

# TOASTMASTER®

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MAY 2012

**16 MAKING A  
CASE FOR DEBATE**

**22 SPEAKING  
TO INFLUENCE**

**26 SELL A GREAT  
IDEA IN FIVE STEPS**

Milo Victoria, CEO  
Omnitrans

## SUCCESSING AS A CEO

Corporate leaders  
share how to empower,  
encourage and  
communicate.  
Page 8


## THE POWER OF GPS



**Getting lost is no fun. Recently, my** law partner invited me to dinner at her home. Since we live only two miles apart, I assumed the drive would be easy. I was wrong! A series of dead-end streets, one-way alleys and unreadable street signs had me driving in circles. I knew I was close, but I was still lost. Finally, I decided to trust my instincts. I parked my car on the side of the road, jumped a grassy divide, and walked right up her front steps. If only I had a GPS (global positioning system), it would have been so much easier.

Your Toastmasters journey also requires a GPS. Without it, you could spend years drifting and wandering. “G.P.S.” will provide you with a carefully plotted course to reach your destination of Toastmasters success.

- ▶ **G: Goal.** A goal is a dream with a deadline. If you don’t know where you want to go, any path will do just fine. Members like this may feel adrift with little sense of purpose or direction. Goal setting will help you crystallize why you joined and how you can benefit from Toastmasters. This year I set a goal to earn my second Advanced Communicator Gold award. What is your goal?
- ▶ **P: Plan.** Next, break down your goal into smaller targets. Then, set precise dates to complete those targets. Have your employer or spouse agree to your action plan and ask them to help you stick to it. Leave a comfortable margin to ensure your goal is achieved by your deadline. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.
- ▶ **S: Support.** Find a support team to help you reach your goal. Your club mates provide accountability, positive support and encouragement. Ask your mentor to contact you seven, five and three days before your next scheduled speech. If current friends are not supportive of your self-improvement goal, find new friends. Surround yourself with people who are genuinely interested in your development and success.

Occasional obstacles and roadblocks may impede your Toastmasters journey, but if you regularly check your “G.P.S.” and keep moving forward, you will reach your destination. See you at the finish line! You learn it all at Toastmasters, where leaders are made. 

**MICHAEL NOTARO, DTM**  
International President

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**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

May 2012 Volume 78, No. 5

## DEPARTMENTS

**2 VIEWPOINT: THE POWER OF GPS**  
BY MICHAEL NOTARO, DTM  
International President

**4 LETTERS**

**5 MY TURN: LAID OFF?!**  
I looked for a job and found something more.  
BY DAVID MCNULLA, ACS, CL

**6 AROUND THE GLOBE**

**12 PROFILE: KRISTI MARSH, CC:**  
**MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES**  
How little things can make a big difference  
BY JULIE BAWDEN-DAVIS

**21 NEWS FROM TI: ENHANCING THE MEMBER EXPERIENCE**  
WHQ announces revised district recognition program.  
BY PAUL STERMAN

**26 HOW TO: SELL A GREAT IDEA IN 5 STEPS**  
Use this simple strategy to present your business idea to others.  
BY GEOFFREY JAMES

**30 FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT: LOST IN TRANSLATION**  
Stop and think before taking a machine's word for it.  
BY JOHN CADLEY

**31 THE TRAVELING TOASTMASTER**

## ARTICLES

**14 THE ART OF ACCEPTING PRAISE**  
Don't neglect your post-speech manners.  
BY GENE PERRET

**20 A QUALITY CLUB EXPERIENCE**  
Members thrive in clubs with high standards.  
BY LANCE MILLER, DTM

**28 ANYONE CAN BE A MENTOR**  
Seize the chance to encourage your peers.  
BY ALETTA ROCHAT, ACS, ALS



## FEATURES

**8 SUCCEEDING AS A CEO**  
Corporate leaders share how to empower, encourage and communicate.  
BY DAVE ZIELINSKI

**16 MAKING A CASE FOR DEBATE**  
How to fine-tune your argument and sell your point.  
BY CHRISTINE CLAPP, DTM

**22 SPEAKING TO INFLUENCE**  
Classic persuasion techniques worth repeating.  
BY JOHN COLEMAN

Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their *competence* in communication so they can gain the *confidence* to lead others.

By regularly giving speeches, gaining feedback, leading teams and guiding others to achieve their goals, leaders emerge. They learn to tell their stories. They listen and answer. They plan and lead. They give feedback — and accept it. They find their path to leadership.

**Toastmasters International. Where Leaders Are Made.**





"I found confidence and inspiration from [the February articles], as if some great power was secretly providing valuable encouragement to help me with my speech."

Sandy Yang  
PMAC Toronto club  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

### Success Takes **Discipline**

Julie Bawden-Davis' article about Annemarie du LeBohn's achievements (January) was very stimulating. I especially appreciate du LeBohn's statement, "I decided to discipline my mind and body to enjoy every moment of the competition." This comment is helpful to all of us, as it indeed takes discipline to achieve the goals we set for ourselves in Toastmasters.

The first sentence, however, jarred me when I read "... du LeBohn peddled ..." I don't believe du LeBohn traveled about retailing small wares. Rather, she *pedaled*, as in propelling a bicycle. Thank you for providing the *Toastmaster* magazine; it is a treasure trove for all of us!

Norma Kelly, CC, CL  
South Lake club  
Clermont, Florida

### A True **Iron Woman**

The Profile article on Annemarie du LeBohn was very inspirational. I was in the same Ironman race as Annemarie. All of us have challenges in getting to the Ironman start and finish lines, but Annemarie's determination was incredible. I finished the race the same day and, as Annemarie can tell you, the weather was not good. Please pass my congratulations on to her — she is an "Iron Woman"!

Steve Andrews  
Russett Ramblers club  
Boise, Idaho

### An '**Oops**' Moment

I thoroughly enjoyed John Cadley's "Battling Babble" (January). I often turn first to the back of the magazine to read his "Funny You Should Say That" column. However, Cadley was hoist on his own petard when he misspelled "cachet" as *caché* after correctly calling out those who incorrectly replace "ado" with *adieu*. Also, I would have loved a playful reference to the movie/stage play *The King and I/Anna and the King of Siam* as a more familiar use of "et cetera, et cetera, et cetera."

I love the magazine and read it cover to cover every month!

Jeremy Davis, DTM  
Watermeisters Toastmasters  
Fountain Valley, California

### **Helpful** Tips

I want to thank you for publishing Jennifer Blanck's article "Career Boost!" in the January issue. The "Resume Tips" were particularly helpful.

Harry Oei, DTM  
Shoreline Speakers club  
Long Beach, California

### **You Read** My Mind

I was scheduled to present for an hour at a professional conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, and worried about it day and night for two months. I completely forgot about the February issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine, which had been on my counter for days. When I finally picked it up,

"The 60-Minute Stretch" caught my attention. I also found many other useful articles in the same issue.

Dear editor, I am still amazed by your telepathic ability. It's almost as if the magazine was customized for me. "The 60-Minute Stretch," "You are a Brilliant Woman" and "A Cure for Blanking Out" carried advice I probably would have ignored in other situations. But the suggestions came to me at just the right time, in the right way. This helped me focus on my speech preparation with less doubt and anxiety. I found confidence and inspiration from them, as if some great power was secretly providing valuable encouragement to help me with my speech. Thank you for your help!

Sandy Yang  
PMAC Toronto club  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

### **Professional** Help

Thank you to Christine Clapp for her February article, "The Language of Lawyers." When I was vice president public relations for my club, I did a good job of recruiting new members through events, but I always struggled to demonstrate to professionals the value of Toastmasters experience to one's career. This article provided me with an arsenal of information to work with.

Andrew Staicer, CC, ALB  
Palomar Airport club  
Carlsbad, California



# LAI D OFF?!

I looked for a job and found something more.

By David McNulla, ACS, CL



**“You didn’t hear?” my 10-year** colleague asked. “Everybody is getting laid off today.”

My colleague proceeded to describe how the CEO’s dishonesty 10 years earlier had led the company into bankruptcy. A giant PC conglomerate purchased the company, and decided to consolidate development sites and initiate layoffs.

By the end of the day, my boss confirmed this decision and offered me


club. These people know me personally and have heard my story. I have also heard *their* stories. We all respect the desire to improve. These contacts gave me a better chance of getting a face-to-face interview.

During my time in Toastmasters, I developed my public persona. I now have a public brand, an image. I spent more time talking with people because of Toastmasters, and this increased my chances of getting help

how to set goals for myself and my club. I can manage my time, develop my skills and serve others. I can create plans for open houses and membership building campaigns. I know how to listen and help solve problems. I also learned how to delegate tasks to volunteers — people who didn’t even have to do the work.

Leadership skills enable me to guide my team without being “bossy.” It also gives my future employer another reason to hire me. If confidence is my style, leadership has become my substance.

Despite having to search for a job in a tight market, I was able to remain calm. Ready to face the challenges, I used my contacts to learn about jobs and get my resumes distributed. I answered tough interview questions eloquently. I shared my leadership experience and vision for the future.

This potentially stressful experience was relaxed and enjoyable because of my Toastmasters experience. I landed a good job before my severance pay ran out. It is true that I was not able to control the events that led to the loss of a 10-year job. I did, however, have control over my future. 

**“Despite having to search for a job in a tight market, I was able to remain calm.”**

severance pay. I started thinking about how I would find a new job. I was not angry. The company made what they considered a good business decision. I know these things happen, and I always considered it my responsibility to be prepared for this eventuality.

As I created my action plan, I realized I was prepared for a situation like this. Central to that preparation was networking, gaining confidence in public speaking and developing my leadership skills through Toastmasters. I knew I was ready to compete in a tough job market.

