

Toastmasters' Accredited Speakers Offer Top Five Tips for Public Speaking Skills

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Jan. 26, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Toastmasters International's Accredited Speaker Program recognizes professional speakers who combine expert knowledge in a particular subject with mastery of the spoken word. With a rigorous set of requirements to meet, including the presentation of at least 25 speeches before various audiences within three years, only 67 Toastmasters have earned the prestigious Accredited Speaker designation since the program's inception in 1981.

Below are public speaking tips from five Accredited Speakers who went from being nervous novices to sought-after presenters in their respective fields.

1. **Learn to walk before attempting to run.** "When you are starting, focus on learning the structure of a speech; its parts and how they fit together," says Toastmasters Past International President [Dilip Abayasekara](#), a trainer and executive speech coach based in Enola, Penn. "Write out your speeches, deliver them, seek feedback and find out how to improve them."
2. **Know your audience and material.** "The more prepared I am, the more confident I will be, which enables me to better connect with the audience," says [Barbara Khozam](#), a speaker based in San Diego who specialized in topics related to customer service.
3. **Be yourself.** "Don't formulate presentations you think people want to hear from you," suggests Patrick Hardy, president of a disaster management company in Baton Rouge, La. "If you do, you will never develop your own personal style, which is critical to true platform fluency."
4. **Start small.** "Take a step daily, no matter how small, to improve your public speaking skills," recommends [Tammy Miller](#), a Port Matilda, Pa.-based international speaker and auctioneer. "It could be as simple as reading out loud to a child to have a better understanding of the sound of your own voice, or standing up in a meeting to express your thoughts on an idea."
5. **Join Toastmasters.** "Toastmasters International is the safest and most comfortable way to begin learning public speaking skills," says [Karen Twichell](#), a caregiving expert and speaker based in Newport Beach, Calif.

To schedule an interview with an Accredited Speaker and find out how they went from amateur to professional speaker, email pr@toastmasters.org.

For more information on the Accredited Speaker Program, please visit <https://www.toastmasters.org/Resources/Accredited-Speaker>.

About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a worldwide nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Headquartered in Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif., the organization's membership exceeds 332,000 in more than 15,400 clubs in 135 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow [@Toastmasters](https://twitter.com/Toastmasters) on Twitter.

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