

How to Provide Online Club Officer Training to Remote Clubs

**A step-by step guide to how District 21 does it.
(contains all the plans and email content)**

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Rodney is an avid writer and sharer of his leadership and communication experiences in Toastmasters. You can find more writings by him at <https://www.rodneydenno.com/toastmasters.php>



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Executive Summary

This playbook contains all the information needed to set up and deliver live (web + phone) online club officer training program.

The intent of web + phone training is to provide much easier access to training for club officers in remote areas. District 21 consists of more than 260 clubs distributed across more than 350,000 square miles and. While the majority of clubs are located in a few urban centers, there are still many clubs that are over 100 miles from any other club.

In the northernmost division, there is only one city where central training could logically be held, and several of the clubs are hundreds of miles away from there. For many of these clubs, it is not reasonable (especially in the winter) for club officers to attend even a division level TLI.

Previously, training the club officers has been left to the area governors to do as part of their club visits. This has been the only economical way to provide face-to-face training.

This adds an extra burden on the area governors and limits the time available to arrange the visits in order to complete them within the officer training period. It also does not provide the same quality of training that other clubs receive, nor the ability to exchange ideas with other clubs. In most cases, the AG does not have the experience necessary to provide training on all club officer positions, and often must cover all positions in only one hour. Given that the alternative is no training at all, this has had to suffice.

By offering the online training, we were not restricted by geography for either the trainers or the participants. We can recruit highly experienced trainers from across the district and provide a more thorough training than officers of these remote clubs have been able to receive before. This improvement in training quality was considered to be most important in requesting permission to conduct this pilot project.

- Motivation – Online training provides easier access and higher quality to clubs in remote areas who would have to travel considerable distance to attend even a central division training event.
- Parameters – Training is conducted via conference call with the trainer simultaneously sharing a presentation to the participants via web conference. Separate conference call and web conference are held for each officer position.
- Train the Trainer – Each of the trainers receives special training on how to present club officer training using web conferencing + conference calling services.
- Remote Club Selection Criteria – A club is considered to be remote if club officers have to travel more than an hour in each direction to attend a central division training event. Only remote clubs are invited to participate in online training.
- Promotion – Weekly emails are sent to remote club officers starting 8 weeks prior to the training sessions.
- Evaluations – Participants are asked to complete an online evaluation.

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What is Needed?

Two managers: responsible for developing the overall program and process, selecting the appropriate clubs, training the trainers and monitoring all aspects of the pilot.

Seven trainers: responsible for the seven club officer roles.

Club officers: willing to participate in the pilot in order to become better club officers.

Technology: Web conferencing and conference calling services

Success Criteria

Every endeavor should have success criteria by which the success of the endeavor can be measured. The success criteria, posed as questions, for OCOT we believe are:

- 1 – How well trained did the club officers feel they were trained during the training sessions?
- 2 – How well did the trainers perform during the club officer training sessions?
- 3 – Were the trainers adequately trained on the setup and operation of the technology?
- 4 – Was the technology stable during the training sessions?

Technical Services Needed

Web Conferencing – Join.me (<http://join.me>) was used to provide web conferencing service (specifically the visual portion of the training).

Conference Calling – Join.me provided the conference calling service (specifically the audio portion of the training). The caller paid the long distance charges – typically \$2.50 for a one hour call.

Computer and Internet Communication

Critical elements to ensure successful online training:

- 1 – Participants must have computers that can handle the processing requirements (information processing of the software running on the computer)
- 2 – Participants must have the communications bandwidth (to handle the information coming and going from their computer)

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Recommended Trainer Characteristics

Effective trainers need to be able to communicate and facilitate discussion effectively through the medium of conference calling and web conferencing.

Trainers will need to:

- Have sufficient facility and comfort with the technology so it does not get in the way of training.
- Be experienced Toastmasters with an energetic presentation style, strong voice, adequate discussion facilitation skills and good vocal variety.

'Remote Club' Selection Criteria

The criteria for selecting clubs to participate in the online training were the time and expense necessary for members to travel to a central division TLI. If members had to drive more than 60 minutes in each direction, we considered it to be an unreasonable burden that merited an invitation to the online training. There are also some clubs in the district that are only accessible by ferry. These club officers were also invited because of the time and expense of the ferries.

