

PERSUASIVE BUSINESS SPEAKING

How To Make Memorable Business Presentations

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Main Idea

Business executives who are effective communicators make more money. In addition, there is a tremendous amount of personal satisfaction and prestige that comes from delivering an effective speech or business presentation.

Business speakers should: Be thoroughly prepared, be brief, be interesting and then be seated.

Preparation is essential, especially delving into the specific interests of the audience so the presentation can be targeted precisely. Based on that preparation, the speaker develops a speech statement which describes the purpose of the presentation. A professional quality presentation has an introduction (10% of the total time) in which you tell the audience what you are going to tell them, the body of the presentation (containing the real meat of the presentation in the form of three main ideas, taking about 80% of your time), and the conclusion where you tell the audience what they have just heard (the remaining 10% of the time).

1. PICKING A SUBJECT THAT WILL APPEAL TO YOUR AUDIENCE

An effective speaker changes the focus of any presentation to fit the audience and make the subject come alive. To achieve this, the speaker begins with a clear picture of who will be listening to the speech or presentation.

The key principle in preparing to give any presentation is to know your audience. What you will say and how you will say it will vary dramatically depending on who will be listening. A successful speaker gauges the potential audience and make the information fit the listeners.

Another important step in preparation is to develop a speech statement.

A speech statement is one sentence describing the purpose of your presentation. It consists of the subject you have chosen to speak about, and why you have chosen that subject. The speech subject is audience specific and highly focused. The speech statement should be brief and concise. Everything in your presentation will be geared towards this speech statement, so it must be absolutely on target.

2. THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS - STRUCTURING THE PRESENTATION

A business presentation generally requires three specific structures:

1. An introduction - about 10% of the total time. The first thirty seconds of your introduction should make it very clear to the audience what you plan on achieving with your presentation. That is, you want to tell the audience what you're going to be telling them today.
2. The body of the presentation - 80% of the time. This is where you deliver on the promise made in your introduction. The body of the presentation contains the real meat or the heavy artillery. The major challenge in this section is to select and organize your material in the most effective manner possible. Focus on three main points which will be organized according to a pattern you select.
3. The conclusion - the remaining 10%. The conclusion must be memorable, and tell the audience what they have just heard. This is the time to recap and make a lasting impression.

3. TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE DELIVERY

The effectiveness of delivering a business speech or presentation depends on three factors:

1. Spontaneity. Being spontaneous makes your presentation fresh, lively and interesting. The best presentations come across to the audience as if the speaker was giving an impromptu chat just for that particular audience. Spontaneity is the opposite of a speaker reading a speech prepared by someone else. The ultimate objective of any speaker is to be well prepared but to come across with a high degree of spontaneity.
2. Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm enhances interest in a subject for the audience. Lack of enthusiasm conveys an attitude that the subject is dry and uninteresting. People like an enthusiastic speaker and will respond accordingly.
3. Eye Contact. Eye contact implies honesty and builds social rapport with the people in the audience. It also conveys enthusiasm and spontaneity. People like a comfortable level of eye contact in a presentation; it makes them feel involved.

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1. PICKING A SUBJECT THAT WILL APPEAL TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Main Idea

An effective speaker changes the focus of a presentation to fit the audience and makes the subject come alive in the minds of those in the audience. To achieve this, the speaker begins with a clear picture of who will be listening to the speech or presentation.

Supporting Ideas

The key principle in preparing to give any presentation is to know your audience. What you will say and how you will say it will vary dramatically depending on who will be listening. A successful speaker needs to gauge the potential audience and make the information fit the listeners.

To effectively analyze an audience, ask these questions of the person who issues the invitation to speak:

1. How many people are expected to attend?
2. What's the purpose of the gathering?
3. What will the audience all have in common?
4. Will there be predominantly men, women or a mix of both in the audience?
5. What sorts of educational or occupational backgrounds will the majority of the audience have?
6. Are there any social or demographic factors that will be shared by most of the audience?
7. What do the audience expect to receive from your talk? Motivation? Inspiration? Technical Information? Warm and fuzzy feelings?
8. Are there any subjects that should be avoided with that audience?
9. Are visual aids appropriate to the situation, and if so, what facilities are available?
10. What amount of time have you been allocated?
11. Is there any fee or honorarium involved?
12. What is the time and place of the presentation, and the contact details for someone who is organizing the program?

Armed with some idea of the setting for your talk or presentation, you can now give some thought to the task at hand. While doing that, keep some general principles at the back of your mind:

1. The more audience-conscious you are, the less nervous and self-conscious you'll feel. Keep in mind your audience's goals and expectations.
2. Use empathy and approach your presentation preparations from the perspective of your audience's problems, plans and ambitions. Ask: "If I were in the audience, what specifically would I want to get more information about."
3. Make frequent and conspicuous use of the word "you" in your presentation. This will make your presentation come alive in the imagination of your audience. Think about how this can most effectively be accomplished.
4. Think long and hard about the best way to tailor your presentation to meet the needs of the audience.

With an accurate picture of your audience, your attention should now turn to the next two vital preparation issues:

1. What subject to talk about.

This will be a mix of what you know best and what the audience expects or requires.

Most public speakers start with a broad topic, and then narrow in on one particular subject which will be of interest and relevance to the audience. That is, they look for one vital topic which cuts to the very heart of the matter at hand. By narrowing your focus as a speaker, you increase your effectiveness.

2. Why that particular subject.

The six basic reasons for giving a presentation are:

1. To inform

Providing and sharing information is the most frequently applicable purpose for business speaking.

2. To convince or persuade

Using information to establish credibility, you then want to logically appeal to emotions to get the audience to think differently about the subject.

3. To motivate or move to action

Convincing moves minds whereas motivating creates new actions based on new information or new ideals.

4. To teach, train or instruct

Training is hands on practical experience - learning through doing rather than just hearing about a subject.

5. To entertain or amuse

6. To inspire or reinforce shared beliefs

The final step in preparation is to develop a speech statement.

A speech statement is one sentence describing the purpose of your presentation. It consists of the subject you have chosen to speak about, and why you have chosen that subject. The speech subject is audience specific and highly focused.

Dominant Purpose + **Single Subject** = **Speech Statement**

Speech statement examples:

- Inform how to manage time more effectively.
- Motivate the management to purchase two new computers.
- Convince the shareholders the company is soundly managed and progressing well.
- Motivate the participants to take the time to donate blood.
- Inform the representatives how to win additional business from their existing clients.
- Convince potential clients that your product is an answer to their greatest problem.
- Motivate everyone present to assist in the forthcoming community project.

The speech statement should be brief and concise. Everything in your presentation will be geared towards this speech statement, so it must be absolutely on target.

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