Singapore management consultant wins Toastmasters' 2017 World Championship of Public Speaking®

Manoj Vasudevan rises above 30,000 participants to win world's largest speech contest

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Aug. 28, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- With a speech titled "Pull Less, Bend More,"Manoj Vasudevan, a leadership coach and management consultant from Singapore, won the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking on Friday, Aug. 25. Vasudevan, along with nine other contestants, reached the championship level after several eliminating rounds that began six months ago with 30,000 participants. Watch Vasudevan compete here.

"This feels surreal; it's a dream come true," said Vasudevan, a native of Kerala, India, who now lives in Singapore. He has twice previously reached the speech contest finals, placing 3rd in 2015.

His winning speech resonated with a capacity crowd of nearly 2,500 from around the world, who attended the contest held at the Vancouver Convention Centre in Vancouver, Canada. He claimed his title with a humorous tale of his own marriage, which originally struggled but succeeded thanks to sage advice from his mother: "You fall in love because of Cupid's arrow. But what keeps you in love is Cupid's bow. The bow and string have a great relationship; the more the string pulls back, the more the bow bends. When she pulls, you bend. When you pull, she bends. If you pull too hard, the string will break."

As a consultant and CEO of his company Thought Expressions, Vasudevan has more than two decades experience working with multinational companies and coaching executives, diplomats and entrepreneurs in Asia, Australia, North America and Europe. Author of a book called *Leadership Lessons From the Mousetrap,* Vasudevan was among the top 25 stand-up comedians at the 2012 International Comedy Festival in Hong Kong.

Vasudevan said the key message of his six-minute speech was unity in relationships. "No matter what our differences are, when choosing to pull less and bend more, we can stay together." He was pleased that the message connected with the audience. "The message is what matters," he said. "The award is a bonus."

Speakers delivered five- to seven-minute speeches on wide-ranging topics, and were judged on content, organization and delivery.

Vasudevan claimed the title of Toastmasters' 2017 World Champion of Public Speaking during the organization's annual convention held in Vancouver, Aug. 23-26.

Second- and third-place winners were Simon Bucknall, an entrepreneur from London, England, with his speech titled "What James Bullock Taught Me," and Kevin Stamper, a pastor from Palm Harbor, Florida, with his speech, "Speak Up."

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 352,000 in more than 16,400 clubs in 141 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 on Twitter.

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