

# 10 WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR CLUB

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# Introduction

Why is marketing important for clubs? Simple, guests will not attend meetings if they are not aware that the club exists and, without a steady flow of guests, a club's membership may quickly decline. On average, 40% of existing club members will leave each year. This means that a club with 20 members will drop to 12 if they do not bring in new people. In the second year, without any action, this same club would then fall to 7 members!

That being said, the benefits of having guests and new members goes beyond maintaining membership numbers. Firstly, they bring in new perspectives and enliven the meetings with their stories, speeches and evaluations. Secondly, they can help spread the workload involved with running a meeting - rather than the same people having to do the same roles every week. Finally and most importantly, it means that more peoples' lives are being touched by Toastmasters!

Many people are already aware of Toastmasters and know that it has something to do with public speaking. However, they are often surprised when they find out how many clubs there are within their area. The purpose of club marketing is to bridge this gap and make people aware that there is a nearby club they can attend.

This short guide was written to support club committee members (especially those doing the VP Public Relations role) with their efforts to promote the club. The ten ideas presented here are not the only ideas that you can try. However, if you are not sure where to start, they may be a source of inspiration. Every club is different and there is no easy way to tell which method will work best for your target audience. That being said, by trying new ideas and measuring the results, you will quickly figure out which one works for you.



# Brand Manual

When we conduct any form of marketing, remember that we are representing the entire organisation of Toastmasters. For that reason, it is important that our efforts portray a consistent image and message across the different clubs.

The Toastmasters Brand Manual provides information of what we can and cannot do when using their brand. You can find a copy of this manual here:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/brand-portal>

In some cases, it may be necessary to have a design approved by Toastmasters International before it can be printed or released to the public. Examples include: customized clothing items, banners, flags and certificates. This is done by submitting a Trademark Use request:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/brand-portal/trademark-use-request>

Misusing the Toastmasters Brand and not complying with this manual can lead to serious repercussions for you and your club. If you have any uncertainty, it is best to email the Toastmasters Brand Team at [brand@toastmasters.org](mailto:brand@toastmasters.org)

## Brand Colours

Use this selection of colours to ensure that your design is consistent with the Toastmasters image.



# 1

# WordPress

WordPress is an online website building tool that can create a professional looking site for your club for free.

No coding or advanced web-design knowledge is required to use this service. Simply select a template, write the content and insert images. There are hundreds of tutorials on YouTube to help you get started.

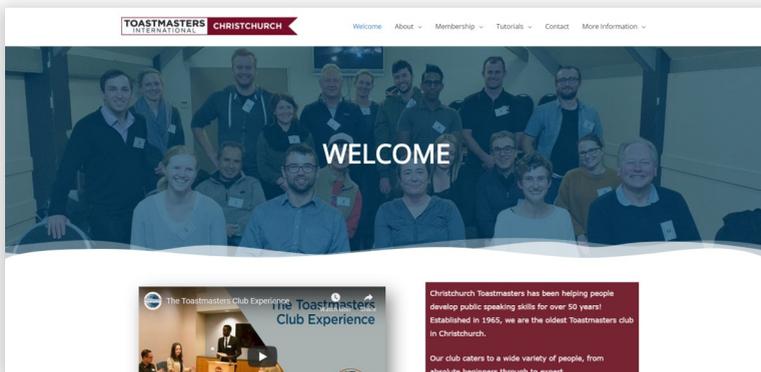
WordPress operates using a Freemium business model. This means that you can access a limited version of it for free or pay a little extra to unlock advanced website building features.

The free version will allow you create a customised and well designed website, however, it will occasionally show ads and use a wordpress.org domain name.

If you would prefer to not have ads and want to unlock more customisation options, then it may be worth upgrading to the premium version. This will give you almost complete control over the site so that you can make sure visitors receive the best possible first impression of Toastmasters!

Creating a WordPress website is a cheap and easy way to establish your club's online presence.

To get started, visit <https://wordpress.com/>



# 2

# Google My Business

Google My Business is the modern day equivalent of the Yellow Pages.

