

96 Tips

on

Public Speaking

By

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Introduction

Speaking in front of a group is the number one fear of most adults in the Western World. Surveys carried out in America show public speaking as the number one fear and death as the number three fear. If this is correct then large numbers of people seem to prefer death to speaking in public. We can hope to reduce that fear with practice, although for many people it never really goes away.

Unfortunately most people never learn the **number one secret** about speaking in public. Most people believe that they should be able to stand up in front of a group and speak without being afraid, otherwise they are in some way a failure. The real secret is that most people feel fear when they stand up in front of a group to speak. You will find that this is a normal and natural response.

Do not aim to be able to stand up and speak in public without feeling afraid. Aim to be able to speak in public and deliver a good presentation while you are afraid.

One of the best ways to obtain experience and confidence in speaking is to join a local speakers club. Learn to speak and gain confidence in a supportive atmosphere.

When you stand up to speak remember that very few people in your audience would have the courage to do what you are doing.

This book will not take away the fear but the following tips will help you

to prepare and deliver that all-important first speech.

Best of luck

Stuart Lockley

Preparing A Speech

1. Preparation is the key to giving a good speech. Preparation will help you to overcome your nervousness and give you the confidence to address your audience. Of course as you become more experienced at public speaking the preparation may take less time. There may even come a time when you have the ability to just stand up and talk, but for now you must be prepared to **PREPARE**

2. Consider your own limitations and the style that you are going to use. Are you going to include humour, statistical information (in an easily digestible form), admonition, practical advice, reminiscences, stories or personal anecdotes? You must consider the style in the context of your audience. You would of course employ a different style when speaking at a stag night than when addressing the women's institute.

3. There are many different ways in which to write a speech and each person must find a method that suits his or her style and personality but the following approach may be of help.
 - a. Gather notes on the subject area

 - b. Read and absorb the notes

 - c. Put the notes on one side for a couple of days then write the structure of the speech

 - d. Reread the notes then wait a couple of days before filling in the detail

and writing the first draft.

- e. Keep modifying the speech until you are happy with it.
 - f. Put the speech on one side for a few days then read and make sure that you are still happy with the finished product.
4. Consider the audience and ensure that both the content of the speech and the style of delivery will be suitable for them. The style of the speech will be just as important for getting your message across as the words that you speak. With the wrong style you will lose your audience and they will not listen to the message.
 5. Decide on the purpose of the speech. Do you wish to entertain, inform, introduce new ideas, or are you going to challenge the audience to think? The purpose of the speech will have a considerable effect both upon the content and the delivery.
 6. Develop a good title for the speech. A well thought out title can attract the attention of the audience even before you begin to speak. A good title can hold interest during the introduction while you grab the attention of the audience. Chose a title for the style of speech, it may be dramatic, humorous or simply create curiosity but it should be aimed at gaining the interest of your audience.
 7. Record your speech and play it back. This will give you a good idea of how you sound when speaking, where to put emphasis, or to insert a pause. This may be of particular use if you are an inexperienced speaker.

8. Establish how long the speech must be then use a stopwatch in order to ensure that your speech is the correct length. A speech of the wrong length will cause you distress when you deliver it. If the speech is too long you will begin to rush, if too short you will begin to spread it out. Both situations will reduce the impact of the speech and leave you unhappy.

9. When timing the speech you must deliver it as you will on the night. The time taken to deliver a speech is always different to the time taken to read it. Recording your speech and then playing it back will help in establishing its length. Remember that when you are delivering the speech for real you may be nervous and either speed up or slow down. Do not attempt to create a speech that meets length of time because you will be unlikely to succeed.

