

Understanding how to estimate speaking times and body movement is the Art of Staging Wonderful Events.

Timing and Staging a meeting:

The job of the Toastmaster is to moderate the meeting and does this by controlling the flow and movement of the events that happen in the meeting. When the Toastmaster creates the meeting agenda, the minimum and maximum times are provided for the benefit of the Timer. The Timer controls the timing signals (lights or cards). Thus, most people only look at the listed maximum time for the given speeches to determine the estimated times for running a meeting. However, other events happen during a meeting that should be considered in order to ending the meeting On Time.

What are the events that cause timing problems?

- Speaker goes over their time limit
- Meeting starts late
- The Toastmaster is long winded about the theme
- The General Evaluation team (as a whole) takes a long time explaining their duties.
- Introduction of the Speakers
- Staging the movement of the Speakers (anyone who talks during the meeting.)

The last two items on the list are generally the most overlooked items when developing timing estimate as to when a meeting ends.

So how does one do timing estimates?

Things you know: Meeting start time and end time (overall meeting duration), maximum speech times, the number of evaluators, GE evaluation, and the remaining reports (short < 1 min)

Here are my rules of thumb in figuring out the timing for a meeting.

For this example let us use the agenda with three speakers and assume that the meeting lasts for 1 hour and we start on-time (always assume that the meeting will start on-time.) Note the column on the right has the names replaced with estimates that I use for times.

Timing Calculator (note: I do not include the “hour : min” time frame except maybe the start, finish, and when the General Evaluator needs to start (this is to know when the meeting ends.)

Meeting Event

Time frame estimates maximum times

Sergeant at Arms	<= <u>30 seconds</u>
Toastmaster	<= Unknown A
General Evaluator (GE)	<= <u>2 minutes</u>
Timer, Grammarian, Ah Counter,	Sum of Team Explanations
Evaluator 1, Evaluator 2, Evaluator 3	
	<= <u>2.5 minutes Net time</u>
Speaker number 1	<= <u>11.25 minutes</u>
Time: 8 to 10 minutes.	[max speech time] + Introduction and movement to the front

[10 minutes + 30 seconds (runs over time)] + 45 seconds

Speaker number 2 <= 8.25 minutes

Time: 5 to 7 minutes <= 19.5 minutes Net time

Speaker number 3 <= 8.25 minutes

Time: 5 to 7 minutes <= 30 minutes Net time

Table Topics <= Unknown B

Time 1 – 2 Minutes assume about 2 minutes 30 seconds per Q and A

General Evaluator

Each Evaluator time limits (2 – 3 minutes) <= 3.75 minutes per evaluations

[3 minutes report + 30 seconds over] + 15 seconds movement

3 Speeches means 3 evaluators 3.75 * 3 = 11.25 minutes

Timers Report <= 30 seconds (assuming they stay at their seat)

Grammarians Report <= 30 seconds (assuming they stay at their seat)

Ah Counters Report <= 30 seconds (assuming they stay at their seat)

General Evaluator meeting Report <= 3 minutes

2 minute report + 30 seconds move to front and back to seat

<= 15.75 minutes Net time

Toastmaster <= Unknown C

End the meeting

The sum of all Net times is for this example about 46 minutes, which leaves 14 minutes for Table Topics and Toastmasters theme. Some of the transition movement is available for Toastmaster theme.

Unknown B time should end as close to 15 minutes before the end of the meeting to allow for reports.

If the speakers use less time than the above allocated estimate than you have bonus time for more Table Topics or closing the meeting on time or early.

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