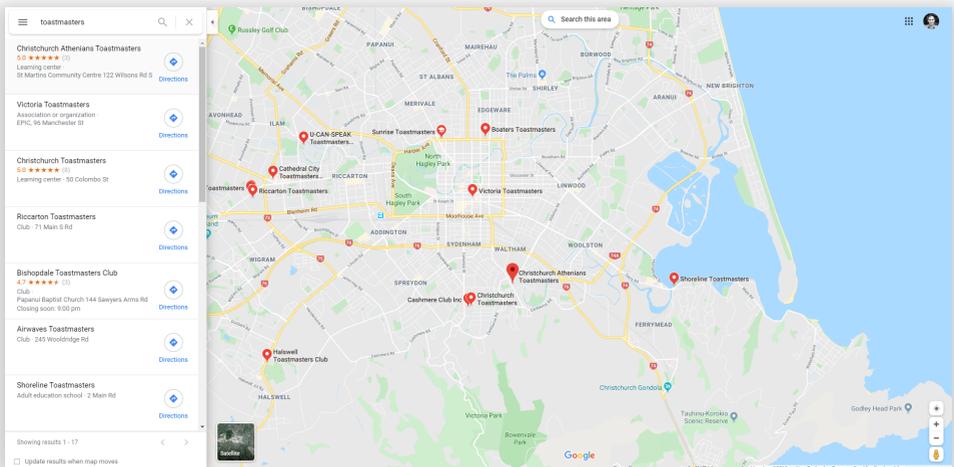
When you search for a product or service on Google, a group of local listings will appear at the top or along the side of the screen. Give it a go! Type in “Toastmasters” and you should find a list of clubs in your area, along with their address and website.

This is all done through Google My Business. This service allows you to set up a listing for your club so that it is visible to the local population. It works across both Google Search and Google Maps.

Creating a listing is easy. Simply go to <https://business.google.com>

Once an account has been set up and the club’s details have been entered, a verification letter will be sent to the listed address. Unfortunately, this creates a challenge for clubs that meet in buildings that do not have postal services. Without this verification, the listing will not be displayed.

If you do receive this letter and can complete the process, the next step is to add photos of the club and fill in any remaining details. This listing may be seen by hundreds of people per month, so it is worth adding as much information as possible.



# 3

# Facebook

Over 2 billion people use Facebook. Having a presence on this platform is critical to attracting new members.

## Groups vs Pages

Some people use these two terms interchangeably, but there is a significant difference between them.

A **Facebook Group** is mostly used for internal communication with existing members and is a good place to post club updates or meeting schedules.

A **Facebook Page** is better designed for promoting the club externally. Most importantly, it allows you to use Facebook Ads, which is not available to a group.

## Facebook Ads

Facebook is currently one of the most affordable means of advertising. At the time of writing, the cost is approximately \$1 per 100 views, depending on demographic selections. This means that a \$20 ad could be seen by 2000 people and will likely attract a few guests.

In addition, Facebook allows you to set the ad to a specific location. If you know that most of the club's guests come from one area of the city, you can set this as the target location.

To get the most value out of these ads, try putting a "page like" button at the bottom. This way, anyone who is interested can like your page and will see future posts from the club.

You can learn more here: <https://www.facebook.com/business/>

## Facebook Content

It is best to post on Facebook at least once every 1 - 2 weeks. This way, when potential guests visit the page, they will get the impression that it is an active, lively club. This can be as simple as posting a photo from each club meeting.

# 4

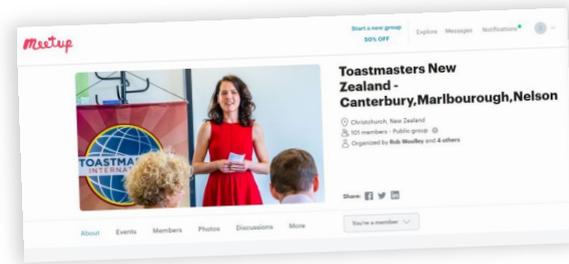
# Online Directories

Online Directories are a good way of reaching people who are already looking for a social activity. Two of the most popular ones are Meetup and Eventbrite.

## Meetup

Meetup allows people to search for nearby **clubs or social groups**. There is a cost for setting up a listing on this website. However, many Districts will sponsor this or list all the clubs on a group account.