Mean What You Say

10. It is important to be sincere and at least while delivering the speech you need to believe what you are saying. If you do not believe what you are saying you are unlikely to come across as sincere and if you do not appear sincere to your audience then your message will be lost.
11. Decide what emotions you are going to appeal to. Are you going to rely on sympathy, pride, logic or some other emotion? Write your speech accordingly. If you are able to bring an emotional content into the speech the impact upon your audience will be greatly enhanced. Most people respond to emotion better than facts. Even if your speech is going to be factual consider using emotion to grab the attention of your audience before launching into the facts you wish to present.
12. Decide upon the best approach to convince your audience. Will you use a reasoned argument with supporting facts in order to appeal to people's logic, or will you make a blatant appeal to emotions? Of course the very best speech will combine both approaches.
13. Use suitable language and emotion to support your arguments. If you feel anger or sadness over some particular point do not be afraid to show it. People will often respond to and remember controlled passion even if they do not remember all that you said.
14. A strong robust style may not suit every speaker or every speech. You may find that a quiet, thoughtful persuasive style suits either you Or the

particular speech best. Do not try to be something you are not.

15. To show that you really believe what you say it is essential to have a strong conclusion. Your last words will be the ones most remembered. Ensure that your audience will go away with your main message clearly imprinted on their minds.

Speech Construction

16. Ensure that your speech has an introduction, a middle and an end.
Your speech should be arranged in a logical and consistent manner so that your audience are easily able to follow your arguments and are left in no doubt about what you have to say.

17. Tell them what you are going to say (introduction), tell them (body of the speech), tell them what you said (conclusion). This basic structure will always work.

18. Ensure that the opening sentence will grab the attention of the audience. Once you have their attention use the remainder of the introduction to build interest. If you do not get the attention of your audience during the introduction you may not get their attention at all throughout the speech.

19. Build the body of the speech in a concise logical manner that is easy for the audience to follow. If the audience cannot follow the logic of your speech they will be left behind and your message will not get across. Once you have lost your audience getting them back is very difficult.

20. Decide on the main headings that you will use in the body of the

speech. Be sure to pay attention to the linking between each section of the speech. It is important not to leave the audience behind when you change tack in the middle of a speech.

21. Develop your ideas over a period of time before you begin to write.

Do not discard any early ideas as they can sometimes prove to be the most useful. Most speeches will take time to prepare and it is unlikely you will be able to write a finished speech at one sitting.

22. There is no single 'right' way to develop a speech but it often makes sense to write the body first and then to add the introduction and conclusion. Some people find it easier to write the conclusion first and establish the main message of the speech before writing the remainder.

23. Ideally your speech will be constructed to read as you would speak and not in the way that you would write an essay. If you attempt to write an essay and then deliver it as a speech your audience will find your delivery strange. After you have drafted the speech you should take time to review and modify where necessary to provide a natural 'spoken' feel.

24. It is essential that your arguments in the main body of the speech are arranged in such a way as to lead naturally to the conclusion that you intend to make. The conclusion is the climax of the speech. This is

the part your audience is most likely to remember. The beginning and body of your speech exist simply to lead to the conclusion.

25. Add interest to the speech by changing the pace. It is always necessary to consider how you will maintain the interest of the audience. A change of pace is one way to do so.
26. The introduction must grab the attention of your audience. You must put them at their ease while conveying your competence and increasing your own confidence. You can grab attention by using some of the following techniques:

Quote a saying or a famous prose.

Deliver an anecdote.

Being humorous.

Asking a rhetorical question.

Making a 'shock' statement.

Stating an unusual fact.

Delivering a strong or emphatic statement.

However you develop your introduction it is essential to ensure that it flows naturally into the main body of the speech.

27. Your conclusion must provide a powerful statement, which summarises the arguments of the speech, and leave's the audience in no doubt as to the message you wanted to deliver. Your conclusion may be the only part of the speech that people remember. Make it memorable if at all possible.

28. Do not begin the introduction with a shopping list of what is going to follow. The purpose of the introduction is to grab the interest of your audience so they will listen to the body of the speech.

29. Do not attempt to squeeze too much material into your speech. It will only become crowded and lose impact. Most people do not wish to listen to large amounts of detail in a speech. Stick to a few main points and ensure you get your message across.

