

The Dos and Don'ts of PR

Do

- Watch your newspapers for articles about community organizations to better understand the kind of events covered and how they are written.
- Tune in TV and radio news programs frequently to learn how they handle publicity – especially public service announcements or routine meeting announcements.
- Treat news contacts as busy, hard-working professionals. Determine what they expect and look for in news releases. Provide information that is really news worthy – such as how a member's life has been changed for the better as a result of his or her Toastmasters involvement. Scale your news release to fit the importance of the event. Avoid any hint of "propaganda."
- Accept the likelihood that you will "win some, lose some" and be grateful for those you win.
- Encourage all members of your club to come up with original ideas for club activities and be sure to promote the best ones – the ones of interest to the community.
- Submit good photos with your story, or at least have them available "on request."

- Always remember that timeliness is important for most stories, so submit your news releases well in advance of media deadlines.

... And Don't

- Don't ask your newspaper contact for a clipping or a copy of the paper in which your article appeared. If you want one, buy it.
- Don't complain or ask your contact why your release wasn't used. Just hope for better luck next time.
- Don't complain if your release is re-worked or even totally rewritten. (Unless facts have been significantly altered.) Be grateful for the free publicity you received.
- Don't make a point of telling one media contact that another media source used your press release. You could alienate your contacts.
- Don't fret about publicity that didn't jell. Focus on the future.
- Don't use pressure such as friendship or business connections to get your publicity materials used.

Skills in public speaking important to employers

Gannett News Service
CHAPPAQUA, N.Y. — For new college graduates and seasoned employees alike, the '90s have been a time of corporate downsizing. Even college degrees and technical skills aren't all it takes to make a person more marketable.

But company recruiters and business consultants say job developers can stand out a bit more by developing one basic skill: public speaking.

It's now virtually impossible to find a large company that doesn't offer public speaking training. Even radio stations run commercials pushing self-help tapes to improve speaking and communication skills.

"We're told by companies that the two biggest problems MBA students often have after graduating are speaking and writing," said Terry McCann, executive director of Toastmasters International Mission Viejo, Calif.

Toastmasters bills it world's largest self-improvement organization, teaching public speaking. With 3 million members worldwide, it's one of the world's largest self-improvement organizations.

members, many unemployed and working people are seeking such outlets to make themselves more marketable, McCann said.

"The biggest advantage good speaking skills gives you is visibility," McCann said. "You're able to stand up and have people take notice of you. The most effective managers are those who are able to verbalize the mission and goals better."

"Toastmasters provides manuals on how to speak in front of others. Club members perform their presentations in front of fellow members, who offer critiques."

Mark Brown of Mount Vernon, N.Y., said he has never had a problem with self-confidence or speaking to other people. The 34-year-old president of Reader's Digest said he always had a knack for meeting people and exchanging ideas.

make somewhat of a difference in somebody's else family and with it. I learned that of communication are us room, the living boardroom."

Yorick Fonseca, Toastmasters coordinator in Harrison, N.Y., said he learned to speak in front of others after just six years ago. For India to attend got the University of Middle management and people on most inclined.

Toastmasters good way to beat fear of speaking

By Katherine Griffin
Years ago, children learned to recite before an audience from an early age; these days, few are taught this skill. If you're anxious about interviewing for a job or other situations calling for speaking in front of other people, a public-speaking class or Toastmasters International can go a long way in helping.

We know, we know: Toastmasters isn't that something people's dads did back in the '50s? The organization was all-male until the 1970s, but today women make up about half of the

170,000 members around the world, and psychologists, speech coaches and others say there's nothing like it for boosting up on the basics of public speaking.

Robert Perry is the only woman in her Toastmasters group when she joined as a secretary in 1974. During her first speech, she was so nervous that she made wild hand gestures as she spoke — with her hands jammed in her pockets. Today, Perry is senior vice president at Edwards Technologies, a Los Angeles-based audiovisual company she co-founded 10 years

ago. She's also the president of her industry's trade group. Perry credits Toastmasters with giving her the skills and confidence to work her way into a leadership position in a male-dominated field.

Said Perry of how Toastmasters can help: "Women can amass all the experience we want, but women who cannot express themselves are pushed aside and not taken seriously."