Some division governors were requesting invitations for other clubs – particularly some corporate clubs – because the scheduled TLI was not convenient for them. Invitations to the online training were not issued on the basis of convenience. If members were capable of attending a regular TLI, they were expected to do so. However, in a few cases, we received requests directly from club officers. Where they could show that they were not able to attend any upcoming in-person training events, we allowed them to participate in the online training.

OCOT Promotion to Club Officers

Email promotion started July 21st, almost four weeks prior to start of online training. Promotional emails were sent on July 21st and 27th and August 3rd to all club officers in the clubs designated 'Remote'. Forty five (45) registered and thirty three (33) participated. All the Division Governors and some of the Area Governors – in which the remote clubs resided – were also telephoned and asked to promote OCOT.

Starting the promotion almost one month in advance of the actual training allowed for multiple messages to be sent and for Division and Area Governors to get involved in contacting and motivating remote club officers.

First email should be about a month out, the second one 2 weeks out, the third one should be one week out in the last one should be just a few days before the session as a reminder. This will give people plenty of time to fit it into their schedule if they are serious about it.

Also, and this is important, they must RSVP in advance indicating that they will indeed be attending. This gets them to state their commitment to attend which makes it more likely that they will actually attend.

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It is also necessary since the trainers must send out invitations to their particular participants – which requires that the trainer know the email address of each participant. It will also help the trainers prepare - they will know how many people will be on the call and maybe even be able to collect some background information and topics that the participants would be interested in.

This is “by invitation training only.” Only those clubs that are deemed geographically remote will even be given the opportunity to participate in this training. Only individuals within those clubs that either have taken on - or are considering taking on – leadership roles will be allowed to participate.

Train-the-Trainer Process

It is important to ensure that any trainers have sufficient knowledge and experience with the web conferencing service being used. Just as PowerPoint failures will hamper a delivery to a live audience those failures can be compounded by problems with the web conferencing service on either the trainer or participant’s computer. This can leave participants viewing the wrong things, or nothing at all.

If the trainers are properly experienced, they can troubleshoot the issues and allow all participants to view the presentation. Alternatively, there could be an extra person at the start of the session to provide technical support. Each session had a couple of participants with problems or questions. Almost all were simple and solved very quickly. The 15 minute period before each training session allows for the trainer and participants to find and rectify issues.

Training the trainers was composed of three phases:

Phase 1 – Prior to the commencement of the train the trainer session all trainers reviewed operation of the web conferencing software.

Phase 2 – Prior to the commencement of the train the trainer session Rodney Denno set up the web conferencing portion of the train the trainer meeting and sent all the trainers the necessary conference call information.

- Rodney used the web conferencing service to set up a web conference meeting.
- All the trainers received a web conference meeting notification email that contained all the instructions needed to join the web conference and conference call portions of the train-the-trainer session.

Phase 3 - This portion of the training took place on August 8, 2010. Rodney systematically walked the trainers as a group through all the steps needed to setup and conduct online training. Trainers then took turns perform a practice session for all the other trainers on the call so each trainer had direct experience setting up and running the technology prior to using it in the club officer training sessions.

- Each trainer in turn was given the opportunity to go through setting up and conducting a short meeting with the other trainers.

Objective – To have seven club officer trainers trained in the operation, and comfortable using, conference calling and web conferencing technology for distance training.

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Participants

OCOT Coordinators

Manager	Phone & Email

Trainers

Trainer	Date and Time	Role
		President
		VP Education
		VP Membership
		VP PR
		Secretary
		Treasurer
		S at A

Overall Training Process - Club Officer's and Trainers

As a result of the online web conferencing service selected the process of getting club officers and trainers online and on the conference call is time sensitive.

The club officer training takes place from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

Trainers should be online and on the call by 7:00 PM.

Club Officers should be online and on the call by 7:15 PM.

