



# Boost Membership With Open Houses

An open house is a special meeting where guests visit and learn what Toastmasters has to offer. Open houses are one of the best ways for your club to boost its membership quickly.

Open houses must be well-planned and executed to make a good impression on guests and potential members. To have the best event, involve as many members as possible.

Some tips for a successful open house:

1. **Set a date.** Allow 3-4 weeks for PR and planning.
2. **Select an Open House Chair and committee.** The VP Membership and VP PR can serve as co-leads. Or involve someone else for CL credit under "Team Building."
3. **Promotion is critical.** Allow time to promote the event. Simply promote the open house and its value. Guests will have the opportunity to learn more about the club at the open house. The first goal is to get more guests, so promotion is critical.
4. **Select a speaker.** Select a polished speaker to speak to the benefits of Toastmasters. Another option is to bring in an outside speaker such as a district officer, a well-known individual, former member, or a member of another club.
5. **Design a special flyer.** Post the flyer in as many places as possible.
6. **Select a Food Chair and committee.** Food works! The food doesn't have to be fancy or costly. Also, consider a potluck to lower costs and give a more personal touch.
7. **Create a special meeting agenda.** Use a special meeting that emphasizes value, opportunity, interaction, and fun. Make sure guests enjoy the event, interact, and get a taste of Toastmasters. Allow extra time to enjoy the food and socialize. Simplify the agenda to make the meeting clear for guests. Table Topics can involve as many members and guests as possible. Encourage guests to speak, even if it's for 20 seconds. Consider cutting any roles that don't add value to the open house.
8. **Have plenty of guest packets, brochures, and applications.** Be ready for new members that day. Members and officers should be ready to help fill out applications.
9. **Have name tags for guests and members.** Set up a registration table to ensure guests sign the guest book, then receive a name badge and a guest packet. Have members and officers explain the guest packet to each guest.
10. **Ask for guest comments and questions.** At the end of the meeting, ask the guests to comment on what they thought of the meeting. Ask them to join, and invite them back if they'd like to learn more before joining.
11. **Write thank-you notes to guests who attended.** Email is fine, but a hand-written thank-you note has a greater impact. Follow up with each guest after the meeting to address questions, concerns, and invite him/her to the next meeting. The follow up is critical. Expect to follow up with guests 3+ times.