

the organization forward today. A 70-member headquarters staff, under the leadership of Executive Director Donna H. Groh, serves members, providing support services, educational materials, a monthly magazine and a Web site ([www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)). Toastmasters also sponsors speech contests, culminating in the annual World Championship of Public Speaking held each August during Toastmasters' annual international convention.



Many members of Toastmasters clubs from throughout the organization's 76 districts also make significant contributions, such as serving in various club and district positions. They write many of the articles in *The Toastmaster* magazine and help coordinate conferences and speech contests. They also participate in the annual international convention, where they give educational sessions, enjoy presentations by professional speakers and the fellowship with members from around the world.

The Toastmasters program fulfills the need in the marketplace for effective communicators and leaders. Good communication skills consistently rank first among personal qualities of college graduates sought by employers in surveys of companies and public organizations conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

## Future Aspirations

In keeping with Smedley's philosophy, Dilip Abayasekara, elected in August 2005 to the one-year volunteer position of Toastmasters International President, chose the motto "Find Your Voice.

Serve Your World" as his theme for 2005-2006.

Abayasekara lives in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.

For more information on Toastmasters International or the clubs near you, please visit [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) and click on "Find a Club" at the top left, or call (949) 858-8255.



## Membership Costs

Toastmasters is affordable! Dues are \$54 per year, renewed semiannually. New members receive a comprehensive New Member Kit for a fee of \$20. Most clubs also charge local fees to cover meeting place costs and other incidentals. Total annual fees are usually less than \$100.



## Toastmasters International

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Toastmasters:

Out of the  
Past, into the  
Future!

# Our Mission

Toastmasters International's mission is "to make effective communication a worldwide reality." This is based on the philosophy of the organization's founder, Ralph C. Smedley, that better communication between people leads to greater understanding.



## Founding

Headquartered in Rancho Santa Margarita, California, Toastmasters International is the world's leading

organization devoted to teaching communication and leadership skills. It has more than 211,000 members in 10,500 clubs in 90 countries – and is still growing.

Ralph C. Smedley, while serving as general secretary of the Santa Ana, California, YMCA, started a speaking club in the YMCA basement in 1924 to help men learn to become better speakers and leaders. Without realizing it, he was creating a movement.

Toastmasters clubs offer "learn-by-doing" programs in which participants learn to give presentations in a comfortable and supportive club atmosphere. A typical club has 20 members who meet weekly or biweekly. There is no instructor; instead, members evaluate each other's speeches, guided by TI's unique and proven educational materials. Members receive recognition for progress as they advance through a series of assignments.

Smedley had started Toastmasters clubs at several YMCAs in Illinois and in San Jose, Calif., before being assigned to coordinate a new YMCA in the growing Orange County community of Santa Ana in 1922. Those clubs thrived under Smedley's leadership but disbanded after he left.

The Santa Ana club took root, however, possibly because of Smedley's longer tenure there. Word of the Santa Ana Toastmasters club spread, and soon men from neighboring communities, and then other states, formed Toastmasters clubs. The name "Toastmasters Club" was copyrighted in 1931, and Toastmasters International was incorporated in 1932 to coordinate the various clubs' activities and standardize methods.

Toastmasters got its name from the fact that Smedley initially patterned club meetings after banquets featuring toasts and speeches. The organization flourished under Smedley's leadership until his death in 1965. It continues to thrive under the guidance of Toastmasters leaders imbued with his vision and dedication.

Although established for men, Toastmasters clubs were given the option of opening membership to women in 1973, and in 1978 Toastmasters International informed all clubs that they could no longer organize along gender lines.



## Present

Toastmasters can point to 81 years of providing a proven, enjoyable and inexpensive educational program for more than 4 million people. Thousands of corporations sponsor in-house Toastmasters clubs as ongoing communications training for their employees. Clubs also exist in many government agencies, including the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, as well as in a variety of community organizations, prisons, universities, hospitals, military bases and churches.

Toastmasters offers a two-track educational program. Once members have completed the introductory speaking manual, they may enter the communication track and/or the leadership track. The communication track helps members develop advanced speaking skills through a variety of specialized manuals. The leadership track guides members serving in various club and district offices through a leadership project of their choosing.

Twenty-three volunteer international officers and directors – including many who once thought they could never speak in front of a group – move