



THE 10X30 INITIATIVE

Strategies for reaching young people, building engagement, and growing your club.

District 45
2024 - 2025

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What do we hope to accomplish?

The goal of the program is to grow club membership in the 18-30 age demographic by 10% in the Toastmaster year with a stretch goal of 30%.

What is the focus of the initiative?

1. Define the characteristics of the people you want to enroll in your Toastmasters club.
2. Where to find these people.
3. How to engage with them effectively by speaking to their pain points.

Ongoing Tools:

Additionally, this initiative will become an integral part of a year-over-year effort to attract new members by creating other tools that support club growth — specifically for the 18-30 demographic such as:

- Testimonial Calls and Videos.
- Increasing our online presence.
- Creating easy-to-digest tools designed to intrigue, inform and enroll young Toastmasters.

Intro: The Original Thought:

After the annual D45 Toastmaster conference I was amped up! I was electrified by the people I met, the strategies I learned and my favorite thing of all — the opportunity to compete in the annual Humorous and Table Topics competition! I couldn't believe the well of knowledge and community that was available to me through the Toastmaster community in D45. It was an incredible experience which I am very fortunate to have been a part of. However, there was one elephant in the room that I couldn't ignore — where were all of the young people?

Though the event was electric and gratifying, I got the impression that there was a need for an inflow in fresh membership. I could hear it in the conversations people had, and the looks on their faces. My friends and I seemed to be the only ones and under 30 years old! We seemed to be some sort of mystical relic. A breath of fresh air to those who have been in Toastmasters for 10, 20 and even 30 plus years! I know because they came up to us and told us so!

After competing in and winning first place in the Humorous competition, I was contacted by Sharon Joseph, the incoming District Director for the 2024 year. Our conversation was amazing and our conversation confirmed the overall feeling that I had while attending the D45 conference — D45 is struggling with new membership; specifically in enrolling those under 30 years old. From what I learned, the Covid-19 Pandemic had severely damaged the attendance at Toastmasters and that a good amount of clubs were still virtual only. Some were struggling to maintain their charter status due to low membership. Because of this, Sharon asked for my thoughts on how to boost membership of those in my age demographic — 18-30 years old.

We talked for a bit and decided that this should be an ongoing project. Our goal set at that meeting is to enroll 10% more 18-30 year olds by the end of the current Toastmaster year with a stretch goal of 30% growth in this age demographic. Hence the name — 10 x 30.

This felt like a huge undertaking and my mind began to spiral in a billion directions. Out of those billion ideas, I have concentrated my thoughts to accomplish the original goal of helping the district connect with, and enroll, more Toastmasters aged 18-30.

My goal of this document is to provide as much tactical and detailed information as possible to equip each club with the knowledge of why, where and how to they can engage with my demographic. This document contains all of my personal ideas, strategies and advice that I would personally suggest. It is designed to be a tool that you can revisit and share with whoever wants to learn. My hops is that it helps you learn how to help make your message clear and attractive to those in my demographic. My hope is this equips specifically the VPE's and Presidents with tools you can share with your club to keep changing the world one Toastmaster at a time.

In the following Digital Pamphlet you will find information on the following:

1. Who is it you want to attract to your club? (The Ideal Avatar)
2. How you can attract them to your club? (Where the ideal person is and the avenues to talk to them?)
3. Why they should be interested in attending your club as a guest and how to sell them. (StoryBrand Training)

At the end, I will share the next steps that will be coming down the road to help make

intriguing, informing and enrolling new members easier than ever.

Let's get into it.

Chapter 1: Why You Should Care to Grow Your Club.

Let's be honest — we're all tuned into the same radio station playing in our heads. The legendary WIIFM Radio! Otherwise known as "What's in it for me?" Radio! We have to be tuned in because, let's face it, you're busy, I'm busy... everyone is busy! For many of us it's hard to commit personal time to the betterment of our Toastmaster Clubs. It's no small task in and of itself to dedicate the time towards completing pathways, writing speeches and attending meetings. When it comes to asking our members to involve themselves in the 10 x 30 Project, we're likely to run into resistance. To ask for more from members may feel like asking too much. Because when each of us is tuned into WIIFM, why should we commit more of our time to the growth of D45? This may seem blunt and selfish — and maybe it is — but it's also the reality of how people are generally going to feel.

The question then becomes: As a leader in your club, how can you motivate your current members to help grow D45 as a whole? The answer — paint the bigger picture.

Toastmasters is a one of a kind organization. With a century of experience in creating well spoken leaders. As a member, you are a part of a legendary community of those on the same mission that you are — to help make the world a better place by infusing integrity, respect, service and excellence into the local communities that you are a part of. Each and every one of you is an integral part of being the change we desperately need in the world.

As a member in your Toastmaster club you are continually pursuing higher levels of personal growth which sets a positive example in the world. As you progress in your ability to communicate, your ability to positively influence others with your ideas grows exponentially. The phrase "the pen is mightier than the sword" is absolutely true!

Communication is at the heart of harmony. What would the world look like with elevated eloquence and diminishing conflicts as a result of poor communication. Think of the ever expanding scale at which we could help shape the world by sharing the tools we have here at Toastmasters. There is a black hole sized void in our community's leadership. As Toastmasters, we are in a position to change the course of culture by shaping and mentoring the next generation in the art of public speaking. All of us can use the Toastmasters platform to help others think, speak and communicate eloquently and forcefully. We can have a part in

creating a world where everyone feels they have the confidence to speak up on behalf of the causes they believe in. Budding leaders will take their place in the driver seat of their life rather than being relegated to the back seat — simply along for the ride. This is the bigger picture.

