



Best Practices for Speech Contests

Best Practices for Judges

- Host a judge's workshop. Use two hours to review the rulebook and ballots, and practice judging a speech from another district, perhaps on YouTube. Discuss protests and originality.
- Make sure the chief judge understands what to do.
- Create a thorough script and share it with the chief judge.
- Require judges to watch the judging guide on the Toastmasters International website.
- Ask the chief judge oversee judges training.
- Ensure judges remain anonymous.

Test Speakers for Evaluation Contests


- Recruit a backup test speaker for evaluation contests.
- Ensure test speakers are good, but not your best speakers.

Best Practices for the Contest Master

- Explain how the Contest Master role differs from the Toastmaster role at a meeting.
- Conduct a contest chair workshop at TLI.
- Have "filler" material ready in case a protest occurs.
- Familiarize yourself with the *Speech Contest Rulebook*.
- Be flexible in case of a protest or another unforeseen complication.
- Ensure the logistics manager knows the rules.
- Brief contestants clearly.

Best Practices for Contest Chairs

- Develop talent by pairing new contest chairs with veteran contest chairs.
- Invite members of new or struggling clubs to fill small contest roles so they learn about contest possibilities.
- Send handwritten thank you notes to key contest functionaries.
- Make the contest fun by developing a theme.

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- Announce date, time, and location of the contest on the district website homepage.
 - Give trophies and certificates to participants.
 - Remain within budget. Area, division, and district speech contests should be revenue neutral.
 - Ask clubs to provide food.
 - Invite local dignitaries.
 - Check contest eligibility early.
 - Create an agenda with sponsor recognition.




Best Practices for District Conferences

Best Practices for Conference Chair

- Identify the conference team early.
- Choose the conference date carefully. Be aware of religious holidays.
- Start planning the next conference as soon as the previous conference concludes.
- Negotiate hotels early. Plan for hotel a year or more in advance.
- Get buy-in from division and area directors.
- Appoint co-chairs for the conference committee. One co-chair hosts the first and another hosts the second conference. Co-chairs support each other.
- Make sure the conference is valuable to the member and is not too expensive for attendees.
- Plan a theme night/event that spouses can attend.
- Organize a first-timers gathering.
- Submit a proposal to the district team for review.
- Lead a "debrief" with the conference team after the event.
- Collect feedback from attendees via surveys or evaluations.

Best Practices for Marketing

- Assemble a conference promotion team that visit clubs to promote the event.
- Call club presidents to discuss the conference.
- Consider offering a club or group discount.
- Advertise on Facebook, the district website, and via email.
- Hold a competition at division-level contests. The division that has the best decorations for the theme of the district conference wins an incentive (special table/recognition).
- Advertise the benefits of the conference.
- Record feedback from attendees and use those comments to advertise the next conference.
- Offer incentives for the club or area that has the most attendees at the conference.
- Get sponsors. Offer various price points/donation levels.
- Produce quality reusable signage.



Best Practices for Schedule of Events

- Plan a theme night/event that spouses can attend.
- Organize a first-timers gathering.
- Schedule great keynote speakers who attract non-members/partners.
- Remain on-schedule, especially for timing.
- Plan a variety of events.
- Offer educational sessions that appeal to members and non-members.
- Make registration easy.
- Include recognition for members, clubs, and district leaders.
- Consider a fun event such as a talent show, costume party, or other activity.