

Using ZOOM –From a Toastmaster Meeting Perspective
Current Best Practices
~Lunchtime Talkers of Durham Region

Create a Climate of Ease

- Everyone is going through uncertainty these days, yet we all need a sense of normalcy, community, as well as the purpose of continuing with our TM goals. Show awareness of these realities by ensuring that online meetings will be a source of relief and enjoyment for all members, not an additional source of worry.

To accomplish this:

- Advise the members that as we segue to online meetings, we are **not** looking for perfection. We are looking for good meetings that are enjoyable for all. Ensure members they can all come and **relax**.
- Here's part of the message we used, if it's helpful:

'This is all new to us—meeting online—but we are NOT aiming for PERFECTION. Perfection is actually the enemy of GOOD—and we want good meetings, not perfect ones. So we encourage all of you to come and just relax during our virtual meetings, and have fun, while learning.

As well, with using ZOOM, we are furthering our Toastmasters' communication goals! We are taking advantage of this situation by learning and improving in a new skill we can't normal use at Toastmasters—web conferencing. That's not a little thing.'

- Let the membership know **the host of the meeting** (ZOOM only allows the owner of the account to host the meeting) **will take care of all the behind the scenes technical details**. They won't have to do anything technical.
 - All they have to do is show up. The host will turn the meeting over to the chair, and the chair will call on various people, as normal. All they have to do is their regular parts, just as in an in person meeting. Talk, and relax. 😊
- If the host sets up a recurring meeting (advised), let the members know it will be the **same link** every week. They can bookmark the link, click it, and they will be in the meeting room. Our members did not have to install anything.
- If possible, open the meeting room at least 15 – 30 minutes before the meeting to allow people to come in, acclimatize, see each other, and chat with each other. We want to keep our TM communities going, and this is one way to do it.
- If you can, hold a prep session ahead of time for members to come in and work out any bugs, and to relieve any worry. Anyone, even with a free account, can hold a prep session. For instance, one of our members is on

- an older desktop without a web cam, so we couldn't see each other. Next week, he's attending on his smart phone.
- FYI—current information on free accounts is that they allow up to 100 participants and meetings of 40 minutes length. We are not using a free account for the actual meetings due to the time limitations but are planning on a prep session for members who didn't get to our first ZOOM meeting, to relieve any fears.

How to Vote for Best Table Topics and Best Speaker:

There is a chat function, and it allows messages to be sent privately to one person, as well as messages to be sent to the whole group. To vote for table topics or best speaker, ask each person to use the chat function, and send the name of the person they choose, privately, to the member collecting the votes. This works incredibly fast and well.

How to send Evaluation Feedback to the Speakers:

We emailed a template to the club. We suggested that they copy it into an email before the meeting, for each of the speakers. Then all they have to do during the meeting is fill it out and email it to the speaker. Voila! Personal Feedback.

If you'd like to use our template, based on the evaluation form we use, here it is.

Lunchtime Talkers Speech Evaluation Form

Speaker:
Your Name:
Project:
Date:
Speech Title:
Good Points:

Growth Points:

Visible

Eye contact
 Head raised
 Standing erect
 Pleasant smile

Audible

Speaking clearly
 Rate of speaking
 Variety of volume
 Avoiding ums / ahs

Preparation

- θ Speech organization
- θ Well researched
- θ Not reliant on notes
- θ Clear Message

Polished

- θ Address the audience
- θ Employ gestures
- θ Relaxed appearance
- θ Strong impact

Timer Function:

- Good suggestions were already given in the previous ZOOM material sent out. An additional option is to simply have the timer say: “TIME”, when the speaker’s time is up.
- For a speech, the timer can say: Green, Yellow, Red, at the appropriate time points.

Additional Best Practices:

- We found that ZOOM did not send out the additional reminder email we’d set to go out 30 minutes before the meeting. We suggest that any ZOOM emails are supplemented by a regular email. i.e.
 - Email 1: Send out LINK, basic instructions and event time, etc.,
 - Email 2: Send out a reminder email with the same information 30 minutes or so before the meeting as well.

Guests:

- We are encouraging our club members to bring guests. All they need to do is give the guest the link, and the guests are welcome. This does not need to stop.
- We are also suggesting that if the guest is likely to come, they can email the sergeant-at-arms ahead of time with their information, though this is not necessary, just a courtesy, if it’s easily possible.

In Conclusion:

We absolutely love our ZOOM meetings! We’re able to see our friends, and continue our speaking and leadership goals with heightened focus. It helps us all have a sense of agency, *and* community. And as always, we’re incredibly grateful to have found Toastmasters, and to be one.

We hope this has served you.

Lunchtime Talkers of Durham Region