With the proper perspective, the drive to grow our clubs becomes much less about meeting performance standards or winning awards... it becomes about making the world a better place by helping create the next generation of mentors, speakers and leaders.

So when you ask yourself, “what’s in it for me?” Maybe you’re asking the wrong question. Tune into a different station. Ask yourself, “how can I contribute to making the world a better place?” Once you ask this question, you will be on the right track. If you believe that Toastmasters has the tools to create leaders, then bringing a guest may be the way you can contribute to the greater good.

Chapter 2: Know Who You Want.

When you go to the grocery store, you’re free to get whatever you want. It’s a free country! You could go to the store and buy nothing but coffee grounds and chocolate and survive on it (as many of us probably already are on a regular basis). However, that would be counterproductive. Although your major retailer has every conceivable item you could imagine for purchase, it doesn't mean that you should buy them. It would be counterproductive and a waste of energy. This is a silly example, I know, but the lesson applies to figuring out who to invite as guests to our clubs. Just because Toastmasters is conceivably for everyone, doesn't mean that we should expend energy to convince everyone of its value. We want to be strategic and go into the “grocery store” with a list of everything that we want to get so we can be as efficient and effective as possible with our time inside the store.

What I am talking about is called identifying your avatar — this is the clearly defined person most likely to purchase and benefit from your product or service. In this case benefitting from being a member at your club. This narrows the scope of your search from “everyone and everything in the marketplace” down to a range that you’re able to easily navigate.

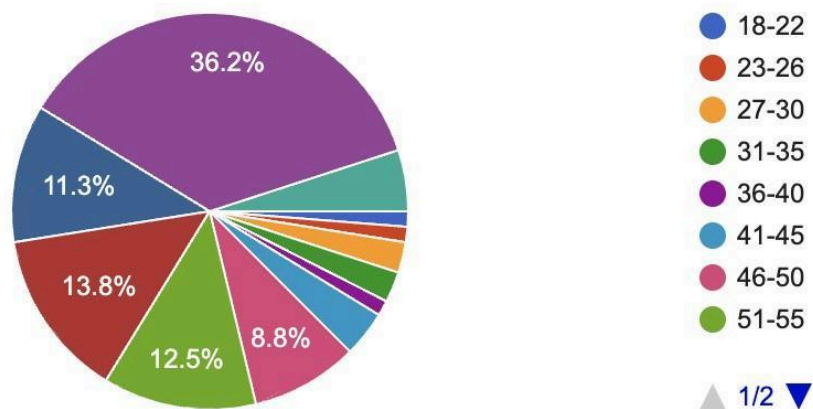
Now you are going to build the Toastmasters 10 x 30 Initiative avatar. To do so, you need to identify the demographic of those we’re looking for, their age, interests, personality traits and

more factors as a means to understand them and the problems they have that we can solve. In other words, it is important to know who you want to talk to in order to talk to them effectively. If you were going to sell red T-Shirts, it would be unwise to spend all of your time talking to the people who only wear blue T-Shirts. So who is it that we want for the 10 x 30?

1. We are looking to engage with young adults aged 18-30 who live in one of the areas that District 45 services. According to the anonymous survey that I put out earlier this summer, only 10.1% of respondents were under 30 years old (including the 5% who chose not to say). Furthermore, 73.8% of respondents were aged 51 and older.

Age Group

80 responses



This shows a gap in this demographic and the need to fill it. It also shows a big opportunity for many of the seasoned Toastmasters to step up and become mentors for the incoming young bucks! Thus, the first detail of this demographic is their age.

2. We are looking for employed young professionals and college students that are looking to develop the skill of speaking to give them an edge in advancing through their career. We will find these people at one of the 110 universities in District 45 or at the countless businesses around the area.
3. Look for possible members with strong character traits. It's key for the health of Toastmasters International and the long term growth that your club attracts people who want to grow, contribute and excel.

You don't want to drag the person to your meetings that begrudgingly shows up, enrolls and ultimately brings your club down with a poor attitude. Yes, we help people develop confidence — but you can only help the people who want to help themselves. You don't want to drag people along. Toastmasters is about mentoring and supporting others in their *own* personal growth — not force feeding someone who is not hungry!

Instead, you want to focus on seeking those that are likely already involved in professional clubs, seminars, book clubs, the gym or sports of some kind. You want to search for the best candidates where they might be hanging out. All of those places listed above are only attractive to those with the drive to spend personal time, energy and money on something that develops their discipline, knowledge and skill. The perfect people for Toastmasters!

To make your club the best that it can be, you are looking for the people interested in contributing to a community and benefitting from the network that it creates. They are self-motivated and searching for a roadmap to bring their personal development to the next level. To summarize this point, in the words of John Wooden, “Bring good people into your organization, individuals who aspire to — and live up to — a solid code of conduct.”

You have to know precisely who your ideal member is, where they are, what they are interested in and what they are looking for. You have to know all of this before you go out and search for members in order to narrow your search, focus your effort and be armed with the knowledge of how to speak to them in a way that intrigues them.

It is my belief that 2024 into 2025 is the year of explosive growth in D45. Not only are we beaming with energy, but the people around us are starving for something that gives them a sense of community, purpose and a challenge they can systematically attack to help them grow. Now that you know who you're looking for, let's move on to some ideas on where to go to talk to them.

Chapter 3: Where Are These People?