TRAINERS

7:00 PM

1 - Go to the web conferencing service website <http://join.me> and click the 'share' button in the middle of the screen. It will take about 30 seconds for your computer to download and install the software needed to share your computer screen with all the participants. Once the software is installed a group of five icons will appear at the top (in the middle) of your screen. Above the five icons will be a line containing 'join.me/xxx-xxx-xxx'. The nine digit code xxx-xxx-xxx is the access code that the CLUB OFFICERS will need in order to join the conference call and online portions of your training session. This nine digit access code changes each time you start a join.me session.

2 - At this point you need to send an email to all the CLUB OFFICERS you will be training. This email must include the nine digit access code for your join.me session and the long distance phone number. To get

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the long distance phone number click on the left icon and a small box will appear that contains the phone number. Please send this email as-soon-as-you-can!! The CLUB OFFICERS cannot join your training session without this information.

3 - Please also ensure that the two technical support people also receive your email. One of them will be in each training session to provide technical support in case there are any problems.

4 – Trainers should also start their presentation so that when the CLUB OFFICERS join your training session they will see some sort of welcome screen identifying that they are joining the appropriate training session.

CLUB OFFICERS

7:15 PM

1 – A few minutes after 7 PM the club officers that have registered for that specific training will receive an email from their trainer containing the long distance phone number and the nine digit access code they will need to join the online and phone portions of the training. Club officers should go to the Web Conferencing service <http://join.me> and enter the nine digit access code in the box beside the word 'join' (in the middle of the screen) and click the icon next to the box. Within a few seconds you will be viewing whatever is on the TRAINERS computer screen.

2 – Club officers should also immediately call the long distance number and when prompted they will enter the same nine digit access code. They will then be connected into the conference call portion of the training session.

CLUB OFFICERS and TRAINERS

7:15 – 7:30

This fifteen minutes ensures that everyone is online and on the phone so that training can start at 7:30. This sequence assumes you will be running two training session simultaneously. A technical support person should be in each training session. The trainer should also take attendance during this time so that the club will get credit for the club officer attending this club officer training session.

7:30 – 8:30 (or so)

Online Club Officer Training

Trainer/Trainee Training Session Protocol

The following protocol was used during the online club officer training sessions to ensure participation and adequate facilitation/moderation. These protocols were agreed to by all participating on the call prior to the commencement of training.

1. The trainer should lay out the structure of the training (content and rough timing) so that all participants know in advance. Adequate Q&A should be included so questions can be asked and answered.
2. If the trainer feels comfortable he/she can allow for ad hoc questions during the training session.

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3. Each speaker should state their name prior to making comments or asking questions.
4. Each speaker should limit their comment/question duration (determined by trainers as they see fit).

OCOT Process

A few days prior to the designated OCOT day the trainer set up the web conference portion of the meeting and emails were sent to all invited participants.

Each trainer used the first fifteen minutes of the training session to resolve any technical or setup issues and let the participants become familiar with the training environment.

Online training then proceeded as planned with comments and questions being interspersed throughout the training sessions.

Each trainer followed up the online session by sending any promised documentation.

OCOT Monitoring

During each OCOT session one of the OCOT Coordinators was present to help with technical issues, help moderate the discussion if necessary and get firsthand experience regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the training sessions.

Cost of Conference Calls

The conference calling portion of the first online club officer training pilot in February 2009 District 21 used a 1-800 conference bridge. This meant that the calls were free for the participants but the District had to pay \$420 in conference call charges.

The strategy used for this OCOT test was to use the web conference bridge (free) and have the participants pay the nominal long distance charges. Long distance charges were typically under \$3 per person for a 1 hour long distance call. This saved the District over \$400 and was still much cheaper for the participants (no travel time or associated costs). One (very remote) person commented that it saved her about \$50 and a day of travel by road and ferry.



Evaluations

We received evaluations from approximately 1/3 of the participants. As we discovered, evaluations are harder to arrange with the online format because they cannot be filled in during the training. For an in person event, we can hand out the evaluation forms and receive them back as the participants leave. In the online training, we sent out evaluation forms by email. Before we closed the training, we emphasized that the evaluations are very important for this event and asked that they email them back to us as soon as possible.

Overall, the response was very positive. The average score for the first question, “How relevant was this session to your job in Toastmasters?” was 4.23/5. Answers to other questions were generally positive, except in some cases where the participants felt that technical issues hampered the experience.