30. Do not apologise for anything, unless you have arrived late or lose your voice. An apology leaves you appearing weak and wishy washy and your audience will not have confidence in the message you deliver.

31. Do not say that you are the wrong person to be giving this talk or indicate that you have not prepared properly. Do either of these things and your speech will fail to impress because your audience will lose confidence in you. If you do not have confidence in yourself how can you expect an audience to have confidence in you?

32. Do not finish with “That is all I have to say”, “Thank you”, “In conclusion” or anything similar. All of these endings will detract from the main message that was part of your conclusion.

Use Of Gestures

33. Remember that when you stand up to speak the way you look, the way you stand and the way you sound will be just as important, if not more so than what you say. If your initial presentation is not right then you can lose the audience before you start.

34. Ensure that you are dressed in an appropriate manner for the audience you are about to address. If you are going to deliver a speech to a group of businessmen there is very little point in turning up wearing a pair of jeans and an old T-shirt.

35. Aim to make all gestures compliment the voice and the relevant point in the speech. All gestures are a supporting act that adds emphasis to your speech. Practice them so they are delivered naturally.

36. In a large room gestures become more important because the people at the back are unable to see facial expressions. Ensure that gestures are expansive enough for everyone in the audience to see them.

37. When you first stand up to speak adopt a positive and erect stance while attempting to remain relaxed. This will make you feel more confident and at the same time instil confidence in the audience. If the audience have confidence in you because of the manner in which you present yourself they are more likely to have confidence in the

message you are delivering.

38. Find something natural to do with your hands but do not clasp your hands or grip the lectern, as this will inhibit movement. Also try not to wave your hands about because this will detract from the message you are delivering.
39. Gestures need to be well timed in order to emphasise a particular point in the speech. It is important to practice gestures in the context of your speech if they are to appear natural rather than contrived.
40. Practice until the gestures become natural and just flows as if it were an integral part of the speech. An awkward gesture will attract attention away from your message.
41. Eye contact is important. You want each member of the audience to believe that you are speaking to them personally. Do not be afraid to move your head so that you are able to scan the entire room.
42. A gesture is meant to add impact to your words. Unless your hands are carrying out this task it is best to leave them still.

Use Your Voice

43. Ensure that you articulate words clearly. You can be proud of a local dialect but it is essential that members of the audience who are from outside your area are also able to understand what you say.

44. Ensure that the volume of your voice is sufficient to enable people at the back of the room to hear. Place a friend at the back of the room to test that the volume of your voice is adequate.

45. Vary the speed of your delivery in order to add interest and variety. Ensure that you master the use of a pause in order to add impact to your speech.

46. Do not be tempted to rush a speech. Go at an overall pace that allows your audience to keep up with you. Speaking too quickly is one of the most common errors for the novice speaker.

47. Concentrate on varying the pitch of your voice. Any speech delivered in a monotone will soon have the audience thinking about their next meal rather than the content of your speech.

48. Remember that acoustics are important. As the room increases in size

your voice will need to increase in volume. Bear in mind that curtains and people will absorb sound as will people. Your voice will not carry as far when the room is full of people.

49. Stand up straight and look at your audience and your voice will automatically carry further. Speaking while looking at notes will result in your voice being 'lost'.

Vocabulary and Word Pictures

50. Learn to emphasise your message by the use of carefully chosen phrases and word pictures. Word pictures will add depth and interest to a speech and hold the attention of the audience.

51. It may be best to write the first draft without concentrating on the language and then go back and make modifications to add colour and emphasis.

52. Use a thesaurus and search your passive vocabulary for interesting words that you do not usually use. Ensure that words you use are ones that your audience will recognise.

53. Create vivid word pictures to enable your audience to “see” the image that you have in your own mind. Also use words to describe smell, taste and touch. If you are able to engage all of the senses of your audience it will be easier to have your message remembered.