Besides teaching her speech-making, being thrown a topic and having to speak off the cuff sharpened Perry's ability to think on her feet, and assess

ing her own and others' presentations has made her a better critical thinker. After 21 years she still attends meetings regularly.

Most people, though, can polish their skills in six to 18 months. Meetings are usually held once a week — a year's worth costs about \$90 — and there are Toastmasters chapters nationwide.

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By Alicia K. Barry
Staff Reporter
The shyness and anxiety experienced when having to get up and speak to a group of strangers is a familiar feeling to many. You doubt yourself, your words and your audience and the only good thing to be found in such an instance is that eventually your speech will be over.

Public speaking can be an agonizing experience even for those who are used to speaking in front of groups. It is not only something that affects the shy and unconfident, but what would motivate a person, who under normal circumstances, would not dream of speaking in front of a group of strangers, to do just that? The answer lies in an individual's ability to overcome their inability to feel comfortable when speaking

in a group and to improve their speaking skills. Just ask anyone at Toastmasters International.

Toastmasters International is a non-profit organization with two main objectives. The first is to teach communication and the second is to provide leadership skills. The group provides support for those practicing public speaking and offers feedback to individuals about what they had done well when giving their speech. Suggestions are also provided on what areas need improving.

People uncomfortable standing in front of a group of people that you do not know you can certainly sympathize with any member of this group. But no matter how you feel giving a public speech you know that the audience is right behind you every step of the way. Individuals

become members of Toastmasters International to improve their speaking skills and give themselves a sense of confidence in their abilities.

Maureen Ross Gennine is a four-year member of the organization. "There is so much to learn in this club. I am always learning something new," she said. "One of the many things she has learned as a member is that 'I am a human being, not just a human being.'"

The Toastmasters meetings follow a particular agenda. The basic needs of the organization is first taken care of and then the Toastmaster for the evening is announced. It is the role of the Toastmaster to act as a "master of ceremonies" and to appoint various roles to other members. Other roles include a time-keeper and a grammarian.

A speaker from the group then gives a five to seven minute speech which has been assigned by the manual the organization uses. Following the main speaker the group has an impromptu session called Table Topics in which a member chooses individuals from the audience to speak for one to two minutes on a particular topic. All the speeches are then evaluated.

A prepared speech is difficult enough to give in front of a group, but that is why members have the opportunity to speak during the Table Topics. Lou Spritzer said that the short impromptu speeches "focus on getting up without a lot of time. They get us more relaxed to speak freely and listen better."

Toastmasters International has 100 clubs with 2,000 members in

Division II which includes the greater Hartford area. Internationally there are 8,000 clubs in 58 different countries. Roger Brown, DTM District Governor, said that the majority of clubs are found in English speaking countries but there are some that have formed in Mexico and the Philippines. The organization was founded by Dr. Ralph C. Smedley in 1924 and originated as part of the YMCA before becoming a separate organization.

Toastmaster's International meets every first and last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be held next Tuesday, Aug. 20, from 5:30-7 p.m., at West Hartford Town Hall. For information about your local Toastmaster's International call Deb Greth at 521-6693 or Jane Phillips at 561-5232.

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Mark Brown, a publisher and editor of Sharing Ideas Magazine, said good public speaking habits are beneficial to executives with large companies who must explain to shareholders their business. Do people who are smaller businesses do. People who are out and introduce their skills or products to the community also benefit.

Public speaking can give you edge

Companies and clubs offer ways to learn it
Gannett News Service
Toastmasters, Brown encountered a brain with death. Though physically fit, Brown suffered from blood clots in his heart and lungs.

"That incident made me aware like never before of a difference in somebody's else's life, with my family and with God. Brown said that good skills of communication are needed in the classroom, the living room and the boardroom."

Speaker in the world
Brown honed his lessons so well that he was selected to be a speaker in the world that the benefits of speaking to the honor, Brown said.

Healing and talking to my who most for various companies 90 percent of the time he spent at the company, by requirements is to have communication and writing.

In many companies are beginning to require public speaking courses for executives and other employees, said Mariel Bryant, executive director of International Training in Communication, a non-profit educational organization in Anaheim, Calif.

"That's the only way that many people get a representation of the company," Bryant said of recruitment. "Many businesses are hiring people in this respect."

People joining groups like ITC are in a great position. Just consider some do not work, but join to build their self-confidence.

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So, you like, want to be, um a better public speaker?

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