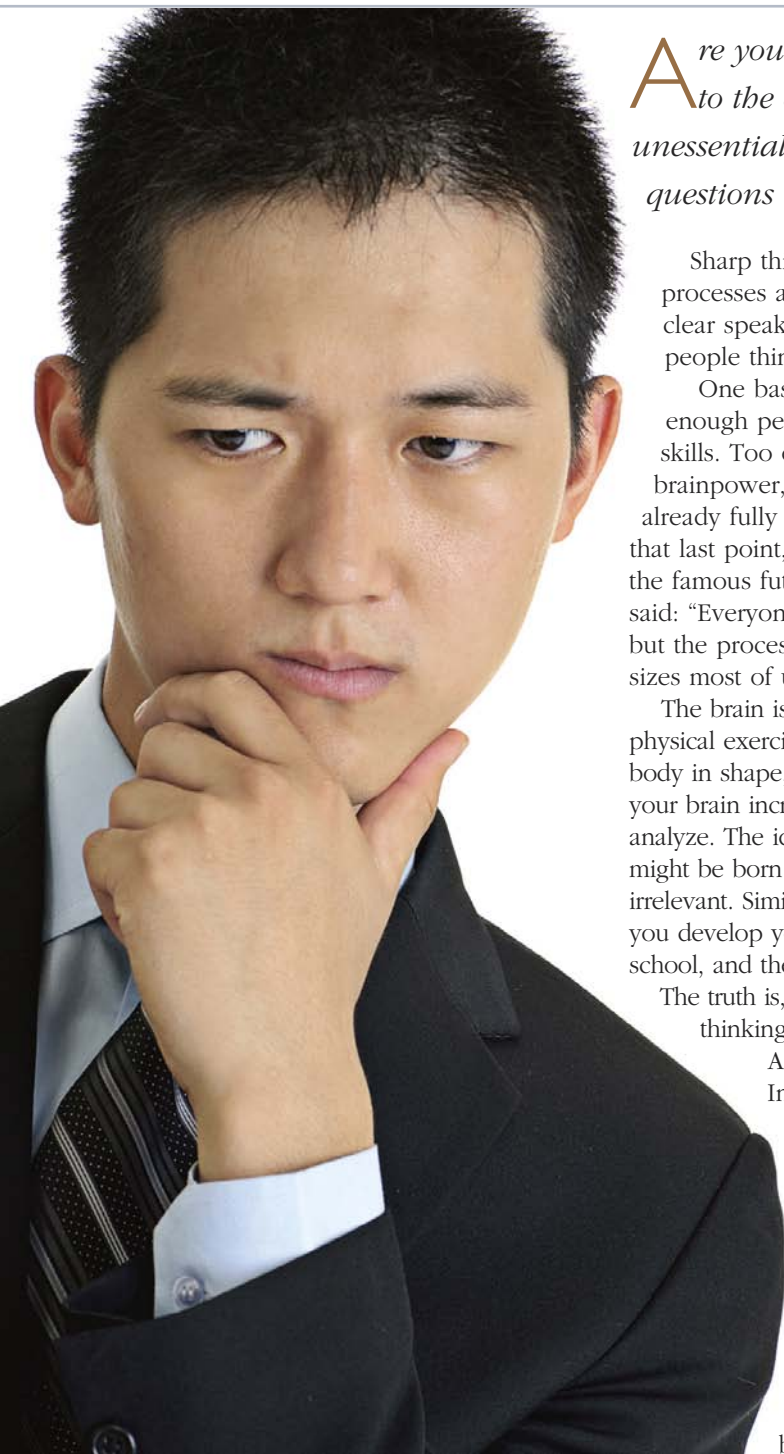
- Jason Voiovich, Co-Founder of Ecra Creative Group

Global Crossing took other actions to retain top employees and restore morale in its crisis period. An annual bonus program was augmented with quarterly cash incentives for achieving certain performance targets, and new investors approved the granting of stock units to all staff members who came through the bankruptcy period. In addition, CEO Legere worked hard to keep employees' minds focused on a brighter future.

"Month after month if you deliver on your promises, employees start to believe you will survive and eventually thrive once Chapter 11 is over," Santos says. "Our CEO was always very clear in stressing that once we emerged from bankruptcy we'd be a whole different company, and we have been." 

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Become a Better Thinker



Are you an analytical thinker? Is your mind able to go to the core of an issue? Can you parse through the unessential to spot the essential? Do you ask provocative questions that make people pause?

Sharp thinking and reasoning processes are at the heart of clear speaking. But not enough people think clearly. Why?

