

Secrets for Running a Great Speech Contest

By Kurt Sims

Target Audience: Area/Division Directors, Contest Chairs, Club Presidents and VPEs

1. Most important things to get right

a. Team

Gotta Haves	Should Haves	Nice to Haves
Contest Chair	Recruitment Chair	Opportunity Drawing Chair
Chief Judge	Registration Chair (area/div)	Photographer
Toastmaster	Food Chair (area/div)	
Facilities Chair (area/div)	PR person	

b. Time

- i. Weeknight (Mon-Thur) or Saturday morning (mostly in Div A)
- ii. Avoid holidays (check foreign calendars) and major sporting events (playoff games)
- iii. Avoid conflicts - Areas in a Division
- iv. Avoid conflicts - Divisions in a District

c. Turf

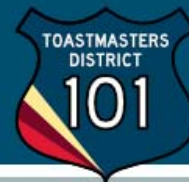
- i. Location
- ii. Facilities
- iii. Amenities
- iv. Security

2. Planning

- a. Date selection
- b. Communication
- c. Budgeting
- d. Logistics

3. Contest Chair

- a. Organizer
- b. Most important to be experienced
- c. Spreadsheet of roles (handout "Contest Planning Template-Fall.xlsx")
- d. Calculate budget (handout "Contest Projections Worksheet.xlsx")
 - i. Estimate headcount
 - ii. Trophies
 - iii. Food (per head), incl. plates/napkins, etc.
 - iv. Other (name labels, printing costs)
- e. Okay to customize script
- f. Reviews roles and responsibilities with everyone
- g. Keep comments short



4. Chief Judge
 - a. Stick to script – okay to read
 - b. Familiarize with contest rulebook
 - c. Briefings
 - d. Qualifications
 - e. Timers
 - f. Ballot counters
 - g. Tiebreakers
 - h. Print and bring all contest forms
 - i. Notification of Winners

5. Toastmaster
 - a. Briefings
 - i. Speaking order
 - ii. Microphones
 - b. Contest Forms
 - c. Keep interviews to two questions
 - i. What club?
 - ii. How long a TM?
 - d. International contest can ask one question from bio form

6. Sergeant-at-Arms
 - a. Timing light or cards
 - b. Calls meeting to order
 - c. Escorts Evaluation or Table Topics contestants (announces remaining time to contestants)
 - d. Microphones
 - i. Hand mics – must speak into them
 - ii. Lapel mics – turn off before handling, test, check for clothing/jewelry noise
 - iii. Do sound check and instruction with contestants, TMs, CJs

7. Registration (area/div)
 - a. Wufoo, Google Form, etc
 - b. Info to include on registration form
 - i. Date/time (specify briefing time)
 - ii. Address
 - iii. Price (early bird date?)
 - iv. Dinner/refreshments included?
 - c. Info you must collect
 - i. Name
 - ii. Email
 - iii. Club(s)
 - iv. Role (contestant, volunteer, etc)
 - d. Info nice to have
 - i. Phone



- ii. Meal Preference
 - iii. Dignitary title
 - e. Download list of attendees to spreadsheet
 - i. print FOUR copies with amounts due for registration table
 - f. Print name tags (optional)
 - g. \$30 in change (\$1 bills in majority)
 - h. Provide registration list *access* to Contest Chair, PR Chair, Facilities Chair
 - i. Helpers – friendly/welcoming
 - j. Signage
 - k. Counting money – create a form
 - l. Arrive early
- 8. Facilities Chair
 - a. Location
 - b. Room setup
 - c. Physical access/security (need volunteers?)
 - d. AV equipment (mics, projectors)
- 9. Food Chair
 - a. Budgeting
 - b. Menu planning
 - c. Logistics
 - i. Setup time
 - ii. Efficiency of food line
 - iii. Cleanup
 - d. Helpers
- 10. Public Relations/Printing
 - a. D101tm.org
 - b. Meetup
 - c. Personal club visits
 - d. Email campaign
 - i. Direct – requires Area/Division Director access
 - ii. Cascaded – ask club officers to pass along
 - e. Flyer (optional)
 - f. Printed agendas
 - g. Print Certificates of participation
- 11. Execution
 - a. Start Times
 - b. Late contestants/judges
 - c. Skits? Keep everything short and sweet
 - d. Handing out certificates – only TMs, CJs, and Contest Chair
 - e. Finances



12. Other stuff (only if you have time)

- a. Opportunity drawing
- b. Photographer

13. Resources

- a. <http://files.d101tm.org/contest>