My next step was preparing for job interviews. I know that a great way to get an interview is through contacts such as friends, co-workers and club members. As an area governor in Toastmasters, I work with 80 to 100 members, both in and outside of my

and recommendations — even from people I never met.

I joined Toastmasters because, like so many others, I wanted to become a more confident public speaker. During my Ice Breaker speech, I was hunched over like I had been punched in the gut. The Ah-Counter stopped counting my “ahs” after 25.

Since then, I have given 40 speeches and dozens of evaluations, and I have responded to many hundred Table Topics. During my job search, I had many opportunities to use my Toastmasters experience to speak with people about my education, qualifications and ideas. I felt a calm that I never had in previous interviews, and this gave me an advantage over other candidates.

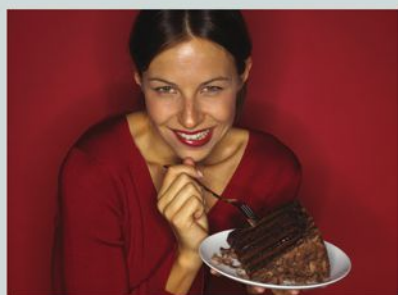
The most important benefit I gained from Toastmasters is the practice in leading others. I know

**David McNulla, ACS, CL**, is a member of Toast Raptors club in San Diego, California, and an area governor. Read his blog on software testing and leadership techniques at [dmcnulla.wordpress.com](http://dmcnulla.wordpress.com).

## AROUND THE GLOBE

### INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

#### A SLICE OF IDIOM KNOWLEDGE



An idiom is a cultural expression with a meaning that cannot be defined literally. Unique to each language, idioms offer insight about cultural differences.

In English, the phrase *You can't have your cake and eat it too* means you cannot have two things simultaneously. The Hindi language paints this picture well with *You can't have mangos and sell the seeds*. The Germans say *You can't dance at two weddings* and the Russians say *You can't sit on two chairs*.

On a good day, you can have it both ways. In that case, the French say *You have the butter and the money from the butter*.

For more idioms, check out Jag Bhalla's book *I'm Not Hanging Noodles on Your Ears*.

### WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN...

#### YOUR CELL PHONE RINGS WHILE YOU ARE GIVING A SPEECH?

**Members from Sunjet club in Bridgetown, Barbados, respond:**

"I would include in my speech 'and at that exact moment, my cell phone went off unexpectedly.'" — **ANTHONY ALLEYNE, CC, ALB**

"Oh my gosh! It must be an emergency! This caller can't wait until I finish my presentation." — **AUDREY REID, CC, ALB**

"Toastmasters and guests: Let us digress from the topic at hand. Maybe you didn't see this coming, a ringing phone in the middle of my speech. To be very honest, neither did I, but I am sure it will make a great speech idea for my next speech assignment." — **SHAN WEEKES**

"That would never happen. My phone is always turned off." — **ERLYN TOPPIN, ACG, CL**

*Congratulations to the Sunjet club on its 25-year anniversary!*

### SNAPSHOT



Dorothy Griffith, DTM, from Bayfield, Ontario, Canada (holding the *Toastmaster*), volunteered for four months at Honour Village in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Honour Village provides a safe home for Cambodian orphans and disadvantaged children. Griffith said this *Toastmaster* "was well-thumbed cover to cover by many of the children. Perhaps they [will] become future Toastmasters!"

### BOTTOM LINE

#### Track Your Orders

Haven't received your magazine or order yet? Email the Toastmasters Tracking team at [tracking@toastmasters.org](mailto:tracking@toastmasters.org) and receive a response within two business days.

#### New Photos

Check out the newest additions to the "2012 Traveling *Toastmaster* photos" gallery on the Toastmasters International Facebook fan page.



#### New Tip Videos

Get the help you need mastering public speaking situations with Toastmasters' new series of videos. Visit [www.toastmaster.org/videos](http://www.toastmaster.org/videos).

## ► PROFESSIONAL TIP

### WHAT DOES YOUR POSTURE SAY ABOUT YOU?

Before you speak, onlookers judge you. Even you judge yourself. The way you carry yourself affects the opinions others form about you and the opinions you form about yourself.

Along with verbal communication, you must also improve your body language to be noticed and respected. A great place to start is with your posture.

- **STAND UP STRAIGHT.** Lift yourself vertically as if you are weightless. Place your feet shoulder width apart and distribute your weight evenly.
- **HOLD YOUR HEAD HIGH.** Your head should be centered on your shoulders, not leaning forward.
- **UN-SLOUCH YOUR SHOULDERS.** Drop your shoulders down and pull them back. Develop confidence by opening yourself up, literally and emotionally.

Next time you walk into a room or stand at a podium, consider your body language. Let your posture say, "I'm confident!"

## MEMBER MOMENT

### BRINGING IDEAS AND PEOPLE TOGETHER

Jeffer London, CC, of Brussels, Belgium, is a trainer and facilitator who partners with organizations that want to improve leadership, teamwork and overall performance. Formerly an industrial designer from New York, he had the opportunity to work at Knoll in Japan with illustrious architects Frank Gehry and Renzo Piano. Watching the future unfold under their pens inspired him to work in the idea business, first as a change manager at Deloitte, and later as an independent adviser. London

is an adjunct professor of organizational behavior and a member of Brussels Toastmasters, a dinner club consisting of professionals from all over Europe.



Jeffer London, CC

#### Why did you change careers from industrial designer to facilitator?

My job titles have varied, but my activities have always been based on the ability to create options. Whether I wanted to design furniture, explain a concept or bring people together, creativity has proved to be my best friend in making things happen.

#### What do you like most about Brussels Toastmasters?

It's the social camaraderie and quality of feedback that I like best. As an independent operator, I rely on my club's input when I test out ideas and discuss matters with a well-informed public.

#### How has Toastmasters helped you in your profession?

Um, oh, well ... enough said. I had a mortifying 27 "ums" and "ahs" in my Ice Breaker. Now I can laugh when my audience "oohs" and "aahs" rather than cry when my tongue gets twisted or shy.

Learn more about Jeffer London at [jeffer-london.com](http://jeffer-london.com).

## Convention Countdown: Sightseeing in Orlando

Your trip to Florida doesn't have to end when this summer's Toastmasters International Convention does. Why not take a day trip or extend your vacation? Consider visiting Disney World or SeaWorld, or seeing a Cirque de Soleil or Blue Man Group show. For beach lovers, Daytona Beach is about 90 minutes away. Go to [visitorlando.com](http://visitorlando.com) or [visitflorida.com](http://visitflorida.com) for more details.

And don't forget: Register before July 20 to receive the full convention package at a discounted rate. [www.toastmasters.org/convention](http://www.toastmasters.org/convention)



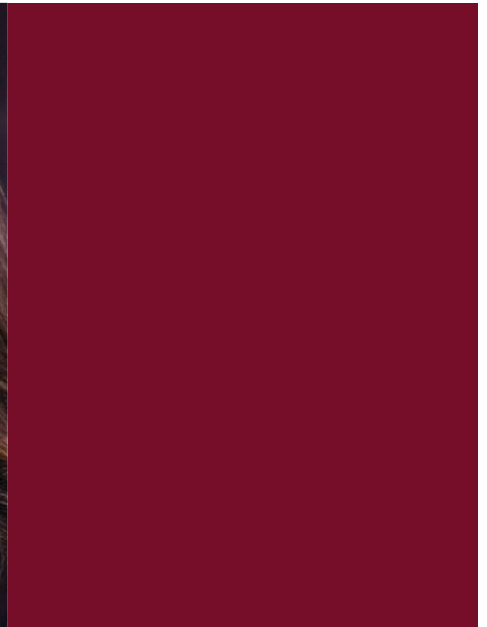




Mark Metz, CEO, Canvas Systems



Mary Flaherty, CEO,  
Preferred Concierge Service



"When people  
know they've  
really been listened  
to, they walk away  
feeling that they're  
important."

— Milo Victoria



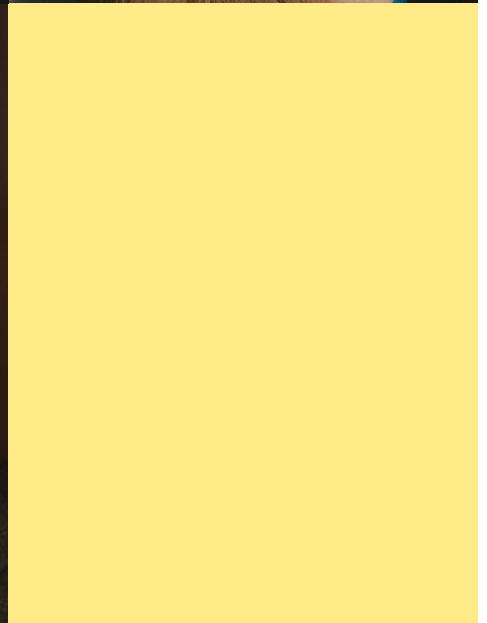
AmyK Hutchens, CEO, AmyK Inc.



John Morley, CEO,  
The JMOR Connection, Inc.



Josh Linkner, CEO,  
Detroit Venture Partners



# SUCCESSING AS A CEO

Corporate leaders share how to empower, encourage and communicate.

By Dave Zielinski

**M**ilo Victoria, CC, always considered himself a good communicator, so as the CEO of Omnitrans, a public transit agency serving California's San Bernardino Valley, he was surprised to find himself struggling at times when delivering presentations as he took the helm of the organization. When an Omnitrans board member suggested in an early job evaluation that he join Toastmasters, Victoria took him up on the advice.

