

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | AUGUST 2026

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

VISIBLE CLUBS

Impossible to
Ignore

**EXTRAORDINARY
CORNER**

ALETTA ROCHAT

One Year. A World of Possibility

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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Toastmasters Distict 74 Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

toastmasters74.org



EDITOR'S NOTE



Happy Women's Month to every South African woman in our district – and to every woman across D74: you are equally seen, equally valued, and this edition is for all of you.

This month's theme is Visible Clubs Grow. But visibility starts with people. It starts with every member who shows up, speaks up, and refuses to shrink. It starts with you.

In this edition, you will meet members who are building clubs, breaking barriers, and doing extraordinary things in the most ordinary, beautiful ways. Their stories are your stories.

We also continue with our Extraordinary Corner – because ordinary members doing extraordinary things is not just our D74 theme, it is who we are.

Every issue, every month, we find you. And this month, we found some truly remarkable ones.

To every member reading this – thank you for being part of D74.

You are the reason this magazine exists.

Lesedi Queen Masina

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DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Recently, at a Town Hall, an ordinary but very esteemed member reminded me of an upcoming Toastmasters Day.

We spoke about wearing our regalia and Toastmasters pins to work, and it struck me: **every day ought to be Toastmasters Day.**

When we live our values of **Integrity, Respect, Service and Excellence**, we become walking ambassadors for Toastmasters. Someone is bound to notice and ask, "What is your secret?" That simple question opens the door to share our Toastmasters story and, hopefully, to extend an invitation to our next meeting.

Word of mouth remains one of the most powerful forms of publicity. Our greatest advertisement is not a poster or social-media post; it is the way we show up every day.

So, District 74, *live our values, wear Toastmasters proudly, continue to shine, and invite those door-opening conversations.*

Every day is Toastmasters Day.



FROM THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DESK

As we step into August's theme, "Visible Clubs Grow," we are reminded that growth begins with being seen.

This month, as we celebrate Women's Month in South Africa and National Women's Day on 9 August, along with Heroes Day in Namibia, on 26 August, we honour voices that inspire change.

Our PR vision continues: visibility creates opportunity for transformation. I invite every member to work with your VPPR to showcase your club—online and in your community.

Share your story, invite a guest, and be visible. Every post, every invitation, every conversation contributes to our BrandStorm across District 74.

Your fellow Ordinary Member Doing Extraordinary Things

Strategic Visibility for Growth
#D74BrandStorm



Beyond the Presidency

Aletta Rochat on Leadership, Connection and Possibility



A year ago, Aletta and I spoke as she stood on the threshold of an extraordinary responsibility: becoming Toastmasters International President. She spoke then about going back to basics, strengthening the member and club experience, and believing in what was possible. A year later, as her term came to an end, one thing was striking: the vision remained, but the experience had deepened it.

Interview by Maud Nale, DTM

A Presidency Built on Connection

What Aletta said she did not fully appreciate a year ago was just how much support she would receive. The presidency, she discovered, was never a solitary exercise in leadership. Through conversations with members, Board members, Region Advisors, International Directors and leaders across the organisation, she found that leadership became a team effort.

“It’s never one person leading an organisation. It’s one person who happens to have the title and the role, but we are all in this together,” she reflected.

Going Back to Basics

That spirit of shared possibility was reflected in the year's results. Toastmasters had 42 Distinguished Districts, including five that had not achieved Distinguished status since the pandemic and another seven that had not done so in more than a decade.

For Aletta, these stories mattered because they represented leaders who refused to allow the past to determine the future. In Africa, the year was particularly strong, with District 130 emerging as the number-one District in the world and Aletta's home District 74 achieving Presidents Distinguished status.

For her, these achievements reflected exactly what she had hoped the organisation would focus on: going back to basics, strengthening the member experience and adding value to members.

Her District visits became another important part of that philosophy. She made four in-person visits, travelling to California, Canada, India and Malaysia, while also holding numerous virtual conversations with District leaders about their challenges, achievements and aspirations.



"I didn't want to only speak to the ones who were Distinguished at the end of the year," she explained.

When leaders wanted her to share a message with their members, she recorded short videos. By the end of her term, she had recorded almost 300. For Aletta, however, the significance was never the number of videos. It was the opportunity to extend a conversation to members she could not physically meet.

Leadership under Pressure

One of the most difficult conversations of the year centred on the recent increase in membership dues. Aletta was candid about the challenge: no Board wanted to increase dues, particularly when members themselves were feeling the pressure of rising costs.

Yet, after months of discussion and having already reduced costs in other areas, the Board concluded that an increase was necessary to sustain the organisation and invest in the member experience.

Her message to members facing that increase was equally candid: maximise the value while you are a member. ***“Being a Toastmaster is not a spectator sport,”*** she said.

The greatest return came from raising your hand - for a speech, a meeting role, club leadership or District leadership. “The more you engage with the programme, the more active you become, the more the return on investment grows exponentially.”

That philosophy of participation also shaped her leadership. With 19 Board members bringing different perspectives to difficult decisions, consensus required curiosity, compromise and a willingness to understand where others were coming from.

“It was just a reinforcement that that is the only way we can lead, is through collaboration, through being curious enough to listen and understand, rather than thinking that we alone have a solution.”

Africa’s Moment

Her presidency also carried significance beyond the organisation itself. As the first International President from Africa, Aletta remained passionate about the continent’s talent and potential.

That belief was reflected in Africa’s performance during her presidential year. Four of Africa’s five Districts achieved Distinguished status, with District 130 emerging as the number-one District in the world. For Aletta, the achievement was more than a set of results; it was evidence of what becomes possible when African leaders recognise their own potential and act on it.

Her “Africa Leads the Way” initiative became a platform for shining a light on African talent and opening doors for collaboration, including with Rotary International.

Her belief had only strengthened: ***“Africa has got the talent. We just have to believe it ourselves.”***

For Aletta, that belief was not dependent on holding the highest office. “You don’t have to be the head of an organisation to make that contribution. It can be from wherever you are now, and in any industry.”



Leading by Listening

Perhaps the most defining moment of her presidency came during a town hall in Bangalore, India. For more than an hour, Toastmasters asked questions - about organisational decisions, leadership and Aletta herself.

She remembered the room vividly. The experience reinforced her belief that leadership was about being open and accessible, creating opportunities for people to ask what was on their minds and helping them understand the “why” behind decisions.

“You have to be connected to the people and look for opportunities to interact with them so that they can engage with you and ask you whatever’s on their mind.”

And through all the responsibility, there was still room for joy. District visits were hard work but energising. Board meetings could be taxing, yet left her enriched. Her advice to leaders feeling overwhelmed was simple: nurture yourself, find what gives you energy, and remember that Toastmasters was meant to be fun.

Remember Who You Are

So, what did Aletta want to be remembered for?

