

Contests Without Stress in Ten Easy Steps!

- 1) Review all available resources on the District 84 website, under the News and Events tab, found at: <http://toastmastersd84.org/contest.html>. Most of the information you need is right here!
- 2) Download the Contest “to-do” List (also attached) and add your own notes as needed. It’s a great place to start. What else would you add? _____
- 3) Share the joy and leadership opportunities - don’t go it alone! Earn credit toward a Competent Leader or High Performance Leadership (HPL) Award. Use a calendar or project management tools to outline timeframes for tasks. The HPL manual includes pages that can help keep you organized.
- 4) Clarify the expected duties for each volunteer. For example, the Chief Judge may recruit your judges and other functionaries, while the Contest Chair may be in charge of reaching out to contestants for their paperwork and ensuring eligibility. Who will prepare the certificates and programs? Will you need signs at your contest site? Will someone be taking pictures? Specific checklists for the Contest Chair, Chief Judge, and Contestants can be found at: <http://www.toastmasters.org/interactivespeechcontestrulebook>.
- 5) Count the costs and plan ahead. You will likely have to pay for at least four trophies, printing for the programs and participation certificates, and refreshments and decorations, even if you secure free space to hold the contest. Will your contest site allow you to hold a silent auction, conduct a 50/50 ticket raffle, charge an admission fee or accept contributions from attendees? Will you ask the clubs or areas represented to help defray the cost? If so, let them know early on and be willing to share ideas for them to raise the funds you are asking, realizing that some may be hesitant to do so. TI’s fundraising rules can be found at: <http://www.toastmasters.org/PolicyProtocol.aspx#page=193> (actually, pages 179 and 180.)
- 6) Honor Toastmasters International’s trademark rules regarding the use of the Toastmasters name and logo, found in the 2014 Speech Contest Rulebook on page 13, as well as D84’s trophy height guidelines listed on the D84 website at <http://toastmastersd84.org/contest.html>.
- 7) Use free resources such as <http://www.signupgenius.com/>, or sign-up sheets passed around at lower-level contests, to solicit refreshments, paper products, decorations, functionaries, etc.
- 8) Encourage all speech contest officials to view the online Speech Contest training at: <http://www.toastmasters.org/Members/OfficerResources/eLearning/SpeechContestModule.aspx>. Go over scripts with Contest Master, Chief Judge and Sergeant At Arms. Will you announce dignitaries?
- 9) Ensure eligibility of contestants by contacting Member Services at Toastmasters International by email at: speechcontests@toastmasters.org, per the 2014 Speech Contest Rulebook.
- 10) Set-up in advance, when possible, to see what you may still need - a microphone, a table or an extension cord for timing lights, tape for the cord (so no one trips on it), sticky tack, hooks or tacks for banners? Do you have backup timing equipment? Do you need Auction Bidding sheets, 50/50 tickets and a basket, extra pens for judges or forms for contestants? Do you need to bring wipes or trash bags for clean up afterward? Check, check and check! TIME TO SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE CONTEST!