

A Guide to Marketing Your Club

District 37 Toastmasters



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Before You Begin

The Challenge of Marketing a Toastmasters Club

It's no question that marketing a Toastmasters club is a challenging assignment. Marketing is difficult for any purpose and organization. It's one thing to appeal to people who might be interested in joining a group of strangers to engage in public speaking. Compounding our challenges is that those of us who take that role in our clubs are volunteers, and that it can seem overwhelming to sort out the various tools of publicity and stay inside our usually limited budgets.



What this Guide Does

This guide to club marketing helps make sense of the most common forms of advertising, marketing, and promotion so that a Vice President Public Relations (and other leaders) can make informed choices and prioritize tools that fit their club's marketing strategy. For each technique we discuss advantages and disadvantages, things to consider when using the technique, how to get started, and where it is likely to work best. Not all methods will work for a given club, but one will likely suit your club's needs.

Where to Start?

Before a club engages in a marketing campaign, it needs to (a) assess its advantages and best prospects by taking inventory of what it has, (b) decide a budget, and (c) select marketing techniques that best suit. Any campaign should be well planned and not undertaken at the last moment, and ought to be carried through methodically.

Self-Assessment

Let's begin with basic analysis and market research. We want to attract prospects with a message. That message is based on our comparative strengths and opportunities. We recommend that the leadership perform a "SWOT" Analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis that will suggest key themes for a marketing message.

Market Research

A successful promotional campaign requires the thoughtful answers to some important questions. First, who are you seeking to attract to your club? What are their characteristics? Second, where can those people be found? Third, who are your competitors (other clubs, other organizations) and how do you differentiate your club from them? Carefully assess your market and your club's space. It's probably easiest to consider the characteristics of the current club members. What brought them to you and why?

Set a Budget

Advertising, marketing and promotion is almost never cost-free. Clubs rarely have a great deal of money on hand to market. You may want to consider setting aside 25% of your club's revenue for marketing and promotion costs. Partner with your club Treasurer to make a proposal. Think about increasing club dues to permit more assertive publicity.

Select Some Marketing Techniques

Using this guide, identify techniques that best fit your advantages, needs, and budget. Look for methods that are most likely to be seen by your prospects and which can surmount your club's particular challenges. Settle on no more than three at first. Plan ahead, bring focus to your message, and execute for the remainder of the year if not beyond.

Important Considerations

When marketing, several strategic practices are essential:

- Be consistent; do not hop from method to method. Success requires persistence.
- Be prepared to repeat messaging over a long period of time
- Use active verbs and language
- Tell the prospect how they will benefit, don't just say when and where you meet
- Emphasize your club's strengths and uniqueness in the market

Some Caveats

Not all these techniques will work for you. We have seen various methods work brilliantly for some clubs but come up short for similar clubs. It may take time to experiment and discover what works best. Also, don't try too much. You have only so much budget and bandwidth. But don't necessarily put all your eggs in one basket.

Play Nice and Honor the Toastmasters International Brand

We can't say this enough: don't reinvent the wheel with your own take on how to brand a Toastmasters club. We are responsible to follow branding guidelines as part of our member agreement. Toastmasters International developed many tools that can help us. Refer to <https://www.toastmasters.org/-/media/files/brand-materials/brand-items/brand-manual.ashx> for specific guidelines and recommendations.

Resources

- Toastmasters International --- <https://www.toastmasters.org/shop/club-officers/marketing-your-club>

Automotive-Based Marketing

Background

Automotive marketing takes advantage of a user's own vehicle, passively, to advertise a club and/or Toastmasters. Cars and trucks can become movable billboards, and this is a technique used often by very small businesses and entrepreneurs. There are even companies that specialize in mobile advertising.



Types of Automotive Marketing

Includes, but is not limited to, bumper stickers, car magnets, car wrapping, dashboard shades, license plate frames, window-hung brochure racks, and window stickers. Some of these items are available for sale from Toastmasters International.

Advantages

- Can be implemented on multiple members' cars
- Can be extremely inexpensive
- Easy to execute
- Works 24/7

Disadvantages

- Can be expensive in some cases
- Doesn't tend to reach a wide audience
- Only truly effective when vehicle is parked
- Works poorly for specific dated events
- Only a limited amount of information can be displayed.

Considerations

- DO be aware of Toastmasters Brand guidelines before designing any automotive marketing items.
- It is strongly recommended not to re-design items already published by Toastmasters International.
- DON'T go overboard, say by implementing all possible methods on a single vehicle.
- Give thought to the vehicle used. Is it in good condition? Is it a suitable representative?
- This technique can be most effective in car parks next to clubs hosted in office buildings (or popular nearby restaurants) and can reinforce efforts at closed company clubs.
- Think about how to lead curious people to more information such as a web URL or QR code.

How to do Automotive Marketing

After determining preferred method(s) the next step is to visit a print shop such as International Minute Press or Office Depot to prepare materials, unless these are already available (e.g. license plate frames, window stickers) from Toastmasters International. We also recommend consulting with a District 37 official to ensure that no Toastmasters brand guidelines or protocols will be in violation. Once a campaign is underway, we recommend continuing it for an extended period of time.

When to Use

This can be a very helpful technique when prospecting in a tight geographic area (office complexes) and may be of benefit to closed or lunch time clubs.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$\$	Easy	Moderate

Broadcast Advertising

Background

Broadcast advertising (principally radio and television) has been a staple of business marketing going back to the 1920s for radio and the 1940s for television. It's changed a great deal in character over the years and especially so for radio which experienced several paradigm-shifts in the past fifty years. New forms of broadcast include streaming services, satellite radio and vodcasts.



