



Distinguished Toastmaster



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Distinguished Toastmaster

About Distinguished Toastmaster

Congratulations on reaching the point in your Toastmasters journey when you are on the verge of achieving your Distinguished Toastmaster award. You have shown tremendous commitment and deserve the highest level of acknowledgment for your effort and volunteerism.

In this project, you will demonstrate your skills as a public speaker and share your knowledge of leadership by applying what you have learned in your paths. You will design a beneficial project and lead a team from inception through completion. You will demonstrate a clear understanding of ethical leadership and Toastmasters values.

Resources

The following is a list of resources available in your digital project on Base Camp. Some of these resources, such as evaluations, are also available on the Resources section on Base Camp.

Project Checklist

Evaluation Resource

Ethical Framework

Goal Setting Worksheet

Goal Task List

Project Plan Overview

Project Plan

360° Evaluation

Introduction and Assignment

Introduction

As a DTM, you represent the very best of what Toastmasters has to offer. You have shown excellent leadership abilities and built your public speaking skills to the exemplary level that is expected of a committed and accomplished member of Toastmasters International.

Your Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to demonstrate your skills as a leader and a public speaker.

Overview: Plan and complete a project that benefits an organization. You may choose to revisit any previous Toastmasters Pathways project that contains information to help you complete your project. Develop a team and design a plan. Deliver a 5- to 7-minute speech at a club meeting to share your plan. Organize the project and lead your team to complete it. Ask members of your team, the organization, and a peer to complete a 360° evaluation of your leadership skills. Deliver an 8- to 10-minute speech at a club meeting to review your project, its outcomes, benefits, and the lessons you learned.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



Weblink: Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the [Project Checklist](#).

Learning in Distinguished Toastmaster



Assess and Reflect

To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

Know

For example: I know how to lead a team from the inception of a beneficial project through its completion.

Wonder

For example: I wonder what skills are required to be an excellent speaker.

Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Demonstrate excellent public speaking skills.
- Apply learning from previous paths to current leadership project.
- Design a beneficial project.
- Lead a team from inception of a beneficial project through completion.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of ethical leadership and Toastmasters values.

Distinguished Leadership

You have completed many projects and led a variety of teams through this point in your Toastmasters journey. Every path in the education program is as unique as the individual who completes it. Each member chooses their topics and designs projects that fit the values and skills they want to learn.

Some sections of this project will be a review of content you completed in your paths and some of it will be new. All the material is here to help you synthesize your learning into effectively leading a small group through the completion of a beneficial project.

For example, you may choose to develop a successful plan for promoting your Toastmasters club, complete the promotion, and share it with the leaders in your District to communicate to other clubs. You may also choose to do a project to benefit a different organization by developing a fundraising plan or designing a plan to collect donations of needed items.

Public Speaking

Speech Completion

This project includes two formal speeches presented at your Toastmasters club. You will complete many more formal and informal presentations as you lead your team to the accomplishment of your goal.

For members who are confident public speakers with skills honed over years of membership, this will be a pleasure and likely represent their favorite part of the project. For members who still struggle to present to an audience or lack confidence as public speakers, the speeches may present their greatest challenge.

Demonstrate Your Skill

The Distinguished Toastmaster award is the highest award Toastmasters bestows on members. It requires years of commitment and countless hours of volunteerism. It is expected that members will spend those years focused on developing exemplary public speaking skills. Use the speeches in this project to demonstrate your skill and share how far you have come during your Toastmasters journey. Take the time to review public speaking skills you need to revisit and be well-prepared for these very important speeches.

Ethics

One of the greatest challenges facing any leader motivated to make ethical choices is defining ethics. At face value, it should be a simple, straightforward assessment of what is right and what is wrong. Most leaders soon discover that right and wrong can be open to interpretation. Ethical choices can be affected by many factors including the situation, culture, professional expectations, and the rules set by an organization.

Defining Your Ethical Framework

To make ethical decisions, you have to start with an ethical framework. Your ethical framework is developed over time through your experience, learning, and the impact of role models in your life. It is assembled from everything that makes you who you are.