Her answer took us back to where her leadership journey began: **“I want to be remembered for my connection to the member.”**

It was perhaps the clearest thread through her presidency - from going back to basics, to listening to District leaders, to making herself accessible, to encouraging members to raise their hands. And when asked what she would tell the Aletta of a year ago, she offered a lesson drawn from a sports documentary about tennis champion, Rafael Nadal: **“Remember who you are. What you’ve already achieved is remarkable. Make sure others see that.”** It was advice that felt bigger than a presidency. Know what you have already achieved. Carry it with grounded confidence. Let others see it.

Aletta’s presidency may have ended, but her contribution has not. She will serve another year on the Board as Immediate Past International President before stepping off in August 2027, after which she expected to continue contributing through Toastmasters committees.

For now, she was looking forward to being “slightly less frantic.”

Yet her larger message remained forward-looking: **“We’ve only just got started.”**

For an organisation seeking to grow, for a continent increasingly claiming its place on the global stage, and for every member wondering what they might be capable of, it was an invitation to do what Aletta had encouraged throughout her year: believe in what is possible, raise your hand, and take the next step.

A Year in Moments

A glimpse into Aletta Rochat's year as International President





A Tribute of Appreciation to Aletta Rochat

As Aletta Rochat's term as International President of Toastmasters International draws to a close, **District 74 extends its heartfelt gratitude for her exceptional leadership, service, and unwavering support.**

Throughout her term, Aletta has remained closely connected to District 74. Despite the demands of leading a global organisation, she has always made herself available to support, encourage, and engage with members across our District. Her presence at District 74 events, including our Hall of Fame and Leadership Induction Dinner, was a powerful reminder that leadership remains grounded in service and connection.

For the members of District 74, Aletta's journey has been particularly meaningful. She is not simply the leader of an international organisation; she is one of our own. Her journey from being a member within District 74 to serving as International President of Toastmasters International is an inspiration and a testament to what is possible when individuals embrace opportunities to learn, lead, and grow.

As her term comes to an end, we celebrate not only the position she held but the impact she has made. Thank you, Aletta, for remaining accessible, for supporting your home District, and for carrying the spirit of District 74 onto the global stage.

Your leadership has made us proud, your service has inspired us, and your journey reminds every member of District 74 that extraordinary leadership can begin with a single decision to step forward.

Thank you, Aletta, for your service, your support, and your enduring connection to District 74. **We are proud to call you one of our own.**

— Lesedi Masina

THE NEWCOMER WHO BROUGHT ABOUT INNOVATIVE CHANGE



Khaka Gomba describes himself as introverted and a person who loves reading. An IT person by profession he had gained quite a reputation as a motivational speaker at team connect sessions given by his company. This he did because he learnt a lot from the books he read and felt like sharing the inspiring content with his colleagues. His bosses felt his talents were getting wasted if not being used externally. That is how he started researching about professional public speaking. He was introduced to Toastmasters International (TMI) by Phaphama Mhlekwana. He says apart from TMI his background in speaking was at work (which made him gain confidence) and as a young boy at church.

Khaka joined Moving Forward (a club he now considers his family) in March 2025 and did a table topic during his first visit. A man clearly familiar with the stage. Within a few months he was elected as VPM due to his active involvement in the club. When asked if he was not intimidated by the role and responsibility he said **“I like to put myself out there to be vulnerable in order to learn. I do not want to merely exist or be counted but to make a difference.”**

He is inspired by the man in the arena by Theodore Roosevelt and Bantu Steve Biko. He truly began to understand the full offering of TMI at the Hall of Fame 2025 and Thrivecorn conference 2026. In the 2025/2026 TMI year he was an editor for the Achieving Excellence Magazine and is now an editor at the magazine at his workplace.

While executing his role as VPM he noticed a few shortcomings on his role and thought of making the VPM role more efficient. The manual system of tracking visitors and new members was not without its faults sometimes the physical documents would go missing leaving no record and making follow ups with visitors impossible.

— Gcobisa Sigwili

Making use of his IT knowledge Khaka developed an App called Nexa which means next action as it will help members and guests take the next step. There was an internal competition to name the App in his club and it was won by Kgaugelo Khunou. The combination of his professional skills and TMI role was because he felt to enjoy the TMI journey he needed to bring all the skills he has to the table. To him TMI is not temporary it is his lifestyle and journey. Even though he used his skills to add value to TMI he also gets to benefit from TMI in his profession. In developing the App he was driven by a desire to absorb members and says "you cannot make a second first impression."

Visitors use the App by scanning the QR code, and indicating if they want to join the club, or download application forms. The App helps EXCO members interact with guests, track visitors from other clubs and club growth.

Old members use the App to register attendance for meetings and role played, track meeting attendance and see people who are likely not to renew membership, the expiry date of membership and helps the Treasurer follow up with members on time. It also provides information on pathways, and shows people who want to join EXCO subcommittees (This helps with succession planning). The App even tracks its members who attend meetings in other clubs and there is an award for attending other club meetings. The APP also has AI component to ask questions. In essence the App helps the VPM, VPE, Secretary and Treasurer roles.

The App has recent features indicating member birthdays, and promoting Conquercon attendance through a QR code (to track who is attending, registering or has challenges).

The EXCO seeks to be timeously aware of Conquercon challenges and mitigate them where possible.

The APP has been in circulation since June 2026 and is still work in progress. His future plans for the App is that users should be able to access all their clubs. District members should be able to see same information the club sees. The App should also be able to send reminder or follow up messages. The vision is that once a considerable amount of time has passed with no issues the APP can be used by other clubs as well for their benefit and District.

When asked if he was aware that he is an ordinary person who has done an extraordinary thing he said he was just trying to do his job better. **He was not doing it for recognition he was doing it to add value.** His advise to ordinary people wanting to do something extraordinary is that they don't have to think big. **They need think of how they can turn the small thing they are doing at TMI into gold.** Like the street sweeper who became the best street sweeper one must do roles like Ah Counter to their level best and try to be innovative and not do it for the sake of doing it. **TMI gives us opportunities to do extra ordinary things. TMI motivates us and it is our responsibility to get the full value of TMI** e.g. by attending conference. **If people were to try to do their jobs better they are capable of doing extra-ordinary things.**

— Gcobisa Sigwili

ELOQUENT SPEAKERS TOASTMASTERS: BUILDING VOICES, CONFIDENCE AND CONNECTIONS

— Retshiditse Talafala



Founded in 2006, Eloquent Speakers Club is a Botswana-based hub for personal, professional, and leadership development. Known for its warm, engaging atmosphere, the club pairs structured learning with fellowship and networking sessions to build both communication skills and meaningful relationships.

MAKING AN IMPACT BEYOND THE MEETING ROOM

Our reach extends into the wider community through strategic corporate partnerships and development initiatives. Notably, through Standard Chartered Bank's Atlega Programme, we equip graduates with practical public speaking skills to help them navigate their careers with confidence.