Types of Broadcast Advertising

Includes, but is not limited to, "infomercials (or advertorials)", public radio/television sponsorships, radio spots, and television ads. There are critical differences between networks and local stations as well as differing transmitters such as cable and dish. Variations include podcasts and vodcasts. There are new forms that include "digital business cards" broadcast on Bluetooth, NFC near field communications, RFID tags, and push notifications that all aim at mobile devices. /// also see VIDEO

Advantages

- Even narrowly-niched cable networks can bring in many viewers
- Look and sound can feel high-end
- Some targeting is possible in niche formats
- Action is live, displaying energy and emotion
- Streaming options and vodcasts can be done inexpensively

Disadvantages

- Broadcast ads are quite expensive to produce and air
- It is hard to target small geographic areas
- Time slots can be very poor
- Often requires sophisticated production
- Channels / stations are very fragmented
- Formats are tight (e.g. 30- or 60-seconds)
- Sales representatives can be aggressive if they don't think you're too small to bother with

Considerations

- Broadcast advertising is become ever more attentive to mobile device formatting
- Spots are often sold in packages covering multiple networks and time slots
- Professional production with experienced producers, technicians and actors is highly recommended
- This method may not be effective for corporate, advanced or closed clubs except in special cases.

How to Do Broadcast Advertising

If your club chooses to adopt a mass broadcaster an extended time will be needed to discuss options with representatives and ultimately to write scripts, schedule recordings, and determine schedules. It is very easy to contact advertising divisions of broadcasters through their web sites. Depending on budget the broadcaster will handle all or most of the details.

If you choose an Internet-based format such as vodcasting or live streaming your principal concern will be obtaining satisfactory equipment such as microphones, lighting, and camera. A consultation with a specialist in video can provide guidance. And, small businesses are available which can provide studio

space and recording assistance at a reasonable price. You will want to interview more than one provider to find a good fit for your needs.

When to Use

This technique (in the form of a mass broadcaster) may be of help to a club in a small or isolated market if done as community access broadcasting. Podcasts and vodcasts may be of interest to clubs ...

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$\$-\$\$\$	Moderate to difficult	Moderate

Clothing-Based Marketing (Wearables)

Background

Marketing campaigns have long recognized the advantages of branding clothing items. This is a common practice in sporting events, sponsorships of events, and team building.



Types of Clothing to Brand

Includes, but is not limited to, buttons (e.g. "Ask Me About Toastmasters"), caps, hats, hoodies, jackets, polo shirts, and tees. We would also include use of sandwich boards in this category. Many of these are already available from Toastmasters International.

Advantages

- Easy to do
- People can move around to where others might be found
- Fun in groups

Disadvantages

- Easy to overdo
- Cost for items can vary significantly
- For some items a wide range of sizes are needed
- Can be unintentionally sabotaged by poor choices
- Fails if uniform styles are not used

Considerations

- Think about how the clothing will be used and act accordingly. For example, buttons are a great idea in mixers and tees might be best at street fairs.
- Think about wearers' presentability.
- Be sure "models" are briefed and can answer questions.
- Use the best-quality items you can afford.
- Use TI-created items. Don't independently produce items without TI approval.
- This is a technique best used in connection with specific events, such as Open Houses, fairs, and exhibitions.

How to Do Clothing Marketing

Most of the work with this method will be taken up with planning a use and having items purchased or created. In cases where you can use items not available (but sanctioned) from TI, it is not difficult to identify vendors using search or directories. Many printers can create items and there are also vendors who deal with branded items for organizations. In such case, set up a call with a representative to discuss pricing and options.

When to Use

Community based clubs may want to experiment with this technique at summer street and craft fairs where large numbers of people gather and where inexpensive tees and pins will feel comfortable. They might best be combined with a nearby kiosk or booth.

COST
\$-\$\$\$

EASE OF USE
Moderate

TIME
Moderate

Direct Mail Marketing

Background

Direct mail is a traditional advertising technique going back many decades, perhaps as long as postal service has been in existence. It has fallen out of favor due to rapid increase in prices and the heavy load of so-called "junk mail" - but is regaining some ground because practitioners now tend to stand out.



Types of Direct Mail

Includes, but is not limited to, letters, greeting cards and postcards. Direct mail can be individually stamped or distributed under bulk mail rates and rules and through digital technology can even appear hand-produced.

Advantages

- Properly packaged, direct mail can stand out in someone's mail box.
- Multiple items can be bundled in one envelope

Disadvantages

- Direct mail is difficult to target for club purposes. Catalogs of lists exist but are limited and expensive.
- Costs can be enormous, even when using bulk mail.

Considerations

- DO be aware of Toastmasters Brand guidelines before designing any direct mail items.
- Decisions must be made about who to mail and especially where to mail
- Develop a budget before beginning
- Carefully consider your purpose for mailing. What is the desired "call to action"?
- This method is not recommended for corporate or closed clubs.
- A bulk mail permit from the USPS is required to take advantage of bulk mail prices. You will need to familiarize yourselves with rules of doing direct mail.

How to Do Direct Mail

A direct mail campaign requires some time to plan and execute. You will need to work out the content of the mailing (and produce this either with internal resources or at a higher end from printers such as Staples or Fedex Kinko), mailing lists---either purchased, internally developed, or "mail dropped"--, and mailing schedule.

When to Use

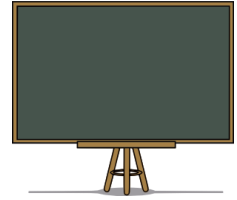
This method may be of best advantage to an advanced club where a list of targeted leads can be obtained from the District and where the Return-On-Investment is highest. An open club might consider direct mail if they want to target people in a single zip code area.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$\$-\$\$\$	Moderate	Low

Displays (Silent)

Background

The “Silent Salesman”, usually in the form of a board-and-table or stand alone, is a long-time staple of promotion wherever opportunity exists. In its simplest form you set them up and walk away and the display does the work.