We added two open questions to the standard evaluation form:

- How effective was the online/telephone format compared to your previous training experience?
- How could the online/telephone format be improved for future training?

Everyone felt that the training was effective, and they were very happy to be able to participate in the online training. They really appreciated being able to be trained from home instead of having to travel long distances to attend a TLI. There was very strong support to repeat the experience.

Overall Process

1. District determines and maintains a list of which clubs ('remote club list') will be deemed remote.
2. District selects the trainers for each club officer role and the dates for online training.
3. District fills the role of 'train the trainer' – this role is responsible for understanding the web conferencing and conferencing technology sufficiently well that this person can train the club officer trainers on its use and operation.
4. One month prior to training the clubs on the 'remote club list' receive a notification email, from the District, requesting RSVP to be sent to the appropriate trainer or some central RSVP email address.
5. Two weeks prior to each training the clubs on the 'remote club list' receive a second notification email requesting RSVP to be sent to the appropriate trainer or some central RSVP email address.
6. One week prior to the first club officer training session the 'train the trainer' session takes place.
7. One week prior to each training the clubs on the 'remote club list' receive a second notification email requesting RSVP to be sent to the appropriate trainer or some central RSVP email address.
8. One week prior to the first training session the District send out whatever conference calling information it needs to send out to each trainer. Some of that information will be included in the invitation sent from the trainer to the club officers that will be participating in that trainers club officer training session.
9. Three days prior to each training the clubs on the 'remote club list' receive a second notification email requesting RSVP to be sent to the appropriate trainer or some central RSVP email address.

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10. Two or three days prior to the specific officer training each trainer sends out the 'web conferencing invitation' and the 'conference calling information'.

Some Issues to overcome

Here are some reasons why we think the participant numbers were not higher:

1. In the very remote parts of District 21 it seems that dialup is still the only way for some to get Internet access. Web conferencing does not function well at dialup speed.
2. Technophobia - or maybe just feelings of discomfort about using computers for training.
3. It's summer time. August is vacation time. People also feel more inclined to travel the longer distances when roads are NOT icy and snow is not a safety factor.
4. Some were already trained. There were TLIs in every division in June, before the online training was announced. Officers used to making the long trip to these events simply did so again.

Technical Issues

Some of the trainers had technical difficulties with the web conference service at the start of the training. In particular, the VP Education trainer seemed to be having trouble with his computer which hampered the video presentation to the participants.

The trainer was also not able to record the session, and the presentation file was subsequently deleted. Others trainers also had difficulties with embedding the Powerpoint into the web conference display window; however, these were not difficult to overcome.

Some extra practice and experience with displaying Powerpoint via web conference beyond the train-the-trainer sessions would be beneficial.

Appendix - First Email Invitation to eligible Club Officers

Dear Club Officers and Area/Division Governors

As a club officer in a 'remote' club you are eligible to receive the next round of club officer training online.

This form of club officer training is being offered only to club officer that would otherwise have to travel more than one hour in each direction to attend a central division training event. Only club officers in remote clubs are eligible to participate in this online training.

Why Online club officer training:

- improves access and remove barriers.....ensuring that all club officers receive quality training
- no need to travel on winter roads.....get the training you need from the comfort of your home.....with the assistance of a computer, Internet connection and telephone.
- inexpensive (total cost of \$2 or \$3 for the long distance conference call)
- excellent online trainers that will provide a quality training experience and answer all your questions
- online training count towards your clubs DCP point goals just like face-to-face training

We are offering this online training to ensure that all District 21 club officers receive quality Toastmasters International approved training (utilizing TI approved materials) and to ensure that no club officer has to endure undue hardship in order to obtain this training.

All the clubs that are designated as 'Remote' are listed at the bottom of this email.

This is the third time that the Toastmasters International Board has authorized District 21 to conduct Online Club Officer Training for 'Remote' clubs.

If you hold more than one club officer role or wish to participate in more than one online officer training session then please RSVP and indicate all the Club Officer Roles in which you wish to participate.