Dating is hard. Finding prospects can be harder. Even in the age of social media where you could “connect” with a billion people with a few taps on your iPhone, it's still hard to create a “connection.” When you're dating, you wouldn't go to Rockefeller Ice Rink in NYC on

Christmas Eve to find a date. That's a place for couples (gross). I'm joking obviously, but the point is that to give yourself the best chance to find a partner, you have to go to where the single people are — bars, dating apps or mutual friends for example.

When it comes to finding the right places to find 18-30 year olds interested in what Toastmasters has to offer, we have to go where they probably hang out. The last chapter was about defining the avatar — the ideal person for your Toastmasters club. We talked about the importance of knowing who they are so you can know what they like and what they want. Now I can go out, find them and talk to them directly! The following are simple ideas and places where you can find the right type of person. Although it is far from comprehensive, you will get a head start on where to start:

- **Professional Seminars** — Search in your local area for seminars that help professionals develop specific skills and reach out. The people that generally attend further education courses on their own are certainly the type of self-starters that would love Toastmasters!
- **Gyms** — Gyms may offer one of the most obvious places where you will find a young person with all of the right qualities that would benefit your Toastmaster club. No one likes to go to the gym all of the time and that is why it requires discipline and self sacrifice. You may also find that the employees of these gyms will be more than happy to learn about Toastmasters! When I was in college, I worked at a gym for its flexibility (and free membership) and would have loved to learn about Toastmasters.
- **Organized Sports** — Flag football, kickball, soccer, softball, pickleball or any other type of activity is the perfect place to look for the people who could be interested in another challenge and opportunity to get better. Most organized sports require time, money and energy off the clock to show up for. If someone is willing to do this for football, they are likely the type of person to dedicate time to developing themselves.
- **Other Clubs** — Think of any type of activity that requires someone to dedicate extra time, energy or money to develop some aspect of their life. Maybe it's a book club, maybe it's yoga... literally anything that you can think of, the people you want to talk to will be there. Most people would rather go home and binge

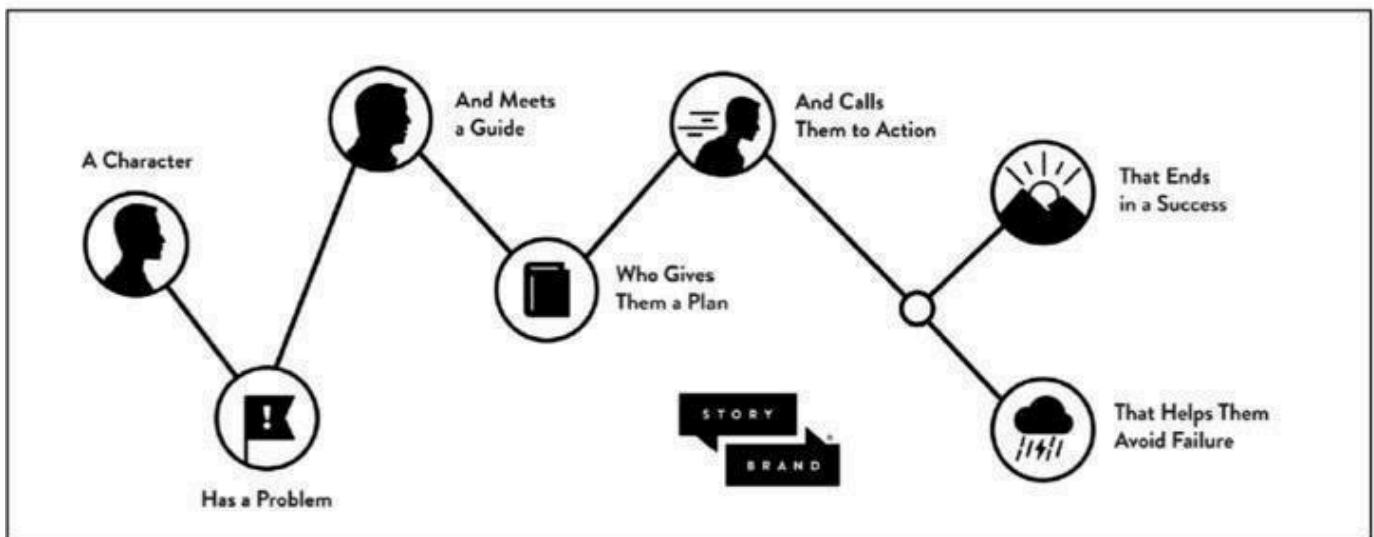
watch Netflix than get up off the couch in the winter and go to a group that requires work and focus! So that's what most people do. But the people that are out in their groups, improving themselves, week in and week out, are the ones that have discipline and the desire to grow.

- **Your Friend's Kids** — One of the most effective ways to get a young adult to do something... tell their mom. No matter how old someone is, they still get nervous when mom and dad get on their case! Make a post on Facebook, Direct Message your friends, talk to them when you run into them at the grocery store. Don't try to persuade the parent, persuade the parent to persuade the kid to attend! Who knows, maybe you'll get both of them to enroll!
- **Universities** — There are 110 universities that enroll roughly 305,000 students as of 2023 in District 45. That is a lot of people to talk to! The truth is that the marketplace for employment is more cutthroat than ever... and the people enrolled, saddled with student debt, know that a lot of their success in life starts by finding a solid career out of the gate. Furthermore, we are living in an age where communication skills have never, ever been so valued! The Covid-19 Pandemic dramatically damaged the ability of our youth to connect communicate and eloquently present their ideas in a confident manner — a skill that could be the difference between success and failure in this marketplace. Another mind bending thing to think about is that the average college freshman is 18 meaning they were 14 when the pandemic happened. The aftershock of the isolation policies certainly reverberates through these kids — especially as many of them completed their schooling on Zoom! With that being said, don't you think that there are some kids currently enrolled that are aware of their stunted growth in speaking and motivated to fix it? I do! It would be wise to contact public speaking, sociology, English, literature, and other social study-specific class professors to get the chance to present to their students! I believe universities around D45 offer one of the best opportunities for you to find new members for 10 x 30.
- **Brainstorm!** — What other places do you think you can find people interested in personal development?