An ethical structure is necessary to provide a foundation for making ethical choices. The content of your framework is unique to you and is not necessarily permanent; it may adjust over time and in different situations. Having a framework in place, one that you have thought about and questioned, allows you to make difficult ethical decisions. It is the difference between driving a car when you are trained and licensed and choosing to drive without any training at all, struggling until you learn what to do and endangering people around you.

The three characteristics of a useful ethical framework include internal consistency, proactivity, and a design that is dynamic enough to adjust to different settings and decisions.

Internal Consistency

Internal consistency is a pattern of principles that work well together. Your framework should not include principles that contradict each other. For instance, if you establish a framework that includes the idea that honesty is fundamental, and also that it is acceptable to be dishonest if you are under pressure, then you have an inconsistent set of principles.

Proactivity

The importance of proactivity is that it gives you a basis for what to do, instead of what not to do. By defining proactive principles, you are able to look at difficult decisions in a way that moves you toward a solution, rather than reacting to a challenge by hoping only to avoid a negative impact.

Dynamism

The third characteristic of a useful framework is dynamism. To keep your ethical framework dynamic, you will need to reevaluate and adjust it as your ethical thinking evolves. Ethics can be affected by a change in position within a company or organization, adjustments in your personal life, the passage of time, or other circumstances. Openly evaluating your ethical thinking will help you prepare for challenges, both expected and unexpected.

Personal Ethics and Organizational Ethics

The vision, mission, and ethical framework of organizations you associate with need to align with your personal ethical framework. For example, if you are a highly collaborative leader and belong to an organization that expects its leaders to make unilateral decisions, you will be at odds with the organization. The situation will be difficult for you and a challenge for other members.

Understand the Challenge

The ethical challenge in this situation is deciding whether or not to accept a position knowing you will either work in opposition to your principles or refuse to uphold those of an organization.

It is important to keep in mind that you are responsible for upholding the values, ethics, and rules of any organization you choose to associate with, even if they are different from your own. The only exception to that rule would be if you were specifically brought in to change the ethical framework and/or the culture of an organization. In that situation, you would have been chosen specifically for the ethics you bring to the group, not to support the organization's current framework.

You may choose to complete the Ethical Framework resource to formalize your framework.

Consider your values and your definition of ethical behavior.

Identify your core, or non-negotiable, ethical values. These values are unique to you and represent those beliefs and expectations that will not change or adjust regardless of the situation.

Take the time to do your own research about ethics, entering into your search with the knowledge that ethics cannot be standardized. For every culture, belief system, or organization, there will be differences in what is viewed as ethical or unethical behavior.

It is up to you, as an individual, to find your personal ethical core and express it in a way that will guide your decisions.

Selecting a Project

Consider All Input

When developing ideas for your project, it may be helpful to collect input from others. If you are able, discuss your ideas with your mentor or another trusted advisor. Because you are designing a project that is intended to benefit an organization, you may choose to reach out to leaders within that group for suggestions or feedback on your ideas.

Define Your Project

The design of your project is yours to choose. The only expectation is that your project will provide benefits to Toastmasters or some other organization. Be sure you plan goals that you feel a strong sense of commitment to accomplishing. You may opt to use this project to work toward the completion of a larger vision, one you have already defined, or a new vision that you develop as a result of working on this project.

Your project needs to be designed to provide you with a leadership role. You may choose to complete a project within your Toastmasters club or District, or for another organization.

Consider Duration

Be sure to balance working toward the fulfillment of your vision with showing the result of your efforts in a reasonably short period of time. Consider the duration of commitment your project will require from team members when making a final decision.

Take the Lead

If you are a supervisor in a business, you can select a leadership project related to the needs of the company. If you are an employee without supervisory duties, you may want to ask your supervisor if you could take responsibility for a project that would give you the opportunity to exercise your leadership skills. You might select a project for your community, an association, a service club, or a professional group.

You may also choose to work on a project for your Toastmasters club or District, perhaps while serving as an officer or committee chair. For example, if you are Vice President Education of your club, you are chair of the education committee. During your term of office, you could lead the committee to improve club meetings, build membership, or develop a stronger rapport in your community.