Our commitment to outreach was recently recognized with a Toastmasters International Certificate of Recognition for Best Public Relations, affirming our brand presence and community value.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND OUR SUCCESS

- Kgobero Kage Kehuparetse: A club pillar since 2016 and former Area/Division Director, Kage is a multi-time speech champion and the 2025 Evaluation Champion.
- Mpho Kabelo (DTM): Club's 4th Distinguished Toastmaster, Mpho launched a youth speaking initiative and served in key executive, Area, Division, and mentor roles.
- Annah Moses: Current Area E5 Director driving club growth and sustaining momentum after its recent revival.
- Phemo Kgosi: Current Club President and former Area Director, leading the club's next chapter and mentoring emerging speakers.

IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

Nine years into her Toastmasters journey, former VPPR Tumelo Maphalala led Gaborone Toastmasters to claim Best Club PR 2025-2026—securing the title for a second consecutive year.

Her secret? Relentless consistency from day one. "Hit the ground running," she advises. By maintaining an active presence across LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, Tumelo ensured the club's momentum never slowed.

"Effective PR isn't about one viral post—it's about teamwork, strategy, and showing up continuously."

DRIVING ENGAGEMENT & REACH

- **Brand-Aligned Media:** Used brand-correct Canva graphics to build a polished visual identity.
- **Targeted Boosting:** Promoted contest and event posts on Facebook to boost community turnout.
- **Diverse Content:** Revived popular "Word of the Day" posts and celebrated member pathway achievements to maximize organic shares.
- **Privacy First:** Adapted to data protection laws by moving private member announcements to WhatsApp while keeping public feeds active.

VALIDATING REFERRALS

Tumelo stresses that while word-of-mouth brings prospective members in, a vibrant online presence validates the club's credibility when they look you up.

3 LESSONS FOR FUTURE VPPRs:

1. **Plan Ahead:** Draft a complete 12-month communications calendar early.
2. **Collaborate:** Align closely with your President, VPM, and Secretary.
3. **Master the Tools:** Upskill in Canva and lean on District PR support.



— Kagelelo Mogotsi



By Retshiditse Talafala

BLOEMFONTEIN TOASTMASTERS: A DECADE OF EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS AND BUILDING LEADERS

For ten years, Bloemfontein Toastmasters has cultivated a warm, welcoming environment where individuals develop critical communication, leadership, and confidence. Conveniently located near the University of the Free State (UFS), the club has become a vibrant hub for professional growth. In April, the club proudly celebrated its 10th anniversary, a significant milestone in its journey of service to the community.

As the only in-person Toastmasters club in Bloemfontein, it offers a unique opportunity for face-to-face connection and relationship building. Its inclusive atmosphere creates a safe space where diverse individuals feel at home while challenging themselves to grow.

INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION

The club's impact extends far beyond regular meetings. Bloemfontein Toastmasters actively partners with the University of the Free State to train students across various faculties, empowering the next generation with essential professional skills. Looking ahead, the club is exploring new corporate collaborations to further expand its reach and benefit professionals throughout the region.

CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

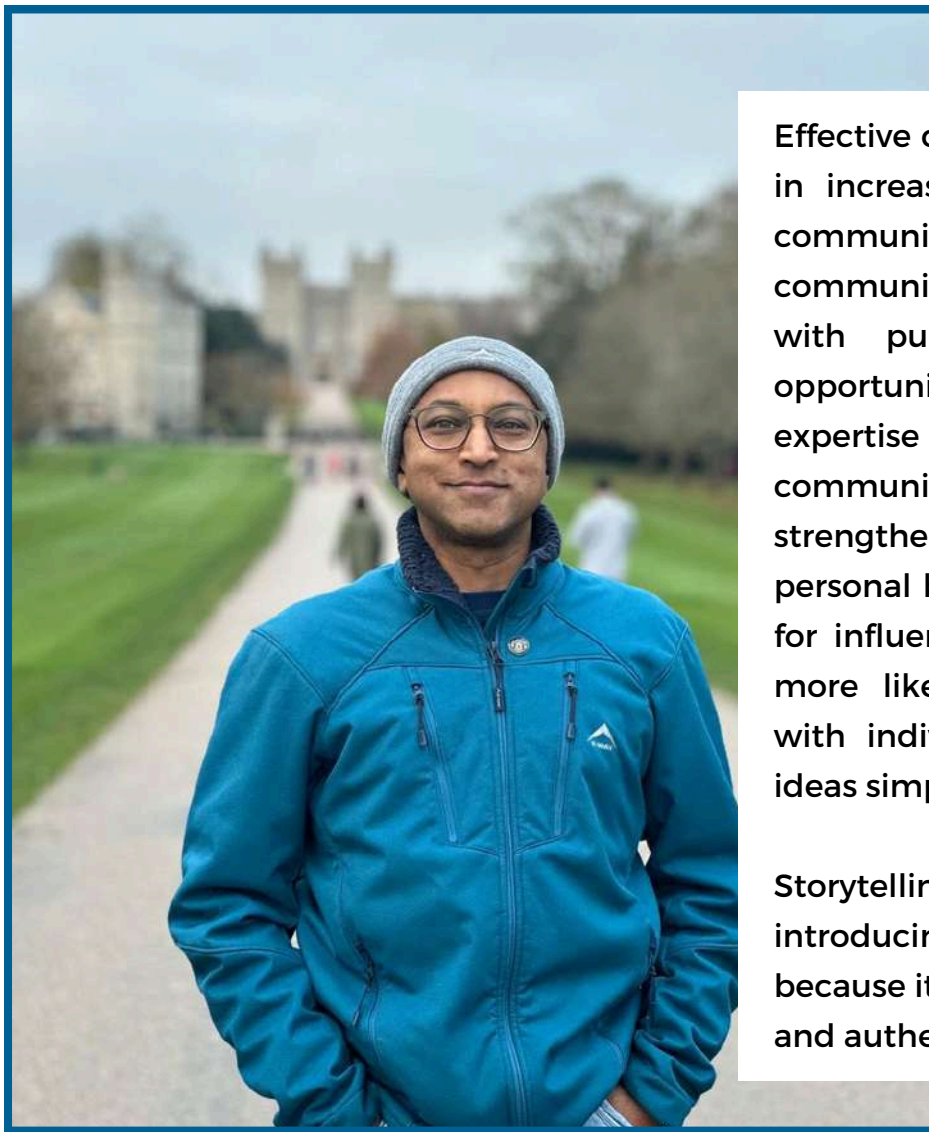
A critical pillar of the club's success is Louis LeGrange. Louis has played a vital role in steering the Executive Committee (EXCO) and has been central to delivering the training sessions to UFS students. His dedication reflects the spirit of service that defines Toastmasters, strengthening the club internally while extending its influence into the broader community.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The journey over the past decade proves what can be achieved through a shared commitment to growth, service, and excellence. As the club moves into its next decade, its focus remains clear: Continuously Exceeding Expectations by empowering members, investing in students, and creating new opportunities for development.