The bottom line is that if you want to find people who will bring value to your club, look for the people already doing that in their life! It's like looking for a single person on Hinge, that's very likely (although not always) where the single people are! This is how you find a match made in heaven.

Chapter 4: How to Talk to Them – Understanding the StoryBrand.

You are in Toastmasters. You love it! You've grown so much, met incredible people, developed your speaking and leadership skills as well as enjoyed the benefits of an insanely supportive community. It is so amazing for so many reasons! It is hard to put all of that amazingness into words! That's why when you tell your friend about it... they tend to zone out and lose interest. And that doesn't feel so good. There's too many words. Likely they didn't zone out because they are bored, it's because they were overwhelmed. The only reason the perfect potential-member would zone out and lose interest is because, like you, they get overwhelmed. A confused mind says no. And that's totally natural! If you want to geek out about the science of it all, there's a cognitive bias called "choice paralysis" that says when you're faced with too many options, you don't choose anything. The cousin of that bias is when someone becomes overloaded with information and can't make sense of it, they simply opt out in their minds! Let's make sure that doesn't happen again.



So far, we have covered two of the three key aspects of making the 10 x 30 successful.

Now, we move on to the most technical and important part of the trilogy – The StoryBrand. The

Story Brand is something that I learned about while running my business as a framework for marketing effectively. It uses the 7 major plot points of EVERY successful movie, novel or story. It is an incredibly powerful tool that helps to simplify, clarify and amplify the message your club has and communicate it to guests and prospects more effectively! Doesn't that sound great?

This is a footnotes version of what is found in the book "Building a StoryBrand" by Donald Miller. I have created a StoryBrand Outline specifically for the 10 x 30 Initiative and will discuss it below. We don't want someone to zone us out, we want them to truly *hear* how valuable Toastmasters can be in their life. This section is going to work through each section, step by step, to give your club the tools to be effective at explaining Toastmasters.

Think of the StoryBrand as the way for you to clarify your message and make it digestible enough for your perfect candidate to not only understand you but also become motivated by your explanation enough to take action and become a member! This is what the StoryBrand can do for you. It takes all that excitement, enthusiasm and energy and distills it into a beautiful bite-size story that the person listening becomes wrapped up and engaged in it! They can envision themselves on a journey to success as you are speaking. So let's get into it.

The key to understanding how to use the StoryBrand effectively is to understand that the power comes from being the GUIDE not the HERO in the story. For example: Yoda is the guide to Anakin Skywalker in Star Wars. Gandalf is the guide to Frodo in Lord of the Rings. Nick Fury is the guide to all of the Avengers in the Avengers Marvel series. The guide is the person that is empathetic for the hero's struggles, gives them a plan to be successful and tells them what's at stake if they fail. They are the invisible helpful hand that guides the hero along and points them toward the Promised Land!

The Toastmasters International organization, as well as all of the seasoned members, are the guides in the story of the potential member. Once you understand this key difference in perspective, the way you talk to people will come naturally. It starts by getting inside the prospects head and trying to understand who they are and what they struggle with. Then you define the problem they are having and what frustrations, both literal and internal, they're faced with. Next you give them the plan and help them get started with baby steps toward success. It's that simple.

Let's start.

A Character: We have already done a decent job of defining exactly what this person looks like. They are 18-30 years old, likely a college student or young professional, with the desire to invest in themselves and develop skills. In this case, public speaking and leadership skills.

They have a problem:

External Problem: They need to develop effective public speaking and communication skills to advance their lives and careers.

Internal Problem: They lack confidence and feel anxious about public speaking and do not know where to start or how to even practice such a thing. They are too embarrassed to speak up and share their ideas.

Philosophical Problem: Everyone deserves to communicate their ideas effectively and be heard, regardless of their experience level.

In this section we define the three layers of problems that a character is facing. Typically we already know what their surface problem is— they want to learn to speak!

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the surface is an entire behemoth of anxieties, worries, confusion and philosophical issues that are causing problems and disturbance in their minds too!

For us to be effective guides, we have to put ourselves in their shoes. That way when we speak to them they feel we understand them. They feel we have both the empathy and authority they are confident in following. They believe we can solve their problem because we know what the problem really is — the deeper stuff.

They Meet a Guide (us):

Toastmasters International: A globally recognized organization with a proven track record of helping individuals become better communicators and leaders.

Empathy: "We understand that public speaking can be daunting and that you want to make a strong impression in your professional life."

Authority: "With a century of experience and thousands of success stories, Toastmasters is the trusted guide for improving communication skills."

This is the section where you can really begin to see the work we put in to take shape. This is the moment when you can step in and rather than talk about how great Toastmasters is (it is), you can begin to show them the "light in the darkness" and *guide* them toward getting what they want! By demonstrating that you care, that you understand and that you have a proven track record for helping others... the person you are speaking to is going to feel they can trust you enough to move forward and invest the time and energy to attend a meeting.

That's when...