One basic reason is this: Not enough people *use* their thinking skills. Too often we neglect our brainpower, or assume it is already fully formed. Regarding that last point, Buckminster Fuller, the famous futuristic thinker, once said: “Everyone is born a genius, but the process of living de-geniusizes most of us.”

The brain is a muscle. Just as physical exercise helps keep your body in shape, mental exercise helps your brain increase its power to analyze. The idea that some people might be born smarter than others is irrelevant. Similarly, the notion that you develop your brainpower in school, and then it’s set, is ridiculous.

The truth is, you can improve your thinking processes at any age.

As the Franklin Institute, an organization dedicated to science education, notes on its Web site: “Your brain is a thinking organ that learns and grows by interacting with the world through perception and action. Mental stimulation improves brain function and

actually protects against cognitive decline – even in old age, [the brain] can grow new neurons.” Participating in Toastmasters, of course, is a great form of mental stimulation.

Here are suggestions for improving your mental processes:

1 Ask questions. This is the core of critical thinking. Your mind should be continually alive to possibilities. Turn something upside down and examine it from the underside. Seek out the reasons behind the rationals. If an issue contains several elements, separate the aspects and arrange them in a different order.

For example, good Scrabble players don’t simply stare at their letters to think of a word. They continually rearrange the letters to spot other possibilities. It is this moving around that gives them their edge. In the world of business, Frederick Smith asked: How can packages be brought across the country speedily? He puzzled through to the answer: a fleet of airplanes picking up and dropping off packages at major cities around the country, often at night.

The result was Federal Express and the creation of the overnight delivery industry. This isn’t an aberration. Many business triumphs stem from questions and innovative thinking.

What about issues in your daily life? Let’s say you frequently lose

accessory items – hats, gloves, pocketbooks and keys. Ask yourself, what would reduce these incidents of forgetfulness? The answer might be to streamline what you carry and count what you came with. When you leave the house, count your disposable items: If you start with four, make sure you have four every time you leave somewhere.

2 Become a skeptic. Never accept anything at face value. Know that people can make both sides of an argument simply by marshalling different facts. When someone says that something is the truth, explore the assertion's accuracy. Realize that experts do not necessarily have the answers.

For example, a recent study concluded that tall people are more successful than short people. So you begin to think: Where was the population of surveyed individuals drawn from? How was the criteria for success established? How were the results evaluated? Could the evaluators have been biased? Perhaps a tall-men's association initiated the study. And if so, what about successful short men – Mahatma Gandhi, Yasser Arafat, Martin Scorsese, Pablo Picasso, Michael Bloomberg – all 5'4" or less. Furthermore, what does the study mean – that short people can't be successful? Finally, what exactly was the original purpose of the study?

Statistics, especially, can be deceptive. For example, a person makes the argument that the Dow Jones average has gone up from 1,000 to 10,400 in 30 years, so one should invest in stock. This is a fallacy of oversimplification. For one thing, the index is composed of 30 stocks. Moreover, the composition of the Dow has changed over time, presumably to increase the tilt. Using any statistical average does not preclude that one could buy several bad stocks, or worse, purchase companies that go defunct. In the last decade, the broader

NASDAQ index, which is composed of 5,000 stocks, has sunk from 5,000 to 2,200. So what does that tell you about risk?

3 Don't be hoodwinked by labels. "He's bipolar." "He's a salesman." "She's wealthy." Labels inhibit clear thinking. Labels set up images that stick in the mind and are hard to unhinge. Labels limit your perceptions of people to broad generalities. Make yourself push through the approximation and focus on the specific to come to your own conclusion.

4 Become a serious reader. Stretch your knowledge base and expose yourself to different kinds of thinkers by reading diverse, challenging material. Digest big-picture thinkers like economist Paul Krugman, author Malcolm Gladwell and political theoretician Kevin Phillips. Become a fiction devotee, burrowing through novels by Orhan Pamuk, Philip Roth and Toni Morrison – authors who have something to say about society and the meaning of life.

"There is no better way to inform and expand your mind on a regular basis than to get in the habit of reading great literature," writes Stephen Covey in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. "You can get into the best minds that are now or ever have been in the world."

Reading is to a person what fuel is to a car: It stimulates the mind to keep churning. It increases your vocabulary and challenges your perceptions. Well-written novels demonstrate that easy answers are seldom adequate, and all reading magnifies and enlarges experience – carrying you forward in the development of your critical-thinking skills.

