

Open House Checklist

An Open House is an opportunity to not just attract new members, but an opportunity for members to step out of their comfort zone, to put their leadership skills to work and shine!

Think BIG! When you give your guests more than they expect, your open house will be a huge success! Plan it all out and put everyone in the club to work. Put names next to items and have check-in progress meetings.

Start with an Open House Chair - this is a great opportunity as a project in the Competent Leader manual or a High Performance Leadership (HPL) project.

Open House Chair _____

Chairman should:

- Give a Motivational Speech to club to gain commitment and volunteers
- Form Open House Committee (assuming the committee is not the entire club)

Phase One - Planning (at least 60 days out)

Open House Committee

- Set a Goal for how many guests & members (Don't just invite 10 people. Invite more because statistically only about 30% will show up.)
- Determine Location, Date & Time to accommodate your goal. Generally it is a good idea to hold your open house in your usual meeting location, date and time, unless there is a compelling reason to change.
- Determine if you'll target a specific audience (i.e. real estate agents, people living on the east end of town, millennials, etc.) or everyone. (Communicating to everyone in a compelling way is difficult.)
- Determine if you'll have a Guest Speaker or conduct some variation of a normal Toastmasters meeting.
- Determine who will perform each role on the agenda.
 - Confirm Toastmaster of the Day
 - Don't have your best speakers presenter. This can intimidate guests. Have your intermediate speakers presenter.
 - Ask your best speakers to Toastmaster, the Evaluator and General Evaluator.
 - Who will give one-minute "toastimonials" (2-3 to speak during the meeting on how TM helps)
- Form a Publicity Sub-committee
- Form a "Day of" Sub-committee

Phase Two - Publicity and Guest Inviting

Publicity Sub-committee

- Brainstorm a list of every possible place to publicize. [i.e. websites, HOA's (homeowners associations), community newspapers, corporate newsletters, Chambers of Commerce and other associations, Facebook, Meetup, neighborhood groups, local blogs, etc.]
- Download a [Open House News Release Template](#) and create a compelling news release.
- Create or download a compelling Open House flyers
- Print and distribute flyers for each member to post
- Invite neighboring businesses
- Press Releases (Make two: send 1 & 2 weeks prior to event)
- PSA's (1 & 2 weeks prior to event) (Radio Stations, Public Access TV, etc)
- Task every member to invite a minimum 2 guests

Phase Three - Preparations of Day of Event

"Day-of" Sub-committee

- Signs to direct guest to the meeting room
- Food (cookies, fruit, veggies, cheese & crackers, punch & coffee)
- Decorations (if appropriate, i.e. Halloween stuff for a Ghost Story Telling night)
- Name Badges or Guest Tent Cards (have Sharpies on hand)
- Greeters to welcome every guest at the door...and ask them sign in
- Floaters to network and answer questions
- Door Prizes (optional) - Have a "punch bowl" for people to throw in business cards or filled out cards with name, email, and phone #.
- Have Membership Applications on hand...and at least 3 people who know how to fill them out
- Information Table ([TM brochures](#), TM magazines, a one-pager on your club, etc)
- Have a member taking action photos during the event

Phase Four - Post Event Follow Up

One week after event:

- Publicity Sub-committee send follow-up press release with action photos
- Members make follow-up phone calls or letters to guests they invited
- Open House Committee conducts an after-event review:
 - How the event went
 - Lessons learned
 - What we did well
 - What to do differently next time

Other Resources

- [Toastmasters' Library of Open House material](#)
- July 2017 Article - [Stir Up Excitement With an Open House or Demo Meeting](#)