==== Please RSVP to this email or to Rodney Denno rodney@rodneydenno.com indicating your Name, Club Name, Club Number and Club Officer Role ====

What will you need to participate?

To participate in this Online training you will need a computer, High-speed Internet connection and telephone.

How does online training work?

- It will be a live and interactive one hour session.

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- The training will be conducted via conference call for the audio portion with supporting visuals displayed on your computer via web-conferencing.
- Most telecom service providers charge a few cents per minute for long distance call.....so the long distance charge for a one hour conference call will be between \$2 and \$3.....much cheaper than having to drive a long distance for training.
- A technical monitor will be available during each session to deal with any technical issues so the trainer can continue the training session.

Schedule

President – Feb 21

Secretary – Feb 21

Treasurer – Feb 22

VP Education – Feb 22

VP Membership – Feb 23

S at A – Feb 23

VP Public Relations – Feb 24

Time

All training sessions will take place from 7:15 pm - 8:30 pm.....the first 15 minutes are to ensure that everyone has joined the call and is receiving the presentation on their computer. The training starts at 7:30 pm.

Eligible 'Remote' Toastmasters Clubs

Clubs were listed here.....

==== Please RSVP to this email or to Rodney Denno rodney@rodneydenno.com indicating your Name, Club Name, Club Number and Club Officer Role ====

Rodney Denno ACS, ALS

Toastmasters International, District 21

Communications & Technology Officer (2010 - 2011)

Achieving Greatness Together with Passion, Service and Leadership

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Appendix - Ongoing Email Invitation to eligible club officers

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To: All Club Officers

What: If you are one of the 52 club officers who have already registered – you do not need to respond to this email.

If you are one of the approximately 100 club officers still eligible to receive Online Club Officer Training – please RSVP to this email if you wish to participate.

Why: This is only the third time the Toastmasters International Board has authorized this training. The success that our District has with this innovative form of Club Officer Training will help Toastmasters International determine how to set policy and move forward with this form of training all around the world.

Thanks!

=====

**Online Club Officer Training
(NO online makeup training will be offered)**

When -- evenings of February 21st to 24th (7:15pm to 8:30pm)

Only three weeks to go.

Schedule (each training will be separate from the others)

Feb 21 ---- President, Secretary

Feb 22 ---- Treasurer, VP Education

Feb 23 ---- VP Membership, S at A

Feb 24 ---- VP Public Relations

This form of club officer training is being offered only to club officer that would otherwise have to travel more than one hour in each direction to attend a central Division training event.

Only club officers in remote clubs are eligible to participate in this online training.

==> The first 15 minutes of each training session will be to ensure that everyone has joined the call and is receiving the presentation on their computer. The club officer training itself runs from 7:30 to 8:30.

==== Please RSVP to this email or to Rodney Denno rodney@rodneydenno.com indicating your Name, Club Name, Club Number and Club Officer Role =====

Why Online club officer training?

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- improves access and remove barriers.....ensuring that all club officers receive quality training
- no need to travel on winter roads.....get the training you need from the comfort of you home.....with the assistance of a computer, Internet connection and telephone.
- inexpensive (total cost of \$2 or \$3 for the long distance conference call)
- excellent online trainers that will provide a quality training experience and answer all your questions
- online training count towards your clubs DCP point goals just like face-to-face training

We are offering this online training to ensure that all District 21 club officers receive quality Toastmasters International approved training (utilizing TI approved materials) and to ensure that no club officer has to endure undue hardship in order to obtain this training.

All the clubs that are designated as 'Remote' are listed at the bottom of this email.

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If you hold more than one club officer role or wish to participate in more than one online officer training session then please RSVP and indicate all the Club Officer Roles in which you wish to participate.

==== Please RSVP to this email or to Rodney Denno rodney@rodneydenno.com indicating your Name, Club Name, Club Number and Club Officer Role ====

What will you need to participate?

To participate in this Online training you will need a computer, High-speed Internet connection and telephone.

How does online training work?

- It will be a live and interactive one hour session.
- The training will be conducted via conference call for the audio portion with supporting visuals displayed on your computer via web-conferencing.
- Most telecom service provides charge a few cents per minute for long distance call.....so the long distance charge for a one hour conference call will be between \$2 and \$3.....much cheaper than having to drive a long distance for training.
- A technical monitor will be available during each session to deal with any technical issues so the trainer can continue the training session.

