

Make Professional Improvement Your Goal for 2010

Toastmasters provide tools to boost your career

It's the new year and you've made your annual list of resolutions. Perhaps you're trying to eat healthier. Or spend less time in front of the TV. Or maybe you'd like to boost your career. Toastmasters International, a thriving organization with 250,000 members in 106 countries, can help you develop the communication and leadership skills needed to reach this goal.

To get promoted, you may need to become a better presenter and more confident team leader. You may need the ability to talk and answer questions off the cuff. If you want to land a good position, you'll need job interviewing skills. All these skills can be learned in the supportive setting of a local Toastmasters meeting. When Oregon resident Gary Schmidt joined Toastmasters, he was an unemployed college graduate who, in his own words, performed poorly in job interviews. He had difficulty expressing himself effectively. Toastmasters training helped him so much that after only six weeks, he was offered a job on the staff of then-United States Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon. He worked for Senator Hatfield and then for U.S. Senator Gordon Smith, also of Oregon - all while advancing his communication and leadership skills as a Toastmaster. Today, Schmidt is the organization's International President. "I credit Toastmasters for my continued personal growth and development, which has led to job promotions and increased responsibilities at work," Schmidt says.

Many more people have enjoyed career boosts with the help of Toastmasters:

-- When Ann Maxfield applied for the job of e-Learning Coordinator at Hormel Foods Corporation in Minnesota, one of the requirements was being able to speak in front of large groups. Her experience as a Toastmaster was pivotal to her getting the job. "I hit a home run in the job world, and Toastmasters played a huge role in that success," says Maxfield.

-- When Jim Bresler changed jobs at Microsoft, from being software engineer to program manager, he had to interact more with customers and assume a managerial role with colleagues. "I think talking confidently to co-workers is very important, and Toastmasters helped me a lot with that," says Bresler.

-- The impromptu-speaking skills that Kealah Parkinson learned in Toastmasters helped her ace an on-the-spot job interview, earning her an opportunity to teach a class for job hunters at a regional adult education center.

If your goal in 2010 is to grow professionally, a Toastmasters group can help you achieve it. Join a club near you - membership is an investment that can pay off in career advancement. About Toastmasters Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has 250,000 members in 12,000 clubs in 106 countries. Since its founding 85 years ago in October 1924, the organization has helped more than four million men and women give presentations with poise and confidence. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Photo Available Upon Request First Call Analyst: FCMN Contact:

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Web Site: <http://www.toastmasters.org/>

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