Types of Displays

Includes, but is not limited to, passive visual pieces at businesses, community centers, fairs and festivals, lobby displays, POS (point of sale) displays, showcases, television information screens, trade shows, and as “employee décor” in companies and other work places. This would also include material placed in brochure racks as well as marketing kits where a number of items are incorporated into a single package and which can be used in a variety of ways.

Advantages

- Works silently
- Can draw the eye if well-designed
- Low cost and can be reused
- Can include a great deal of information
- Works almost 24/7

Disadvantages

- No human reinforcement
- Easily looks tacky or unprofessional
- Low reach
- Sometimes requires a fee

Considerations

- Always ask permission to display
- Design with care and good taste, and spend as much as you can afford
- If outdoors, consider impacts of weather, sun and wind
- Maintenance is essential: check up on displays regularly to attend to damage or other servicing
- Add a QR (Quick Response) code to make access of information easier for those with a mobile device
- Limit number of different handouts
- Very good option for closed company clubs or where clubs are hosted in well-trafficked facilities

How to Do Word of Mouth Marketing

Creating a display can be as simple as visiting one’s local office supply store and building a basic foam core board. If more professional design is required the same outlets offer branded printing options at affordable prices, or print shops can be located in the directory or by search. Always discuss options and pricing with attention to how the display will be used. If your display is reused store it carefully between uses to optimize your investment.

When to Use

This technique works best in a club hosted within a high-traffic facility (closed company clubs, or open clubs based in colleges or universities, community centers, military posts, churches, etc.)

COST
\$-\$

EASE OF USE
Moderate

TIME
Moderate

Email Marketing

Background

Once email became widespread in the 1990s it became a significant “go-to” for anyone marketing anything. So much so that email volume is exceptionally high and resented.



Types of Email Marketing

Includes, but is not limited to, email via a client (e.g. Constant Contact, Mailchimp), small lists contacted through personal or club email client (e.g. Gmail, Roadrunner), SMS (text) messages, and automated response forms. Another form of this is the usual of email signatures to carry a (more subtle) marketing message. An older form is facsimile transmission (Fax) although this is quite out of fashion.

Advantages

- Very easy to do
- Low or no cost
- Email can be forwarded by recipients to others
- Works wonderfully in mobile formats

Disadvantages

- Digital security may be a concern
- Email is easily derailed by spam blockers, etc.
- People are increasingly hostile to email
- Emails are not usually well-read
- It is hard & costly to obtain prospect lists

Considerations

- Users must be very careful to adhere to anti-spam laws and protocols
- It is recommended that recipients have been given an opportunity to opt in.
- We strongly advise not using list harvesting techniques
- Design with care: email is highly abused and many are too lengthy
- Do not send too many “e-blasts”, directing people to important events or opportunities only.
- Be considerate of recipients who use text format only
- This is a method that can be very valuable at closed clubs, provided IT protocols at the organization are observed.

How to Do Email Marketing

It is no longer acceptable to simply fire off emails to a list. Begin by subscribing to a good client service (e.g. Constant Contact or Mailchimp), familiarizing yourself with the basic laws concerning email, and building legitimate opt-in lists. It is recommended someone add a subscription option to the web site to collect addresses. Next, build a clean, simple email message using HTML with discretion.

When to Use

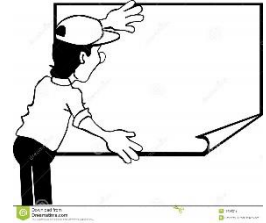
Email will be most useful for advanced clubs, using District-obtainable lead lists, or within closed company club environments. Risks outweigh returns in almost all other situations. A thoughtful option is to email periodically but not frequently to emails provided on an opt-in basis by visitors or inquirers, reminding them of your club’s activities.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$	Easy	Low

Flyers and Posters

Background

These are printed one-sheets (usually), and typically left behind at a location. Digital versions can be emailed or otherwise shared electronically with recipients. Also known as handouts. Flyers and posters are very old and evidence of posted “bills” goes back many hundreds of years. [See also Displays]



Types of Flyer and Poster Locations

Includes, but is not limited to, use on or at car windshields, bagel shops, brew pubs, bus stations, coffee shops, colleges and universities, community bulletin boards, churches, community centers, grocery stores, gyms, kiosks, libraries, local business windows, restaurants, schools, shelters, and train stations. Brochures are a special kind of flyer that is usually trifolded. Business cards are used this way on many bulletin boards.

Advantages

- Easy to execute
- Works 24/7

Disadvantages

- Can be expensive if many are printed
- Doesn't tend to reach a wide audience
- May be difficult to find places to post
- Bulletin boards are usually crowded
- There are usually view who read them

Considerations

- DO be aware of Toastmasters Brand guidelines before designing any automotive marketing items.
- Toastmasters flyer templates are available for digital download
- Use a team to spread out the work
- Ask first. Some locations may restrict Toastmasters-type promotion
- It is wise to bring your own pushpins if using bulletin boards
- Put flyers up at least two weeks prior to particular events
- Use color judiciously. It helps draw attention to the flyer, but costs will add up
- Don't overdo use of colors, text, and other elements
- A photo or illustration will help draw attention.
- These do not have to be 8 ½ by 11. Other sizes may be effective.
- If produced for digital use format as .pdf for email or web purposes and .jpg for social media posting.

How to Do Flyers and Posters

Most of the effort is simply designing and publishing. These days it is quite easy to create a flyer or poster on a home or office computer and print locally. Professionals are available from high-end printers to solo graphic designers. When using such services be sure to ask about options, pricing, and the intended audience. Professionals can improve messaging for these purposes.

