

Improve and reinforce speaking and leadership qualities with a

Toastmaster Skill Builder

Skill Builders are concise presentations during the club meeting which focus on a speaking or leadership skill. They remind members to remain focused on and continue practicing the skills they joined Toastmasters to learn.

Clubs that want to help members focus on the skills they are learning can easily schedule a Skill Builder early in each meeting. It adds a lot of content and never takes more than three minutes.

~ Organization ~

A Skill Builder is a short speech with a single point. It has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. An example, a quick story, or a relevant quotation supports the point.

The '3X' theory works well in a Skill Builder:

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them.
2. Tell them.
3. Tell them what you told them.

If a topic can't be covered in a single point and within three minutes, either narrow the focus or cover the wider topic in a regular manual speech.

Whether you give your audience a single point or a dozen points to remember – a mere hour after you've spoken, most listeners will be lucky to recall a single point. A Skill Builder presentation is an exercise in choosing the single point you most want your audience to remember, and delivering that point memorably.

~ Time ~

The Skill Builder may be as long as three minutes – and no longer.



The green card or light is shown at two minutes, yellow at two and a half minutes, and red at three minutes.

When the red appears, the toastmaster of the day leads the applause and the meeting continues.

There's no minimum time. To effectively make and reinforce a point in 60-to-90 seconds is powerful delivery. Brevity is a critical speaking

attribute and Skill Builders are an opportunity to practice effective brevity.

Your ability to powerfully present an important topic in limited time is valuable. Many chances to express your opinion in public are limited to two minutes of speaking time – such as at the City Council, a State Legislative hearing, or a Toastmasters International board meeting.

~ Resources ~

Minimal effort will uncover many sources for generating ideas and reinforcing content.

Your own experience is a worthwhile resource – a point in an evaluation that has stuck with you would make a great topic! A Skill Builder isn't the voice of authority, it is peer feedback on what a fellow Toastmaster has noticed or wants to strengthen.

Skill Builder topic ideas will be found in:

- Toastmaster CTM and advanced manuals.
- Toastmaster Magazine.
- <http://www.toastmasters.org/indexbk.htm>
The TI web site has a 'speaking tips' link and frequent skill-building features.
- Old speech class textbooks.
- Watching other speakers.
- A point made (or missed) during an evaluation.

~ Topic Selection ~

An ideal Skill Builder is the point you'd like to strengthen in your own presentation ability. Pick a skill that everybody needs and focus on a single aspect of that skill.

It is even okay if somebody else covered an aspect of the same skill recently. There are so many facets to each skill that another perspective will be valuable. Somebody that didn't connect with the point when it was previously presented will 'get it' during your presentation.

A few possible Skill Builder topics are listed on the other side.

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~ Topic Ideas ~

- Ask for an action
 - Ask for useful feedback
 - Attracting attention
 - Audience involvement
 - Avoid distracting mannerisms
 - Be a mentor
 - Book with worthwhile advice for speakers
 - Breathing
 - Bring your audience into your speech
 - Build to a climax
 - Conduct a business meeting
 - Contest rules
 - Contest techniques
 - Convince your audience
 - Deal with interruptions
 - Define your topic so everybody understands
 - Develop your voice
 - Dress for your presentation.
 - Edit to fit a time limit
 - Emotional involvement
 - Emotional responses from your audience
 - Empty pockets, comb hair
 - Enter club contests
 - Enunciate
 - Establish audience rapport
 - Evaluate a speaker
 - Evidence to prove your point
 - Eye contact
 - Facial expression
 - Find interesting topics
 - Find helpful quotations
 - Flip charts
 - Get your butterflies flying in formation
 - Gestures – powerful and weak
 - Gestures to support your words
 - Get to the point quickly
 - Get away from the lectern
 - Get dramatic
 - Get quiet people to participate
 - Give useful feedback
 - Greet toastmaster of the day
 - Handouts
 - Head table protocol
 - How to address the chair
 - Humor
 - Hypothetical vs. real life examples?
 - Interview others for speech material
 - Introductions
 - Invocations
 - Language - powerful & simple
 - Leadership awards
 - Leadership opportunities
 - Leave them wanting more
 - Lectern techniques
 - Listen
 - Loud voice / soft voice
- What do
you
want to
reinforce?***


- Make an idea file
 - Make it memorable with a story
 - Make table topics exciting
 - Meet audience before speaking
 - Memorable moments
 - Never apologize
 - Open up for questions
 - Organize as you speak
 - Organize a speech
 - Outside speaking opportunities
 - Overcome poor speech habits
 - Parliamentary procedure
 - Pitch
 - Posture
 - Power of the pause
 - Prepare charts in advance
 - Prepare notes
 - Prepare your introduction
 - Prepare a meeting agenda
 - Promote your cause
 - Pronunciation
 - Projectors
 - Propose a formal motion
 - Props
 - Rate
 - Reach out to bored audience members
 - Rehearse
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Research or plagiarism?
 - Revise a speech for another day
 - Room set-up
 - Select the right material to make a point
 - Self-revelation
 - Show your enthusiasm
 - Speaking pace
 - Speak up in a meeting
 - Statistics to support your speech
 - Storytelling
 - Strengthen your voice
 - Summarize your points
 - Support your points
 - Table topic techniques
 - Tailor speech to audience
 - Tone
 - Transitions / sign-posting
 - Use a microphone
 - Vocal tone
 - Vocal variety
 - Walk around or stand still
 - Wall charts
 - What to do with your hands
 - What to say while thinking of what to say
 - What to tell your audience about your speech
 - White boards
 - Word selection

Every role in a meeting is a great Skill Builder topic, including the toastmaster of the day, table topics leader, grammarian, humorist, timekeeper, general and speech evaluator.

Share ideas, reinforce lessons, and improve your communication with Skill Builders.