Victoria knew the ability to communicate in clear, confident and compelling ways — both in formal group presentations and when interacting informally with co-workers — would be essential to his success as a CEO. His work in Toastmasters eventually helped him eliminate “crutch” words when speaking. It also helped him craft a smoother delivery and become a more confident and polished presenter.

But what Victoria did not anticipate was how Toastmasters would help him hone other skills crucial to his job in leading an organization that employs 650 people and carries 15 million passengers each year.

“One of the most important things you learn in Toastmasters is listening skills, which tend to be underrated as a leadership trait,” Victoria says. “Good leaders have to be skilled listeners.” Not only does active listening help top leaders understand key issues facing their employees, it also builds morale, Victoria says. “When people know

they’ve really been listened to, they walk away feeling that they’re important to the company.”

Toastmasters also validated Victoria’s belief that different personalities respond to communication in distinct ways. “That’s something I learned in part from targeting speeches to specific audiences,” he says. “You have to know what appeals to different people and the issues that keep them up at night.”

## A New World of Leadership

Succeeding as a CEO or senior leader requires a set of skills that were rarely required — and often undervalued — in past generations of top executives. Keeping one’s own counsel and single-handedly making tough decisions were once championed as indispensable leadership traits; however, the complex, rapidly changing nature of today’s global business climate often requires leaders to be more collaborative.

In addition, it is likely that today’s leaders are being tested in ways predecessors never were. With the lingering global recession, there is a need to motivate employees who are asked to “do more with less.” Being a leader can also mean managing four different generations in the workplace.

One needs to look no further than the example of Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft Corporation, who told *Businessweek* in a recent interview that he has rethought his leadership style in response to market challenges. When he took the reins from Bill

Gates in 2000, Ballmer believed he could unilaterally lead the company to success by virtue of his own smarts and energy. But Microsoft’s failure with its Vista operating system illustrated how various company divisions failed to work together. As a result, Ballmer started focusing more on recruiting the right leaders, empowering them and encouraging teamwork.

“I think the skill set needed for top leaders has changed,” says Josh Linkner, CEO of Detroit Venture Partners, which works with the likes of basketball superstar turned thriving businessman Earvin “Magic” Johnson to rebuild urban areas through technology and entrepreneurship. “You don’t need to be so great at long division any more, but you better be a darn good communicator.”

In the past, many top executives could simply follow a time-honored “operating manual” and get by, Linkner says. But today “the business world is too complex and moving too quickly. Leaders at all levels need to be able to innovate in real time, as well as communicate their visions effectively,” adds the CEO, author of *The New York Times* bestselling book *Disciplined Dreaming: A Proven System to Drive Breakthrough Creativity*.

## A Leadership Incubator

Many business leaders believe Toastmasters provides a helpful training ground for these challenges, albeit on a smaller scale. Mary Flaherty,

CC, owner of Preferred Concierge Service, a small business in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, says her experience in Toastmasters helped improve her management skills as much as it honed her public speaking skills.

“Every role you play in a club meeting works together to help you be a more effective leader,” says Flaherty, a member of Speech Meisters club in Basking Ridge. “From serving as the Toastmaster to being a timer, it helps you learn to plan for contingencies, solve problems and work with different personalities.”

Flaherty says Toastmasters also boosted her confidence in networking and marketing situations when she had to promote her business. “Speaking week after week in Toastmasters helped me talk about my business without stumbling over my

it could result in lost business or damage to your credibility.”

Mark Metz, CEO of Canvas Systems, a leading provider of refurbished enterprise computer equipment based in Norcross, Georgia, says the skills he acquired in Toastmasters played an instrumental role in helping him ascend to a senior management position at a former company.

“I think I had some leadership qualities then, but I was not a very good presenter,” says Metz. “That was a problem, because you’re presenting all the time in top leadership jobs, not only prepared presentations but also off-the-cuff speaking akin to what you do in Table Topics.” Within a few years in Toastmasters, Metz says he became skilled in both formats, and he later became one of the youngest executives in the company.

plished international speaker, believes the most successful leaders encourage thoughtful engagement in their decision-making processes.

“3D isn’t just a concept for movies,” Hutchens says. “A process where executives Discuss and Debate before making a big Decision fosters healthy dialogue, and that debate builds commitment and greater long-term support for final decisions made at the top.”

Hutchens believes this approach is particularly important when dealing with people born between the late 1970s and the mid-’90s. With four generations often working together in a company, she says it’s important for leaders to know what each generation is seeking to gain from the organization they work for. Then, she says, a leader must know how to engage each age group in a way that is consistent with their wants. This helps create employee engagement and loyalty.

“Often leaders will make decisions without getting input or explaining why they’re making them, but people like to hear reasoning behind decisions,” Hutchens says. For example, “if you have a constructive debate with stakeholders prior to making a big decision, you will usually get more loyalty to that decision, even if things go a little sideways with it down the road.”

### **The Buck Stops Here**

Leaders still need to make many tough decisions on their own, which comes with the territory of a top management job.

Alexandra Wilson, founder and chief merchandising officer of the Gilt Groupe, a New York City-based company that introduced the invitation-only, sample sale concept of designer clothing to the Internet, says she faced such decisions as her company grew out of its embryonic stage.

Some Gilt Groupe employees well suited for a start-up company weren’t as well equipped for expanded

**“I believe a good deal of [our company’s] growth had to do with how we’d all learned to present ourselves to others through Toastmasters.”**

— Mark Metz, CEO of Canvas Systems

words and become more confident that I have services people really need,” she says.

John Morley is CEO of The JMOR Connection, Inc., a New Jersey-based computer technology and network support company. Morley, ACB, CL, has been active in Toastmasters for 15 years and currently serves as an area governor. He says Toastmasters has aided him in goal setting, task prioritization and planning for the inevitability of Murphy’s law, skills he uses regularly in his own business.

“In the role of Toastmaster you need to be prepared if someone doesn’t have a speech ready or doesn’t show up,” says Morley, a member of Parsippany Toastmasters club in Parsippany, New Jersey. “There were times I had to cover two or three different roles in meetings. As a business leader, you learn quickly you need these kinds of backup plans, because if you don’t,

Metz started his current company, Canvas Systems, with four colleagues from the same Toastmasters club. It became one of the fastest-growing companies in Georgia, surging to \$100 million in annual revenues in four years. “I believe a good deal of that growth had to do with how we’d all learned to present ourselves to others through Toastmasters,” Metz says.

### **Power of Participative Leadership**

Given the sheer volume of complex decisions faced each day by senior executives, collaborative leadership has become something of a survival mechanism for many organizations. Now, more than ever, leaders surround themselves with talented colleagues and regularly tap into their expertise.

AmyK Hutchens, CEO of an Encinitas, California-based leadership training company and an accom-



management roles as the company evolved. “Sometimes certain roles become more complicated than what individuals can handle, and you need to hire someone above them,” Wilson says. “That’s not an easy decision when someone has given 200 percent to his or her job, but it’s important for a company in growth mode.”

### Never Stop Improving

One distinguishing characteristic of many top executives who are accomplished speakers is that they never stop improving. Hutchens, for example, who has given presentations to more than 30,000 senior leaders around the globe, still regularly solicits feedback on her speaking skills.

“Some of the best tips I’ve received were when someone saw me speak on the keynote circuit and said ‘you were great ... but,’” Hutchens says. “It’s that *but* that has made me so much better along the way. We all need to stay open to feedback, no matter how experienced we are.”

Linkner, another in-demand speaker, opted to work with a presentations skills coach for a year to take his speaking skills to another level. Among his takeaways from that instruction was a need to let important points “sit” after delivering them.

As for Victoria, he has come so far in his speaking ability that he was recently asked to give a presentation to a group of fellow CEOs. The speech was so well received that he was asked to moderate a panel of other top-executive presentations.

“That wouldn’t have happened had I not applied the things I’ve learned in Toastmasters about how to prepare a speech, how to eliminate fillers and crutch words and how to recover from mistakes,” Victoria says. **T**

**Dave Zielinski** is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster*.

## LEADERS: HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF BRIEF INTERACTIONS

By Dave Zielinski

CEOs and other senior leaders lead work lives characterized by a relentless series of brief meetings with co-workers, clients, vendors and investors. That makes the ability to communicate in those short interactions a pivotal leadership skill, says leadership trainer AmyK Hutchens.



There’s usually little time to provide meaningful coaching to others in these meetings, but leaders can learn to ask more effective questions, Hutchens says.

**“It’s important to remember that leadership happens one conversation at a time.”**

“Asking people to simply bring you up to speed on where they are is little more than a data dump,” Hutchens says. “There is no critical thinking in that communication. I encourage leaders to spend one or two minutes ahead of any interaction brainstorming more specific questions to ask” so they can yield more actionable information.

Mark Metz, a former Toastmaster and CEO of Canvas Systems, learned the importance of having a succinct message in these types of meetings during Table Topics sessions. “You might have 20 similar conversations a day as CEO, whether over the phone, one-to-one or in small groups,” Metz says. “I’ve learned to focus on getting my point across quickly, concentrate on the key issues and then make a decision.”

Senior leaders often learn the hard way that shoot-from-the-hip conversations in informal, everyday interactions can come back to haunt them. “When I ask top executives I work with, ‘Is there a conversation from the last six months you would like to hit the reset button on?’ I have never had someone say no,” Hutchens says. “Those short conversations can affect morale, productivity, efficiency and accountability. It’s important to remember that leadership happens one conversation at a time.”

## Kristi Marsh, CC: **MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES**

How little things can make a big difference.

