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Toastmasters: The guaranteed way to become a better speaker

Teaching People to Talk Turkey Without Turning Chicken

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, CA – Most people would rather die than give a speech, according to a survey reported in *The Book of Lists*. Fear of public speaking outranked the fear of death by a two-to-one margin!

Unrealistic as this may seem, the fact remains that while many people lack the training and stamina to effectively deliver a clear thought, today's fast-paced, technological world is in desperate need of good communicators and leaders. The person with strong communication skills has a clear advantage over tongue-tied colleagues – especially in a competitive job market.

Toastmasters International, a nonprofit educational organization, has been working for more than 70 years to provide for this need and help people conquer their pre-speech jitters. From one club started at the YMCA in Santa Ana, California, Toastmasters has grown to become the world's largest organization devoted to developing people's public and interpersonal communication skills.

Since that first club was organized by Dr. Ralph C. Smedley in October 1924, nearly four million men and women have enjoyed the benefits of Toastmasters membership. The organization now has more than 175,000 members in 8,600 Toastmasters clubs in 70 countries.

How Does it Work?

A Toastmasters club is a "learn-by-doing" workshop in which men and women hone their skills in a comfortable, friendly atmosphere. A typical club has 20 to 40 members, who meet weekly or biweekly to learn and practice public speaking techniques. The average club meeting lasts approximately one hour.

Upon joining a Toastmasters club, members progress through a series of 10 speaking assignments designed to instill a basic foundation in public speaking.

When finished with the basic speech manual, members can select from among 15 advanced programs to develop speaking skills that are geared to specific career needs. They are: *Public Relations, Specialty Speeches, The Entertaining Speaker, Speaking to Inform, The Discussion Leader, Speeches by Management, The Professional Speaker, Persuasive Speaking, Technical Presentations, Communicating on Television, Storytelling, Interpretive Reading, Interpersonal Communication,*

- more -

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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Special Occasion Speeches, and *Humorously Speaking*. Members also have the opportunity to develop and practice leadership skills by working in the *High Performance Leadership Program* and serving as leaders at various organizational levels.

There is no instructor in a Toastmasters club. Instead, members evaluate one another's oral presentations. This evaluation process is an integral component of the overall educational program. Besides taking turns delivering prepared speeches and evaluating those of other members, Toastmasters give impromptu talks on assigned topics, usually related to current events. They also develop listening skills, conduct meetings, and learn parliamentary procedure.

The effectiveness of this simple learning formula is evidenced by the thousands of corporations that sponsor in-house Toastmasters clubs. These clubs serve as communication training workshops for employees. Every year, more and more business and government organizations are discovering that Toastmasters is the most effective, cost-efficient means of satisfying their communication training needs.

Toastmasters clubs can be found in the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as in a variety of community organizations, prisons, universities, hospitals, military bases and churches.

Community Service

Toastmasters also promote effective communication in their communities by conducting the following types of programs:

- YOUTH LEADERSHIP – public speaking training for junior and high school students.
- SPEECHCRAFT – a “short course” in public speaking for adults in business, education, industry and government.
- SPEAKERS BUREAU – to help other nonprofit organizations and community and government groups tell their stories to the community.
- GAVEL CLUBS – bringing Toastmasters training to prisons and other institutions.
- SUCCESS/LEADERSHIP and SUCCESS/COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS – educational modules in a how-to format on topics such as conducting productive meetings, effective listening, parliamentary procedure, evaluation, creative thinking, leadership, management and training.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CLUBS NEAR YOU,

CALL 1-800-9WE-SPEAK

or look at our home page on the World Wide Web: <http://www.toastmasters.org>