

Toastmasters Contest Organizer Insider Tips

Here are some insider tips from seasoned Toastmasters contest organizers to help you conduct a Perfect Contest!

1. Volunteering to organize a Toastmasters contest can count as a leadership project in Pathways to earn your Distinguished Toastmasters Award (DTM). Talk to your club's Vice President of Education (VPE) for more information.
2. The secret to contest success is **DELEGATION**. Read the current contest rule book to understand all the ins and outs of putting on a Perfect Contest. Then, ask Toastmasters you know to help out. Assign roles and tasks and then let those people go go go! You will be smiling and relaxed on contest day.
3. As soon as you know you will be a contest organizer, begin to look for a great Chief Judge and other judges from a variety of Areas. A great opportunity to recruit for contest roles is at a Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) or District meeting or conference.
4. Many Toastmasters from various clubs maintain a "friends" network of participating as a functionary in various contests during contest season. Identify these groups and network for contest help. This is your best resource.
5. Participate in other contests to receive reciprocal help with your contest
6. Start networking for your contest early in your tenure as Area Director, Division Director, etc. **Do not wait until contest season.**
7. When recruiting help always ask face-to-face. People are busy and will ignore emails, messages. Follow up with email in writing stating time, location, expectations.
8. Book the location of your contest early and make sure it is centrally located for contestants but also for where you are recruiting the bulk of your help.
9. Select your judges carefully. Pick more experienced Toastmaster for this function and be diverse in your selection. This gives more credibility to your reputation hosting a contest. Try to avoid selecting Judges that are too familiar with each other.
10. Always sign up more contest judges, timers, sergeants-at-arms, and other helpers than you need because some will cancel beforehand or simply fail to show up on

Toastmasters Contest Organizer Insider Tips

contest day. Advise additional volunteers that they are valuable reserves who will almost certainly have some role to perform at the contest. Many hands make small work!

11. Really encourage the 2nd place winners from the previous contest level to attend your contest. Remind them that if the 1st place winner fails to sign in, the duty and honor falls to the 2nd-place winner. In person is always best for these communications, but a friendly phone call, email, or text can also serve the purpose.
12. Consider having a Refreshment Chair whose sole purpose is to set up a table groaning with food and drink at the contest. Requesting food contributions from volunteer staff can also work. When inspecting the contest room, decide where food service will be set up, out of the way of the speaking area.
13. Above all, **BRING THE TROPHIES TO THE CONTEST!** Tape a reminder note to yourself on your car keys or steering wheel. (Seriously.)