When to Use

Flyers and posters will get the most traction driving specific events such as Open Houses and contests. They are most helpful to closed clubs where there is a high proportion of prospects to viewers.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$	Easy	Moderate

Free Press

Background

Free Press is appearances in print or on air that are not paid for. In a mass media environment, there are always some ways to gain attention without resorting to paid advertising. In broadcasting, for example, there are FCC requirements for local networks to provide community access as a service.



Types of Free Press

Includes, but is not limited to, articles in newspapers or on-air spots, business page listings, community access programming (interviews, etc.), church bulletins, and community event calendars.

Advantages

- No associated cost
- Access to significant distribution media

Disadvantages

- No guarantees of publication or notice
- Calendars are not widely used by public
- Difficult to impossible for repeat free press
- On air spots often broadcast at low-view times

Considerations

- You can often expect to get what you pay for
- DO be aware of Toastmasters Brand guidelines before writing press releases.
- This method is not recommended for corporate, advanced or closed clubs.

How to Obtain Free Press

Good research and persistence is the key to obtaining free press. For mass media outlets it will be important to send a well-written press release to an appropriate person. Press and broadcast web sites can be helpful for this purpose, or one can simply call the organization and ask for the right person's name and contact. It is generally much easier to identify and apply for a community calendar at these same organizations using their web sites. An Internet search can be instrumental in finding other calendars in your area. Patch.com is an additional resource. Otherwise, keep your eyes open for free press opportunities.

See a good breakdown of press release writing care of District 2 Toastmasters at:
https://d2.toastmastersdistricts.org/How_to_Write_a_Press_Release.html

When to Use

Open clubs are most likely to get results when there are specific events that can interest a writer or editor, such as a well-designed open house, special guest speaker, or community-facing event. Calendars should be freely used simply because they are no-cost and easy to access.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$	Difficult	Moderate to high

Memberships and Alliances

Background

Clubs can reach some ideal prospects through the assistance or auspices of other organizations. These organizations can be the gateway to the prospects (as fellow members) or provide useful promotional assistance. This is a classic technique for small business owners and entrepreneurs as they build their businesses.



Types of Memberships and Alliances

Includes, but is not limited to, Chambers of Commerce, civic clubs (e.g Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions), corporate HR departments, forums, homeowner associations, individual collaborations, merchant associations, NC Center for Nonprofits, networking forums, peer to peer support, and professional leads groups. We would also include celebrity endorsements in this category (which can be applied in multiple channels.)

Advantages

- Target rich environments
- Wide range of resources
- Easy to join
- Networking opportunities
- Directories are often available which can list your club

Disadvantages

- Memberships can be very expensive
- Limited opportunity to advertise
- Limited number of people to touch on
- Considerable time investment

Considerations

- Memberships in chambers of commerce and NC Center For Nonprofits can be exceptionally helpful
- Networking can bring in new members through connections but must invest in relationships
- Other club officers will be needed to cover events over a period of time
- Chambers of Commerce will offer recognition “ribbon cutting” spotlight events to members
- Must reciprocate with benefits to others in the relationship
- When and if you join an association learn and respect networking protocols.

How to Do Membership and Alliance Marketing

To undertake this marketing technique your first mission is to identify opportunities. Informed persons in business can suggest good opportunities in your area. You can also use Internet search and make contact with organization ambassadors or membership officers through web sites. Some organizations can be found with Meetup or Eventbrite. We strongly recommend that you talk with a member or ambassador to see if their organization is a good fit for your club. After joining make use of available resources to maximize your visibility among people who can help you. Regularly attend meetings and other events. Take an active role in the organization and volunteer. Most importantly, be patient. Connections and referrals will come over time after members come to like, trust and respect you.

When to Use

Open clubs that are especially attractive to business owners, entrepreneurs and professionals should at least take a look at this technique. In addition, clubs in small markets may want to consider it as well because other options may be comparatively disadvantaged.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$\$-\$\$\$	Depends	High

Newsletter Marketing

Background

Newsletters are one or more pages with content about a club, including recaps of meetings and events, club business, appeals for assistance and other elements. They are less than a newspaper but more than a letter. They are admittedly old-style and have not aged well, but can be used, with care, to promote a club.



What Can Newsletters Include?

Includes, but is not limited to, advertisements, club news, facts and figures, humor, messages from leaders, photographs and illustrations, recaps of meetings and events.

Advantages

- Members can share newsletters with others
- Can be used as leave-behinds at waiting rooms, etc.
- Work well in closed clubs
- Can be downloadable on web sites and social media.

Disadvantages

- Time consuming to create
- Tend to be formulaic and uninteresting
- Often are not well-read
- Can be expensive to print at the high end
- Often don't go to the right places.

Considerations

- Newsletters should be easily convertible to digital format
- DO think about what to include or exclude from the newsletter if sharing outside the club
- Be prepared for the long run: a commitment of a year or more
- Use photos

How to Do Newsletters

It is fairly simple to create a newsletter with a word processing computer program. Ideally you should have the cooperation of club officers and other materials in writing material and distributing the newsletter where it can do good.

When to Use

A brief but well-designed newsletter may be a "slam dunk" if it can be left in magazine racks at libraries and other places. Closed clubs should consider this if a suitable distribution is possible (mail slots or common areas). They're low cost and soft sell.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$	Moderate	Moderate

Outreach Advertising

Background

These are a variety of techniques mostly involving making visits on foot to a target market (a.k.a "Sneaker Net"). A form of this method is known as "Door-to-Door" and has been in use for a very long time.