By Julie Bawden-Davis

**I**n 2006, when a biopsy confirmed that Kristi Marsh suffered from aggressive breast cancer, doctors gave the 36-year-old mother of three her treatment options. While Marsh immediately researched her alternatives, ultimately it was her inner wisdom that led her to make the best possible decision.

*"I found my voice and was inspired to encourage women to be their own environmental health self-advocates."*

"For five days I sat on the phone talking to everyone I could about whether to have a lumpectomy or mastectomy," says Marsh, a member of the Tri-County Talkers Toastmasters in South Easton, Massachusetts. Finally, exhausted from the research and confused because everyone gave her a different answer, she lay down on her bedroom floor and closed her eyes.

"I finally realized that despite the huge medical community and all of the information on the Internet, the answer had to come from me," says Marsh, who has no family history of breast cancer. "I had to access the quiet place inside and listen, because that would be the best answer."

In those quiet moments, Marsh chose a mastectomy, and the decision ultimately saved her life. During the surgery, doctors found and removed another tumor that was flattened against her rib cage. It was Marsh's newfound ability to acknowledge her inner voice that led her to not only survive the cancer, but to thrive and discover her calling.

### **Sharing Better Choices**

For two years she struggled with cancer, enduring eight surgeries and rounds of chemotherapy. Fighting this battle while being the best mother possible to her three young children, Marsh examined the health effects of everyday personal care, non-organic foods and household items such as mosquito repellent. The more she dug, the more she believed that some of the choices she made for herself and her family were potentially toxic. As a result, she searched for healthier options and became eager to share her findings with others.

One day Marsh was watching her son's karate lesson, and as she sat, she sketched out her thoughts on how to make the subject of toxins humorous

and not gloomy. A friend leaned over, she recalls, "and asked if I wanted to be a motivational speaker one day. I laughed and thought — oh, no!"

"But, by the following October, I joined Toastmasters. After a couple of months as a member, I started moving through the *Competent Communication* manual and my life was electrified."

Once she became a Toastmaster and started sharing her story with clubs for mothers and church groups, Marsh found her audience growing as word spread of her engaging talks. Since then she has established the organization and website Choose Wiser, and now speaks across the United States about her experience with cancer and the connection between environmental toxins and health. Her book, *Little Changes: Tales of a Reluctant Home Eco-Mom's Pioneer*, interlaces her own story with simple ways to make small changes that can add up to a healthier lifestyle.

"I did not venture on this journey to 'name' environmental toxins as causing my cancer, but to focus forward on a full, loving, healthy life," Marsh says. "As individuals, we can have significant influence over our exposure by simply knowing what is in our products and choosing wiser when we can." Her message has



Kristi Marsh and family

► From right to left: Kristi Marsh, her husband, Ted, and the couple's three children: Kyle, age 11, Kaytee, 9, and Tanner, 14.

resonated. Marsh, CC, who lives in the Boston area, has spoken at a variety of venues, and in 2010, *Prevention* magazine featured her as a "Picture of Health" finalist. In October 2011 the U.S. environmental organization Clean Water Action presented her with the John O'Connor Grassroots Leadership Award.

Marsh entered her first Toastmasters speech contest in the spring of 2011 — and took second place at the district level. She also is scheduled to speak at District 31's Spring Conference this month.

Marsh credits Toastmasters with helping her reach her goals.

"Through Toastmasters, I found my voice and was inspired to encourage women to be their own environmental health self-advocates," she says. "When I started on this voyage, I was concerned about the fact that I wasn't an environmental scientist, and I wondered how anyone would listen to me without those credentials. I learned that through my experiences I'm an expert in my own right, and that I can share the work of scientists with the average person."

### Sending a Positive Message

Another aspect she struggled with initially was how to get the word out

in a positive way without inspiring gloom or guilt. "I realized that the topic of environmental health can be overwhelming," she says. "I didn't want to overburden already stressed-out moms, so I decided to make the Choose Wiser philosophy about little changes," she says.

Fellow club member Jason Gold of the Tri-County Talkers usually dislikes activist messages, but he finds Marsh's approach refreshing. "Kristi's message and mission are inspiring, and while it's personal for her, she isn't an extremist or alarmist," he says. "She's very down-to-earth about it, while at the same time giving 110 percent every time she speaks."

Stacy Malkan is co-founder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and has worked with Marsh on safe-cosmetics campaigns.

"Kristi has a compelling story and tells it in a way that is inviting, intriguing and humorous," says Malkan, author of the award-winning book *Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry*. "It's a story everybody needs to hear — about adversity transformed into inspiring life purpose. I think so many women are going through similar transitions and Kristi is easy to relate to for that reason."

One important lesson that Marsh shares with audiences is the importance of being your own medical advocate. "I went into this journey as a patient who thought that the answers were much more black and white than they actually are," she says. "Coming out the other side, I'm deeply grateful and thankful to the medical community. We're all just humans and there's so much more we have yet to learn. I found that it's important to be open-minded and to look at all your options."

It was looking at options like Toastmasters that led Marsh down a new and rewarding path. "I joined the organization to see if I had anything in me worth sharing during a do-over part of my life," she says. "Thanks to Toastmasters, I'm now connected to my life's mission." **T**

For more information about Choose Wiser, visit [choosewiser.com](http://choosewiser.com).

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# THE ART OF ACCEPTING PRAISE

Don't neglect your post-speech manners.

By Gene Perret

**Congratulations!** You've just delivered a magnificent speech. The audience welcomed you warmly, listened attentively, laughed in all the right places at all the right things, and highlighted their approval with loud, sustained and enthusiastic applause. You were a smash ... but your work is not yet done.

After such a successful presentation, people will want to meet you, shake your hand and have a picture taken with you. Perhaps they may

ask for your autograph. Some will simply want to tell you how much they appreciated your talk. You may have stepped down from the podium, but the bright, white spotlight is still focused on you. Greeting and acknowledging these people can be as much a part of your presentation as the speech itself — you're giving a kind of post-show "performance."

You were personable, considerate and dignified while at the microphone, so people will expect to meet and chat with the same person

they listened to and applauded. You must now be appealing as a conversationalist.

Faulty post-performance behavior can nullify a spectacular presentation. A musician friend of mine told me a story that illustrates this point.

Musicians in the Los Angeles area were raving about a new drummer on the scene. Because of all the scuttlebutt about his talent, several musicians went to see him perform at a local nightclub. My friend, who

was himself a well-known drummer, said, “This guy’s playing was great. He was solid technically, yet he was also creative and innovative. All of us thought he was fantastic.” However, there’s more to the story.

My friend said, “During the band’s break, this young drummer came over to say hello to us and turned out to be a real jerk.” He added, “When he played the second set, we all agreed that his left hand wasn’t that great.”

The talented musician went from “fantastic” to “a drummer with a weak left hand.”

**“It’s insulting to speak with one person while you’re glancing around the room for someone more important to talk to.”**

### **Create Positive P.R.**

Extending your positive presentation qualities into the after-show is simply good public relations and savvy business. Many of the people you speak with either decide, or help decide, if and when *you* will be brought back for a repeat performance. They may also be instrumental in recommending you to other groups. It’s to your benefit to keep them as enchanted with your off-stage self as they were with your public speaking abilities.

One of the secrets of maintaining your charm is in knowing how to accept praise graciously. Here are a few tips:

**If people tell you that your lecture was brilliant, agree with them.** That may sound a little self-indulgent and egotistical, but it isn’t. It might be boastful to elaborate on their compliments, but it’s not if you sincerely and humbly accept them.

Some speakers might feel it is more modest to disagree and may say, “Oh no, I thought my talk could have been much better,” “I really didn’t feel I gave it my best this evening” or “I felt there were many moments when I could have been sharper.”

In a sense, it borders on rudeness to contradict the praise. These audience members are sincerely telling you that in their opinion your efforts were superb. You might appear arrogant telling them they were wrong. Allow them their point of view and accept it.


**Keep your acceptance short, simple and dignified.** I once asked a major celebrity how he dealt with all the adulation he received. He said, “You can never go wrong with ‘thank you.’” You can add other phrases so that your response doesn’t appear repetitious or insincere. “It’s very nice of you to say that.” “I’m glad you enjoyed it.” “Thank you for being here.” Anything that helps you accept the praise courteously and sincerely serves your purpose. Notice, though, as my celebrity friend pointed out, such phrases are all variations on the simple “thank you.”

**Sincerity is a major factor in accepting praise.** Each person you meet is offering you kudos sincerely; it’s imperative that you accept the compliments in the same manner. Give each person his or her moment. I once had a meeting with a celebrity who was constantly receiving

phone calls from notable people: entertainment figures, athletes, politicians and the like. At the beginning of our meeting, he told his secretary, “Unless it’s the president of the United States, hold all my calls. I’m in a meeting with Gene right now.” Can you imagine how proud and important I felt hearing that?

Make eye contact with each person and listen to what they say to you. Respond to that one person before you move on to someone else. It’s insulting to speak with one person while you’re glancing around the room for someone more important to talk to. It’s rude to sign an autograph for a person and hand it back without even acknowledging them. If you take a moment to appreciate each person who compliments you, that person will feel appreciated.

Try to adopt that “hold all my calls” attitude when chatting with admirers after a talk. It’s a win-win technique: It makes each individual feel important, and it makes you look important in their eyes.

It is certainly gratifying for a speaker to give an outstanding performance. It’s thrilling to feel that outpouring of admiration from a grateful audience. Return that warm feeling with the graciousness of your “post-show” performance. 

**Gene Perret** is an author and three-time Emmy winner who was the head writer for Bob Hope. His latest book is *Write Your Book ... Now!* To learn more, visit [comedywritersroom.com](http://comedywritersroom.com).