Eligible 'Remote' Toastmasters Clubs

Clubs were listed here.....

==== Please RSVP to this email or to Rodney Denno rodney@rodneydenno.com indicating your Name, Club Name, Club Number and Club Officer Role ====

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Appendix - Email Outlining Training Process

Club Officers and Trainers

This email contains all the information you will need to join the online and phone portions of the District 21 Online Club Officer Training

Please note that timing is important.....as noted in the instructions below.

TRAINERS

7:00 – Trainers will go to <http://join.me> and click the ‘share’ button in the middle of the screen. It will take about 30 seconds for your computer to download and install the software needed to share your computer screen with all the participants.

Once the software is installed a group of five icons will appear at the top (in the middle) of your screen. Above the five icons will be a line containing ‘join.me/xxx-xxx-xxx’.

The nine digit code xxx-xxx-xxx is the access code that the CLUB OFFICERS will need in order to join the conference call and online portions of your training session.

This nine digit access code changes each time you start a join.me session.

At this point you now need to send an email to all the CLUB OFFICERS you will be training. This email must include the nine digit access code for your join.me session and the long distance phone number.

To get the long distance phone number click on the left icon and a small box will appear that contains the phone number.

Please send this email as-soon-as-you-can!! The CLUB OFFICERS cannot join your training session without this information.

Recommendation --- you should start your PowerPoint presentation now so that when the CLUB OFFICERS join your training session they will see some sort of welcome screen identifying that they are joining the appropriate training session.

CLUB OFFICERS

7:15 – A few minutes after 7 PM you will receive an email from your trainer containing the long distance phone number and the nine digit access code you will need to join the online and phone portions of the training.

Once you have received this email you will go to <http://join.me>

Enter the nine digit access code in the box beside the word ‘join’ (in the middle of the screen) and click the icon next to the box.

Within a few seconds you will be viewing whatever is on the TRAINERS computer screen.

Call the long distance number and when prompted enter the same nine digit access code.

You will then be connected into the conference call portion of the training session.

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CLUB OFFICERS and TRAINERS

7:15 – 7:30

This fifteen minutes is to ensure that everyone is online and on the phone so that training can start at 7:30.

Attendance will also be taken during this time so your club will get credit for you attending the club officer training session.

7:30 – 8:30 (or so)

Online Club Officer Training

Schedule (each training will be separate from the others)

Feb 21 ---- President, Secretary

Feb 22 ---- Treasurer, VP Education

Feb 23 ---- VP Membership, S at A

Feb 24 ---- VP Public Relations

If you have any problems call

Rodney Denno CISSP, ACS, ALS

Toastmasters International, District 21

Communications & Technology Officer (2010 - 2011)

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About Rodney Denno



Since late 2006 I've spent a lot of time in the laboratory that is Toastmasters! It's a wonderful place to develop new skills and hone existing ones.

Through the years I've served in most of the club officer roles multiple times and as Area and Division Director, District 21 Public Relations Officer and District 21 Communications & Technology Officer. In 2008 I led the effort to create and deliver the first Online Club Officer Training program in the Toastmaster world.

While I was busy learning, enjoying myself and giving back to Toastmasters I received the two highest Toastmasters honors in District 21 (the province of British Columbia, Canada) - the **2009 Rookie of the Year Award** and the **2010 District 21 Toastmaster of the Year Award** and **2018 District 96 Toastmaster of the Year Award**.

I believe that in order for a society to grow and prosper we must give back more than we take. Over the years I've volunteered whatever time I could to various non-profit organizations. Since 2006 my volunteer efforts have been focused, through Toastmasters, on the development of leadership and communications skills in the almost 6,000 Toastmasters throughout British Columbia.

I write about what I'm involved with in Toastmasters so I can share it with other Toastmasters and hopefully make their Toastmasters journey more enjoyable and valuable to them and to the Toastmasters organization worldwide.

You can find more Toastmaster writings by me at <https://www.rodneydenno.com/toastmasters.php>

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