Types of Outreach Advertising

Includes, but is not limited to, business site drops, employee orientations, festivals/fairs, mail box marketing, manned cafeteria tables, participating in local Speakers Bureaus, placing TI Magazines (with club contact info labels) in racks and waiting rooms, and speaking at civic clubs. Other forms include charity advertising (i.e. paying for listings as nonprofit event sponsor), sponsorships as a whole, corporate letters to managers and senior leadership, HOA newsletters, office park newsletters, company newsletters, and door to door hangers at residences.

Advantages

- Can reach a meaningful number of people
- Generally easy to execute
- Some methods are inexpensive
- Depends on person-to-person contact

Disadvantages

- Can be time consuming
- Materials can be expensive
- May require long term commitments
- There can be costs at fairs, etc.
- Not easy to get into some places
- "People" persons are a must

Considerations

- Ask permission when appropriate, such as when making drops at business locations
- Having a team is a must to cover as much ground as possible.
- DO take time to research drop locations
- DO follow all postal or facility rules and regulations where they exist
- DON'T be haphazard. Be strategic where and when you apply outreach techniques
- Develop a script in outreach situations requiring gaining access
- Plan ahead. Fairs and festival application deadlines are usually months ahead of the event.
- Use a tool like LinkedIn to identify champions within secure facilities who can help you.
- This method is not recommended for advanced clubs.

How to do Outreach Advertising

As with many forms of marketing, a great deal of planning is the first order of business. You will need to work out both a schedule for outreach visits and a well-researched list of where to go and work out any potential obstacles such as building security and gatekeepers. Thoroughly brief volunteers on what to say and do. Collect and prepare materials that includes a "how to find/contact us" that is clear and welcoming. Be prepared to take time to properly cover the ground you need to cover.

When to Use

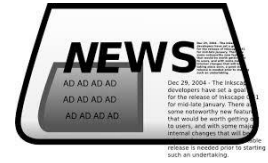
An open lunch time club might gain the best advantage from this technique. They are often surrounded by office buildings filled with prospects.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$\$	Easy	High

Print Advertising

Background

Print ads are typically static messages combining text and visual images impressed on a page or signboard. It is the most traditional method of all, having been used for more than three hundred years.



Types of Print Advertising

Includes, but is not limited to, beer mats, bench signage, billboards, cinema trailers, circulars, classified ads (including digital), concert/event programs, coupon packets, inserts (and "onserts"), magazines, mobile signage, newcomer/ "Welcome Wagon" kits, newspapers, on-line banner or pop-up ads, placemats, "restroom" displays, shoppers, and Yellow Pages. There are a variety of online formats including banners, interstitials, and popups that can appear in different places on a display screen.

Advantages

- Can reach many people
- Easy to execute
- Many choices and methods are available
- Professionals can design ads for you

Disadvantages

- Ads can be lost among others on a page
- Can be very expensive
- Some methods reach very few people
- Difficult to reach a target market
- Placement can be undesirable
- Sales representatives can be aggressive
- Usually requires repetitions to be effective

Considerations

- DO ask for a media kit. These describe demographics and how many consumers are reached.
- DO ask for a nonprofit rate.
- Print ads are often sold based on a cost per thousand reached, or similar basis.
- DON'T overdo a print ad. Be concise and leave white space.
- Use color judiciously or not at all as it adds considerably to cost.
- DO follow Toastmasters International branding guidelines.
- Be aware of size restrictions, deadlines, formats (e.g. .pdf, .jpg)
- You may need to place ads over a long period of time to generate enough awareness.
- Some marketers can place ads in multiple places or media. They will often charge retainer fees.
- This method is not recommended for corporate, advanced or closed clubs.

How to Place a Print Advertisement

Sales representatives can be reached by telephone, email, or online form. Most print advertisers have web sites where an "Advertise with Us" (or something like it) can be located on a menu. A representative will work with you on all of the details.

When to Use

Print ads of any kind are a fairly effective and affordable way to reach a large general population and may be well considered by a community club with a serious marketing budget.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$\$	Easy	High

Promotional Item Marketing

Background

Objects used by businesses to build “top of mind awareness” (TOMA) and are left behind with customers and prospects.



Types of Displays

Includes, but is not limited to, bags, clothing items, mouse pads, notepads, pencils, pens, tumblers, and water bottles. And much more.

Advantages

- Easy to do
- Works almost 24/7
- Can work for you for years

Disadvantages

- Costs
- Hard to promote club with these items
- Dubious return on investment – vanity item?
- Easily disappear into drawers.
- Limited message space
- Not helpful in promotion of specific events

Considerations

- Tricky! TI does not like clubs making our own branded items. Always start with their catalog and seek permission to develop items that you cannot otherwise purchase from TI.
- Best used to reward members and to supplement employee displays
- Must think about where to place or use them

How to Do Promotional Item Marketing

If you don't purchase items with TI and can gain approval for alternative there are promotional item brokers in your market that can be found with an Internet search or directories. Remember to adhere to TI branding guidelines. A broker should be consulted about options and pricing and can suggest items that may be especially effective. After that the challenge is to use a promotional item where it can do the most good. Help from other club members is essential in distributing such items.

When to Use

Businesses use promotional items as a tool to build “top of mind awareness” (TOMA) that complements other marketing and advertising. They are most likely to assist a club that undertakes displays of any kind where a visitor can take things home with them.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$\$	Easy	Low

Publicity Stunts

Background

Publicity Stunts (including techniques grouped under the label of “Guerrilla Marketing”) use outrageous or surprising activities to catch the attention of passers-by. They have been a staple of marketers for many decades although they have yet to shake a dodgy image.