VOICES AND VIBES: WHERE CONVERSATIONS, CONFIDENCE AND CONNECTIONS COME ALIVE

— By Retshidisitse Talafala



Effective communication plays a vital role in increasing one's visibility within the community and profession. When we communicate clearly, confidently and with purpose, we give people an opportunity to understand our ideas, expertise and value. Strong communication builds credibility, strengthens relationships, enhances our personal brand and creates opportunities for influence and leadership. People are more likely to remember and engage with individuals who can express their ideas simply, clearly and effectively.

Storytelling is a powerful way of introducing people to Toastmasters because it makes the experience relatable and authentic.

One of the most underestimated communication skills is listening. Genuine listening builds trust, improves understanding and creates meaningful conversations. Other often-overlooked skills include asking insightful questions, providing constructive feedback and adapting our communication style to suit different audiences.

Toastmasters provides a supportive environment where members can develop all these skills. It helps ordinary people become confident communicators and effective leaders who are able to use their voices to make a meaningful and positive impact in their communities and professions.



Asive Nongogo, President of 4th Dimension Toastmasters



4TH DIMENSION TOASTMASTERS: 25 YEARS OF BUILDING CONFIDENT COMMUNICATORS

Founded in December 2001, 4th Dimension Toastmasters celebrates its landmark 25th anniversary this December. Originally established as a corporate club at Dimension Data's Campus in Bryanston, Johannesburg, it has evolved into a thriving open community club while maintaining its prestigious home base.

MAKING AN IMPACT BEYOND THE MEETING ROOM

Our commitment to skill-building extends far beyond our core meetings through high-value outreach initiatives:

- **Speechcraft Programs:** A flagship 10-to-12-week intensive corporate course introducing participants to practical public speaking while serving as a key fundraising driver for the club.
- **Annual Open Houses:** Three consecutive years of successful community events inviting local professionals to experience Toastmasters firsthand.
- **Modern Outreach:** Harnessing creative TikTok content driven by our President to reach a fresh, diverse audience and fuel consistent membership growth.

OUR BRAND IN THREE WORDS

Educational. Vibrant. Supportive.

- After 25 years, our greatest strength remains our people—and our shared belief that every voice has the potential to make an impact.
- **Key Milestones Preserved:** Highlights the 25-year anniversary, Bryanston location, Speechcraft program, and modern TikTok marketing campaign.

THE VOICE THAT MAKES THE ROOM TAKE NOTICE

By Michael Shackleton, DTM



Visibility is often mistaken for being the loudest person in the room. For Happiness Mlambo-Mokgwabona, Vice President Education at Universal Speakers, visibility means communicating with enough clarity, confidence, and purpose that people understand the value you bring.

Through Toastmasters, Happiness learned to approach communication intentionally—choosing words with purpose and handling difficult conversations with courage and empathy.

"When you dare to speak up and share your ideas, your voice can turn possibilities into meaningful impact."

GIVING GOOD IDEAS A VOICE

During a corporate strategic planning session, Happiness proposed an innovative solution to a complex challenge. By presenting her idea with clarity and confidence, her proposal was embraced and implemented. The experience highlighted a critical lesson: a great idea cannot make an impact if we are unable or unwilling to give it a voice.

Aligning with District 74's theme, Visible Clubs Grow, Happiness emphasizes that doing good work isn't enough—professionals must also communicate their value. Without visible communication, even technical competence can be overlooked.

INFLUENCE BEYOND SELF-PROMOTION

For Happiness, authentic visibility relies on three core habits:

- **Active Listening:** Creating trust and signaling respect so others feel heard and understood.
- **Non-Verbal Presence:** Leveraging posture, eye contact, and demeanor to communicate confidence before speaking.
- **Relatable Storytelling:** Sharing personal growth updates on social media to spark curiosity about Toastmasters.

By living her growth visibly—in her career, community, and daily interactions—Happiness serves as an ambassador for personal transformation. Her goal is clear: to open the door for others to discover their own voice, confidence, and potential.

FLORIDA TOASTMASTERS: HOW ONE CLUB MADE ITSELF IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

The term had barely begun when Florida Toastmasters was already on the radio and in the newspaper. Most clubs spend their early weeks sorting out logistics, meeting times, roles, membership drives. Florida Toastmasters spent theirs doing something bolder: **making noise where it counts**

.Most clubs spend their early weeks sorting out logistics — meeting times, roles, membership drives. Florida Toastmasters spent theirs doing something bolder: making noise where it counts.

The strategy, according to their VPPR, was disarmingly simple. "Lead with value, not with 'join us'." Instead of pitching a club meeting, they pitched a story. Two of them, in fact — both rooted in what their community was already hungry for: building confidence and growing through adversity. The media angles wrote themselves.



President Jaco Theron, VPPR Emmanuel Lunga, Treasure Eugene Wheats

But the real work happened before a single call was made. "The biggest move was building relationships first," the VPPR explains. "I reached out to community radio and local papers with a clear angle, a ready guest, and talking points. We made it easy for them to say yes." That last part is the key most clubs miss. Media does not need to be convinced — it needs to be helped. When a club shows up with the headline, the guest, the photographs, and the reason their audience should care, doors open fast.

And they did. Florida Toastmasters appeared on community radio and in the local newspaper within weeks of the term starting — a feat that required not luck, but preparation.

The response has been immediate and personal. The club received messages from members and strangers saying "I heard you on the radio" and "I saw you in the paper." More telling, new faces have started showing up at meetings — particularly women and young professionals looking for exactly what Toastmasters offers: a safe space to find their voice. "**Visibility builds trust**," the VPPR says.

"When people hear your voice in their community, they believe you're real — and they show up."

For any VPPR wondering where to begin, the advice is clear. "Start with one story that serves the community. Don't pitch a Toastmasters meeting. Pitch how to overcome the fear of public speaking." The rest, as Florida Toastmasters has already proven, follows naturally.

Clubs have stories. Media wants content. The only thing standing between them is someone willing to make the connection.

— Lesedi Masina

THE VISIBILITY ADVANTAGE: WHEN EVERY MEMBER BECOMES THE STORY



Visibility is not about being seen. It is about giving people a reason to care.

Award-winning change advocate, entrepreneur, Toastmaster, and founder of **Insoxial Africa**, Kagiso Ngwenya has helped more than 240 businesses, organisations, and SMEs across South Africa build brands that people remember. When he stepped into the Vice President Public Relations (VPPR) role, he brought the same philosophy to his Toastmasters club (Soweto Positive Speaker): stop posting meetings-start telling stories.

