



CLUB OPEN HOUSE BASICS

VENUE

Location Location, Location!

- Room capacity limitations.
- Parking (paid or free)
- Public transit (nearest stops, closures)
- Accessibility (automatic doors, elevator)

MEETING AGENDA

Put on the best show with a stellar cast!

- Guest speaker (local celebrity, VIP or top speaker)
- Toastimonial (junior & senior member)
- Table Topics (fun & easy questions)
- Time for networking

PR & PROMOTION

Get the word out to your target audience!

- Order / download resources from Toastmasters.org
- Connect with District Public Relations Manager

HOSPITALITY

Everyone loves to eat!

- Set a budget
- Ask for donations
- Potluck gets everyone involved
- Finger food is ideal
- Clean up (Tupperware, wet wipes, garbage bags)

MEMBERSHIP

Make a good impression the 1st time

- Guest package (contact details, info about club/TM)
- Membership application
- Name tags
- Guest book

VENUE

Location, Location, Location!

Your date has been chosen, next is to confirm a venue. Find a large enough space, and easily accessible by either public transit or close to parking. It could be your usual meeting space or another venue.

ROOM CAPACITY

The room for the event must have space large enough to accommodate seating for the current club members plus an average of two guests per member. Example: 5 members + 10 guests = 15 attendees. *The idea is to encourage club members to bring one or two guests each.* Some venues have chairs and tables available for use. At the minimum you will need chairs for everyone. Be sure to allow for a seating area for guests who are handicapped. If a projector and projection screen is needed for the speakers, check to see if there is one on site for usage.

PARKING

Ample parking spaces and designated areas for handicapped parking should be included in considering a location. If the Open House will be in the evening, consider visiting or driving by the location at night to determine ample lighting in parking areas.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Confirm if there are service disruptions and offer alternative routes. Offer all routes to access the venue and the nearest bus or subway stops.

RESTRICTIONS

Compliance with restrictions for room usage makes the event pleasant to everyone. Some locations will have strict rules regarding serving food or drinks as well as limitations on any decorative items. Be sure to check the Rental Agreement, if applicable, for any specific regulations.

ACCESSIBILITY

Ontario is the first province and one of the first jurisdictions in the world to enact specific legislation establishing a goal and time-frame for accessibility. Most public locations will have already anticipated and prepared for handicap accessibility, however, there are some exceptions. Be sure to tour any venue and determine that there is a ramp, without stairs, elevator, automatic doors for accessibility into the building as well as determining the feasibility for the meeting room and restroom usage.

RENTAL AGREEMENT

A rental agreement is typically only necessary if the Open House will be held offsite. (If the event will be held at the club's typical meeting site, ask if serving food & beverages are allowed.) Be sure to mention Toastmasters International is a non-profit organization, the rental fee may be reduced, or free usage of the room is possible! Reserve a minimum of 2 hours to 3 hours for set up, meeting, and clean up. *Read the rental agreement carefully before signing.* Book your venue a minimum of one month in advance of the event, if possible. Obtain a receipt for the rental fee to remit to the club's treasurer.

NOTE: If the event is being conducted offsite, be sure to send a Thank You card to your site contact. Gratitude goes a long way toward building a relationship for future use of the venue.

MEETING AGENDA

Put on the best show with a stellar cast!

The Open House is your club's showcase event! It is an introduction to Toastmasters for the novice. Creating a solidly structured plan is critical for the success of your Open House. Details to cover:

COMMITTEE SET UP

Pull out your Competent Leadership manual because this is your opportunity to complete Project 6, "Organization and Delegation" or Project 10, "Team Building". An Open House Chairperson (Project 10 role, "Club Special Event Chair") will help lead other team members and keep track of the Open House project progression. Take it further and credit towards and HPL ([High Performance Leadership](#)) which counts towards your DTM. Vital roles such as Hospitality and Publicity can receive credit for their roles as well (Project 6, Help Organize a Club Special Event, PR Campaign, Membership Campaign or Assist the Club's Webmaster).

SET UP & ASSIGN ROLES

This will be a non-typical meeting format. Remember, this is your showcase and the best performers will make a lasting impression regarding the benefits of being in your Toastmasters club. Include the following roles / segments:

1. **Toastmaster** (open and close meeting, introduce speakers, manage raffle)
2. **Guest Speaker** 10-15 minutes (VIP, local celebrity, experienced speaker, Toastmaster)
3. **Toastimonials** 2-5 minutes (junior and/or senior Toastmaster, sharing their TM journey)
4. **[Pathways Presentation](#)** 10-15 minutes (New educational program)
5. **[Toastmaster Benefits](#)** 10-15 minutes (PowerPoint about real benefits and learning opportunities)
6. **Table Topics** 10-15 minutes (fun and easy questions to get guests involved)
7. **Networking Break** 15-20 minutes (opportunity to engage with guests, sign up and answer questions)
8. **Raffle / Door Prizes**

TIP

If time permits and depending on the number of guests, ask for their feedback, impressions and any general questions. Invite them all back to a regular Toastmaster meeting.