54. Never use jargon or technical words unless you are certain that your audience will understand. Jargon is likely to add confusion rather than interest. Use of jargon does not impress it only frustrates those who do not understand it.

55. Avoid clichés such as “leave no stone unturned”.

56. Do not use two words where one will do and resist the temptation to use long words just in order to show how clever you are. A simple picture is easy for everyone to understand and holds people’s attention. Big words will simply turn your audience off rather than leave them staring in awe at your brilliance.

57. Alliteration and repetition can be powerful ways to add emphasis as long as they are not overdone. A word or a phrase can sometimes be repeated two or three times in the course of a speech and add considerable emphasis.

58. Word pictures can appeal to a number of senses at once. Describing a meadow or a river can involve sight, sound smell and touch. This will enable you to make ‘contact’ with all of your audience. Remember that not everyone ‘sees’ things the same way.

Use of Notes

59. A speech of any reasonable length will probably require the use of notes. Few people would be able to learn an entire speech. Learning even a short speech is not necessarily a good thing. A speech that is learnt will lose spontaneity and hence interest for the audience.
60. The idea is not to read a speech but to have notes as prompts. A speech that is read will always lose some impact. It is very difficult to pay attention to your audience if you are looking down and reading a script.
61. Avoid having your notes on A4 paper. This is unwieldy and if they are held rather than being placed on a lectern they are likely to wobble about and detract from your speech. A4 notes can also be very difficult to move around on the lectern.
62. Put your notes onto 3" x 5" cards. These are easy to hold and read from and will not distract your audience.
63. Highlight key words and phrases in your notes so that you can see them at a glance. The purpose of notes is to provide a prompt rather than the full text of a speech

64. Ensure that the typeface for your notes is sufficiently large to be easily read. Are you going to be reading with or without your glasses? Use the appropriate size typeface.

65. Notes are there to help you not prove to be a straight jacket. You are allowed to deviate from your notes should the need arise. The better you know your subject the easier it will be for you to deviate from your written notes while delivering your speech.

66. Many people like to write their speech out in full rather than use notes. Be sure that the text is large and double-spaced so that it will be easily read. Highlight key phrases and passages so that they will not be missed.

67. Do not speak while you are looking at your notes. When you need to look at your notes take your time and look at them deliberately then look back up at your audience and re-establish eye contact before you begin to speak.

68. Never hold your notes if you are able to use a lectern. You need your hands for gestures. If you are holding notes they will inevitably attract the attention of your audience unless you are very careful.

69. Never put your notes on a table as they will be too far away and difficult to read. You should never put yourself in the position where you have to struggle to read your notes.

70. Do not continually take your glasses on and off in order to read your notes. It would be much better to either leave your glasses on or off and prepare your notes using an appropriate sizes text.

71. If you are in a position where you must hold your notes then ensure that you do not wave them around at your audience. Your audience will soon be paying far more attention to your note waving than to your speech.

Smile Please

72. Try to inject some humour into your speech but do not feel that you have to overdo humour unless that is the purpose of the speech. Unless the whole speech is meant to be humorous too much will simply detract from the message you are putting across.
73. Do not tell “blue” jokes. You are likely to offend someone and it is just not worth the risk.
74. Do not start a speech with a joke. If it falls flat you have left yourself with an uphill struggle to recover. A memorable opening to a speech is required but that does not have to be a joke.
75. Remember that a string of jokes is not a speech. Use humour appropriately to lighten the mood and add emphasis to the message.
76. Do not use any humour that relies on specialist knowledge. It is likely to go over the heads of most of the audience.
77. In some situations such as an after dinner speech the audience expects to be entertained and hence a substantial part of the speech must be given over to humour.

78. Take time to ensure that your humour is pertinent too your audience. There is little point using humour that will offend sections of the audience. Consider what they have in common. Are they male or female, young or old? What goes down well with one group may fall flat with another.