We Give them a Plan:

Three-Step Plan:

1. Join a Club: Join a local Toastmasters club.
2. Attend Meetings: Participate in regular meetings and take on speaking roles.
3. Develop Skills: Progress through the Toastmasters Pathways program to gain confidence and improve your public speaking and leadership skills.

When you follow someone, you want to feel confident that they know the way! Very few people are going to blindly follow the advice of a friend without feeling that they know exactly what they are doing. Remember those anxieties I told you that bubble beneath the surface when someone has a problem? This is when anxiety starts to really pick up! Imagine if your prospect could hear a raging river ahead and you told them you were going to cross it. They ask how and you say, "just trust me!" A lot of people will turn around right then! Contrast that with, "oh don't worry! First we step here, then here and then we are all the way across. It's simple and easy and we've done it a million times for over a hundred years straight." Likely the person is going to come with you to cross the river. We need to come prepared with the simple next steps that someone needs to take to make the plan frictionless. But sometimes, people will hesitate right at the edge of the river. This is why you...

Give them a call to action:

- Direct Call to Action: "Visit our Toastmasters club and enroll!"

Most of the time people are not going to take the leap without a little nudge. This is the point when people are usually open and trusting of your guidance and want to be told what to do next! It isn't a big nudge, it's more of a point in the right direction and telling them to walk. It's encouraging and just what they need.

Other times, someone may just be getting cold feet and drop out all together. That is totally ok! This is when you offer the transitional call to action. This is something of value that a person can receive in exchange for something like an email to keep them in the loop. This could be something like a free guide to building a speech, attendance at a meeting as a guest for no cost, or something else. The choice is yours really! The important thing is that you know when and how to execute this step.

That helps them avoid failure:

- Failure: "Without improving your public speaking skills, you risk being overlooked for promotions and missing out on career opportunities."
- Negative Outcomes: "Continuing to have fear and anxiety when speaking in front of others can hold you back professionally."

You've heard of the carrot and the stick, right? It is the key to all motivation! This holds true for everyone across the board. Even if you have done the perfect job in gently guiding the person across the river, it doesn't always guarantee that they will stay on the other side. They miss the life they used to have. Familiarity is comfortable. So, it is important for you to explicitly detail the things you are helping them avoid by describing some of the negative outcomes they could have as a result of not committing to the club. In this case, something like what I have listed above. Describe being stuck, remaining unheard and unconfident, and what that will feel like to stay there forever. This is the stick and people need to be reminded!

(Remember that Ex you really wanted to get back with? Yeah, you had to be told more than once). Once you've done this, you can tell them about the happy stuff!

And Ends in Success:

- Success: "You will learn to speak confidently in front of any audience, be recognized for your communication skills, and advance in your career."
- Positive Outcomes: "With Toastmasters, you'll gain the skills and confidence to

Here's an example of what that might look like when having a conversation.

Mary is currently a member of Toastmasters and runs into her coworker, John. John has given some signs of being interested in self improvement. He is in a new leadership position at work and has expressed some worries about talking in front of groups at meetings.

Mary: Hey John! How are things going since you took on this new role at work?

John: Hey! Things are great, I am really excited. But I will admit I am a little worried I'll be messy when I run the meetings. I am used to working in small groups or alone so I don't feel great about running big meetings in front of everyone. Otherwise it's going well! How are you?

Mary: I am wonderful! It sounds like you don't have a lot of experience talking in front of people and that makes it hard for you to feel confident in your leadership abilities. **(Internal Problem)**

John: Yes exactly. It's not really a skill that anyone teaches you how to do. I mean, I never took classes on public speaking or anything like that. It's really not something I felt I needed to care about until now. It's hard for me to get my plans and ideas across to my subordinates.

Mary: I totally understand that. It must be difficult to step into a brand new role and feel blindsided! Even if you have a good idea, it can be hard to make others believe in it too without being crystal clear. I think everyone deserves to feel confident in speaking up for the things they believe in. **(Empathy)**

John: Absolutely agree, that's exactly how it feels. I know how to do my job but when I seem uncomfortable in front of others, it makes me look bad. I know my ideas will work but I can't get people to see it the way I see it in my head. It's not easy to be clear. If I could do that I think our team would crush it.

Mary: You would! If you're serious about getting better at speaking, you should come to my Toastmasters club with me **(Call To Action)**. Have you ever heard of it?

John: I am serious. I am always looking for new ways to challenge myself and grow. What is Toastmasters?

Mary: I figured! It's an organization that meets roughly every week, depending on the club, that helps you develop your public speaking and leadership skills. It's been around for over a century! **(Authority)** We all get to practice writing and delivering speeches as well as honing the skills needed to run a meeting well. Plus, we all help each other by giving specific critiques on how to improve week over week! For me, I feel so much more prepared to talk at meetings and I've even gotten a few of my ideas here at work pushed through because of the skills I learned there. You should come as a guest this week! **(Call To Action)**

John: I am busy this week, but could I tag along next week?

Mary: Yes absolutely! Here, you can sign up for their newsletter and get this Speech Writing Cheat Sheet for free sent to your email. This will keep you in the loop for now and help you get ideas for your next presentation **(Transitional Call To Action, more on this later)**.

After you come to the meeting as a guest and you like it, we can quickly get you enrolled and started on pathways — our step by step educational course to help you progress as a speaker! **(1, 2, 3 Step Plan)**.

John: Done, I just signed up! Thank you for telling me about Toastmasters. It sounds like you have gotten way better at speaking and I hope I can too.

Mary: Oh absolutely. I felt like before I was just talking in circles and going nowhere fast. I wasn't getting noticed at work or getting my ideas pushed through **(Avoid Failure)**.