For Kagiso, the VPPR role extends far beyond managing social media. It is about protecting the club's reputation, celebrating member achievements, and creating a brand that inspires people to belong. Every educational milestone, club success, and member accomplishment deserves to be visible because recognition builds confidence, connection, and community.

Rather than working without direction, Kagiso introduced a sustainable Club Success Plan that would outlive his term. More importantly, he developed "support VPPRs" by involving members in content creation and club promotion. His goal was simple: create leaders who would take over, not start over. That shift transformed visibility from one person's responsibility into the club's culture.

The results reached beyond the club. Engagement increased, the club's online presence became more attractive, and Kagiso's own social media platforms experienced remarkable growth. The lesson was clear: when a club consistently celebrates excellence, people naturally want to be part of it.

He believes the greatest untapped asset in any Toastmasters club is its members.

While many clubs post agendas and meeting updates, extraordinary clubs showcase the people behind the speeches. Authentic videos, member reflections, leadership journeys, career achievements and milestones beyond Toastmasters reveal the true impact of the programme. These stories demonstrate that confidence developed at the lectern creates success in boardrooms, businesses and communities.

The most powerful marketing strategy is not better graphics or more frequent posts. It is making people visible.

Because when members become the story, the club becomes impossible to ignore.

— Keitumetse Moeketsi

THE CLUB THAT DECIDED TO BE SEEN



Interview insights provided by Tebogo Badenhorst, President of Westrand Toastmasters Club.

Some clubs wait to be discovered. Others make a conscious decision to step into the spotlight and tell their story. Westrand Toastmasters Club is one of those clubs.

Located at the Discovery Bowling Club in Roodepoort, Westrand Toastmasters has been a cornerstone of the community since June 1997. As the club prepares for its 30th anniversary, President Tebogo Badenhorst reflects on what keeps members proudly calling it "The Best Club in the West!"

A FAMILY-FIRST CULTURE

What truly sets Westrand apart is its deep sense of family. Whether walking through the doors as a first-time guest or delivering an Ice Breaker, members enter an environment built on genuine support and psychological safety. Here, speeches that don't go as planned aren't failures—they are welcomed as part of the transformation process.

INTENTIONAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING

When the 2026/2027 Executive Committee took office, they shifted from simply posting content to intentionally showcasing member transformations.

- **Expanding Footprints:** The club launched a TikTok account to reach younger audiences and offer an authentic glimpse into meeting energy.
- **Demystifying Public Speaking:** Content focuses on showing that Toastmasters extends far beyond lecterns and speeches—it is about confidence, connection, and growth.
- **Celebrating Members:** Sharing achievements online not only attracts prospective members but strengthens the sense of belonging for existing ones.

MEMBERS AS THE ULTIMATE AMBASSADORS

Despite their digital reach, Westrand attributes its greatest growth to word-of-mouth referrals. Members actively share posters on their personal networks and invite colleagues, while the executive team maintains personal follow-ups with every visitor.

As Tebogo notes, visibility isn't about follower counts—it is about creating spaces where people feel they belong. Westrand's invitation remains simple: Come as you are, grow with us, and leave transformed.

— Kqomotso Masela



THE ART OF BEING MEMORABLE: HOW EVERY SPEECH CAN LEAVE A LASTING IMPACT

— Keitumetse Moeketsi

Born and raised in Cape Town and a proud mother, **Pholisa Faltein** is a Leadership Development Specialist in Santam's Human Capital division. An accredited Enneagram Level 1 Coach, Crucial Conversations Facilitator, mentor and former President of Santam Cape Town Toastmasters Club (2025/2026), she is passionate about developing leaders who lead with influence, inclusion and purpose.

Although facilitating came naturally to her, spontaneous speaking did not. If she felt underprepared or lacked confidence in a topic, she often chose silence over speaking up. Everything changed when Toastmasters was introduced at Santam. After attending demonstration meetings, she recognised an opportunity to strengthen a skill she had long avoided.

Since then, Toastmasters has transformed not only how she speaks, but how she communicates. One speech remains especially significant: **"Off the Corporate Ladder onto the Dusty Streets of a Small Town Called Adelaide."** What began as a story about travelling by long-distance bus to the Eastern Cape became a powerful reflection on privilege, accessibility, and inclusive leadership. The journey challenged her to see beyond the corporate world and recognise that opportunities many take for granted remain out of reach for countless South Africans. Even more impactful was her evaluator's challenge—not merely to reflect on those lessons, but to turn them into meaningful action.

Beyond prepared speeches, Toastmasters has sharpened Pholisa's everyday communication. She has become intentional about eliminating filler words, listening with purpose, and responding with greater clarity. Her simple yet effective tip? Write your most-used filler word on the back of your hand. The constant reminder encourages mindful speaking until better habits become second nature.

The greatest shift, however, has been confidence without preparation. Once hesitant to MC or host events outside her area of expertise, she now embraces opportunities with confidence. Table Topics taught her to think on her feet, trust her voice, and communicate authentically. Today, she confidently hosts both virtual and in-person corporate events.

Her advice to anyone wanting to become an extraordinary communicator is refreshingly simple: Join Toastmasters. Then say yes to every role. Every speech, evaluation, and meeting role develops a different communication muscle. Master your craft through consistent practice, embrace feedback, and remember—the most memorable communicators are lifelong learners.

THE PR LEADER WHO CHANGED EVERYTHING

Why visibility is a leadership responsibility at Universal Speakers

— By Michael Shackleton, DTM



For a Toastmasters club, visibility is the bridge connecting what happens inside the meeting room with those outside searching for confidence, leadership, and community. For Sivuyile Luthando, Vice President Public Relations (VPPR) at Universal Speakers, public relations isn't an optional extra, it is the core of club growth.

"A club cannot benefit people who do not know it exists," Luthando explains. The VPPR role extends far beyond posting meeting photos; it is about protecting the club's reputation, communicating its value, and turning prospective members' curiosity into belonging.

CONSISTENCY AND AUTHENTICITY

At Universal Speakers, regular, authentic storytelling has proven to be the most effective strategy. Showing real people learning, speaking, and supporting one another demystifies the meeting experience and lowers the barrier for new members.