Types of Publicity Stunts

Includes, but is not limited to, flash mob meetings, legal graffiti, unusual newsworthy events to generate attention, photo-ops, pop-up meetings or speeches, and streetside “Sign Wavers” (and “barkers”), and Watch Parties

Advantages

- Easy to execute
- Only limit is creativity
- Could offend or upset some people
- Might result in a police visit
- Risk of being ignored by passers-by or media
- Obtaining permissions may be difficult

Disadvantages

Considerations

- DO consult police, property owners and local law to ensure the stunt is acceptable.
- DO exercise good taste when trying a publicity stunt: remember that the TI brand is impacted
- This method is not recommended for corporate, advanced or closed clubs.

How to Undertake a Publicity Stunt

A really good publicity stunt or Guerrilla Marketing event must be thoroughly planned and scripted. Care must be taken to develop a vivid idea that carries low downside and which stands a chance of winning over people in the “audience.” Some rehearsing is suggested prior to the event. Don’t forget to incorporate a means of signing up curious by-standers.

When to Use

Publicity stunts may be used best for a community or open club that needs to break out of a slump in a very competitive market assuming other techniques have been found wanting.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$	Easy	Low

Search-Based Marketing

Background

Marketing through Internet search is a relatively new technique that came of its own in the 1990s. Popular search engines include Ask.com, Bing, DuckDuckGo, Google, and Yahoo. Evidence suggests that web search is the #1 way that people find Toastmasters clubs.



Types of Searches

Includes, but is not limited to, "Toastmasters Near Me", "Toastmasters Club Asheville", "Public Speaking in Wilmington" and so on.

Advantages

- People try to find you
- Works 24/7

Disadvantages

- You are not in control (very much, at least)
- Much depends on your club's SEO (search engine optimization) which you can only affect a bit
- Improving SEO can help competitor clubs

Considerations

- There are brokers who make claims they can move you to the "top of the list" in a short time. Such claims must be viewed with skepticism.
- Think about how people could find you. Look at search terms that will be most effective especially if someone didn't know about Toastmasters.
- This method is not recommended for closed clubs.

How to Use and Improve Search

Using Search is easy: have a web site (or blog) that can be found. The onus on you is ensuring that the destination (your web site) is inviting to a visitor. See WEB SITE for more details. Affecting SEO can be a long-term project and difficult to influence. Time honored strategies include "generating buzz": having your club mentioned in other, searchable places such as reviews, others' blogs, online directories, and news articles. The more citations you have, the likelier it is that a search engine can find you especially if your club name is more unusual.

When to Use

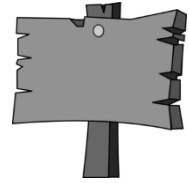
There is almost no reason for an open club not to pay attention to their search results and take the trouble to improve their visibility.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$	Easy	Low

Signage Marketing

Background

Think of signage as display advertising visible from a distance and often placed outside a building. These are sometimes simply larger-format display ads (e.g. ads at ball parks, billboards or bus shelters)



Types of Signs

Includes, but is not limited to, bench signs, billboards, participant recognition for highway cleanup, roadside signs, and sponsorship advertising.

Advantages

- Fairly easy to produce or buy into
- Works 24/7
- Often visible to large number of people

Disadvantages

- Can be expensive to make or buy into
- May not be placed everywhere due to municipal sign laws
- Requires work if individually placed
- Only limited amount of text can be read
- Require color to truly stand out

Considerations

- DO be aware of Toastmasters Brand guidelines before designing any signage.
- It usually only makes sense for a club to use signs in limited ways, such as passive advertising near meeting spaces. Billboards, while spectacular, will almost always fail cost-benefit tests.
- Municipalities usually have very strict rules about where signs can be placed. Take the time to learn the local law.
- Signs can in some cases be arranged through sponsorships at local sporting events (although not municipally-operated ones) such as Little Leagues. Costs will be lower but visibility will diminish.
- Signs may be a good idea simply to help visitors find your meeting space, but this is an extra responsibility for the VPPR.
- This method is not recommended for corporate, advanced or closed clubs.

How to Do Signage

Your first step will be to decide what signage to create and what you can afford. After that, identify whether the signage is available through a broker (who can be identified in a Web Search or directory) or if you will place signs yourself. A print shop can create signage for you. It is important to ask them about options and pricing.

When to Use

Assuming a club is based in a densely populated area and draws visitors from a small area, a strategically placed, legal sign may boost visibility. We nevertheless don't recommend this technique in most cases given that there are likely more effective alternatives.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$\$-\$\$\$	Moderate	Moderate

Social Media

Background

The 21st Century has seen an explosion of so-called “social media”, websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. The mix is constantly changing and formerly popular sites have disappeared. Generally, few users are considered “contributors” generating original content and most social media pages have few users.



Types of Social Media

Includes, but is not limited to, Digg, Eventbrite, Facebook, Facetime, Foursquare, Instagram, LinkedIn, Nextdoor, Pinterest, Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter, Yelp, and Youtube.

Characteristics of Various Social Media Sites

Digg: Focus is on news aggregation. The main page is curated and pages are organized by themes.

Eventbrite: Focus is on events of all kinds, organized by geography and type.

Facebook: Focus is on people. This has been the most popular choice among District 37 clubs for several years running

Foursquare (City Guide): Focus is on local search-and-directory

Instagram: Focus is on social sharing often with videos. Very brand-friendly.

LinkedIn: Focus is on people in professional jobs, most often sharing ideas, information and updates

Nextdoor: Focus is on particular neighborhoods and neighbor concerns in those areas.

Pinterest: Focus on discovery, users most interested in home, food, fashion, art.

Reddit: Focus is on social news aggregation and discussion.

Snapchat: Photos and pictures disappear after viewing, users are 3-1 female and mostly under age of 25.