79. Consider the mood of the audience. Are they fresh or tired? Are they about to eat, or have they eaten and drunk well? A tired audience may well need waking up.

80. Any humour must also be pertinent to the speech. Humour that does not fit the style and purpose of the speech will detract from the whole effect.

81. Timing is important with humour. Never rush and always speak clearly. When the laughter comes along always wait until it dies down before continuing to speak. Always allow the audience to appreciate the humour. As a result your speech may take longer than anticipated.

Visual Aids

82. Before you use visual aids in a speech ensure that you practice. The time to learn how to use visual aids is not when you are standing up in front of a group of people and are about to deliver your first speech.
83. If you are going to use technology such as computers, projectors or overhead projectors ensure that the equipment is working before you begin to give your speech.
84. Simply displaying text is essentially boring so find some way to make it interesting or keep it brief.
85. Keep diagrams simple and use colour to add emphasis.
86. Do not attempt to overload each screen. Any screen should be kept simple, clear and easily read.
87. Never display an image until you are ready to use it. If you do your audience will be concentrating on the image not on the words that you are speaking.

88. Always give your audience time to absorb an image before you continue to speak. If you do not provide your audience with time they will be concentrating on the image rather than your words.

89. Never speak to the screen always speak to the audience. If you speak to the screen your voice and message will be lost as you lose contact with your audience.

Delivering The Speech

90. When you first stand up to give a speech ensure that you stand in a confident, poised and relaxed manner. Take a time to engage all of the audience with eye contact and smile. Now start speaking in a strong confident voice.

91. It is essential to ensure that you maintain eye contact with your audience by constantly scanning the room. Making eye contact with the audience helps to make them feel part of the performance and keeps their interest in the speech. Lose eye contact and you will lose your audience.

92. Be careful to eliminate annoying mannerisms such as playing with eyeglasses or waving hands around. Such habits distract from the speech and let everyone know how nervous you are.

93. It is essential that you maintain eye contact with all of your audience. The effect of eye contact is to make all of the members of the audience feel that they are being addressed individually. Make a habit of constantly scanning the room.

94. Maintaining eye contact will enable you to judge the reaction of the audience to your presentation. You will soon come to realise how

many people are still listening to you and who is no longer paying attention.

95. Ensure that the audience is aware that the speech is coming to an end. This can be achieved by turning and addressing “Mr / Madame chairperson at the beginning of the conclusion. This is of course necessary unless you wish to be faced by a period of silence once you finish speaking.

Go For It

96. You might be nervous but then so is everyone else when they deliver a speech. Remember that most people in the audience would not have the nerve to do what you are doing. Act as if you are confident even if you are not and your audience will have confidence in you and you will feel much better.

About the Author

Stuart is dedicated to bringing the knowledge and experience gained during 24 years in business to help owners and managers of SME's to realise their dreams by developing their business.



Stuart has gained unique experience from working for blue chip multi-nationals, SME's and start up companies. His last post was running an SME in the service sector for four years, during which time the business moved from a loss to a profit and doubled turnover.

Following graduation from The University of Bath with a degree in Business Administration Stuart went on to qualify as a Chartered Accountant. An interest in all aspects of business rather than just finance resulted in Stuart obtaining an MBA from Henley Management College. More recently he has trained with Peter Thomson, Business Consultant and Chairman of Peter Thomson International, who is now regarded as one of the UK's leading strategists on business and personal growth.

At the young age of 40 something I have stopped counting the passage of time and decided that "the best is yet to come". I consider myself to be privileged and grateful for all that I have done in the past and all that I will have and do in the future.

I firmly believe that it order for each of us to experience the most from life it is necessary to keep growing our business and at the same time to grow ourselves. When we become bogged down in the day to day running

of a business it is easy to forget why we get out of bed in the morning.....

To have an enjoyable life.

Feel free to call, fax, email or otherwise contact me with questions, comments, inquiries or just to say hello.

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