



Public Speaking Tips

Many skills are important to being an effective leader. However, many people assess leader's abilities by their ability to speak publicly. It is for this reason that a resource is provided for use in becoming a better public speaker.

Speeches are usually classified into one of three categories, Impromptu (1-2 min), Standard (2-7min), or Keynote (7+ min). Each of these speeches are very different, but here are some universal tips, as well as a few specifics for each individual type of speech.

The first thing to know about public speaking is that you are responsible for what you say. No one else should ever be held accountable for the words that come out of your mouth during a speech. You have been given a special opportunity, and you should treat it as such. But also keep in mind that if you are giving a speech, it is your time to impart a specific message to your audience. It is for this last reason that in making a speech it is best to start at the end.

Before beginning the preparation for any speech you must ask yourself these questions; "Who is my audience?" and "What do I want my audience to take away from this speech?" Once you answer these questions, you can begin the actual development of your speech.

Become an Expert

With your end result in mind, it is now your job to become an expert on your topic. Research what you are to be speaking on so that you have as much knowledge as possible and can be confident in what you will say. The Internet, magazines, books and people in the field of your chosen topic are excellent resources for information to help make you an expert on the field. While researching, it is important to look for quotable information that you may cite in your speech as this can add impact to your message. However, one of the most valuable resources you have is your own experiences, especially for impromptu speeches.

Organize and Write

For many people this is the most difficult and strenuous part of the entire speech, putting it together. In reality, this should be the easiest part if you have followed the right steps in getting here. Here are some things to remember that will make writing the speech easier:

- ALWAYS KEEP YOUR END RESULT IN MIND!
- Use the speech sandwich:
Tell them what you are going to tell them
Tell them
Tell them what you told them
- Design an attention-grabbing introduction, which gets the audience's attention and a conclusion which emphasizes the lasting message that you want your audience to leave with as these are the parts that make impressions
- State the main points that you are talking about in the introduction and restate them in the conclusion. Have no more than 3 main points, and support them with experiences and quotes
- Personal Tip: Record everything you want to say into a tape recorder and play it back slowly as you record the parts of your speech on a word processor and move them around to create your final masterpiece

Practice

The most important part of public speaking is actually the delivery. You may have written the greatest speech ever, but if it is delivered poorly no one may even pay attention to your message. So to avoid this pitfall of public speaking there is only one solution, PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE! The most important part of practice is that it must be out loud. The reason for this is that you are able to hear parts that don't sound quite right and find areas that give you trouble. Even more so, the more often you give the speech the more comfortable you will become with giving it, and during your presentation you will look comfortable. Some other tips to think about when practicing are as follows:

- Elements of public presentation: eye contact, gestures, body language, tone, pace, inflection & enunciation/clarity.
- Memorize your speech if you can, but always carry a hard copy with you.
- Personal Tip: double and triple space your hard copy in large font for easier viewing.

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- Care about what you say, otherwise no one else will.
- Be willing to take criticism from people, and evaluate whether or not you will implement it.
- Find someone who is an experienced speaker to help critique you and improve your delivery.

Impromptu

Unfortunately, most impromptu speeches cannot be practiced, but you can practice giving impromptu speeches and this will help your mind work when you must give the real one. Use many of these same strategies for developing the ideas that will fit into your speech and create a quick outline of how you want the speech to flow.

Standard

This is the most common type of speech that people give and can often pose a lot of difficulty. Use the speech sandwich as much as possible when giving this type of speech. Have strong main points, a strong introduction and a lasting conclusion.

Keynote

Quotes and stories are the key to making a speech of this length keep the interest of the audience. Also consider ways to involve the audience in your speech.