

—  
IMAGINE  
EVERY  
THING  
—

# The ultimate guide to hosting a *killer* *Toastmasters* *open house*

BRYSON BERNARDE  
DISTRICT 35  
CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR

THE WHY

# Why your open house shouldn't feel like one

People don't attend events to be pitched something... let alone public speaking. Nobody wakes up excited to attend an event in a church basement and listen to strangers talk about their club. **That's not what this is.**

This is a room full of your city's most influential doers, a place to make connections that could turn into business, partnerships, or friendships. The hook isn't Toastmasters — the hook is the networking. Toastmasters is the ace up your sleeve, revealed when everyone's already leaning in.

THE VENUE

# Design a night people brag about

You can't build energy in a dead room. That's why the venue matters. Skip the bland conference tables and pick a place people want to show off on social media — a distillery, rooftop, or private room at a great restaurant. Many locations will give space to nonprofits - check with club members to see who has connections.

Then give the night a theme that grabs every professional's attention. Nobody's Googling "how do I become a better public speaker," but everyone wants to know how to be more interesting, more persuasive, or more confident in the room. Market it like a can't-miss networking event, not a club meeting.

YOUR CREW

# Line up your leaders, then let them lead

No one pulls off a killer event alone. Success comes from putting the right people in the right seats and making sure everyone knows their job.

Start with your club officers — they're already leaders and invested in the outcome. Then, assign roles like it's game day. Everyone should own a piece of the event, because when each person executes their lane, the result is bigger than anything one person could create.

THE DOOR KNOCKER

# The door knocker – street-level promotion

This role is old-school hustle, and it works. Four to eight weeks out, your Door Knocker is on the ground handing out flyers, posting them on every community bulletin board, and asking local businesses with foot traffic to give you window space. Grocery stores, coffee shops, gyms, and post offices — all fair game.

It's gritty, but it's effective. Nothing beats boots-on-the-ground promotion when it comes to reaching people where they actually live and move.



THE EMAILER

# The emailer – personal touch wins

Mass emails get ignored, but a personal invitation? That gets opened. Your Emailer takes every business card collected over the past few years and puts them to use. They send out hundreds of one-to-one emails, each personalized based on the last time they connected with that person.

Done right, it feels like an exclusive invite. Start this four to six weeks before the event. A night of opportunity and valuable networking is an easy sell, but only if you make it personal.

THE MARKETER

# The marketer – amplify the signal

The Marketer's job is to make sure this event gets attention beyond the club's reach. They start with free options: contacting local newspapers for nonprofit event listings, getting onto community calendars, and submitting posts to neighborhood websites.

If they have the skills, they can also run a few targeted Facebook or Instagram ads, or boost posts to widen the net. On top of that, they should use their own social channels to push the event. Their job is simple: amplify the signal until people can't miss it.

THE LINKEDIN CONNECTOR

# The LinkedIn connector – tap the network

If you've got LinkedIn connections, you've got leads. The LinkedIn Connector combs through their network and sends out personal messages inviting people to the event. This isn't a mass blast — it's one-to-one outreach that frames the event as a can't-miss networking night.

Think of it as extending a personal handshake in digital form. These invites carry weight because they come from an existing connection, and professionals take notice when you make the effort to reach out directly.



SEARGANT AT ARMS

# The SAA – the quarterback of the room

If the space isn't ready, the event isn't ready. Your Sergeant-at-Arms is the one who makes sure the banners are sharp, the lectern is set, and the flyers are laid out. They arrive early, walk the room, and turn a blank space into a stage.

By the time the first guest walks in, everything should scream: this is a professional event worth showing up for. The SAA preps the room so once the first guest enters, it's game-on.

COVER EVERY ANGLE

# Miscellaneous outreach – cover every angle

Every community has places where people gather, and your job is to show up there. Post your event on Meetup, Nextdoor, and Facebook Groups. Mention it at farmers markets, craft fairs, and other local events. Send invitations to former Toastmasters guests, past prospects, and even old members who might be ready for a comeback. Get the word into local colleges and networking groups.

The more lines you cast, the more bites you'll get — and all of those touchpoints add up to a packed house.

ORCHESTRATION

# Orchestrating a can't-miss event

Attention is the new currency, and you've got to earn it. That's why the first 30 minutes are pure networking — drinks in hand, business cards flying, conversations sparking.

When the room is warm, bring up 1–2 killer speakers who deliver short, punchy talks built around your theme. Think *How to Be the Most Interesting Person in the Room*, or *How to Command Influence*. These hit on universal desires every professional has.

Then you make the pivot: what they just witnessed is Toastmasters in action. Share when and where you meet, keep it tight, and send them back to networking with food, drinks, and curiosity about what else they're missing.

THE NEXT DAY

# The day after decides everything

If you stop at the event, you've wasted the work. The magic is in what happens after. Collect every guest's info at the door, then hit them fast. Send a thank-you email the very next day, while the event is still fresh in their mind. Reach out again a week later with a personal invite to your next meeting. Then follow up once more a month after to catch the ones who needed more time.

Momentum dies quickly — your follow-up is the afterburn that keeps the fire lit and turns curiosity into commitment.

TIMELINE

# The timeline

## **8 Weeks Out — Line Up Your Leaders**

Start building your team. Assign roles, set expectations, and make sure everyone knows their part.

## **6 Weeks Out — Venue & Theme Finalized, Promotion Begins**

Lock in your location and theme. Launch your first wave of promotion — flyers, local listings, and word-of-mouth.

## **4 Weeks Out — Digital Promotion & 1-on-1 Invites Begin**

Kick off your online push. Post on social media and start sending personal invitations to your contacts and local professionals.

## **1 Week Out — Final Emails, Social Posts, Reminders**

Keep the buzz alive. Send reminder emails, share last-minute social posts, and confirm your logistics.

TIMELINE

# The timeline

## **Event Day — Showtime**

Doors open, lights on. Welcome guests, network, run your keynotes, and showcase the Toastmasters experience.

## **1 Day After — Email Follow-Up**

Strike while the iron's hot. Send a thank-you email and invite guests to your next club meeting.

## **1 Week After — Second Touch**

Send a second email to all event attendees with an invite to your upcoming club meetings.

## **1 Month After — Final Invite to Club Meeting**

Close the loop. Reach out one more time laying out your next 4 meeting days/times — some people just need that extra nudge.



SECRET SAUCE

# The secret sauce of a successful open house

You don't beg people to join Toastmasters — you create the kind of event they'll regret missing. Keep it professional, keep it fun, and make the next step crystal clear. The atmosphere sells, the conversations connect, and the follow-up converts. Run it right, and you're not just hosting an open house — you're building the room everyone wants to be in.

BRYSON BERNARDE  
DISTRICT 35  
CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR

LET'S ROCK N' ROLL

# Questions or need a hand?

If you're putting together an open house and want advice, ideas, or just a sounding board, I'm happy to help. You can reach me here:

**Bryson Bernarde**

Bryson@unitedsmm.com

(715) 301-0426

2025-2026 District 35 Club Growth Director

On a side note — outside of Toastmasters, I lead **United Social Media Marketing**, where we help companies stop blending in online and start winning attention. From driving sales to getting more people in the door at events, this is what gets us fired up. If you have a company — or know someone who does — that wants to talk strategy, I'd be happy to connect.