

New Year's Resolution: Stage Your Club for Success

How to Plan for Your Club Open House

1. **Your mission** is to plan an Open House for your Toastmasters club in order to build membership. The following guide is intended to help your leadership team and club members think through the many decisions that will be made in preparing for the event.

2. **Establish roles** in planning for your event:
One person can take on multiple roles as long as everyone knows who is responsible for what! Possible roles include

- Open House Chairman
- Secretary for the group to take notes on your discussion and turn after your presentation
- Treasurer for the group who will guide in establishing a budget
- Facilities Coordinator
- Program Planner
- Program Designer
- Greeter
- Toastmaster
- Table Topics Master
- Speaker
- Hospitality Coordinator
- Publicity Coordinator
- Club Cheerleader to promote within the club

3. **Make Decisions:** After being assigned your role, you will assist the group in making decisions related to various elements of planning. Here is a list of decisions that must be made in order to plan for a successful Open House:

- **Budget**

- **Planning to Plan/Selecting Date(s)/Time/**

Planning to Plan

How many planning meetings will be needed before the event?

When should you start planning? (NOW is good answer!!)

Who will create a timeline for planning and communicate it to the club?

Will you host a single Open House or more than one?

If one, pick a date early in March to allow for new members to join before the end of March

- **Selecting a Location/ Facilities**

Will you use your regular meeting place?

What are the pros/cons of having another venue?

Who will make the reservation?

What are the cost considerations of hosting in a different venue?

What room arrangements will be required at a different venue?

What items will need to be provided for the meeting and who will bring them?

- **Materials**

What promotional materials will you need? Who will order extra materials? (Free stuff from TI should be ordered right away!)

Who will make guest packets? (Materials for 5 provided by D25 packet)

Will you have door prizes? Who will provide them?

Will you have a token gift for visitors (pen with club name, small inspirational quotes booklet, etc.)? Who will provide these?

Do you already have business cards with name of club and contact info? If not, who will order or create these?

Who will provide name tags for guests and members?

If the club does not have standard pin-on or magnetic name badges, consider creating these.

Who will see that visitors are provided with name tags, visitor packet, etc.?

Will you have visitor cards and/or guest book available?

Who will see that visitors fill these out and collect them for the VPM?

Is there enough money in the budget for everything needed?

- **Agenda**

How will you assure a quality meeting (i.e., Gavel Club meeting)

What will your meeting theme be? (How will it relate to getting new members for your club?)

Will the main speaker do a manual speech related to Toastmasters?

Consider having a guest speaker (someone who has competed in contests at Division or District, for instance)

Will there be an evaluator for this speech?
Will the TT Master provide TT about communications and leadership? Consider having a few members volunteer to prepare a 1-2 min. testimonial on “What Toastmasters means to me” instead of/in addition to TT.
Will you use a Toastmasters video, such as Welcome to Toastmasters?
Who will create the printed program?
How will you handle introduction of guests?
 Consider assigning a member to each visitor who will introduce the guest when called upon in the meeting.
Will guests be asked for comments at the end of the meeting?

- **Hospitality**

Is food, beverage allowed at your venue?
How will food items be provided?
 Catered? Pot luck? Planned menu with members contributing items?
If meeting at a restaurant, will you negotiate a menu?
 Will the club pick up the cost of visitor’s food?
Who will bring paper goods, etc.
What will be used for decorations? Who will provide these?
How much of the budget will be allocated for food and beverages?

- **Advertising**

For corporate clubs, how will you use the Intranet and other resources of your business to promote the club? Will Human Resources or Training Departments support your Open House?
Will you coordinate with other organizations? (i.e., Chamber of Commerce, college or university, community centers, etc.)
Who will create fliers? Who will distribute them?
Who will create press release or newspaper ad and get it scheduled for publication?
Who will contact other media, such as local radio station, for interview or ad?

Will your club use social media for advertising, and who will upload your invitation?

Who will create a personal printed invitation or evite?

Will you ask for an RSVP?

Who will assemble a mailing list or evite list for former members, previous guests, other good prospects?

For Corporate Clubs: Who among your company leadership should be invited?

Will you make use of the latest Toastmasters branding logos?

- **Promotion within the Club**

Will you have a membership contest (who brought the most guests, etc.)?

How will you encourage members to invite friends, coworkers, family, etc.

Brainstorm where each member might find guests to attend (ex., church, other civic organizations they belong to, etc.)

Who will take care of sign up for meeting roles and other “helper” roles for the big day?

Greeters welcome, have guests fill in visitor card, give visitor packet

AV Coordinator to set up video, if used

Toastmaster for event: Should be smooth, polished

Select main speaker on a Toastmasters topic

Other main roles: TM, TT, GE, E, T (probably won't do AH or G)

- **Follow-up**

Who will send email or note thanking guests for coming?

Who will set up a schedule for orientation and assign mentors of new members?

How will you keep the momentum going?

Now that you have staged your club for success, how will you assure that the same quality you displayed at the Open House will continue in subsequent meetings?

4. Additional Resources

- **Materials from District 42**

Each club will be receiving a packet of materials from District 42 containing, open house posters through their Area Directors, Division Directors, Club Growth Team, from the Club Growth Director or by mail.

The materials or info to be supplied are for guest and marketing the open house.

All you need to provide is the additional materials for the guests, e.g Guest parkegage

Check out the D42tm.org page for more resources and great stuff!

- **Articles on Toastmasters International Website on Open House:**

- **Articles on D42 website page**

Toastmasters International Official Documents

Marketing Information:

[Corporate Letter \(doc\)](#)

[Power Point Slides \(ppt\)](#)

[Power Point Notes \(pdf\)](#)

[Corproate Flier \(pdf\)](#)

[Marketing Flier \(pdf\)](#)

Open House Information:

[Open House Power Point \(ppt\)](#)

[Invitation \(doc\)](#)

[Event Flier \(pdf\)](#)