# MAKING A CASE FOR DEBATE

How to fine-tune your argument and sell your point.

By Christine Clapp, DTM

**I**t happened at my first debate tournament when I was a freshman at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. To demonstrate speaking proficiency for my undergraduate major — rhetoric and media studies — I was required to participate in two intercollegiate debate tournaments. However, I had struggled with public speaking since the days of elementary school book reports, so luckily there was no requirement to win any of the debates.

During that first tournament, my partner and I were randomly assigned to debate one of the best teams in our

I finished graduate school and started my career as a press assistant to a U.S. senator, I became a Toastmaster. While I have now been a member much longer than I was a college debater, many of the practices I developed through debate inform and improve the speaking I do as a Toastmaster today.

## Lessons from Debate

**1. Have a position and support it.** In high school and college debate, each team is assigned a position: They will argue either for or against a selected topic. Depending on the particular

testimony or examples — and explain your rationale. Otherwise, you are simply stating an assertion.

## 2. Anticipate counterarguments.

In addition to supporting positions with evidence, debate teaches you to anticipate counterarguments, says Piatt. “Not everybody is going to agree with what I say, so I better be prepared for that,” he notes. “I don’t want to be caught off guard, so I think ahead to some of the possible objections and how I can respond.”

In the context of prepared Toastmasters speeches, when speakers don’t typically debate issues or take questions, presenters should identify key objections to their position and address each one directly during their speech.

## 3. Motivate yourself with competition.

“People don’t want to work at public speaking because it is scary and time-consuming,” says Charity Staudenraus, my junior-year debate partner, who now teaches science at North Marion Middle School near Portland, Oregon. “But doing debate makes it easier — the excitement of competition makes you want to get better and better.”

Toastmasters also can use competition as a motivational force — whether it is in striving to become the best speaker at a club meeting or participating in a contest at the club level or beyond.

“Many of the practices I developed through debate inform and improve the speaking I do as a Toastmaster today.”

region. Our opponents were poised and professional as they crafted a cogent argument off the cuff.

I felt humiliated as the team soundly but graciously defeated us. But then it happened. Like so many people who are or become Toastmasters, I experienced it — that “aha” moment when I resolved to tackle my fear of public speaking and become a confident communicator. I wanted to debate with the best of them. And I did — after that first semester when, I admit, my record was 0 and 12.

I spent the rest of my college career competing at local, regional and national debate tournaments. After

form of debate, the topic may be announced well in advance or revealed just 20 minutes before the debate begins. Either way, debaters must take a clear position and support it.

Barry Piatt, DTM and District 36 Governor, is a former high school and college debater. In debate, he says, it is not enough to make a point — it is “the importance of having evidence to back it up.”

That same principle applies to Toastmasters. Whether you are a prepared speaker or a Table Topics respondent, provide support — in the form of facts, statistics, expert

**4. Command the lectern.** One of the lessons I learned by participating in debate is that your speech begins *before* you say a word. “If you walk in and look confident, you have already started winning the round,” says Elliot Olson, who debates for Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. This isn’t unique to debate.

“When you take the lectern, walk up there like you own it,” adds Piatt, who regularly participates in demonstration debates hosted by a citizenship education organization

ers receive feedback. And the ability to thrive under pressure and handle the unexpected certainly can be honed by responding during Table Topics or by serving as Toastmaster of the Day.

**6. Act on feedback.** Lessons I learned from debate didn’t stop at the end of rounds. Being judged and responding to feedback increased my self-awareness. After all, the person sitting in the back of the room during the round declares one team the winner and the other a loser. In many

the other team on a win. Contrasting debate with prevailing political discourse in the United States, Piatt concludes, “Debate is an exercise in civility, not bombast and belligerence. At the end, we shake hands and can still be friends, even if we disagree.”

In addition to providing an environment for developing communication and leadership skills, effective Toastmasters clubs foster community and camaraderie among members. This requires members to practice

“Debate is an exercise in civility, not bombast and belligerence. At the end, we shake hands and can still be friends, even if we disagree.”



for youth. “You are in charge. You aren’t going to be effective if you look hesitant.”

**5. Shine under scrutiny.** Debate is inherently adversarial. Most forms of debate allow opponents to ask questions during speeches when new arguments are presented, or immediately following them.

“When your opposition is questioning your argument, you need to be able to maintain cool when your argument is scrutinized or challenged,” observes my sophomore-year debate partner, Bjørn Stillion Southard, now a lecturer in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Georgia. “It’s nice to know how to deal with that scrutiny in a productive way.”

The Toastmasters program also offers opportunities to learn how to handle scrutiny when prepared speak-

types of debate, judges also rate individual speakers and provide a reason for their decisions.

Olson contends that judges provide a reality check: “You may have intended to make an argument, but did you actually make it? Getting feedback from the judge makes you aware of how you truly are speaking and presenting yourself.”

Debaters who want to increase their rankings will study and act on feedback provided by judges. Toastmasters also should take advantage of feedback provided through oral evaluations at club meetings and through comments written in their manuals.

**7. Practice civility.** After a contentious round, most debaters shake hands with their opponents, acknowledge strengths in the opposition’s case and even congratulate

civility and keep an open mind when listening to speeches and evaluations.

### Get Involved

Perhaps you are having your own “aha” moment and want to improve your speaking skills by getting involved in debate. Here’s how to participate:

**Contact local high school and college debate programs.** Ask if they need lay judges to adjudicate practice rounds or even tournaments. Many programs are short on staff and welcome outside help.

**Host a demonstration debate at a district conference.** Such exhibitions can inspire club leaders to hold debates and will provide an example of the debate format.

In May 2009, I participated in a debate at the District 36 Spring Conference in Maryland. The resolution: Local governments should use traffic

enforcement cameras — speed cameras, red light cameras and parking cameras — to better enforce traffic and parking laws. The topic worked because there is a strong case to be made on both sides of the issue. It is a current event relevant to the daily lives of participants, and arguments on either side don't overtly align with any political party or agenda.

Mary Ann Guerra, DTM and Past District 36 Governor, says the debate process played a key role in helping her club resolve an important issue. When the club considered changing its name, the members debated the matter and subsequently voted to keep the same name (Tally Ho Toastmasters).

"I think debating is a fair way to resolve differences," she says. "Had we not debated, I think we

may have lost some club members, which would have been disastrous. I highly recommend that every Toastmaster participate in a debate at least once."

Debating can provide an open, fair and productive way for clubs to make certain decisions — and improve the speaking abilities of members at the same time. Toastmasters offers a Debate Handbook (Item 104) with sample formats and judging tips to guide your club's efforts.

Debate "is a fun and easy sport to learn," says my former college coach, Robert Trapp, director of the Willamette University Debate Union since 1989. "Any educated person can participate."

Participants gain confidence and polish, notes Trapp. But for him,

debate serves a larger purpose: "Debate is a primary citizenship skill. All people in open society are not debaters, but debate teaches skills to be a citizen — how to listen and think outside lines of authority."

All the more reason for Toastmasters — even reluctant ones — to try debate. **T**

**Christine Clapp, DTM**, president of *Spoken with Authority*, develops the voice of experts who want to broaden their impact. She also lectures in the Department of Communication at The George Washington University, in Washington, D.C. Follow her on Twitter @ChristineClapp.

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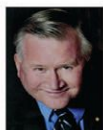
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# A QUALITY CLUB EXPERIENCE

Members thrive in clubs with high standards.

By Lance Miller, DTM

**W**ould you eat in a restaurant where the food is bad, the dishes are dirty *and* the service is poor? Most of us would not. Quality counts in the success of a restaurant and in the success of a Toastmasters club. But instead of serving

Here are strategies to create a dynamic club environment and a quality experience for your members:

## Project a Positive Attitude

Leaders of healthy clubs project the confidence that they *can* and *will* help mem-

## Plan for the Long Term

It is easy to get caught in the short-term trap of weekly meeting planning. This can feel like running on a treadmill and working up a sweat but not going as far as you'd like. Instead, focus on long-term planning.

For Toastmasters, the program year begins July 1 and ends June 30. To help members complete educational achievements during the year, follow these steps:

► **Set Goals.** The Vice President Education (VPE) should meet with each member, preferably in July, set the member's annual goal for obtaining a CC, AC, CL, AL or other designation, and assign a completion date of June 30. The VPE can then schedule each member to complete the goal. When new members join mid-year, the VPE immediately meets with them, plans a target date for the completion of their CC designation and schedules speeches until each project is completed.

► **Plan Ahead.** A VPE can plan the club's schedule for the year, adjusting it as needed. The VPE should publish

*Continued on page 27*

*"The average club loses one-third of its membership each year. Membership building is a planned activity."*

quality food, a top-notch club delivers quality communication and leadership training — with great service!

In the 20 years I have been a Toastmaster, I have visited more than 100 clubs. From my perspective, one distinguishing factor separates large and strong clubs from small and struggling ones: Successful clubs have high standards for the quality of their meetings, speeches and evaluations.

We all enjoy friendship and camaraderie, but a club that does not consistently challenge and improve the speaking, leading and evaluation skills of its members will start to lose them.

Members improve their speaking and leadership skills. These leaders are *confident* that members will achieve their goals.

It is a privilege to belong to a club, and members are expected to contribute and participate. Pay attention to keeping the experience fun, friendly and positive for all members, while still encouraging and challenging all to achieve higher levels of competence.

The Toastmasters club is a place where members are encouraged to work on, and overcome, their weaknesses. But it is also a *learning* environment, not a *perfect* environment. It is a *safe place to fail*.

# ENHANCING THE MEMBER EXPERIENCE

WHQ announces revised district recognition program.

