



Public Speaking Made Easy

- Understand the purpose of the presentation
- Keep the message clear and concise
- Be prepared
- Be vivid when delivering the message

Understand what you want to achieve

Before you start working on your talk or presentation, it's vital that you really understand what you want to say, who you want to tell and why they might want to hear it. To do this, ask yourself: **Who? What? How? When? Where? Why?**

Who are you speaking to? What are their interests?

- Evaluate the audience you are speaking to. Prior to the speaking engagement evaluate who you will be talking to and what they will want out of your presentation. And be sure to use language that the audience will understand.
- What audiences want:
 - Learn something new
 - Be inspired
 - Hear something about you
 - Get practical tips and advice
 - Obtain resources
- What audiences don't want
 - A speech
 - Perfection
 - To listen to you read
 - To know how you're feeling
 - Fancy language

What? What do you wish to communicate? What are you asking them to do:

- Spread the word about your organization
- Make a donation
- Volunteer
- Write notes that will jog your memory. Do NOT write the entire presentation. Write out the three key points that you want to convey to your audience, or the three action steps you want them to take.

How? How can you best convey your message? Language is important here, as are the nonverbal cues. Choose your words and your nonverbal cues with your audience in mind. Plan a beginning, middle and an end to your presentation. If time and place allow, consider and prepare audio-visual aids.

- Create a strong opening
 - Capture their attention quickly (between 8-20 seconds to do that)
 - Startle them with statistics or facts
 - Ask them a question to get them involved
 - Memorize your opening so you are not looking at notes
- Middle
 - Tell stories
 - Give examples
 - Use quotes from reliable resources
 - Add humor if appropriate
- Closing
 - Transition
 - Repeat key points of the presentation
 - Ask for a call to action
- Be conscious of physical appearance. Dress well and don't wear loose jewelry that makes noise. Always stand up while doing your presentation. Be conscious of your facial expression and gestures.
- Maintain eye contact with the audience. Pick out a few people in the audience that look friendly and focus your eye contact on them. Don't forget to look toward the back of the room, as well.
- Use plenty of emotion and passion. Don't be afraid to use energy and passion when speaking. Get excited!
- Speak in front of a mirror. Try to practice your presentation beforehand so that the first time you speak is NOT in front of the audience. Practice by speaking in front of a mirror and/or videotape your presentation so you can get an idea of how you appear to the audience. Use cue cards if not using a PowerPoint presentation.
- Emphasize key words in your presentation. When I give presentations, even now, I underscore key words and phrases that I want to emphasize during the presentation. Nothing will put the audience to sleep faster than giving a monotone, flat presentation. Be mindful of your pitch, volume, speed and inflection, projection and enunciation.
- Take a deep breath first. When going up to the podium to speak, stop for about three seconds and catch your breath, take a deep breath, and scan the audience. . .then begin speaking.

When? Timing is important here. You need to know how much time you have for your presentation. Develop a sense of timing, so that your contributions are seen and heard as relevant to the issue or matter at hand. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent.

Where? What is the physical context of the presentation?

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before your presentation.
- Check how the room is set-up
- Check audio equipment and make sure you are heard
- Check the video equipment and the PowerPoint presentation you are using

Why? In order to convert hearers into listeners, you need to know why they should listen to you – and tell them if necessary.

- Know the audience before you give the presentation
- Research your subject
- Interview people as needed about what you will be discussing
- Make sure you leave your audience with a call to action do *something* such as volunteer, donate money, make a phone call to a legislator, or even to think about a new idea.
- What is in it for them?
- If you are going to give out handouts and it is a copy of the presentation, give it out at the beginning of the presentation.
- If there is additional material, give that out after the presentation

Other Stuff: How to handle questions and objections

- Listen carefully
- Always repeat the question
- Keep your response brief
- Don't get defensive
- If you don't know the answer tell them you will get back to them

Resources:

Toastmasters, www.toastmasters.org

National Speakers Association (NSA), www.nsaspeaker.org

NSA – NJ, www.nsa-nj.org

Bohse & Associates, www.bohse.com