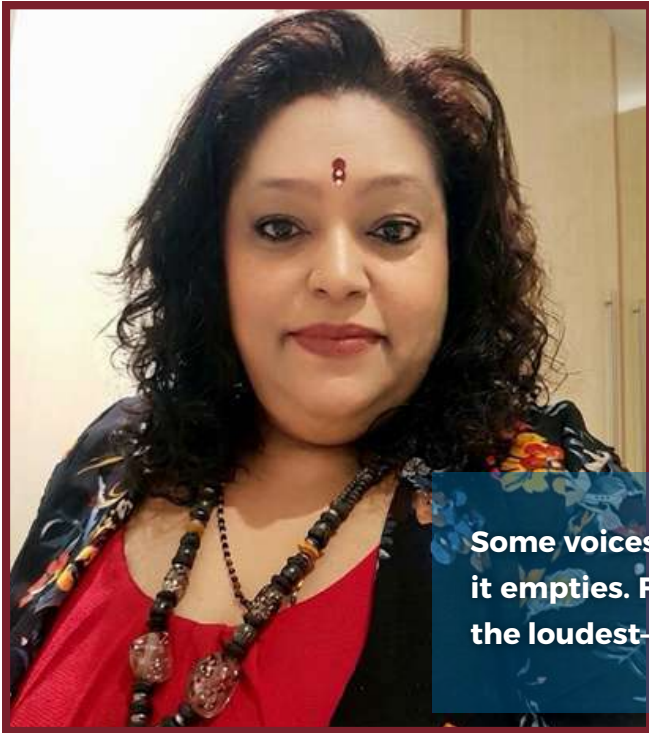
For members hesitant about the spotlight, Luthando anchors them in their original purpose: personal growth. Members become natural ambassadors not by self-promotion, but by embodying the positive change Toastmasters creates in their professional and personal lives.

THE FOUR ESSENTIALS OF A VISIBLE CLUB

Building a visible brand requires tenacity rather than instant results. Luthando identifies four non-negotiable elements for club reach and impact:

- **Findability:** Easily accessible across digital and local channels.
- **Activity:** Consistent, active presence showing a thriving community.
- **Clarity:** A clear message defining what the club stands for.
- **Connection:** Deep, meaningful engagement with the surrounding community.

Ultimately, visibility serves a higher purpose rooted in the African principle of Ubuntu—*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through people). By daring to be seen, clubs open the door to a home where individuals discover their voice together.



THE ECHO PEOPLE REMEMBER

Some voices fill a room; others leave a lasting mark long after it empties. For Michelle Seeparsad, visibility isn't about being the loudest—it's about being the most authentic.

A COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG LEARNING

A Certified ETD Practitioner, accredited Life, Mindfulness, and Neuroscience Coach, and Business Support Consultant at Nedbank Insurance, Michelle has spent nearly three decades developing people. Her core philosophy remains unchanged: when people grow, organizations thrive.

As a proud member of Nedbank All Stars Toastmasters Club, Michelle has served as Vice President Education and Club President. Today, she continues refining her leadership through Level 5 of the Visionary Communication Pathway, proving growth never reaches a finish line.

Toastmasters has strengthened not only her voice but also her executive presence, giving her the confidence to lead with clarity. For Michelle, the platform is the foundation of a personal brand built on credibility, humility, and service.

IMPACT BEYOND THE PODIUM

"Visibility isn't about being seen—it's about being accessible, authentic, and willing to serve."

For Michelle, true visibility means allowing people to see the person behind the title. Whether serving with the Rotary Ann's Club of Reservoir Hills, mentoring others, or creating motivational content online, her purpose is simple: leave people better than she found them.

Her advice to members: use Toastmasters as your launchpad. Every speech, role, and evaluation is an opportunity to refine your voice and shape your legacy.

— Keitumetse Moeketsi



MOEKETSI NTHOMBENI ON BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE THROUGH COACHING.

What does earning the Club Coach Award mean to you, and what did it cost?

This award represents showing up, motivating people, and coaching them to bring out their absolute best. It cost me nothing beyond time, commitment, and dedication. My intention was never to receive an award—it was to give a struggling club a fighting chance, rebuild its membership, and restore its reputation.

What does Toastmasters mean to your family, colleagues, and community?

Toastmasters is a practical platform where I can grow without fear of judgment. For my family, it is a space where my son and I spend quality time investing in our personal development and learning valuable life skills together. For my colleagues, it is where I continuously challenge myself to engage stakeholders confidently and articulate thoughts that inspire positive change. For my community, it serves as a vital hub where leaders are developed and empowered.

Which leadership role stretched you the most?

Having served as Club President, VPPR, VPE, Treasurer, and Area Director, the role that stretched me most was Vice President Education. Managing the educational program, ensuring all role players were prepared, and constantly executing contingency plans for last-minute cancellations required high adaptability to keep meetings running seamlessly.

Who in Toastmasters has had the greatest impact on your journey?

I have had the honor of learning from and working alongside many remarkable people throughout my journey. Rather than singling out one individual, I acknowledge the collective impact of everyone who has supported my growth through mentorship, constructive feedback, and exemplary leadership. Every mentor has contributed immensely to my development and progress.

— Lorato Moroeng

Ordinary Members
Doing
Extraordinary Things

A LIFETIME OF SAYING YES: THE LEADERSHIP JOURNEY OF ZORHAN PRETORIUS

"Confidence grows through action, not before it."



At eight years old, Zorhan Pretorius was elected Class Captain—the first title in a leadership journey spanning Scholar Patrol, Head Girl, corporate management, and Toastmasters.

Yet titles tell only part of her story. With 17 years in the insurance industry—advancing to Operations Manager of Claims before joining Santam as a Non-Motor Desktop Assessor—Zorhan built a career grounded in detail, decision-making, and service.

However, after experiencing retrenchment, even her extensive experience did not make her immune to imposter syndrome and self-doubt.

LEAPING BEYOND SELF-DOUBT

When asked to accept senior leadership responsibilities, Zorhan confronted her hesitation and chose to step forward. Reconnecting with her voice through Toastmasters, she took on dual executive roles: serving as Vice President Education for Santam Hill on Empire Toastmasters Club and incoming President of EmpowerHer Toastmasters Club.

LEADERSHIP INSPIRED BY RELATIONSHIPS

For Zorhan, leadership begins with people over results. Leading volunteers taught her that influence must be earned through trust and empathy rather than authority:

- **Inspiring Action:** Drawing inspiration from mentors Thandi Mthombeni and Shaun Langa, DTM×2, she leads through empathy, intentional mentorship, and servant leadership.
- **Celebrating Small Wins:** She keeps members engaged by reminding them of their original goals and celebrating every milestone—from completing a speech to simply continuing to show up.
- **Bridging Career & Growth:** Her Toastmasters experience directly enhances her corporate career, refining her public speaking, facilitation, and feedback skills while reinforcing that true leadership requires listening.

Zorhan's story proves that leadership isn't about having all the answers or waiting for doubt to vanish. It is about choosing purpose over fear and creating spaces where others can discover what they are truly capable of achieving.

— Michael Shackleton DTM

HOW TO SUCCEED IN PATHWAYS: THE STORY BEHIND THE AWARD: ZORHAN PRETORIUS ON, PATHWAYS, YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESS.



What brought you to Toastmasters, and what were you hoping to change?

My journey began after being retrenched. Though experienced, I was struggling with imposter syndrome and self-doubt. I questioned my value and knew I needed something to challenge me to grow. More than anything, I needed to find my voice again. Toastmasters became the antidote—providing a safe, challenging space to rebuild confidence, develop communication skills, and embrace vulnerability as a strength. With every speech, evaluation, and leadership role, self-doubt gave way to self-belief.