Tumblr: A microblog---Focus is on multimedia posting and crowd-sourced information

Twitter: A microblog---posts limited to 280 characters, focus is on trending events.

Yelp: Focus is on crowd-sourced reviews of businesses and organizations.

Youtube: Focus is on video sharing.

Advantages

- Extremely easy to use
- Virtually no cost
- Followers, users, and members can engage with you
- Posts are easily shared by followers

Disadvantages

- Very few people respond, react, or add content of their own
- “Trolls” are common and can disrupt the tone of a conversation
- Bigger social media sites increasingly discriminate in favor of paid advertising
- It is difficult to get noticed

Considerations

- An effective social media campaign depends upon fresh content and consistent posting.
- Avoid the temptation to use more than three social media sites. It’s time consuming to keep many sites fresh and each additional platform yields fewer additional eye balls.

- Before choosing a Social Media page focus consider how you want to present content, who is your audience, and where you will likely be most visible. No social media site is like another.
- The larger players (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube) offer paid “boosting” or ads that may help get the word out, However, you have little control over who sees ads and often the return on investment is extremely low.
- Page formats vary within some social media sites. For example, you can set up as an “open” or “closed” environment. This may make more sense with some (e.g. LinkedIn) than others (e.g. Facebook) Consult with informed persons before committing to a page format.
- Closed clubs may have access to internal social media sites such as Chatter (Salesforce), Slack, and Yammer (Microsoft). Organization policies may allow use of these sites to promote the organization-sponsored club.
- After creating social media pages be sure to add a connection (link) to those pages from your web site and other online marketing properties and add logos of those sites to any printed material.

How to Get Started with Social Media

Each social media page has a simple-to-use account creation function. It does not take long to name and configure your page, add contact information and logos, and to create content. Some will allow you to invite others to visit or join the page. Provide as much information as possible in your organization profile.

When to Use Social Media

It’s probably wise to take advantage of at least one social media platform, provided that the club’s situation, demographics, and resources guide a choice. This is as cost-effective a medium as exists and allows for some degree of engagement with club members and other stakeholders.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$	Easy	Moderate to high

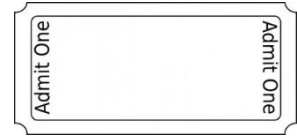
Special case: Chatbots

Chatbots are simple artificial intelligence programs that allow visitors to a social media site to interact using text. By employing a chatbot, a club can, immediately, answer any number of questions and provide the illusion someone from your club is working “24/7”. Advantages of chatbots include ease of use (they follow the same standards as texting apps) and ability to collect useful information from visitors. Drawbacks include cost and potential for growing irritation with pop up chat boxes. Popular chatbot providers include Xenioo, Landbot.io, Botsify, Chatfuel and Mobilemonkey, but there are quite a few more.

Special Events

Background

A club can be noticed by creating and sponsoring events that attractive opportunities on their own.



Types of Special Events

Includes, but is not limited to, candidate forums, debates, holiday-related speech events, "Lunch-and-learns", open houses, seminars, speaker showcase, speech contests, Speechcrafts, and webinars.

Advantages

- High curiosity factor if well promoted
- Some types can be cost-reimbursed
- Can help members with speech, leadership credit
- Club can become brand-identified with a particular event

Disadvantages

- Needs much time to properly organize
- A bit one-off from regular meetings
- Requires additional promotion for the event itself
- May require a larger location than meeting space

Considerations

- A special event always requires commitment, time and effort. Choose an event carefully for P/R purposes.
- DO prepare a budget that thoughtfully addresses costs and expected member returns
- Investigate how similar events worked for other clubs or organizations.

How to Undertake a Special Event

- DO plan, and well ahead of the event. Allow at least 45-60 days.
- Put event in hands of a chairperson and committee
- See Toastmaster manual for events and meetings
- Consider committing to an annual event.
- Create incentives among members to bring visitors

When to Use

A special event can serve as an alternative form of Open House, requiring much of the same planning but providing a more understandable way to stand out in a community.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$\$	Moderate to difficult	Moderate to high

Telemarketing

Background

The use of the telephone connection to homes and businesses goes back only as far as the late 1970s but has become almost a public nuisance, spawning the Do Not Call List in 1991 and has taken on an even uglier quality in the age of the Robocall.



Types of Telemarketing

Includes, but is not limited to, "boiler room" telephoning from a facility using live callers, computer-assisted calling (a.k.a. "robocalling"), and more benignly, telephone trees.

Advantages

- Fairly simple to implement
- Allows for a conversation and questions
- There is significant hostility to telemarketing. Callers risk earning a bad reputation.
- Calling cell numbers unsolicited is an especially frowned-upon practice
- Targeting is very difficult to do
- There are many ways to block or ignore calls
- Costs are high if using a telemarketing company

Disadvantages

Considerations

- In this day and age there are probably no reasons why a club wouldn't use a different approach to marketing than this method
- A great deal of care must be exercised in writing a caller script that does not appear to be a commercial solicitation. And amateur callers must be briefed on how to handle upset contacts, hang-ups, etc.

How to Do Telemarketing

It is simple to find a telemarketing company with an Internet search or by consulting a directory. Web sites will reveal how to reach a representative who can discuss options and costs with you. These are turnkey operations where everything is arranged by the company. If one wants to assemble their own pick-up telemarketing operation one needs phones, some form of phone directory or telephone number list, a script for callers, log sheets to record calls and outcomes, and an incentive system to reward volunteer callers.

When to Use

Advanced clubs may find a telephone call to a current Toastmaster prospect to be a way to differentiate themselves, but we cannot recommend any other application at this time. Telephone abuse has become simply to toxic and it's exceptionally hard to isolate leads in a general population.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$-\$\$\$	Easy	Moderate

Web Site



Background

While a little less important than ten years ago, web sites remain a vital part of marketing programs and are a perfect base for club information.