By Paul Sterman

**B**ecause recognition is such an important part of the Toastmasters experience, Toastmasters International is revising its district recognition program to align it more closely with the Distinguished Club Program. Enhancements include an emphasis on club growth and membership growth, and an increased focus on quality and Distinguished clubs.

*“High club-quality standards enhance the member experience and grow our network of clubs and members around the world.”*

The District Recognition Program (DRP), which takes effect July 1, reflects changes to the area-, division- and district-level recognition programs. Its main focus is helping members get everything they can out of Toastmasters — something that occurs in quality clubs, which engage members and help them achieve their personal and professional goals.

The DRP helps areas, divisions and districts support clubs in providing this type of membership experience. That, in turn, makes members more eager to continue in Toastmasters. Moreover, everyone benefits in the process, because if clubs do the right things, then they receive Distinguished Club status, which also helps their district become Distinguished.

Toastmasters International President Michael Notaro is excited

about the changes to the program. “High standards for club quality enhance the member experience and grow our network of clubs and members around the world,” he says. “The District Recognition Program creates important benchmarks for members’ educational achievement, growth and retention, as well as for club administration and training.”

The foundation of the DRP is the existing Distinguished Club Program, which emphasizes member satisfaction and retention. The revised recognition guidelines stress that the member experience should match the Toastmasters mission: to provide members with communication and leadership skills development, opportunities to practice and learn, and the chance to expand their abilities.

Toward that end, the District Recognition Program points club and district leaders to Toastmasters’ *Moments of Truth* program for a road map to success. Among the program’s key elements:

- ▶ Make sure guests at club meetings form positive first impressions that will encourage them to return.
- ▶ Acquaint new members with the Toastmasters education and


recognition system, as well as their responsibilities to their club.

- ▶ Offer a warm and friendly environment that encourages and supports enjoyable learning.
- ▶ Carefully plan club meetings, and feature well-prepared speakers and thoughtful evaluations.

“When members experience a consistent, high-quality club meeting — including manual speeches and helpful evaluations — our Toastmasters brand soars,” Notaro says.

The District Recognition Program also stresses the importance of goal-setting as a means to achieving progress. It also emphasizes the value of teamwork and collaboration among Toastmasters leaders.

Contrary to previous years, the revised recognition program doesn’t limit the number of areas, divisions and districts that can achieve Distinguished, Select Distinguished and President’s Distinguished recognition. This is designed to spur more participation at the area, division and district levels, and provide more opportunities for achievement and recognition.

For more information on the DRP and the new qualifying requirements for achieving the different levels of Distinguished status, please visit [www.toastmasters.org/2012RecognitionRevisions](http://www.toastmasters.org/2012RecognitionRevisions). 

**Paul Sterman** is senior editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine.







# SPEAKING TO INFLUENCE

Classic persuasion techniques worth repeating.

By John Coleman

**W**hat are the basics of persuasive speech? They may be simpler than you think. By practicing them now, you can quickly make them second nature.

Finding the right strategies and making them habits is the first step to effective public speaking. What follows are seven strategies for writing a good persuasive speech. These principles can be a good place to start. The next step is to practice ... and keep practicing.

## The Structure of Persuasion

To build a basic persuasive speech, particularly if you have limited time, consider a very simple structure: problem, cause and solution.

### ► Isolate the Problem(s)

If you are to persuade an audience, then demonstrate that a verifiable problem exists. As George Rodman and Ronald B. Adler note in their book *Understanding Human Communication*, “If your listeners don’t recognize the problem, they won’t find your arguments for a solution very important.”

First, isolate the problem and limit its scope. Set boundaries. For example, it would be hard to address the topic of global income inequality in a 10- to 15-minute speech. Limiting the scope of the problem to something like “income inequality between male and female state employees in Virginia” could make it both manageable and actionable.

Second, emphasize the problem’s urgency. At any given moment there are millions of problems in the world. Why is yours important enough for

the audience to act on? Use examples and statistical evidence to show the recent escalation of the problem, or as with the topic of income inequality, link it to popular news items or “hooks” like Occupy Wall Street.

And finally, show why your problem is significant to your audience. As Rodman and Adler comment, “It’s not enough to prove that a problem exists. Your next challenge is to show your listeners that it affects them in some way.” Who is your audience, and why should they care?

### ► Identify the Cause(s)

Next, identify the problem’s causes. People often have a psychological need to affix blame, and whether a cause is human, circumstantial or environmental, it must be clearly identified, logically connected to the problem, argued with sensitivity and delivered with passion.

First, limit the causes you address and logically connect them to the problem. When I delivered a speech on human trafficking several years ago, the causes of trafficking were numerous, ranging from poor legal systems to organized crime. Amid a sea of obvious and not-so-obvious reasons for the atrocities, I had to identify the primary causes and, through logic and reliable evidence, link them to the problems I described. This rhetorical “connective tissue” is important. If the audience doesn’t buy the connection between problem and cause, it is less likely to act.

Second, argue the causes with sensitivity. Chances are high that at least

some of the people in your audience, through negligence or action, are a small part of the cause you describe. Communicating this is never an easy task, but it is easier when you find common ground. Most people share the same basic goals: to live comfortably, help others, love, protect their families, adhere to a certain moral code and succeed at their jobs. Find this common ground and communicate the ways in which you can collectively reach those goals.

Finally, keep the causes compelling. While it is easy to exude energy when describing the horrors of a problem or the actionable ways in which your audience can confront them, many speakers let the “causes” portion of a speech slip into a dry rhythm. Don’t let that happen. Personalize the causes.

### ► Formulate Workable Solutions

Once you have clearly presented the problem, and persuaded the audience of its causes, you must formulate solutions that are actionable, personal and immediate.

First, make your solutions actionable. There are a lot of problems — hurricanes, volcanoes, bad breath — but we can’t solve all of them. Select topics your audience can meaningfully address, and then get creative. Find solutions that will allow your audience to act with a reasonable chance of success.

Second, make solutions personal. Anyone can write to a local government representative, but few people do. For your solutions to work, audience

# DEFINE YOUR HABITS, DON'T LET THEM DEFINE YOU

By John Coleman

One key to success is setting the right habits. Business aficionado and self-help guru Stephen R. Covey made a small fortune with his how-to manual *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Habituation — practice with frequent repetition — works. My high school basketball coach improved our fast breaks by making us run monotonous drills. Toastmasters is founded on the premise that nothing is more powerful than real-world experience, constructive criticism and practice.

As a public speaker, I learned the benefits of habituation through four years of public speaking competition in college, years in management consulting, and even through speaking at events for my latest book, *Passion & Purpose: Stories from the Best and Brightest Young Business Leaders*. Consider adding a beneficial habit to your routine to help you accomplish a goal.

members must feel as if they are helping “hands on” and that their actions will have a direct and lasting effect.

Third, give your solutions immediacy. If your audience needs to mail in money, bring the stamped and addressed envelopes with you. If they need to read further information, distribute pamphlets. Solutions are best served hot — get the audience to act as soon as possible.

es in at least two ways: clear, linear reasoning and fact-based thinking.

First, logical argumentation must be a product of clear, fair reasoning. While that reasoning can take many forms, it is often easiest and most effective to lay out a number of independent pieces of the problem and then link those pieces to their respective causes and solutions. Think of this as a series of five to six parallel

**“Never blind your listeners with emotion — use pathos to open their eyes.”**

## The Content of Persuasion

More than two thousand years ago, Aristotle outlined three basic components of a persuasive speech in his book *Rhetoric*: logic, emotional appeal and credibility. And while the thinking behind these principles has existed for millennia, their applicability is still strong.

### ► Speak with Logic

Primary to Aristotle’s framework is logic (logos). In George A. Kennedy’s translation, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, “Persuasion occurs through the arguments when we show the truth or apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case.” And you can use logic in your speech-

chains holding your speech together. If one of the chains breaks or is unresponsive to a given listener, the other four may hold and inspire action. In building the chains, however, you must link each through the entire speech: problem to cause, cause to solution, and solution back to problem.

Second, persuasion should rely on fact-based thinking. Mix individual stories with statistics and incorporate hard, verifiable facts. One of the best ways to ensure that your thinking and your speech are fact-based is to cite credible sources, particularly for assertions that may be unfamiliar to the listener. Utilizing sources can buf-

fer your fact base and improve your credibility. Do your research, and the effort will shine through.

### ► Speak to the Heart

Complement the logic in your speech with emotional appeal (pathos). If fair and effective, emotional appeal is often the difference between a compelling speech and a forgettable one. As Aristotle noted, “[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [pathos] by the speech.” It is the emotional appeal that prepares listeners to accept your message and compels them to act.

Structurally, *pathos* and *logos* work in tandem. Start most speeches with a funny or serious story and follow with logic and fact. Repeat this structure throughout the speech. Long stretches of emotional material drain and desensitize listeners. Likewise, endless chains of logic may bore or exhaust them. Weaving the two creates balance, touches listeners’ hearts and engages their minds. Tell stories and take the time to make some of your statements and parables aesthetically beautiful.

In coordinating these appeals, however, refrain from manipulation or attempts to obscure rather than complement logic. Never blind your listeners with emotion — use pathos to open their eyes.

Finally, remember that emotion works both ways: Just as you can inspire empathy for a problem or victim, you can also evoke anger toward the cause of that problem. There is room for both, but be responsible. If someone or something deserves outrage, there is nothing wrong with pointing that out, but do not arouse negativity where none is necessary or useful.

### ► Speak from Authority

The capstone of Aristotle’s rhetorical triad is the appeal of credibility. You can create this appeal in three primary ways: using external sources, relying on your own history and character, and showing passion.