Manage the Scope

As you refine your options and develop your project, be sure that your plans remain reasonable in scope—not too broad or too vague. Regardless of who your project will benefit, it must make a positive contribution to the cause or organization you choose.

Identify Your Vision

As you think about the different projects you could complete with your team, consider looking at completing a portion of a larger vision. A vision is a broad, conceptual ideal for the future, created without limits. You may already have a vision that you have dedicated time and energy to and have a project you would like to complete in mind. If not, there is a wide variety of information available to guide you in creating your vision. The following information is provided to help you start the process.

Creative

The process of developing your vision is creative. Look beyond possessions or monetary rewards and instead, focus on challenging yourself to create a vision that enhances many areas of your life and is uniquely yours. Focusing your vision primarily on financial gain, even when it relates to a business or organization, can limit your potential rather than broaden it.

Focused

For example, perhaps you run a retail company and your vision involves tripling your market share from your current position. If you focus only on market share, you may miss potential opportunities such as expanding product lines or improving customer loyalty, both of which might be of higher value in the future for you and your organization.

Taking time to develop your vision and allow for creative solutions and goals to create a multilayered vision will enhance the process and help you identify what is most important over time.

Documented

Record your thoughts and ideas. The smallest notion can lead to an expansive possibility. Ignore any concerns over the attainability or feasibility of an idea. It is important to list as many of your thoughts around your vision as possible. The more information you include, the easier it is to identify your most authentic vision.

Share your ideas with your team and encourage their input to help you identify a project that moves you in the direction of fulfilling your goals.

Use your ideas and team members' input to decide on a project. It may be clear to you before you meet with your team exactly what you want to do, or you may need a few days to consider all of the information before you select a project to complete.

Set Goals

Once you have your vision in place and your project chosen, step back and look at the goals required to make your project a success. Focus on the goal, not the timeframe.

After your goals are set, refine them down to achievable tasks. Depending on the size of your project, you may choose to focus on one or two primary or larger goals.

Specific

Make your goals specific. Instead of the general goal, "I'm going to work on my Toastmasters project today," make it more specific, such as, "I'm going to finish my introduction today."

Measurable

Set goals that can be measured. For example, stating, "I will write for 15 minutes today" is more effective than saying, "I will write today."

Attainable

Recognize what is attainable and realistic. Thinking, "I will be this year's World Champion of Public Speaking," is less helpful than focusing on winning your club contest. Winning the club contest is the first step toward your broader goal of winning the international honor.

Relevant

Determine how important your goal is to you and your life. You can gauge a goal's relevancy by deciding if you have time to take on a project at the moment. It may be that something else needs to come first.

Timely

Setting a due date for each goal helps you keep track of your objective. For example, establish a specific date and time by which you want to finish your project.

Design Your Plan

When you have your vision, goals, and tasks divided, establish a timeframe for your project. Start with the smallest, most accomplishable tasks and move through to the larger, more time-consuming tasks, adding each to your plan. Once your plan is complete, organize goals and tasks over your timeframe to create a timeline for your project.

Build Your Team

Building a New Team

As you have progressed through your path, you have worked with at least one team to complete a project. You may have focused on delegating tasks, motivating team members, or organizing the skills required to have a successful outcome.

One of the greatest challenges facing a leader who is choosing members for a new team is projecting how the group will work together.

Rapport

You may choose individuals for your team with whom you have the greatest rapport. Though this can work, it can create a situation in which the team is ineffective if the skills of the group are not complementary or suitable for the tasks you need to complete.

Choose Well

Regardless of your rapport, it is important to select people who work well together, complement your leadership style, are motivated to participate, and are excited about your project.

Match Skills

Consider each person's skill set before you invite them to join your team. You would not want to choose four innovators and no team members who are strong at fulfilling practical details.

Build Camaraderie

The first activities you choose need to be designed to help team members learn about each other. Even if the members have known each other in a different capacity, it could be the first time the current group has worked toward a common objective.

Working Through Your Project

Leading Your Team

During the organizational phase of your project, you may have had the opportunity to lead your team as you established your plan. Once the project is underway, your leadership skills will be more valuable than ever. You will need to be prepared to meet the needs of your team while still maintaining the forward progression of your project.