Types of Web Sites

Includes, but is not limited to, Free Toast Host, Easy Speak and WordPress are popular web page hosts among Toastmasters clubs. This category would also include so-called “microsites.”

Advantages

- FTH is designed expressly for TM clubs
- Power features are available
- There is flexibility to add content
- It is easy to link web sites to other publicity work.

Disadvantages

- Must be updated regularly
- Can easily become boring or clueless
- FTH and ES have limitations
- Easy to neglect mobile friendly formatting

Considerations

- All things being equal, there is no reason why a club should not have a web site of some kind
- Analytics (such as those available in Google) are available to understand user behavior
- Don't forget TI find-a-club and be sure to keep information up to date in Club Central
- Use a QR code for digital access
- Anoint a dependable webmaster
- It is critical to take advantage of Meet Up Members and related publicity features
- Don't experiment with fonts and colors
- Consider using a domain name that helps users find the club
- At closed clubs be aware of IT firewall and branding issues

How to Do Web Site Marketing

There are easy-to-find guides to creating a web site on the Internet. Free Toast Host and Easy Speak have Toastmaster-specific instructions on creating a site. After creating the site spend time to load content and explore functions. Keep updating and freshening content over time for maximum impact.

When to Use

While there is growing sentiment that web sites are starting to become out of fashion (usually in favor of social media pages or microsites) we do not see any important reasons why a club would not want to employ a web site. They are simply too popular, cost effective, and easy to maintain not to have one.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$	Moderate	Moderate

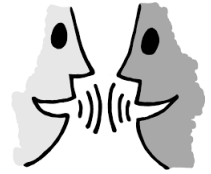
Special Case: Blogs

A blog (short for “web log”) is a specialized form of web site where the owner publishes a discussion or information in essentially diary-style entries. They are considered a form of journalism that can improve one's SEO (search engine optimization) and permit a deeper, more personal approach to engagement with readers. A club blog that discusses club or wider Toastmasters issues can be a way to attract attention to the club. The most significant challenge for using a blog as a marketing tool is that it itself must be promoted to become an effective marketing channel.

Word of Mouth

Background

Word of mouth (WOM) is something of a gold standard and “Holy Grail”. Every club would love to have an inflow of visitors who say that someone else referred them, endorsed the club, or asked them to attend. The trick is how to achieve continuous word of mouth. The principles used are much the same as those taught to small business entrepreneurs in using networking to build referrals.



Types of Word of Mouth

Includes, but is not limited to, active WOM (members or champions actively talk up, share and post to social media, review, or endorse the club) and passive WOM (conversation chains or buzz takes place as a consequence of the club achieving notice someplace.) Also see Membership and Alliances.

Advantages

- Little cost to the club
- Members get involved in promotion
- Easy to execute
- Works almost 24/7

Disadvantages

- Requires a discipline to keep ball rolling
- Risk of negative feedback
- Some cost if incentives are employed

Considerations

- Consider a training class or program in how to spread the word
- DON'T let resistance derail you. Some members will not participate in WOM activity.
- A serious long-term time investment must be made for success

When to Use

We believe every club should find a way to generate WOM. There are no better sales representatives than club members, and people often respond warmly to invitations by people they know and trust.

How to Do Word of Mouth Marketing

The key to building a WOM program is to consistently ask members and champions to speak for the club in their own lives, among their own networks, etc. and to reward them so for doing. At every meeting request that members talk up the club in their circles and invite friends. Be sure to create an incentive program for those who bring in visitors or who can demonstrate that they talked up the club someplace (say, in a networking group). A regular prize drawing or ribbon of accomplishment are examples of such programs.

COST	EASE OF USE	TIME
\$	Easy	Moderate

Special Club Situations

The more limited a club's universe of prospective members or the limits on membership, the fewer options exist for marketing that club. In our District, those special situations include the following cases. For each, we'll recommend some marketing and promotion considerations.

Advanced Clubs

Because these clubs are usually designed only for experienced Toastmasters, marketing can thus only be directed to Toastmasters. Special care must be taken to identify channels and strategies where Toastmasters are predominant, such as District social media properties, email and mail lists, District-sponsored events, and club visits.

Closed Clubs

About half of all clubs restrict their membership to employees of host organizations and therefore the most effective means to appeal to such employees depends on communication tools available at and within those organizations. Obstacles often exist in the form of limitations on displays, use of email and Intranet, and recruitment events. A good working relationship with a Human Resources department or a management champion is essential. Some clubs, due to extraordinary security such as military-post clubs, can act like closed clubs and are sensitive to the same challenges regardless of charter status.

Clubs Accepting Online Members

With Toastmasters International blessing for clubs accepting online members comes an entirely new marketing challenge. Marketing work here depends enormously upon digital resources. The club will want to focus on its web site, SEO, any social media properties, blogs and especially its TI find-a-club page.



Specialty Clubs

These clubs may be open to the public, but by focusing on a specialty discipline (e.g. humor, video, impromptu speaking, etc.) targeting messages becomes exceedingly difficult. Promotional messages are best used where the specialty populations can be found, Examples include specialty events, associations publications, and listservs.

Special Population Clubs

Examples of such clubs in our District include clubs at colleges and universities, clubs at military posts and bases, and homeless and rescue shelters where additional challenges and opportunities exist for attracting members, or clubs focused on use of a particular non-English language, or where members have certain disabilities, for example. In the former case, high turnover necessitates recruiting a certain level of non-student support to maintain continuities. In the latter case attracting non-resident supporters is a necessary function of the clubs' missions.