First, generate authority through the use of credible external sources — the same sources used to build a fact base and satisfy the appeal to logic. Cite organizations or individuals that carry intellectual weight, and rely on the statistics and stories of those with a history of neutrality and accuracy.

Second, share your own experience and character. “[S]ince rhetoric is concerned with making a judgment,” wrote Aristotle, “it is necessary not only to look to the argument, that it may be demonstrative and persuasive but also [for the speaker] to construct a view of himself as a certain kind of person and to prepare the judge.” If you are an expert, let your reputation precede you. If you are known to be an honest and fair person, your reliability may be the only credibility you need. Build a solid reputation and it will enhance your performance at the podium.

Finally, you have to care about your topic if you want your audience

to do so. In the words of two-time U.S. national persuasion finalist Alex Brown, “Speaking with passion is most important. You may have a well-researched, intelligently crafted script, but the audience must see that your words come from your heart or true persuasion is all but impossible.” When you believe, others will, too.

### Create an “Us”: The Power of Identification

#### ► Connect with the Audience

Perhaps the most difficult task for a persuasive speaker is overcoming the separation between speaker and audience. That’s why it is important to view persuasion not only as talking to your audience but as talking *with* them or as one of them. Until you truly make your audience a part of your speech, you’ll fail to connect on the deepest level.

Despite all its complications, there is a structure to persuasion. There are specific ways to enhance that structure

with logic, emotion and credibility. And there is a mode of thought that can help you put the audience first and reframe the very way in which you view persuasion and influence.

When I entered college I knew next to nothing about persuasive speech. By habituating myself to the fundamental strategies of persuasion, I was able to guide my thoughts, train my mind, and structure my communications to make them more consistent and effective. Train yourself in these basics to build a foundation of what is almost certain to add confidence and effectiveness to your speech. **T**

**John Coleman** is a former U.S. national speech champion and co-author of *Passion & Purpose: Stories from the Best and Brightest Young Business Leaders*. Follow him on Twitter at @johnwcoleman.

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# HOW TO SELL A GREAT IDEA: 5 STEPS

Use this simple strategy to present your business idea to others.

By Geoffrey James

**I**n a world driven by innovation, new ideas are powerful tools for building your career and your bank account. That said, ideas (even good ideas) are a dime a dozen. What really matters isn't whether you've got an idea, but whether you can sell that idea — to investors, customers and colleagues.

Use this simple five-step plan to present and sell your idea:

## 1. Have Prior Credibility

When deciding whether an idea makes sense, investors are initially more concerned with the person who has the idea, rather than the idea itself. Unless you have some kind of track record, you're probably not going to get a hearing.

This does not mean that you must have already built a company, for instance, before you can ask somebody to invest in one. But your idea is more likely to fly if you've been a departmental manager than if you've only worked in the mailroom.

"Buyers ask themselves: 'Is this person competent, based upon past performance?' and 'Is this person speaking with candor or handing me some BS?'" says Neil Rackham, author of the bestseller *Spin Selling*.

## 2. Have the 'Next Big Thing'

Buying is always an emotional act, especially so when it's an idea being sold. People get excited when an idea makes intuitive sense, when it appeals "to the gut." This is far less likely when an idea seems totally off the wall.

"When you're trying to sell somebody a new idea, you must persuade them that the idea confirms their own

opinions, rather than proves them wrong," says Seth Godin, author of *Permission Marketing*.

Ideally, the idea should also make people feel that they're doing something positive and powerful if they decide to invest in your idea. There's a reason that "we're going to change the world" is a business mantra.

## 3. Adapt Your Story to the Listener

Decision-makers inevitably see ideas from their own perspective, so your idea should be expressed in terms that address the practical business concerns of the potential buyer.

In your business plan, you'll cover all the bases, naturally — but when you're face to face or on the phone, tailor your remarks appropriately. If you're talking to a tech-head, talk technology. If you're talking to an accountant, focus on ROI. "This is important, because investment decisions usually involve a team of people, each with different expertise," according to Edward R. Weiss, who as general counsel at Group One Software oversaw the acquisition of 15 firms.

## 4. Make Buying Less Risky

Once somebody has decided to buy, their mind automatically starts looking for reasons not to do so. So don't wait for the inevitable defenses: Instead, anticipate problems and objections in advance and be ready with a convincing response.

For example, if the objection is "we did this before and it didn't work," be ready to articulate how your idea is substantially different. Note exactly

which

factors and

circumstances make it more likely to succeed. "If it's a good idea, everyone will say it's crap, at least at first, so you go for a pilot project," says Ken Gidge, who among other things invented and sold the hanging plastic "strip doors" used in service-station garages.

## 5. Create Momentum

Ask for feedback frequently throughout the dialog. The best part about this is if you continue to check for agreement, the buyer will often preemptively close the sale by saying something like, "When do we start?"

If the buyer doesn't do this, however, you'll have to ask for the next step, says Linda Richardson, author of the bestseller *Perfect Selling*. Summarize your idea and ask a few final questions to ensure that the idea-buyer agrees it's workable. For example, "Does this make sense to you?"

If you get agreement, you have the green light you need to move forward. So the next question is: "When can we bring this to the other partners?" **T**



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## RX FOR A QUALITY CLUB

*Continued from page 20*

and distribute schedules to all members well in advance of meetings so that members can prepare for their assignments. Each week, the VPE should re-confirm members' roles in next week's meeting.

### Plan Your Membership Building

The other key goal for a club is to attract new members. The average club loses one-third of its membership each year. Membership building is a *planned* activity — one that needs to be considered throughout the year. The following five actions, planned annually, will result in fun, dynamic meetings and increased membership:

**"The Toastmasters club is a learning environment, not a perfect environment."**

- ▶ **Advertise your club.** Have a website and an online presence. Have good signage for meetings. Reach out to people through newspaper ads and articles.
- ▶ **Promote your club.** Create promotional cards or fliers and distribute them throughout the surrounding geographic area each month. But be patient — it can take up to six tries or more to get results.
- ▶ **Hold special club meeting events and invite guests.** Meetings can include topics such as "The Elevator Pitch," "How to Introduce a Speaker" and "How to Prepare a Speech." Also, consider giving PowerPoint training sessions and hosting guest speakers, such as district contest winners. The idea is to get people to visit the club to see what it is like.
- ▶ **Host special events outside your club.** Think along the lines of festive parties. Invite your Toastmaster friends, as well as your other friends, and play Table Topics together. Invite your non-Toastmasters friends to the next meeting.
- ▶ **Speak to outside groups.** Have the best speakers in your club give talks

about public speaking and leadership skills to community service groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions clubs. Have contact information available so people are able to find *your* club.

### Prepare Dynamic Meetings

Meetings need to be enjoyable and filled with high energy. They also need to be well-run and punctual. Meetings that don't start and end on time give the impression that everything in the middle is a waste of time! Follow these steps:

- ▶ Schedule meetings well in advance, and make sure speakers are confirmed.
  - ▶ Have the room set up early and ready to go.
  - ▶ Have members greet guests at the door.
  - ▶ Have the sergeant at arms get everyone seated, and start the meeting by introducing the president.
- It all takes planning and preparation, but by taking the steps necessary to run on schedule, you'll retain members and grow your club!

### Find a Good Venue

Plenty of good venues are out there, but it can take some time to find one that is comfortable enough for speaking. The site should be easily accessible and have space for growth. It also should be private enough so that members feel comfortable while speaking (remember — this is a safe place to fail!).

### Follow the Distinguished Club Program

The 10 goals of the Distinguished Club Program give clubs a road map for success. The program addresses the critical points needed to have a successful club. Complete all 10

goals of the DCP — your club will be Distinguished and your members will benefit!

### Make Sure to Communicate

The amount of communication necessary to run a Toastmasters club is grossly underestimated. Successful clubs communicate, communicate and communicate.

- ▶ The president communicates each week with each officer.
- ▶ The president or VPE communicates with the Toastmaster to ensure that meetings are set.
- ▶ The VPE communicates with members about functions, assignments and achieving educational goals.
- ▶ Executive Committee meetings are held at least once a month.

Toastmasters is a large community, and members are there to help each other, so ask for help when you need it!

### Provide Helpful Speech Evaluations

Speech evaluation is not about how we "feel" about a presentation; it is not about repeating the speech to the audience or being the funniest evaluator. It is about helping the speaker improve by providing useful, constructive feedback.

Speech evaluation is one of the keys to making a Toastmasters club successful, but it is often the most difficult task that a Toastmaster will encounter. The ability to help another improve often leads to great success beyond Toastmasters.

Remember: Quality counts! High standards and great service are the keys to your club's success. 🗣️

**Lance Miller, DTM**, is a member of the Renaissance Speakers club in Hollywood, California, and a professional speaker and trainer. He is also the Toastmasters 2005 World Champion of Public Speaking. Contact him at [Lance@LanceMillerSpeaks.com](mailto:Lance@LanceMillerSpeaks.com).



▲ Immediate Past President Pat Johnson (left), DTM, and author Aletta Rochat, ACS, ALS, share a laugh at the District 74 Conference held near Johannesburg, South Africa, in April 2011.

# ANYONE CAN BE A MENTOR

Seize the chance to encourage your peers.

By Aletta Rochat, ACS, ALS

**I**n April 2011, Thomas Bowman, a member of Peninsula Toastmasters in Cape Town, South Africa, was ready to leave Toastmasters. Today, he is club president. What caused him to change his mind? Bowman had a conversation with an “unofficial” mentor — a conversation that changed his view of Toastmasters and his belief in his own capabilities. The mentor was Pat Johnson, who at that time was Toastmasters’ International President.

