

Prospecting For Guests For Your Club or Next Open House

1. Make your meetings fun! Members will want to invite guests to share in the fun. Tell your friends how much you enjoy belonging to Toastmasters. Ask the people you do business with on a regular basis to come with you to your club meeting. Some ideas: Your dentist, banker, grocery clerk, gardener, veterinarian, postal clerk, real estate agent, clergy, retail store clerk, hair dresser, friends at church, etc.... Invite them to your club and next Open House!
2. Make a list of all the people you know who would benefit from Toastmasters. Mail them invitations to your club's next meeting. Follow-up with a phone call. When they attend, be sure to ask them to join!
3. Invite former members of your club to your Open House. Look at membership rosters from several years past. They may want to come back as a member. This gives them that opportunity.
4. Invite the Founders (charter members) of your Club, the new Club Sponsors and New Club Mentors. Look at your club charter certificate to find their names. If you don't have their contact information, ask your Area Governor to ask the Key 3 (Top 3) to access the District Membership list for this information.
5. Make a list of the best things about your club. Offer an educational at your club with a Q&A session afterwards to get the club's input. You now have described the culture of your club and have a list of selling points to use when talking with prospective guests.
6. Have club business cards made with your meeting date, location, time, and a contact number on the front of the card. On the back of the card have information about your Open House, date, time and location, with a brief description of Toastmasters. Pass them out everywhere. Club business cards templates can be downloaded from the Toastmasters International website at www.toastmasters.org.
7. Hold an Open House around a Holiday. Create a holiday invitation (St. Pat's, Halloween, Thanksgiving, spring, etc.) and ask each member to hand out invitations to friends and co-workers. Plan your agenda around the holiday theme!
8. Have an occasional Social Meeting/Open House to recognize family and co-workers of club members. Remember it's the support of these people who help enable the club member's participation. It's nice to include them once in awhile. This is often done successfully around a holiday or other special event.
9. Hold an Open House with an emphasis on how the Toastmasters Educational Program provides ongoing training and practice in improving language skills. Contact your city's various cultural centers. Many of these individuals will have English as a second language. It may be helpful to work with someone who is associated with that specific cultural community.
10. Develop a web site listing your club information and include the Open House information. Make it visually appealing and interesting. Give an educational presentation at your club followed by a website planning session to get your club's input on what they want to have on the club website. Toastmasters International has specific guidelines regarding web sites. Be sure to check this information. Club websites can be hosted for free. For more information go to the Toastmasters website at www.toastmasters.org and <http://www.freetoasthost.org>
11. Hold an Open House around one of the Successful Speaker, Successful Club or Leadership Excellence Series. Create a guest list to invite prospective members who can specifically benefit from the topic. The evaluation and listening modules work particularly well!
12. Send out Press Releases on your Open House, include the local radio and TV station. Don't be discouraged if it takes awhile to be noticed. Small community newspapers are likely to give you the best coverage.
13. Read your Toastmaster magazine each month. There are good prospecting for guests ideas in it!

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14. List your club with the local Chamber of Commerce. Ask them to list your Toastmaster meeting information and a notice of your Open House in their newsletter. If a member of your TM club is a member of the local Chamber, ask them, or a club officer or Area Governor, as their guest to give a presentation to the Chamber on the benefits of Toastmasters membership and invite prospective members to your Open House.
15. Advertise your club in local newspapers. Advertise your Open House too. Run a Toastmaster ad in your company newsletter, local church newsletters or programs. Research getting an interview or article in Company newsletters of businesses in your area.
16. Post brochures and flyers about your club at your local library. Insert club membership flyers or bookmarks inside books about Public Speaking, Communication, and Leadership in your local library! Also post brochures and flyers about your club at local bookstores, both new and used. The demographic is compatible with potential Toastmaster members.
17. If you meet in a public location, such as a restaurant, library, or church, have fliers in the front Lobby about your club. Include meeting date, time and a brief description of the Toastmasters Educational Program. If your club meets at a church, request that your next Open House be published in the church newsletter or bulletin.
18. When someone compliments you on a presentation or a speech, be sure to mention that you developed your skills in Toastmasters. Ask if they would be interested in doing the same and invite them to your club.
19. Ask your doctor, dentist, optometrist, hair salon, local businesses, community center, library, retirement community, bookstore, etc., if you can leave Open House information and Toastmaster brochures in their offices. Make sure there is a phone number to call for more information. If members have membership in multiple clubs, collect their extra Toastmaster magazines and distribute those too. Have a card stapled to the front with contact information with name, phone number and email address.
20. Wear your Toastmaster pin on a regular basis, not just at Toastmaster meetings. Have a 30 second speech ready for when people ask, "What's that nice looking pin you're wearing?" "What's Toastmasters?" Give them your Toastmasters business card and invite them to your club or next Open House.
21. Appreciation night: Honor a community member at a special meeting. Ask the guest to say a few words promoting Toastmasters. Be sure to have lots of guests to help express your appreciation.
22. Invite your supervisor to your next Open House with the possibility that he/she would encourage your co-workers to join Toastmasters. Suggest to your supervisor that this be part of your Professional Development Plan.
23. Sponsor a Toastmasters booth at community events, craft show, fair, trade show, Career Fairs and Employment Fairs and give out information on Toastmasters Educational Program and invite them to your Open House. Have a guest sign-in book, and follow up with people who express an interest.
24. Have a Table Topics session that is based on prospecting for guest ideas. Make sure someone writes down all the ideas and then plan a follow up strategy.
25. If you belong to other organizations that schedule speakers, try to include a fellow Toastmaster on the program, with the idea this speaker will also provide Toastmasters information to the audience. This can include information on your club's Open House! This works well with Kiwanis, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, etc...
26. Plan a membership building contest around the number of guests a member brings to your club in a month, or to your next Open House. The winner can receive a free dinner. Also, challenge other clubs in your area to a guest contest for the number of guests brought to each club's Open House! The loser buys pizza for the winning club.

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