

M | P R Tips & Tools

Marketing & PR resources
to ensure success

July
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Marketing Zone

Keeping Them in the Club

Are you doing all you can for your members?

TOASTMASTERS AROUND THE WORLD WORK HARD to **bring new members** into their clubs. This is a great start, but it's only the beginning. Once you have members, how do you deliver on your promises? And how do you keep them coming back when their needs change? Retaining your members takes greater effort than recruiting them, and it all begins with the club experience.

The first thing to remember for a successful meeting is to keep it fun and safe for all participants. Toastmasters' founder Ralph Smedley said, "We learn best in moments of enjoyment." This holds true today. While most members join to improve their speaking and leadership skills, they will grow more rapidly if they're enjoying their time spent in a club. You may wish to create a "Jokemaster" role, an unofficial position that allows a member to share a joke and get everyone laughing as the meeting begins. Encourage speeches that share humorous anecdotes, and make sure that evaluations always recognize what people do well.

Some clubs have reduced attendance in summer months due to vacations. There's nothing wrong with **selecting materials** to market to your existing members. They won't need an introductory brochure, but you could go over the **Features, Benefits and Value** chart to ensure they're getting what they need from their meetings. One trick is to plan special speeches that focus on topics your members won't want to miss. Timely ideas include helping travelers communicate better in foreign lands. For those who are staying home, try ramping up the fun with unique and interesting Table Topics™ that challenge everyone while making them laugh.

Avoid the temptation to allow your club to become lax in the summer months. Now is the best time to communicate clearly by email or through your website. Follow through on meeting role assignments and if someone is absent, try to secure a replacement before the actual

(Continues on page 2)



What's New?

Ever wonder what motivates other Toastmasters to remain active? Read the new "**10 Questions**" feature on the website.

Facts and Stats:

- Toastmasters now has over 270,000 members in more than 13,000 clubs in 116 countries. This is an increase of almost 5% in membership over the last year.

Featured Question

Question: Where can I find marketing materials on the website?

Answer: The Toastmasters website is a valuable resource for marketing materials. First, be sure to visit www.toastmasters.org/marketingresources to find a list of brochures, fliers and informational materials to get you started. Branding is an important part of marketing, so make it a point to visit the **Virtual Brand Portal** for templates you can use to brand your written materials, including business cards. Round out your marketing materials with information on **membership building**. Use this wealth of tools, resources and ideas to launch or reinvigorate your marketing campaign. Many of the items are available in PDF to download and print for free; professionally printed copies are also available in the **online store**.

KEEPING THEM IN THE CLUB *(Continued from page 1)*

meeting date. Make sure your members know that it's not just business as usual during the summer — it's business to the max!

One of the top reasons members don't renew their membership in any season is lack of time. It's important to be sensitive to your members' needs. For example, are members having trouble with the meeting time or duration? Does the meeting run too long? Are members unable to get to work on time after a meeting? Are they having trouble with evening hours or lunchtime on Wednesdays? Find out and consider adjusting the club's schedule accordingly. Of course, you can't please everyone, but if you're losing a lot of members, it's important to take note and act.

Remember to focus your club educational program on meeting the members' needs. Those who benefit from an optimal experience in the club will return to build more skills, enjoy the camaraderie and find the success they deserve. For more information, visit www.toastmasters.org/membershipretention.

Helping You Succeed

Valuable PR resources are only a click away.

SOME MEMBERS HESITATE TO TRY PR BECAUSE THEY'RE AFRAID of being rejected by a member of the news media. But getting the buzz started means the publicist needs to step out of that comfort zone and contact people — especially those who don't know you — such as reporters and bloggers. Remembering this helps: The news media is always looking for a good story. Reporters and editors don't always have the resources to find you, so you need to help them. This is especially true of your local press.

Here is a list of Toastmasters International resources to help you succeed in your PR duties:

- **Let the World Know! Publicity and Promotion Handbook** (Item 1140) has been revised and updated to reflect current trends in public relations. The new version will be available for free download in August 2011. It is worded to be most applicable for use at the club level; but area, division and district leaders can find success in their roles using this guide as well.
- **News Releases** reflect the current industry standard for formatting and language. The World Headquarters PR team distributes a variety of news releases throughout the year.
- **Fact Sheet** was prepared for the organization. You can also create a fact sheet about your particular group, its leaders, its background and planned programs for the year.
- **Electronic Media Kit** is a useful package in PDF format to email to a journalist or editor if he or she asks for more information about the organization.
- **Mondo Times** is a free website that will help you find local media outlets. In addition, most newspapers, television and radio stations have websites with contact information.
- **Key Messages and Questions** offers a list of materials, on the left side of the screen, to help you when talking with media representatives and others in your community. It offers suggestions about what messages to communicate, programs to talk about and angles to pitch. Prepare for interviews and activities where the media might be present by reviewing key messaging from Toastmasters marketing brochures, fliers and manuals.
- **M/PR Newsletters** offer advice about pitching and contacting the news media. Be sure to bookmark the archive so you can refer to prior issues for help.
- **Conditions of Use** features the logo and other materials.
- **Virtual Brand Portal** offers free customizable templates to increase brand awareness and ensure brand consistency through marketing, PR and other methods of communication.