What was a defining moment where you clearly saw your growth?

The day I stopped using cue cards. Early on, I realized my notes created a barrier between me and the audience. Letting go of cue cards challenged me to be fully present and connect authentically. It shifted my delivery to match the strength and passion of my message.

How has Pathways shaped who you are beyond your Level 3 Presentation Mastery Award?

The greatest achievement isn't the certificate—it's the person I've become. Pathways taught me to communicate with clarity, listen intentionally, and trust my abilities. Today, I take on leadership opportunities with confidence and am deeply committed to helping others succeed. I have embraced my intrinsic purpose.

What was your most challenging project, and what did it force you to confront?

Presenting on Club Roles. Rather than a basic overview, I challenged myself to map Toastmasters roles directly to corporate executive positions—showing how club experience drives real-world career growth. The pressure to be creative forced me to confront my fear of taking risks and my tendency to equate excellence with perfection.

What personal goal did you set when joining, and where are you today?

My goal was to become comfortable being myself, expressing my thoughts clearly without fear. Today, completing Level 3, speaking without notes, and stepping into leadership have proven my progress. Finding my voice was just the start—now, my goal is using that voice to inspire and empower others.

Our Club in Three Words

Jaclyn Smith (West Rand Toastmasters) – Motivational. Supportive. Inclusive.

Jaclyn describes her club as a place where members and guests are continually encouraged to participate, grow and challenge themselves. The club fosters a welcoming environment where everyone feels included, supported and empowered throughout their Toastmasters journey.

Maboi Mashabela (Honeydew Toastmasters) – Caring. Goal-Driven. Authentic.

Honeydew Toastmasters is a club where people genuinely care about one another's growth and success. Members are encouraged to set meaningful goals and are supported every step of the way as they develop their communication and leadership skills. What truly sets the club apart is its authenticity. Members are free to be themselves, share their experiences honestly, and grow in an environment built on trust, encouragement and genuine connection.

Candice (Florida Toastmasters) – Supportive. Successful. Empowering.

For Candice, Florida Toastmasters is a club where members feel respected, heard and encouraged to grow. The club celebrates achievements, helps members achieve their personal definition of success, and empowers them to find their voice, build confidence and realise their full potential.

Preston Naidoo (Honeydew Toastmasters) – Simple. Growth. Impact.

Preston describes Honeydew Toastmasters as a club that keeps things simple while remaining focused on growth. Every meeting is designed to create a meaningful and lasting impact, helping members develop the confidence, communication and leadership skills needed to succeed both inside and outside Toastmasters.

— Kqomotso Masela



District 74
Southern Africa
Toastmasters

**SMEDLEY
CAMPAIGN IS
LIVE**

- Contact **past members** to rejoin
- Host an **Open House**
- Ask every member to **invite a guest**

SMEDLEY CAMPAIGN: 1 AUG - 30 SEPT 2026
Add 5 new, dual, or reinstated members and receive a **R300 Club Fitness Reward Voucher**

A PRESIDENT DISTINGUISHED AND THE HOME DISTRICT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



District 74
Southern Africa
Toastmasters

**RETENTION
AWARD**

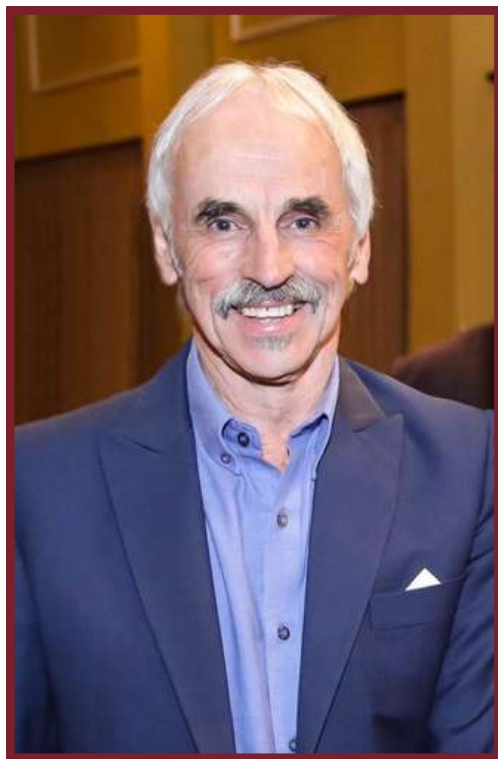
75%

- **Check in** with all members
- **Plan** engaging, high-value meetings
- **Follow up** with absent members

RETENTION AWARD: OCTOBER
Retain 75% of club membership by
1 October 2026 and receive a **R300 Club Fitness Reward Voucher**

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UNIMAGINABLE: IAN FLINT'S FOUR DECADES OF TOASTMASTERS, LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE



When Ian Flint was told by an accountant friend to join Forum Toastmasters Club in 1984, he followed the instruction. More than four decades later, he describes it as one of the most rewarding commands he has ever followed.

In a discussion with me about his extraordinary Toastmasters journey, Ian chose one word to describe the experience: “unimaginable”. It fits a journey that began almost as a mystery and grew into a lifetime of communication, leadership and service.

Ian remembers himself as a reserved scholar and young businessman. Toastmasters became what he calls a “finishing school”, helping him become a confident communicator able to share his views in relaxed and dignified settings.

A former cadet band member at Pretoria Boys High School, Ian continued playing drums throughout much of his adult life. His band, Sixty Shades of Grey, has grown in musical competency and commercial success. He also values the mental and physical activity that drumming provides.

Music led him into another form of service as Chairman of the South African Musicians Benevolent Fund, an NPO assisting musicians in need. The role reflects a recurring theme in Ian's story: experience matters most when it is shared.

That instinct is especially visible in his dedication to the Youth Leadership Program. Ian estimates that he has delivered no fewer than 60 programmes at prominent schools in and around Pretoria.

The impact reached his own family. Ian's daughter completed two Youth Leadership Programs, at primary and high school. He believes the experience positively influenced her eventual choice of a radio and television career and, ultimately, her journey to becoming Miss South Africa in 2009. For Ian, it remains a proud family moment – and one in which Toastmasters played an indirect but meaningful role.

His formal Toastmasters leadership journey began in 1986 as Educational Vice President. From club President, he progressed to Division Governor and eventually District Governor, as the office was then known. He also served through the initial leadership academy within District 74 and promoted the inaugural Past District Governors' committee.

— Michael Shackleton DTM

Among his proudest achievements is becoming only the second District 74 District Governor at the time to achieve Distinguished District status. Ian places the achievement in context: leadership at that level demands commitment, time, understanding and a dedicated team. It also requires family support and careful career management.