Provide Support

For a team leader, providing support comes in the form of clearing obstacles to enable the project to move forward. Specifically, a leader may offer team members encouragement, validation, or emotional support.

Resolve Conflict

Challenges may arise that require you to make decisions or resolve conflicts between team members. You may also need to be present to help the team accomplish specific tasks.

Communicate Effectively

A successful leader provides support by keeping the lines of communication open. This means being available to your team and making sure communication moves freely among individual team members.

Fluid and effective communication can eliminate many conflicts and challenges before they arise.

Develop the Team

Provide learning opportunities for each member of your team. Share what you know and what you learn during the course of your project, but also encourage team members to share their expertise. Allow time for cross-training between team members on specific skill sets whenever possible. Encourage your team to learn and share what they know.

Show Appreciation

Sincere praise and recognition can boost morale and increase commitment to your project. Let your team members know you value their contributions. Each milestone you reach is a good time to stop and review the good work they are doing and what they have accomplished so far.

Hold Regular Meetings

As work progresses on the project, hold regular meetings with your team to keep them informed. You may use this type of meeting to share the overall progress of the project, acknowledge contributions, or give general feedback to the group. Address the highest priority items first to make sure you accomplish as much as possible in the allotted time. Review your agenda before the meeting begins. If a single issue is particularly complex, it might be most efficient to talk about smaller items first.

Promote Open Communication

Give each team member the opportunity to speak. By allowing team members to express concerns and share successes, you establish an environment where communication and appreciation flourish.

360° Evaluations

At the conclusion of your project, invite stakeholders, including your team, to complete a 360° evaluation. A 360° evaluation provides performance feedback from all directions.

360° In a Business Setting

In a business setting, it would include responses from upper management, supervisors, managers, peers, and those who report to an individual.

360° In a Volunteer Setting

In a volunteer setting such as Toastmasters, a member might request feedback from the president of their club, members of their team, and fellow Toastmasters who are affected by the work they have done.

Team 360°

In this project, you must get feedback from at least one member of your team.

Be sure to complete an evaluation on your performance as well. Self-assessment is a powerful tool when combined with evaluations from others.

A 360° evaluation helps to provide a balanced view of your contributions and performance within a group. You learn about your performance from the observations and perceptions of others who see your work from different perspectives.

360° Evaluation Guidelines

When you receive the evaluation:

- Develop a plan for implementing feedback directly from the evaluation.
- Build on strengths and look for places you can grow skills in need of development.
- Use the process as an opportunity to consider your contributions and behaviors.

Conducting 360° Evaluations

There are a variety of ways to conduct a 360° evaluation. Use the 360° Evaluation provided with this project to help you plan for your evaluation. Choose the method of administration you feel is most effective such as in person, on paper, or via email.

Depending on the makeup of your team, you may want each member to receive the benefit of a 360° evaluation. It is your choice, but sharing this type of evaluation can allow you to share with your team the benefits of feedback from all the stakeholders of your project, including you and their peers.

Analyzing and Presenting Your Results

It is important to review the results of any project. The ability to reflect on success and areas for growth is fundamental to developing skills as a leader. Just as you would give team members feedback based on the results of their efforts, you need to evaluate the project as a whole and yourself as a leader.

Review Results

Analyze your efforts and the efforts of your team. For a successful project, evaluate what contributed to the positive outcome. It might be the team members' outstanding work, your ability to overcome obstacles, or a combination of the two.

Even in the most successful projects, there are areas that could have been completed in an easier, more effective way. Consider what you would choose to do differently in future projects.

Conduct a Lessons Learned Meeting

The ability to learn from experience builds strength and understanding in any environment. A lessons learned meeting is an opportunity to gather your team and stakeholders to discuss both positive and negative aspects of your project.

A meeting of this type can be held after any milestone when review contributes to the success of the project as well as when the project is complete.

Reflect and Discuss

A lessons learned meeting involves reflection, analysis, and discussion. It is an opportunity for everyone to contribute their unique perspective. Support all participants in sharing issues they observed throughout the project, and let them know that their input is valued. Create an environment of productivity and openness.