Now, I feel like I am more confident than ever! My subordinates are excited and

motivated, my superiors are supportive of my ideas and I feel like I have more independence at work since my boss can see my vision **(Get Success)**.

John: I am actually really excited to get started. I need that badly! I am really looking forward to next week. Thank you for inviting me as a guest!

Mary: You will love it! See you then!

As you can tell by this fictional dialogue, the StoryBrand can be very helpful for organizing your thoughts into a framework that is both simple and effective at intriguing potential members. There is no one size fits all way to say these things, but it is going to make the conversation much more engaging to stick to the framework!

Here are some examples. You would simply plug in the appropriate External, Internal and Philosophical problem you think the person on the receiving end may have!

A freshman in college may...

- Have difficulty articulating himself and struggles to speak loud enough in front of people... **(External)**
- So he feels too embarrassed to voice his opinions... **(Internal)**
- And he believes he ought to have the ability to express himself when he wants to. **(Philosophical)**

A 25 year old young professional at a new job may...

- Be unsure how to effectively prepare and deliver a persuasive presentation... **(External)**
- So she feels her ideas aren't taken seriously and worries about her career advancing too slowly... **(Internal)**
- And feels everyone who works hard ought to be successful in their career. **(Philosophical)**

A 30 year old stay at home mom may...

- Not having as many hobbies as she used to... **(External)**
- So she feels lonely and wants to find a community where she can push herself to learn new skills... **(Internal)**

- And believes that everyone ought to feel like they are growing and connected to a community. **(Philosophical)**

As you can see, the variations are endless. The key is to display empathy by naming their problems, demonstrating the authority that Toastmasters has to help them, and urging them to take the next *simple* steps in getting involved as a member in your Toastmasters club! Put yourself in their shoes! Be simple. Be clear. BE THE GUIDE!

As the President or VPE in your club, this is a powerful tool you can show to your club. This strategy for talking to people will make them more effective at bringing guests and growing your membership.

I've tried to demonstrate the thought process specifically enough for it to be understood while being broad enough to show that it is applicable to a million different scenarios. It will be up to you to digest the information, continue to learn about it and think about how you can get your club members excited to grow your membership. This document is designed to empower each club with clarity — clarity about what to say, how to say it and who to say it to in order to explode your membership this year!

Chapter 5: Stereotypes & Communication Breakdowns.

I'd like to take a moment and comment on the stereotypes of my generation. Although we obviously have the best intentions and try not to stereotype people, they're highly likely to be present on a subconscious level and create blockades in our minds — especially when it comes to groups that confuse or frustrate us. There are innumerable books on this topic and studies to demonstrate this (Thinking Fast and Slow; Influence: the psychology of persuasion; Laws of Human Nature; etc.).

These stereotypes create subtle biases toward groups and lead to a form of the Butterfly Effect as it affects the attempts you make to connect with them. With this in mind, it's important to address this reality plainly and have a discussion about stereotypes, assumptions and communication breakdowns that could happen between the older and younger generations. What you'll find is that we're not so different after all!

The demographic in focus for the 10 x 30 Initiative fall within the Gen-Z and Millennial generations. Neither of these groups have the best PR. The generalizations about these two

groups lie somewhere between: a middle manager with a beard and glasses who spends too much money on organic clothing and Starbucks to care about saving for retirement and the braindead broccoli headed kid who speaks in a broken language consisting of “bruh” “that’s lit” and “fire” while their brain is rots away on TikTok. Neither of these paints a flattering picture. Now even if these are dramatizations, they’re not entirely untrue. There are *some* people that fit into these categories which is why the stereotype exists in the first place. However, the mistake that I see being made most is that strategies we use to connect with these generations are built on these stereotypes. Remember when we talked about building an avatar? I feel there’s been an incorrect avatar built for these two groups. I’ll explain further.

Now more than ever there’s an emphasis on quick and easy. Reels, TikTok’s, Facebook videos, bright images and weird marketing that plays on our diminishing attention span have taken over. Anything that takes longer than 2.3 seconds to grab attention is going to be passed by. If it isn’t quick — it isn’t it. There *is* some truth to this. However, it has gone too far. Instead of these principles of attention getting remaining in the marketing sector where they belong, the principles have inappropriately bled into our culture and made it seem as though there is no longer utility in challenging people to be better. We have developed an *incorrect* assumption that human beings crave easy and run from hard. This is far from the truth. In fact, it is this misguided belief that is causing the biggest breakdown in communication and leading to ineffective efforts to increase membership of 18-30 year olds.

People are starving for a challenge. It is not our true nature to be catered to in every way for a fee. We crave difficult things. The current generation is a victim of coddling culture and is devoid of drive not because they were born without it, it’s because nothing is hard enough to inspire them to action! We want to climb mountains. Move heavy weights, and chase goals that are just out of reach. We are evolved *hunter*-gatherers not gatherers. We crave the chase, the challenge and the grind. Now more than ever, there is an opportunity for Toastmasters to fill this void and become a place where that spark can be reignited for these people tamed by boredom. If you want to talk to my generation, I think it is wise to talk about the challenges and growth that can happen in this environment. Do not try to sell a bill of goods that parades around a downloadable skill set at the push of a button. In the classic “How to Win Friends and Influence People” Dale Carnegie suggests “laying a challenge before people to motivate them.” In my life, a good challenge given to someone else is a surefire way to get them moving. Do this when you’re talking to young people. Don’t shy away from the hard stuff — it’s what will get their attention!