Johnson, DTM, was in South Africa on an official visit. “She said that we all have our talents, and if we are brave enough to take responsibility for leadership, we can double our impact on so many people,” recalls Bowman. “What she said changed me!”

Bowman is now thriving in his leadership role and enthusiastic about further possibilities.

## Speaking to Greatness

One of the words we often use and hear within Toastmasters is “mentor.” As soon as we become members, we are encouraged to find one, and in time we can become one ourselves. But even if you are not an official mentor, you have a unique opportunity every time you encounter Toastmasters: You can boost their confidence in what they are capable of. I once heard a phrase that perfectly described this process: “speaking to one’s greatness.”

As District 74 public relations officer in April 2011, I had the opportunity to plan Pat Johnson’s visit. Watching her while she was here, I could see she had an easy rapport with people and consistently motivated them by “speaking to their greatness.”

Frances Kazan, a member of the Golden Gavel Advanced Club

in Johannesburg, says she, too, was profoundly influenced by our Immediate Past President’s visit. “At that point in time, I was only interested in completing my area governorship as a requirement for an Advanced Leader Award,” acknowledges Kazan, ACB, CL. Now she has a different attitude, thanks to something Johnson said. “Pat inspired me to put myself forward [to become] division governor by saying that we take on roles in Toastmasters not because we can do them, but because we can *learn* to do them.”

“That was a true awakening,” Kazan adds. “Now I am a division governor learning the job.”

Johnson reassured people that you did not need to “know it all” before taking on a role — you simply had to take a leap of faith and start learning while doing.



## In Praise of the President

This year's Toastmasters International President, Michael Notaro, DTM, has also made his mark as a mentor. When a member in his district, Charles Gibson, DTM, was a novice Toastmaster 10 years ago, Notaro was his club mentor in the Oakland City Center Toastmasters, in Oakland, California. A new member to the club, Gibson signed up to give his Ice Breaker, wrote the speech and went out to lunch with Notaro to discuss it.

The speech delved into Gibson's international travels, his service in the Navy and his work as a police officer, among other things. "Michael said, 'Charles, it looks like you have three speeches in here,'" Gibson recalls with a chuckle. "He said, 'You can't chroni-

**"It is the role of a leader to see things in people that they don't see in themselves."**

cle your entire life in a six-minute speech. Just get the highlights in."

"Ever since, I've looked up to him in so many ways."

Even though Gibson eventually joined other clubs, and has since won three district-level speech contests, he continued to seek out the feedback and advice of Notaro, especially when honing a contest speech or preparing an important job-related presentation. (Gibson is a college-district police chief.)

"Michael's enthusiasm is so impressive. He's always there, encouraging. Even when he gives you constructive criticism, it's in a way that you appreciate."

## Gary Schmidt's Experience

International Toastmasters leaders have taught and influenced others — but when they were new members, they, too, were the recipients of valuable mentoring. Gary Schmidt, DTM, Toastmasters' 2009–2010 International President, says that when he joined Toastmasters in the mid-1990s,

four members were particularly invaluable to his personal development: Susan Lannis, Nancy McCarthy, Past International Director Dorothy Cottingham and Past International President Gavin Blakey. They encouraged him to take leadership roles in the organization. And he did just that, serving at every level of Toastmasters.

Once a top aide to two United States senators and currently director of public and government affairs for Clackamas County, Oregon, Schmidt says members benefit greatly from serving as officers in their club or district. He is still grateful to his four mentors for starting him on his leadership journey more than 15 years ago.

"What subsequently blossomed has made all the difference in my

life," Schmidt wrote in a May 2010 "Viewpoint" column for the *Toastmaster* magazine. "I owe my career and increased responsibilities at work to the leadership lessons I learned in Toastmasters."

## Tips on Mentoring

At every Toastmasters meeting, we each have the opportunity to be "unofficial mentors." Perhaps you have never thought of yourself that way. Here are some tips that can help you:

**1. Listen like you mean it.** One of the most valuable things you can do for people is *listen* to them. Everyone has different challenges — lack of time, lack of confidence, fear of failure or even fear of success. By listening attentively, you validate a person's concerns and perceptions. Leave out your own opinions and judgments. Be there for the other person.


**2. Find something to applaud.** Any role that a Toastmaster performs at a meeting is worthy of praise. For some, being brave enough to walk

into the room is a victory. Or perhaps someone deserves cheers for delivering an Ice Breaker speech. The Breakfast Club in Cape Town, South Africa, places "Woo Hoo" cards on a table at every meeting. Members are encouraged to write comments about anything another member does well. These comments are then passed around, and I have personally seen the faces of members light up when they receive unexpected compliments from fellow Toastmasters — unofficial mentors — at the meetings.

**3. Let your imagination run wild for someone else.** Children often use their power of imagination to play. In an instant, they can be superheroes, ballerinas or pilots. Adults sometimes lose that quality. As an unofficial mentor, you have the opportunity to imagine for someone else, to "paint a picture" of that person's future as he or she develops into a better speaker or leader.

"It is the role of a leader to see things in people that they don't see in themselves," says Bill Russell, CTM, CL, a member of Ernst & Young Toastmasters in Cape Town. "You can light a fire under them. They may doubt their abilities, but your voicing their potential makes it real for them."

## Do it all again

Make a habit of looking for the possibilities in people. If you can approach each Toastmasters meeting as a way of speaking to someone else's greatness, you can become a powerful catalyst for change. As 19th century British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once said, "The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to him his own." 

**Aletta Rochat, ACS, ALS**, is a member of Cape Town Toastmasters in Cape Town, South Africa, and is Division D Governor for District 74. Reach her at [aletta@voicing-your-potential.com](mailto:aletta@voicing-your-potential.com).

# LOST IN TRANSLATION

Stop and think before taking a machine's word for it.

By John Cadley

**L**ike most grandmothers, especially those who live to be 96, mine was hard of hearing. One time while watching a football game I mentioned that the ball was on the 30-yard line, prompting Granny to ask, "Why would they put the ball on a dirty clothesline?"

I have found voice translation technology to be a lot like my grandmother. It doesn't quite get it. My office phone system, for instance, not only records the caller's voice, but emails the message in text form.

*"If I relied on translated emails alone, I would think that the people calling me were either illiterate or psychotic."*

I appreciate the thoroughness, but if I relied on those translated emails alone, I would think that the people calling me were either illiterate or psychotic. One voice message said, "Hey John, it's Ted. I didn't know if you had officially retired or not. Give me a call." The text in my email put it this way: *Hey John it's dad give me a call I didn't know if you do fish leary card or not. But call me see you.*

If I only read the email I'd be thinking: Gee, I'd love to call my dad but I can't. He's dead. And if he were trying to contact me from beyond the grave it wouldn't be by email because he believed it was a sign of the apocalypse. ("Why don't you just pick up the @#^&\*!! telephone?!") To think that my father would have changed that much in the afterlife is

beyond miraculous. If all the angels and saints couldn't get him to change his opinions in *this* world — as my mother frequently invoked them to do — I doubt if they've had any better luck in the next. And as for me doing "fish leary card" — no, I don't. Never have. Probably never will.

Another voice mail was from a doctor's office: "Hi John, this is Maggie calling from Dr. Wilson's office. Just following up with you to make sure that the blood work for your MRI has been completed." The cor-


responding email came through as: *John this is Maggie calling from Dr. Pilsner's office just following up with you to make sure that the but works for you arise been completed.* Well, yes, my "but" works just fine, not that it should matter to Dr. Wilson. He's an ear, nose and throat man. I got another call from the Syracuse Eye Center, which email identified as the Syracuse Sign Center. I can't see signs. That's why I need the Eye Center.

Then there was someone calling from the Syracuse Auto Dealers asking to hire my musical group for a local event. Only my email said it was from the Syracuse Daughter Dealers. Isn't that against the law? Besides, I already have a daughter. The recorded message went on to say: "Either send a contract or if you have any issues

give me a call." The text form put it this way: *Either send a contractor very issues give me a call.* I don't usually send contractors. The postage costs a fortune — even more when they have issues.

I also got a message from my bank on the day of my retirement: "Hey John, it's Debbie from M&T Bank. Just wanted to touch base with you today. I'm not sure if today was your last day or not but wanted to wish you good luck, and give me a call when you get a chance." The email said: *Hey John it's Mary from I'm into bank. Just want to touch base with you today not sure if today wish I left a or not but one door ship it locked and. Give me a call when you get a chance.* Well, I'm glad Mary is "into bank." It's nice to be passionate about your profession. Still, she'll have to do a little more work on her grammar before I entrust her with my financial future.

My accountant called next, saying he'd just gotten off the phone with my accounting department, which email translated as: *Hi John, this is Jeff. I just got off the phone with your cabled apartment.* Really? I didn't know I had an apartment, especially one with cable. I wouldn't watch it anyway. There's never anything on.

Maybe my father was right. Let's just use the @#^&\*!! telephone. 

**John Cadley**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Reach him at [jcadley@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jcadley@twcny.rr.com).



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**Mike Baier, CC, CL**, from Chandler, Arizona, practices near St. Basil's Cathedral in Red Square, Moscow, Russia.



**Stephen Morrow** from Belfast, Ireland, climbs Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa.



**Flora Cadawas Saballa, ACB**, from Pasig, Philippines, poses in front of the Grotto in Boracay Beach, Aklan, Philippines.



**Earl Paul, ACS, ALB**, from Brandon, Florida, lounges with the fur seals on the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador.



**Kashif Jamil**, from Cork, Ireland, poses with a golden Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart statue in Vienna, Austria.



**Lynne Brighton, DTM**, from Lesmurdie, Western Australia, visits Edith Falls near Katherine, Northern Territory, Australia.



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