Check out their website for more information: <https://www.meetup.com/>



## Eventbrite

Another similar website is Eventbrite. This is also an online directory, except this one lists all the **events** within a geographic area. There is no cost for using this website so long as the event is free. However, if you were to hold an event that involved selling tickets, Eventbrite would take a percentage of the revenue.

You can learn more about Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/>

The key to succeeding with either of these websites is to make sure they are kept up to date. There is nothing worse than going along to an event listed online only to find that the date or venue has changed! It is also important to include lots of photos of the club. People like to know what they are walking into and posting photos of a typical meeting helps potential guests feel more comfortable about attending.

# 5

# Letter Box Flyers

Clubs that have tried distributing Letter Box Flyers have reported mixed results. However, if you feel that potential guests of your club would respond well, then it may be worth trying.

The key to succeeding with letter box flyers is to know your target demographic. Some people are open to have advertisement material placed in their letterbox, as they use these to find the best deals at local shops. Others find it overwhelming and place any flyers directly into the bin!

One challenge is that and any notices placed into letterboxes are competing with all the other circulars that are also being distributed. One possible way around this is to design a flyer that looks like a plain and boring community notice so that it stands out from all the other glossy, colourful advertising material. It may seem counter-intuitive, but people are more likely to read something if it looks like it came from a community group rather than a company.

It is important that you respect any signs that ask for no advertisement material. It may be tempting to ignore these, especially on streets that have almost no available letterboxes. However, doing so may create a negative first impression of Toastmasters and it will be difficult to regain this trust.

You can find templates and designs here:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/Resources/Resource-Library>



# 6

# Posters

Designing and printing an attention grabbing poster can be an effective and passive way to promote your club. When it comes to this form of marketing, location is everything.

Community noticeboards are a good starting point. However, these tend to be competitive and posters are typically taken down on a weekly basis.

Local cafés and shops are sometimes open to displaying posters. Walk along the main street and see if anyone is willing. You could also see if any club members know of a good location or are connected to local business owners.

Displaying posters in parks and along streets is not recommended. Some neighborhoods and councils are not receptive to this and will immediately take down any advertising material. Never display a poster on someone's property without their permission.

A good tip is to print a dozen smaller posters (perhaps A5 size) and carry them around with you. You never know when you may encounter a good place to display them.

Visit the Toastmasters International website for logos, images and templates that you can use in your design:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/brand-portal>



# 7

# Business Cards

How many times have you mentioned Toastmasters to others? How often does the person seem genuinely interested? This is the reason why clubs should have business cards.

By giving someone a card, the potential guest will be reminded of the meeting details and will be pointed towards the club website should they want more information. Without this, a person may quickly forget about Toastmasters once the conversation has finished.

Remember that people receive business cards everyday, so your one needs to stand out in order to have an impact! It may even be worth asking someone with graphic design skills to help design them. You should also consider having them professionally printed using the best paper available.

Once they have been designed and printed, encourage club members to take a bunch and carry them around. You never know when Toastmasters may come up in everyday conversation!

Toastmasters offers a variety of business card templates that you can use:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/brand-portal/branded-business-cards>



# 8

# Signs and Banners

A street sign, banner or flag can be effective depending on your meeting location.

There are two benefits of having a sign. Firstly, it makes people who are passing by aware that a Toastmasters club meets in this location. Secondly, it gives first-time guests the confidence that they are in the right place and ensures that they get off to the best possible start.

If your club meets in a difficult to find venue, having a sign with directions is essential. Guests are often nervous about attending for the first time and having to ask someone for directions can be the barrier that turns them away.

Simple customizable signs are available from the Toastmasters International Shop: <https://www.toastmasters.org/shop/club-officers>

You can also design and print your own sign for the club. If you do this, make sure that it meets all the [Toastmasters Brand Guidelines](#). If in doubt, send an email to [brand@toastmasters.org](mailto:brand@toastmasters.org)

If your club does not have the financial resources to purchase a sign, keep in mind that a simple piece of paper taped to a window can be just as effective!



# 9

# Speechcraft

Speechcraft is a short public speaking course run by members for the community. It is designed to give people a structured learning experience and is more hands-on than a regular club meeting.

Participants will usually pay to be involved with a Speechcraft course. The exact amount is decided by the club and needs to reflect venue costs, manuals and printing costs. That being said, due to a ruling from Toastmasters, the amount charged cannot exceed the equivalent of \$90 USD per participant.