Set the Tone

Your first and most important job as the leader of a lessons learned meeting is to set the tone. Begin by thanking all of your team members and stakeholders for their hard work and participation. Identify the parts of your project that were generally successful while allowing time for other opinions and feedback.

Create a Record

Record all ideas, suggestions, and comments presented in the meeting. Disseminate the meeting notes with team members via email, shared drive, or printed documents. Encourage all lessons learned meeting participants to add suggestions to the record, even after the meeting is over. Use this record as a reference when organizing future projects.

Apply Feedback

Applying feedback to future projects or events is the most important aspect of the lessons learned process. A lessons learned meeting allows your team to celebrate successes and identify what worked well for use in the future.

Present Your Results

The last step in your Distinguished Toastmaster project is to present the results of your project to your club. This speech is longer than a traditional Toastmasters speech to give you time to include information about how you designed your project, your team-building process and your team, the process of developing your project, and the end result of your effort.

A highly important component of this presentation is your public speaking skills. At this point in your Toastmasters journey, the expectation is that you will be an outstanding public speaker. Be sure your speech is well-composed and interesting. Make your transitions seamless and your visual aids, if you use them, the highest quality possible.

You are showing the members of your club what the best of Toastmasters can be.

Review and Apply

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What does it mean to you to be a Distinguished Toastmaster?

- How can you lead ethically and apply Toastmasters values to your project?

- What skills will you look for when building your team?

- How will achieving the Distinguished Toastmaster award benefit you both inside Toastmasters and in your life outside of Toastmasters?

Complete Your Assignment



Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, complete your assignment.

This project includes:

- Selecting, leading, and completing a project with a team
- The Ethical Framework resource
- The Goal Setting Worksheet
- The Goal Task List resource
- The Project Plan Overview resource
- The Project Plan resource
- The 360° Evaluation resource
- A 5- to 7-minute speech
- An 8- to 10-minute speech

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or complete the digital version in your project on Base Camp.

- ☐ Define your project.
- ☐ Recruit members for your team.
- ☐ Schedule your first speech with the Vice President Education.
- ☐ Write your first speech. Include information about your plan.
- ☐ Rehearse your first speech.
- ☐ Present your first speech.
- ☐ Organize a calendar of meetings with your team.
- ☐ Complete your project.
- ☐ Distribute the 360° Evaluation resource to members of your team.
- ☐ Conduct a lessons learned meeting with your team.

- ☐ Schedule your second speech with the Vice President Education.
- ☐ Write your second speech. Report on your project's results and your leadership experience during this project.
- ☐ Rehearse your second speech.
- ☐ When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

☐☐☐

Evaluation Criteria

Your Evaluation



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary 4 – Excels 3 – Accomplished 2 – Emerging 1 – Developing

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the interviewer
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the interviewer
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the interviewer
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the interviewer
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the interviewer

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Plan (first speech only)

- 5 – Presentation of the project plan is comprehensive and exemplary
- 4 – Gives an excellent presentation on all or part of the project plan
- 3 – Communicates all or part of the project plan
- 2 – Mentions the project plan but focuses on other topics
- 1 – Speaks about topic other than some aspect of the project plan

Topic (second speech only)

- 5 – Delivers an exemplary speech about some aspect of the impact, process, or other substantial part of their project
- 4 – Delivers an excellent speech about some aspect of the impact, process, or other substantial part of their project
- 3 – Communicates some aspect of the impact, process, or other substantial part of their project
- 2 – Mentions some aspect of the impact, process, or other substantial part of their project but focuses on other topics
- 1 – Speaks about topic other than some aspect of the impact, process, or other substantial part of their project

Complete Your Project



Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

Learned

For example: I learned how to demonstrate ethical leadership and Toastmasters values in my leadership roles.

Before You Move On

Review Your Learning

Review all the material in this project.

Deliver Your Speech

Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.

Receive Your Evaluation

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

Assess and Reflect

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Congratulations!

You have completed the final education project on your way to achieving your Distinguished Toastmaster award. Your commitment and leadership are highly valued and appreciated. CONGRATULATIONS on reaching this important point in your Toastmasters journey.



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