COMMITTEE CHAIR CHECKLIST

The following is a suggested list of tasks and duties for the Open House Chairperson for your team's success. Use the check list as a follow up regarding projects for each group. Assist as in helping each member achieve objectives to insure the event runs smoothly.

OPEN HOUSE CHAIR & COMMITTEE

- Set a Goal for how many guests & members (Think Big)
- Every member is responsible for bringing minimum 2 guests
- Determine Location, Date & Time to meet your goal
- Book your Guest Speaker and schedule additional speakers (at least two speakers)
- Confirm Toastmaster of the Day & Assign Roles
- Assemble Team (include volunteers for SET UP and CLEAN UP)
- Create & distribute a Contact List for ALL team members & leaders for event
- Open House Chair gives a Motivational Talk to club to gain commitment
- Schedule & follow up with team regarding status (at 2 weeks prior and 1 week prior to event).
- Remind members to bring their manuals to get credit for participating.
- Send a Thank You card to the venue contact and any other key contributors
- Schedule a post-event meeting to discuss your successes and challenges.

PUBLICITY CHAIR, & TEAM

- Brainstorm a list of every place to publicize. (Social media, websites, community & corporate newsletters, emails, blogs, bulletin boards, libraries, etc.)
- Print and distribute 5 flyers for each member to distribute & post to surrounding areas
- [Press Releases](#) (Create two, send 1 & 2 weeks prior to event)
- Follow up press release on club webpage and social media with action photos
- Post pictures of the Open House Event on District 60's Facebook Page
- Creates & put out Signs to direct attendees to meeting room

HOSPITALITY CHAIR & TEAM

- Donations from restaurants or grocery stores (obtain pick up time & contact person)
- Designate volunteer(s) to pick up donations from restaurants / grocery stores
- Potluck Donations send reminders 1 DAY BEFORE the event to members bringing items.
- Food (cookies, fruit, veggies, cheese & crackers, water, coffee, tea)
- Decorations (check for venue restrictions in rental agreement)
- Conduct walk through of venue after cleaning up

GREETERS & TEAM

- Greeters to welcome every guest at the door before the event
- To float during networking break and answer any questions.
- Insure a [Guest Book](#) is filled out with names and emails
- Bowl for guests to drop information cards to win door prizes at the end of the event
- Name Badges, pens & markers

COMMITTEE CHAIR CHECKLIST

(continued)

TOASTMASTER FOR THE EVENT

- 1-minute "Toastamonials" (need 1 or 2 to speakers about how TM helped them)
- Announce Door Prize Winners
- Pathways Presentation, Education Benefits & Learning Opportunities
- Prepares & Prints Agendas

CLUB VP MEMBERSHIP & TEAM

- Have New Member Packages for those guests ready join the club at the event.
- Have Visitor Packages with Membership Applications and Club Contact details.
- Assist Open House Chair with gathering volunteers for Greeters.
- Follow up with Greeters after event regarding interest levels for guests.
- [Follow up email](#) to ALL guests and invite them back to a regular club meeting or another club location.
- Gather any leftover packages from event, retain for future use.

PUBLICITY CHAIR CHECKLIST

(Provide this copy to the Publicity Chairperson)

With the date and location already set, it's now time to invite the masses! Timing is EVERYTHING, so begin to advertise no sooner than TWO WEEKS PRIOR to your Open House Event. Most people can plan accordingly to attend if they are aware of your event within this time frame. Heralding the event via word of mouth, flyers and social media are best methods for notifying the public. Using your resources effectively start with:

MATERIALS

Creating a flyer or an announcement is as easy as a visit to www.toastmasters.org. Download the PDF copy of the "[Open House Flier](#)" and you are ready to fill in your Open House Event Information.

ADVERTISING 101

With your flyers in hand, you are ready to announce your club's event. Asking local businesses to allow you to place a flyer in their window or in their designating customer waiting area are good options. Examples of prime businesses are Public Libraries, Employment Agencies, Temporary Employment Agencies, School District Administrative Offices, Starbuck's and any place where people wait for services.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is choice for getting the word out. *First, announce event via the banner on your club's free toast website* (see your Club's Public Relations Officer for announcing the event on your webpage and Facebook page if you do not have administrative access to these sites). Other Social Media sites to announce the event: MeetUp.com, Eventbrite, and Facebook.