Let us know if you receive coverage so we can add it to the **In the News** webpage of the **Media Center** section on the Toastmasters website.

Good luck! Please contact the PR team at World Headquarters at pr@toastmasters.org if you need assistance.

Training, Development and Timelines

Keep your public relations skills current and sharp.

HAVE YOU EVER SEARCHED FOR THE word “Toastmasters” in Google’s News section? Try it. The search results in a list of articles about Toastmasters members and clubs around the world. How did these members receive news coverage? They conducted good public relations activities. Most of the articles you see are a result of a member **pitching** a timely story about an interesting Toastmasters activity or member to a local journalist or blogger.

As a vice president public relations (VPPR) or a public relations officer (PRO) in Toastmasters, you learn how to conduct an effective PR campaign, and your club(s) and district benefit from the publicity results of your efforts. Building publicity skills in Toastmasters means you learn how to protect the **Toastmasters brand**, establish an *internal* communications program and develop an *external* public relations program for your club or district.

A well-planned and organized PR program allows you to generate awareness and, even more, establish your club or district as a leader in helping people develop their communication and leadership skills in the community. You can help your club or district achieve its goals by using a variety of communication channels and **PR materials** available from World Headquarters.

These materials will help you learn about tasks commonly associated with public relations, including how to write a **news release**, how to pitch to your local news outlets and how to represent your district or club using **social media**.

Practicing effective public relations helps Toastmasters develop valuable professional and personal skills. PR is

vital to many activities you participate in throughout your lifetime. You can’t run a business or expect an event to draw a large crowd without appropriate media attention. Likewise, the most vibrant Toastmasters club or district can’t remain strong without attracting new prospects while **retaining current members**.

Training

So how do you learn those valuable PR skills? Toastmasters International provides its members with effective training programs and materials. With training, you’ll learn how to take advantage of these resources to successfully promote your club or district. Outlined below is a list of materials to help you prepare for your PR role. Also check your **district and club websites** to learn more about training events offered within your district.

Vice President Public Relations Training

As VPPR, you will learn how to coordinate an active public relations and publicity program in your club. You are encouraged to establish and maintain lines of communication between the club’s leadership and members, as well as between the club and the public — most importantly through the news media.

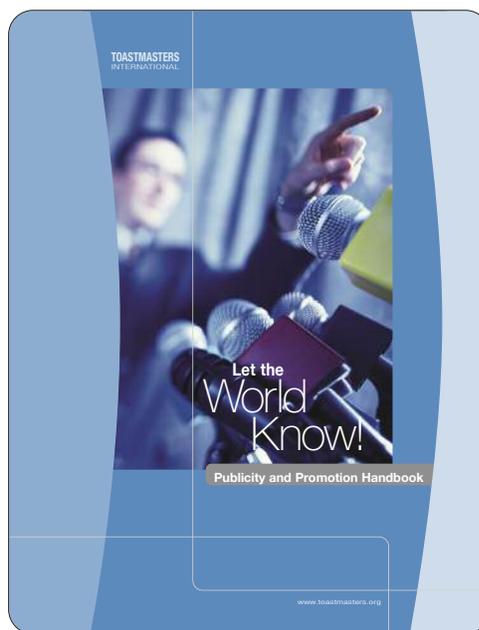
Please review Toastmasters International’s public relations guide, *Let the World Know! Publicity and Promotion Handbook* (Item 1140). Meet with your club leaders regularly to discuss your club goals. You can create a PR program based on these goals. Finally, be sure to ask your club president for more information about **club leader training** programs happening in your district.

Public Relations Officer Training

Watch this prerecorded **PRO training webinar**. It defines the responsibilities of a district PRO by focusing on three major aspects: brand stewardship, the public relations program and the communications program.

In addition to the webinar, be sure to review this **PRO handout**. It lists a variety of materials and resources available to help you develop your district’s public relations program.

After watching the webinar and reviewing the materials, meet with your district leaders to learn more about your district’s plans and goals for the year. Take all opportunities to collaborate with district leaders so that you can include PR topics in your district’s calendar. Don’t forget that you’re also a mentor, so be sure that VPPRs get the **club officer training** they need to be successful in their role.



Give Us Your Feedback

Let us know what you liked and what you would like to see more of in future editions by emailing newsletters@toastmasters.org. Important Toastmasters markets were highlighted in the last four issues: medical professionals, career coaches, college students and law schools. If you used any of these tips or can offer suggestions, contact marketing@toastmasters.org.