We crave struggle because it gives us a sense of meaning. Every great adventure starts with a problem – an obstacle greater than our own current abilities that forces us into action and causes us to grow. When the obstacle is greater than your current abilities, you have to focus all of your mental energy to overcome it. It requires effort and struggle. Even though the word “struggle” is a synonym for a cuss word today, it’s struggle, conflict and the call to a higher standard that engages you. Without something to push against, life feels flat. When you have a cross to bear or an enemy to fight, you feel alive. When you conquer that mountain or beat that foe, the rush of the win is worth all of the effort it took to get there. That’s what people crave – and sadly most have never had the opportunity to feel it before.

In your Toastmasters club, you provide a training ground where people fight their insecurities in a room filled by others supporting them the entire time. To some, public speaking is worse than death; so maybe learning to face this fear, as hard as it is, feels akin to beating death. That sounds pretty cool to me, and I’m sure it sounds cool to others looking for something productive to do with their time.

What I am trying to say is that you shouldn’t assume that my generation, 18-30 year olds, only respond well to what you have to say if it is quick and easy. In fact, I think the opposite is true. I believe that young people want to shoulder responsibility, have something meaningful to do, and challenge themselves to be better. If you want to talk to them and get them to listen, don’t be afraid to lay a challenge in front of them. Of course, remind them that the challenge is accompanied by a community of amazing people, a proven system and lots of success stories... but that to get the most out of their experience it *will* take effort. Effort is attractive. We want to be challenged, not coddled. And let’s face it... if someone doesn’t want to grow and contribute, why would you want them in your club?

Chapter 6: Win-Win-Win.

Growing your club is a win-win-win. With regards to the 10 x 30 Initiative, bringing in a swath of young people will have many benefits; to both the organization and the members currently enrolled, including you – no matter their age. Actually, in many ways, an influx of younger people is especially beneficial for more tenured members who are in a primed position to be mentors to these people! But we will get to that. In this section, I am going to describe how growing your club is 1) good for you 2) good for your club and 3) good for the Toastmasters organization as a whole.

How It’s Good For You:

Why would enrolling new members be good for you? There are several reasons. For one, when you bring in a new member to Toastmasters, you aren't simply filling a roster spot. Instead, you are introducing a brand new person into your group who has a wide range of perspectives, vast array of skills, and unique library of perspectives. Each person, no matter their skill level, is a dynamic and brings with them a perspective unlike that of anyone else on this planet. Each person is a seedling of fresh and rejuvenating ideas that sprout and flourish; transforming your club meetings in unpredictable ways!

For example, at my home club, Greater Portland Toastmasters, we have a high-powered, oddball melting pot of individuals. Judy owns her own dog training company and is authoring a book on the subject. Jonathan is a language expert who speaks at least 5 languages, interprets ancient texts, and travels to worldly hotspots regularly. My friend Zach is an entrepreneur who makes his living buying and selling thrifted items. We have marathon runners, therapists, former celebrity chefs, U.S. Navy veterans and more. We even have someone who rides unicycles! Each of these people contributes something unique to the club. This is maybe one of the best parts about going to a meeting – I have no idea what I will learn about!

When you bring in a new person, you expose yourself to a person who could pique your interest and transform your mind in ways you cannot anticipate. This makes you a more well rounded individual with additional tools to impact the world. Additionally, after being for Toastmasters for a while, the tasks and growth can start to feel redundant. The spark you felt at first starts to fade and it's easy to get off track, become bored and lazy. Toastmasters is not the problem... It's natural to feel this way when you have been doing something for a length of time – we run out of steam. You can be snapped out of your sleep-walking when a new person arrives at your club; hungry to make progress! It reminds you of you back when you started! You catch their infectious energy and suddenly, you feel like you may want to get back on the horse too. You can't help but be reinvigorated by the energy that someone else brings to a club meeting when they have the guts to share their ice breaker. This is of personal benefit to you as well as your club. The energy that a new member or guest can bring to a club can spiral upward and create an air of optimistic ambition that is impossible to ignore. This helps you refocus and recommit to goals you may have become ambivalent about!

Lastly, new members mean new opportunities for you to become a mentor. See one, do one, teach one was a principle I first learned about in college. First, you learn. Then you do it yourself. Lastly, you teach someone how to do it themselves. The process of see one, do one, teach one has been proven to increase learning by engaging many parts of your brain at once. Having brand new

members grants you the opportunity to “teach one.” You have the chance to increase your learning by helping someone else learn. Not only that, but you feel fulfillment that is unique to the mentorship experience.

How It’s Good For Your Club:

I first heard of an amazing concept from the author Stephen Covey in his best selling book “The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People.” Simply put, he said that the result of cooperation is not $1+1=2$. Rather, $1+1=10$, 20 or $100!$ When we work together in harmony toward a single goal, the outcomes are disproportionately greater than the effort we’ve put in. I have found this to be absolutely true. Within a club environment, there is an exponential amount of growth potential that happens when new members join. The potential within each club does not grow in increments of one as each person joins. Rather, the potential excitement, growth, learning, discovery, networking, and perspectives all soar exponentially with each subsequent member added. The importance of this can not be understated.

One person could share a life changing point of view in a speech. They may provide opportunities to network and grow your career. They may even know of 5 friends that have been looking to join something like Toastmasters and will be joining your club — all because of one person! You never know. There are no downsides to having more interesting subjects to stimulate your imagination.

There are no downsides to having more networking opportunities. There simply are no downsides to growth.