1. **MeetUp.com** will send a broadcast message a few days before your event to Meetup member's email addresses. (This is also a great way to advertise your usual meeting information).
2. **Eventbrite** FREE to use and most event marketing tool. Track all the registered guests and send a reminder a few days and a day before the event.
3. **Facebook** has capability to create an event. Use the same link to register created with Eventbrite. However, post each week a "teaser" post to keep people visiting your club's Facebook page and website.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Brainstorm a list of every place to publicize. (Social media, websites, free media outlets, community & corporate newsletters, emails, blogs, etc.)
- Print and distribute 10 flyers for each member to distribute & post
- [Press Releases](#) (Create two, send 1 & 2 weeks prior to event)
- Invite past club members and visitors
- Follow up press release on club webpage and social media with action photos
- Post pictures of the Open House Event on District 60's Facebook Page
- Follow up with guests and ask, "How did you hear about the event?" to gauge which marketing tactic was most successful and recognize an

HOSPITALITY CHAIR CHECKLIST

(Provide this section to the Hospitality Chairperson)

The Open House event is the opportunity to extend a warm greeting and a little extra incentive for those who join your club. Setting the tone of the meeting with a sincere welcome starts with:

BASICS

The time of day of your event will indicate the type of hors d'oeuvres to serve as appropriate refreshments. Offering snacks and finger food would be the gold standard. It is a known fact; it's hard to focus when you're hungry...so treat your guests!

DONATIONS

Gathering donations for the party is one of the primary functions for the Hospitality Team. First impressions are everything! Dress professionally and be courteous when asking for donations. In exchange for donations, offer recognition in the Open House program (sponsorship) by listing the business name, location and link on your website or Facebook. Here are two primary methods for gathering goodies:

1. Grocery Stores & Restaurants

Many local grocery stores offer gift cards to purchase items for your event. Keep a list of the contact information and send thank you cards for donations.

2. Potluck Donations

A "Sign Up Sheet" with items needed for treats can be created and passed around during the meeting for members to choose what they will bring to the event.

CHECKLISTS

Attached are checklist options for prospective items needed for your hospitality table, from the minimal to the more lavish events. Whichever you choose, as indicated by the time of your event, make your guests feel special. Even a plate of homemade cookies and freshly brewed coffee with nice napkins will be remembered by your guests. The list of items, on the checklist attached, cover a variety of situations and allow for a beautifully organized event.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." - Maya Angelou

HOSPITALITY CHAIR CHECKLIST

(Provide this section to the Hospitality Chairperson)

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Donations from Restaurants (obtain pick up time & contact person)
- Designate volunteer(s) to pick up donations from Restaurants
- Hospitality Chair maintains list of donation items pending
- Potluck Donations send reminders to volunteer donors 1 DAY BEFORE the event
- Food (cookies, fruit, veggies, cheese & crackers, tea, coffee etc.)
- Decorations (check for venue restrictions in rental agreement)
- Conduct walk through of venue after cleaning up

THE LIST

- Napkins, Plates, Cups (insulated for hot beverages).
- Water, Coffee, Tea, Juice and/or Sodas.
- Creamer, Sugar, Artificial Sweetener.
- Cutlery and Serving Utensils.
- Platter for Cookies, Brownies (or other sweets).
- Platter with a healthy option (fruits or veggies).
- Garbage bags and baskets, if not provided at site.
- Zip Lock bags, Tupperware for any leftovers.
- Paper towels & Windex.
- Wet wipes.
- Table cloth, for easy cleanup.
- Decorations.
- Food labels, identifying ingredients for food allergies
- Vegetable Platter
- Cheese Platter
- Bread and Crackers
- Entrée Platter (example: sliced Summer Sausage, Swedish Meatballs, etc.)
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR CHECKLIST

(Provide this copy to the VP of Membership & Committee)

The membership committee is comprised of the VP of Membership and Greeters for the Open House. Greeters are needed to welcome guests upon arrival and answer questions.

GUEST PACKAGES

Don't leave your guests empty handed! Give them a packet with information they can read at their leisure regarding highlights about your club and the Toastmasters experience. Include a Visitors Card, "[Your Path to Leadership](#)" brochure (Item # 101), "[Find Your Voice](#)" brochure (Item #99), "[Success 101](#)" brochure (Item #1622), "[Features, Benefits and Value](#)" and a copy of the Toastmaster Magazine (can be recycled copies from current members). Put a club label with meeting day & time, website and contact details on all materials. All the printed materials can be found on the www.toastmasters.org website.

MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES

Your guests have seen the show and they are ready to join TODAY!! Have membership packages at the Open House for them. [Membership Application](#) form, "[Navigating Pathways](#)" Flier, (Item #133), a [Fact Sheet](#) for first time members.

VP OF MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

- Have New Member Packages for those guests ready join the club at the event.
- Have Visitor Packages with Membership Applications and Club Contact details.
- Assist Open House Chair with gathering volunteers for Greeters.
- Follow up with Greeters after event regarding interest levels for guests.
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- Greeters to welcome every guest at the door before the event.
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