As you read, take down thoughts and ideas and insert them into file folders. You can do this

electronically or the old-fashioned way. Create different categories: fiscal facts, social observations, economic observations and personal insights. The act of writing something down helps you remember it. You are more apt to bring up these ideas in conversation at a later time – or use them as material for Toastmasters speeches. Also, you can periodically peruse these folders to refresh your memory and keep the ideas alive, ready to help you answer Table Topics questions.

5 Make people your school of life.

Everyone has something to share. Never end a personal encounter without learning something. Perhaps the other person has an unusual hobby. Maybe he learned life lessons from a difficult divorce. Or she draws on specialized knowledge for a job.

Ask people questions – about their careers, preferences or parenting philosophies. Then follow up each time by writing a note about your discoveries and file it in the folders you've set up. This method will not only expand your insights, it will also encourage a pattern of being curious, which is essential to keeping the mind active.

Try to adopt these habits of the mind, making them part of your daily routine. Soon you will see that your Toastmasters speeches reflect a deeper dimension, because rigorous thinking is the structural underpinning of clear speaking.

Finally, consider the words of Albert Einstein: "Imagination is more important than knowledge." Meaning, no amount of research, Googling or speaking to experts will replace what occurs in that space in your head. Think about it. 📖

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And Now for Your Local News

Local news is an oxymoron. News is what happens to other people in other places. If it happens in your hometown, it's not news – it's life.

That's why I feel so sorry for local news broadcasters. To compensate for the lack of real news, they have to be entertaining. This involves a form of broadcast balderdash known as "happy talk," in which the on-air personalities trade unscripted remarks between segments to liven up the otherwise mind-numbing reports of water main breaks, town hall meetings and

would be forthcoming until the next council meeting.

ANCHOR 2: Still no resolution, huh?

ANCHOR 2: Not yet.

ANCHOR 1: We'll have to wait for that next session, then.

ANCHOR 2: Yes, we will.

That sort of thing.

They get to be a little more entertaining when they introduce the court jesters of the show, the weatherman and the sports guy. For the weather guy the anchor might segue with something like: "So,

Wow, what great camaraderie. That's because they're part of a team, and not just any team but "your local news team." They even have slogans to communicate their commitment to your news. "Breaking news while it's breaking." (These guys are fast!) "The news behind the news." (These guys are smart!) "News you can use." (These guys really care!) "A higher level of reporting." (These guys sit on taller chairs!)

And, boy, are they connected. They have laptops in front of them, right there on the desk. That way, they can break even more breaking news on top of the breaking news they've already broken.

What I love most, though, is their sincerity. Just the other day I saw an anchor doing a "promo" for his show. He was chatting casually with someone off-camera, his tie loosened, drinking coffee from a paper cup just like regular folks. He said, "I don't just report the facts. I tell you what those facts mean. If there are potholes on County Route 7, I tell you what those potholes mean. If there's a kitten caught in a drain pipe, I tell you what that means – for the kitten and the drain pipe."

This is supposed to show his commitment to the community, even though he's trying to get out of this community as fast as he can so he can get a bigger job in a bigger market. When he does, he'll be reporting on what's happening to other people in other places – and I'll finally get to hear some real news. □

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"Local news is an oxymoron."

Memorial Day parades. Unfortunately, they're not very good at it. These aren't actors. They're communications majors with expensive hair. Watching them ad-lib clever chitchat is like watching the sailing team try to play varsity football.

First, there are the "anchors." They get to be the most serious, reading news of a break-in at the 7-Eleven like it was a raid on the Federal Treasury. Because they lack the weight of a national network anchor, there must be two of them and they must be of the opposite sex in the hopes of sparking a little on-screen "chemistry" that will make viewers wonder how they really get along (i.e., Do they like each other?)

Usually their happy talk consists of commenting on each other's stories:

ANCHOR 1: ... and the mayor said no resolution on the matter

what's it going to be this weekend, Bill, the golf clubs or the umbrella?" To which Bill replies: "A little bit of both, Lou, so hit the links and bring an umbrella. If you hit a slice you can blame it on the rain."

"I don't need the rain to hit a slice, Bill. I can do that in broad daylight." Ha-ha-ha-ha.

Using Special Sports Words

The sports guy has license to be even more of a kook. That's because he gets to use special sports words to break the interminable monotony of game results. "Mulloy edged Hudson 21-20, while Hamilton blanked Greenwood, 14-10. Jefferson snuck past LaFayette 14-10, Lowery topped Dewitt 27-20, and Benson routed Kirkville 30-3."

Then the comedy starts: "And that's it for sports. No golf scores to report. Lucky for you, Lou." Ha-ha-ha-ha.