How It’s Good for TMI:

In the same way a member can exponentially impact the potential at a club is the same way that a district full of growing clubs can affect the organization as a whole. With each subsequently growing club, the entire District has a more robust opportunity to learn, ideas to capitalize on, and competitive speech competitions that drive rapid development of the contestants. The buzz that success injects into a large organization such as Toastmasters is undeniable and necessary. The higher the energy, the more fun we all have. The energy can shift from surviving to thriving. No longer will the focus have to be on floating; instead, it’s on flying. When you focus on flying, everything begins to grow. A rising tide lifts all ships.

With cooperation to grow the district, we also grow our capacity to impact our communities. Each club – rooted in the values of integrity, respect, service and excellence, becomes fertile soil for positive impact in our culture. We can be more impactful in the communities we live in. More

leaders are made, more communicators are created and more positive influences are dispersed. The result? A more prosperous world around us. With increasing amounts of positive people being introduced to Toastmasters, the organization is likely to attract positive people back to it. Growth is a lot like gravity – the larger an object, the greater the force of attraction. Long story short, the more we grow... the more we will continue to grow!

The bottom line is simple: everybody wins when the clubs are growing. That's why it is important to care about growth. None of this is to say that all growth must be meteoric. It is to say, however, that no growth is not justifiable. Just as growth is a win-win-win, no growth is a lose-lose-lose. If you want to get the most out of any opportunity, it is important to know that you will reap what you sow. This extends well beyond Toastmasters. It is not important how *fast* you go. What matters is that you are *moving*. Not everyone's personal or club journey will look the same and that is how life is. It is never important how fast you get results the only thing that matters is how much effort you put into getting results. It is critical to have a goal no matter how small that goal may be.

Chapter 7: Closing Remarks and Down-The-Line Moves.

As I mentioned in the introduction, The 10 x 30 Plan will be launched this year and continue to grow and evolve as time goes on. This document is the first part of this plan as a tool to empower each club with information that works for getting people in the doors!

Other parts of the plan include:

1. The Guest Attendance Competition!

This competition is a chance for you club to see how you stack up against others in the district. The competition is to see which club can bring in the most documented guests to their meetings through the end of the TM year leading up to the annual event. It is not a membership competition, only a guest competition. There will be a leaderboard displayed on the website and will be tracking all of the GROSS amount of guests your clubs brings to its meetings as well as a PERCENTAGE-BASED leaderboard to give the smaller clubs a chance to compete. (For example, if your club has 50 members and you bring in 15 guests in the timeframe you may win the GROSS category. However, if your club only has 6 but manages to bring 3 guests, they would win the percentage based category.)

This is a fun, engaging way for us to keep each club engaged and committed to growth while also pushing each other in a healthy way. **The top performers will be recognized at our yearly conference.** May the best club win!

2. Boosting Online Presence—

Throughout the next several months I will be putting out online resources, mainly videos, that will help boost awareness of Toastmasters in general. This will allow your club to use the testimonies of those in the 18-30 year old range to your advantage. If your club does not have members in this age demographic, you will have the tools that are relatable to them to share with them.

3. Other Social Media Content —

Alongside the more specific marketing material, I will be joined by other amazing Toastmasters to help increase the amount of content that we have on our public pages. This may include updates, training, short-form testimonials or other information. The point is to pour more gas on the fire we begin getting more attention on Toastmasters Clubs in D45 — specifically online.

4. Monday Night Testimonial Call —

Starting on Monday, November 25th at 8:30 pm EST I will be hosting a Toastmaster Testimonial call. Every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month you will have the chance to invite prospective people to the call where they can listen to an interview-style call where members of Toastmasters will share their experiences. I will be hosting, recording and uploading each show to the D45 YouTube Channel so that you can share with friends later on. This is a chance to let the stories do all of the talking. Each call will be MAXIMUM 30 minutes and give your guests the chance to learn about Toastmasters from the comfort of their own home.

A Final Note:

The 10 x 30 Initiative is not a flash in the pan, but the beginning of a bold way forward for District 45 into the future. The plan is specifically tailored to increase membership in those aged 18-30 by 10-30%, but the principles apply to everyone even outside of the demographic we are looking to enroll. No matter who is listening, if you talk to them the right way, you will get results.

As a leader, your club will grow when you make the decision, right now, to spark new enthusiasm in your members. We have a duty to bring the values of Toastmasters — Integrity, Respect, Service and Excellence — to our communities on a broad scale. We have a proven track record of over 100 years and hundreds of thousands of success stories. We have the willingness and ability to change peoples lives.

Lastly, I'd like to tell you about one surprising result of the survey that I put out. When asked why a member joined Toastmasters, over 80% of the responses said that it was for personal development and speaking skills. However, when asked why they would recommend Toastmasters to a friend, the answer surprised me. It was not because of pathways, personal development or speaking skills. It was because of the *people*. Almost every single response cited some form of *community in their club* as the primary reason they would stay enrolled.

To me, this means that people come for the skills and stay for the people. This nuance has powerful implications. It means that the curriculum is not the best part of Toastmasters — but the people are. I fully share this sentiment. In Toastmasters, people find a home. A home where we support one another, care for one another and push one another to be the best version of ourselves. If merely one more person in the world felt that they had a home full of support, it would make a difference.

At each of our clubs, we have the tools to help make the world a better place... and we ought to do that!

Thank you for reading! I hope you find it helpful for your club. Remember that you are able to do anything you put your mind to and that enthusiasm is contagious. It may be the greatest tool you have that can make your club remarkable.

I wish you the best moving forward!

-Christopher Hannon.