



Creating an Award-Winning Guest Packet

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Whether you are putting together your club's first guest packet, or revamping what you currently have to offer, winning a Public Relations award isn't nearly as important as winning over the guests... as each guest is a prospective new member! Remember, you are trying to sell your club, so think about the things you want them to know about your club and what you want them to walk away with after their visit.



Having everything available in a folder creates something tangible they will have to take with them. It doesn't have to be a plain old boring folder... be creative! I added a Ghirardelli chocolate square to ours, along with a label below it that reads "Good communication skills sweeten your confidence level" – it adds a touch of fun and grabs their attention (there aren't too many people that don't like a little chocolate treat!)

What do you want your prospective new members to remember about your club? Ideally you will want to include the following:

- ✓ The day, time and location of the meeting, on a magnet or business card they can keep handy to remind them when to come back
- ✓ Include contact information of club officers (we have ours on the back of the meeting reminder card – see examples, right)
- ✓ A welcome letter from your club President
- ✓ A Toastmasters International Membership Application form (Available for download at <http://www.toastmasters.org/fupload/media/400-MembershipApp.pdf>)
- ✓ The Benefits of Toastmasters (Order a set of 25 at no cost at <http://www.toastmasters.org/store/item.asp?Category=16&SubCategoryID=&GroupID=&SKU=354>)
- ✓ Information about the educational tracks they can follow as a member (Info available online at: <http://www.toastmasters.org/education.asp>)
- ✓ Personalized club fliers, brochures, etc.
- ✓ Your club's newsletter, if you have one



It is also a good idea to include a guest information form – make sure you have your guests complete this on their visit and leave it with you; it allows you to follow up after their visit. A simple form that includes the following will provide you with follow-up contact information:

- Ø Guest name and date of visit
- Ø Phone number
- Ø E-mail address

You may want to include a simple question like “What encouraged you to attend our Toastmasters meeting?” or “How did you hear about our club?” These will help you as you track your PR efforts.

Location, Location, Location... you hear this in realty all the time. But the location or layout of your information in the folder is also important. The welcome letter should be up front on one side, followed by a membership application. On the opposite side (if you are using a two-pocket folder) have your guest information form right up front. Make sure you show this to your guest and ask him or her to please complete and leave it with you. If you use a single-pocket folder, a suggestion would be to have the membership application right behind the welcome letter. We place our information card in the pocket of the folder.



Keep an electronic “folder” of materials as well. You might discover at the last minute you do not have the packet available at your meeting. You may have simply run out, or perhaps your Sergeant At Arms is unavailable and the substitute did not have access to them. If your guests did not receive a hard copy folder of materials, be sure to get their email address and send them an electronic copy of the guest packet. In our club, we have everything that is in our paper folder available in PDF format so we can easily send if we find out someone did not receive a folder when visiting. It’s also wise to create in PDF format, as not everyone uses the same word processing program or the same version. Anyone can download a free copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader to view PDF files. There are software programs out there as well that allow you to turn any print job into a PDF file; you don’t necessarily need Adobe.

Finally, keep it fun! Your guests should feel a warm welcome when they visit. They should know that being a part of Toastmasters offers them a way to improve their communication and leadership skills, and that they can have fun with it as well! We felt that a little play on words with the “sweeten your confidence level” along with a piece of chocolate was just a little touch that shows our club’s fun side!