Two leaders stand out in shaping him. Adrian Spruyt, a former South African Toastmasters Council Chairman before District 74 was chartered, influenced Ian through discipline, decorum and responsibility. Past District Governor Dolf Kaestner later motivated Ian towards District leadership success. After more than 40 years, Ian still speaks about Toastmasters with the enthusiasm of someone who believes there is more to give.

His motivation comes from a desire to share the experience with prospective members and encourage fellow Toastmasters. His journey demonstrates that membership can extend far beyond prepared speeches and meeting roles. It can influence a career, shape a family, develop generations of young people and create confidence to serve elsewhere.

It also means, Ian notes, that a Toastmaster is frequently the person asked to “say a few words” or propose a toast at family, work and community occasions.

Yet the deeper transformation is clear. The reserved young businessman became a communicator, District leader, youth development advocate, musician and NPO chairman. Toastmasters did not replace Ian’s other passions. It strengthened his capacity to pursue them and connect with people through them.

Perhaps this is why Ian still regards Toastmasters International as one of the world’s most lucrative secrets. The return is not measured only in money. It is found in confidence, relationships, leadership opportunities and lives influenced along the way.

“Unimaginable” is therefore more than Ian’s description of his journey. It is an invitation to consider what may follow one seemingly simple decision to walk into a Toastmasters club.

For Ian Flint, that decision in 1984 became the beginning of more than four decades of growth and service. Southern African Toastmasters has changed around him, District boundaries have evolved and leadership titles have changed. The enduring thread is his belief in the organisation – and his willingness to keep sharing its secret.



District 74
Southern Africa Toastmasters

GOLDEN QUARTER
1 JULY – 30 SEPTEMBER

GOLDEN New Club SPONSOR REWARD

Sponsor a new club during the **GOLDEN QUARTER**

30% OFF
MAY CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

FOR EACH CLUB CHARTERED!
The more clubs you build, the more you save!

HOME DISTRICT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



District 74
Southern Africa Toastmasters

50 MORE T-SHIRTS RELEASED!

AN ADDITIONAL 50 OPPORTUNITIES TO RENEW AND EARN YOUR T-SHIRT

Renew or reinstate by 31 Aug for membership through March 2027 or beyond

ONLY 50 MORE T-SHIRTS FOR THE FIRST 50 QUALIFYING RENEWALS

Don't miss out! RENEW TODAY!

HOME DISTRICT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

SPS OPEN HOUSE: WHERE CONFIDENCE BEGINS AND VOICES GROW

— Keitumetse Moeketsi

An Open House is more than just another Toastmasters meeting — it is Soweto Positive Speakers (SPS) in action. Our Open House held in June 2026 gave us an opportunity to introduce guests to the heart of our club, our welcoming culture and the life-changing benefits of becoming a member.



A successful SPS Open House reflects the journey of growth. Instead of showcasing only polished and experienced speakers, the programme featured members at different stages of their Toastmasters journey — from beginners delivering their first speeches to confident speakers who have mastered the platform. This sends a powerful message: great speakers are developed, not born. Guests can see themselves progressing in the same supportive environment.

Equally important is making the joining process simple and clear. Before the event ends, guests should know exactly how to become members. Membership forms should be readily available, questions should be answered, and club leaders should personally engage with guests to help them take the next step. A memorable Open House should inspire action — not just applause.

One of the biggest mistakes clubs make is running an Open House exactly like a regular club meeting. An Open House should be designed like a sales presentation, with one clear goal: helping every guest understand why joining SPS will help them become better communicators, confident leaders, and stronger professionals. Every segment should answer one question: "What's in it for me?"

Beyond attracting new members, hosting an Open House creates valuable opportunities for existing members. Planning and executing the event allows members to strengthen their leadership, communication, teamwork and event management skills while progressing on their Toastmasters educational journeys. Every role contributes to personal growth.

For Soweto Positive Speakers, an Open House is more than a recruitment event — it is a showcase of our values, our people, and our commitment to helping individuals find their voice. When guests leave inspired, informed, and excited to join, SPS doesn't just gain new members — it grows a stronger, more vibrant community of future leaders and communicators.

At SPS, every confident speaker started as a guest. Your next success story could begin at our Open House.

CONQUERCON 2027 is coming to Gaborone, Botswana

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL
DISTRICT 74

INTRODUCING

ConquerCon 2027

Conquer beyond limits

6-9 MAY 2027

JOIN US FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING, NETWORKING & CELEBRATION!

ROOM RESERVATION
EARLY BIRD PRICES
UNTIL 31 JANUARY 2027

	SINGLE ROOM	R8 500
	DOUBLE (SHARING) ROOM	R7 500
	DAY PASS (NO ROOM)	R4 500

RSVP TODAY!
SECURE YOUR SPOT BY FILLING IN THE FORM.

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE!

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 74

Mark your calendars! 6-9 May 2027

🎯 Three days of growth, connection & conquering your comms goals!

Don't miss the biggest event on our District calendar. Book your spot now and spread the cost with our easy payment plan!

💰 **EARLY BIRD PAYMENT PLANS OPTIONS:**

Single Room — R2 500 deposit by 31 August + R1 200/month × 5 months

Sharing Room — R1 500 deposit by 31 August + R1 200/month × 5 months

Day Pass (no room) — R1 500 deposit by 31 August + R600/month × 5 months

📌 Please note: For Early Bird Special **full payment must be settled by 31 January 2027** to confirm your spot

👉 Register here:

<https://toastmasters74.org/conquercon/>

📌 Bookmark the website, it's your single source of truth. Changes happen, so check back often! Spots are limited — secure yours TODAY!

— Lesedi Masina

CLUB GROWTH ACADEMY

STRONGER CLUBS. STRONGER DISTRICT



The Club Growth Academy is a series of practical and interactive sessions designed to equip **YOU** with the knowledge, tools and confidence to grow Toastmasters in your community and beyond.

	SESSION 1 CLUB BUILDING Turn your idea into a thriving Toastmasters club.	16 JULY 2026	18:00 CAT
	SESSION 2 Marketing for club growth	13 AUGUST 2026	18:00 CAT
	SESSION 3 More impact. More members.	8 OCTOBER 2026	18:00 CAT
	SESSION 4 Finishing the year strong!	10 DECEMBER 2026	18:00 CAT

OUR GOAL

Build more clubs.
Empower more leaders.
Transform more lives.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

All Toastmasters who are passionate about growth and making a difference!

WHO CAN JOIN?

Anyone with ideas about clubs or interested in club building.

VENUE

Online
via Zoom

CLUB ANNIVERSARIES

August 2026

Division

A

CIS Toastmasters' Club - 54 Years

Division

D

Pietermaritzburg Toastmasters Club -
53 Years

Division

E

Nedbank Club - 48 Years

Rivonia Toastmasters Club - 42 Years

Division

F

Soweto Positive Speakers
Toastmasters Club - 20 Years

District 74 Southern Africa
Toastmasters