More importantly, Speechcraft is an excellent form of marketing. Once a person is introduced to Toastmasters and sees the benefits that membership can offer, they have a higher chance of joining. Be sure to invite participants along to a club meeting afterwards.

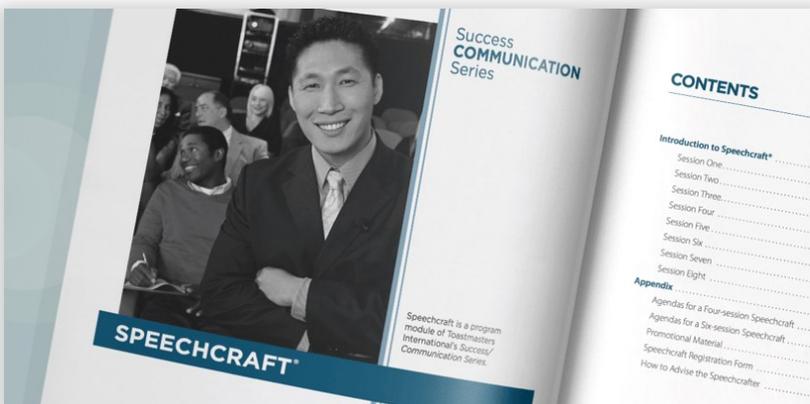
You can find more information about this program here:

[toastmasters.org/education/speechcraft](https://toastmasters.org/education/speechcraft)

A similar short course is the Youth Leadership Program. This is designed for people who are below 18 years old and not yet eligible to join Toastmasters:

[toastmasters.org/education/youth-leadership-program](https://toastmasters.org/education/youth-leadership-program)

Running a public speaking course for the community can be hard work. It takes preparation and a team of volunteers. However, if done well, it can be a good way of bring more people into the club.



# 10

# Open Meetings

When did your club last run an open meeting? For some clubs, this is an annual or semi-annual membership-building event. For others, they may not even be aware of what an open meeting is!

## What is an open meeting?

An open meeting (sometimes called a demonstration meeting) is when a club makes a concerted effort to bring in guests so that they can see the benefits of Toastmasters. It is kind of like an “Open Home” or “Open School Day” where we are inviting people who are interested in Toastmasters to view our meetings and learn more.

## Isn't every meeting an open meeting?

Ideally, yes - every meeting should be an open meeting. We should be constantly trying to connect with our communities and inviting people to attend our clubs. During our meetings, we should be explaining each role as if someone was viewing it for the first time and we should have information packs ready to go.

However, we are all busy people and it is not always easy to find the time to run a club in this way. The purpose of running a dedicated Open Meeting is to create a point of focus where we can direct our efforts. If a club sets a specific date to try and bring in guests, any promotional activities can be designed around this.

Clubs that use this format often report having 5 - 10 guests in attendance. This creates an enormous buzz in the room and ensures that these guests get the best possible first impression of Toastmasters.



# Conclusion

How many of these ideas has your club tried? If the answer is more than five, then well done! This probably means that it is easy for potential guests to find your club. If you have tried less than five or possibly none at all, then it may be worth trialing a few of these ideas in the year ahead.

The key to succeeding with marketing is to experiment and collect data on what works. Some of the ideas presented in this book will not work for every club, while others may take a lot of refinement before they start showing results. Therefore, a club that has no previous experience with marketing is best to try many ideas and fail often than to invest too much time into running the perfect campaign. Eventually, through trial and error, you will find something that brings people in.

There is one thing that all clubs should remember - never under-estimate the power of Word of Mouth. Even if a guest does not join, they will likely tell others about their experience. For this reason, creating a high-quality learning environment where people can fulfill their goals and ambitions is just as important as running marketing campaigns. When people walk through our doors, we want them to be so impressed that they do the marketing for us!

I hope this guide is useful and provides inspiration to Club Officers. These ideas are by no means everything a club can try to promote itself. In fact, it is barely the tip of the iceberg! If you have tried something that was successful, I would love to hear about it. Send me a message at [bradgrootelaar@gmail.com](mailto:bradgrootelaar@gmail.com) and it may be used for the next version of this guide.

