

Margaret Wan

also known as

Magic Wan



Every Meeting is a Show: The Role of the Table Topics Master

Prior to the meeting:

- ★ Ask the Toastmaster if there will be a theme for the meeting.
- ★ Prepare table topics questions related to the theme or on general topics. You may decide to mix both types of questions to avoid anticipation of questions based on the theme.
- ★ Questions should allow the respondents to expound on them and should require no knowledge in a specific field (e.g., do not ask someone to comment on the results of a football game unless you know that this person is interested in football.) Questions should be brief and simple.
- ★ How many questions you need depends on the size of your club and the time allotted to the table topics segment. It is always good to prepare too many rather than too few questions.
- ★ Arrive early at the meeting to finish last-minute details and settle down before the meeting starts.

Upon arrival at the meeting:

- ★ Find out who the program participants are, from the agenda or the Toastmaster.

During the meeting:

- ★ Do **not** start the table topics session by giving a speech yourself. Keep your comments to a minimum.
- ★ If guests are present, briefly explain the purpose of the table topics session, i.e., to practice thinking and speaking on the feet and to give every member at the meeting an opportunity to speak.
- ★ State the question before calling on a respondent. This way, you hold everyone's attention and add to the impromptu element.
- ★ Call on respondents at random. Do **not** go around the room in the order in which people are sitting.
- ★ Give priority to those members who do not have an assigned meeting role on the agenda. Only if time permits should you call on program participants (speakers last).
- ★ Do not ask a non-Toastmaster guest unless he or she has volunteered to participate **before** the meeting starts. **A guest put on the spot may never return!**
- ★ If a guest is willing to participate, do not ask him or her to answer the first question. Let a member demonstrate how to answer.
- ★ Watch the time based on the agenda and adjust the number of questions accordingly. Even if the table topics session started late, try to end on time.

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