

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

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Here are some established ways of ensuring that you will be an interesting communicator and people will be eager to hear that you have to say:

1. Do not be interested only in matter that concern you personally. Be curious about people, new methods, new ideas. What interest you is also true of other people.
2. Select the subject that you know others are directly interested in. With such a subject you probably need only present the facts clearly and economically. Others will do the rest.
3. Give your facts and comments vividly and concretely. Use words that appeal to the senses—words

that let your listeners see, hear, feel and smell that permit them to experience things for themselves. The late Sir Winston Churchill knew what he was doing when he promised the English Nation not "suffering, toil and sorrow"—but more concrete, stated this as "BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS".

Some Further Rules of Communication/Conversation

Taking the above remarks into consideration, here briefly, are some established rules of good communication/conversation.

* Don't confine your conversation to people you already know. Speak to strangers. You will be surprised how many there are in very situation who are eager to talk to you, if only you will draw aside the veil of privacy enough to let them in.

* Don't talk too much and monopolise the conversation.

* Don't interrupt while others are talking. If you stop him with something that sounds like a dogmatic retort, he is immediately going to be defensive, such as you would be.

* Never be positive and avoid direct contradictions.

* Don't focus conversation too much on yourself, or on your possessions. The most acceptable conversationalist talk about YOU and I.

* Be a good questioner, and ask questions one at a time. Let the other fellow answer one question before you ask another. Avoid questions that can be answered

"Yes" or "No"—in other words, get him talking.

- * Never try to make others uncomfortable by meaningless, exaggerated flattery. Also refrain from explanations of what is already perfectly clear. Both insincere praise and unnecessary explanation imply stupidity on the part of the listener.
- * Don't be stubborn and unwilling enough to change the subject when others are tired of it. You can easily fall into this trap without noticing it.
- * Don't take too long to get to the point of your story. Many people ruin a story by including non-essential information and unimportant details.
- * Don't plague a listener who is already restless or busy. It does not take an expert in human relations to recognise when a person would rather do something else than talk to you.
- * Don't assume knowledge which you do not have. Attempting to speak with authority with the backing of very little knowledge is a pernicious way of attempting to interest people.
- * Don't pursue a conversation that is tending to reveal the other person's private affairs. Very few can be pushed into discussing something which they do not want to talk about.
- * Don't treat opposing opinion with derision or contempt. Most matters are after all, only a matter of opinion. Unfortunately, we enjoy talking to someone who agrees with our views but tend to brusque with those who oppose our views.

The above-listed conversational faults have been selected at random, and are by no means complete. Perhaps you could supply more. One thing is certain, however, that if these points are practised, the quantity and quality of interest in your conversation in any situation should be enhanced.

Fundamentals of Public Speaking

Public speaking is an art of the oldest. To be effective, one does not require any special endowments of mind or spirit. All you have to do is to utilise the powers given to us by our Maker in the proper proportions and with the tolerance and

understanding of the people to whom you are speaking.

Practically all business men are equipped to take their part in the business conference, hold forth across the luncheon table, and proceed with their talking without any semblance of hesitancy when an informal occasion arises. Yet, when most of them are asked to stand before those audience in the full knowledge that they are waiting to hear what the businessman has to say, and are looking up to him to commence, something happens to our speaker.

This process usually resolves itself in a jerky, staccato oration, with half the necessary information left out, and a final retreat to one's seat-sore, humiliated and with eternal gratitude that, that job is finished.

Stage fright

All authorities consulted, although they may have differed considerably on other matters, are, unanimous on this one point. They speak with one voice declaring that the reason for this emotional "stage fright", is the inherent fear of failure that all men possess in varying degree.

Three important rules

There are but three rules to lean to completely banish all hesitancy and to enable you to prepare and present a speech to all kind and sizes of audiences with resultant activation and acceptance. These rules are:

Rule No. 1

Regardless of the size and status of the audience you are to address, ALWAYS thoroughly prepare what you are going to say. Imprompt speaking is as weak as it is spontaneous. The author doubts whether any speech that has been entirely imprompt has ever lived beyond the hour of its delivery.

Never make the mistake of writing a speech out word for word. This is a useless waste of time as the big problem in public deliveries is not to find the words to express the ideas we want to talk about, but simply to find the next idea in logical order to discuss.

List your major points, and then learn the order of those points only. Then rehearse conscientiously the speech with sitting comfortably in a

chair and again while walking with measured strides. When you know what you are going to talk about, you will be surprised how easily the words will come to express those ideas.

Rule No. 2

Arrange your facts and arguments in accordance with the rules of conviction. The following order and plan has been tried out in thousands of cases and is eminently suitable for all occasions:

The opening

Never open with an apology but always open on a steady firm basis. Also never keep your audience waiting to find out on which side of the fence you are, in the matter of the subject you are discussing. Tell them in a few words at the outset.

The narrative

This is the part your speech wherein you supply your audience with the origin and history of the matter you are discussing. Of course, there is no need for this section if your audience already aware of these facts. However, never fail to fill in the gaps for an audience that is only half aware of the background of the subject you are talking about.

The proof of your case

The author assumes that any businessman is well trained in making a deduction, from a set of facts, that is proved by those facts. On the basis that the truth, as you know it, is the most important argument you can advance to an audience; it will prevent you from making assumptions that remain unproved, and which your audience will not accept.

A few of the pitfalls in this section of your speech are mentioned.

Use of figures: Words have meaning and definitions best figures on their own have neither. A speech crowded with figures will ruin the best audience ever made. But they can be used effectively if they are shown in comparison with something that gives them their true meaning.

Furthermore, always remember that a statement—"a little over a half a million points" is much more understandable to ordinary people than "£501,369".

Humour: A funny story used by a speaker just to be funny and "get the audience into a good humour" is a grave risk that no speaker should take. Do you remember that joke that you heard which you thought was screamingly funny, and you went home that night and told the family, but no one batted an eyelid? What was wrong? You told the same story. Perhaps the members of your family were not in the good to see the humour in it, that you were in when you heard it. And that will probably be case with most of your audiences.

A more profound reason for avoiding these humorous stories is that your audience, if they do see the humour in the story, will probably continue thinking about it, instead of listening to the main message you have to tell them about. Avoid the alleged funny story—it may flop—it probably will.

Honour only your truth: As pointed out above, the truth is the most effective argument you have got in support of anything. Don't take liberties with your audience. After a lifetime of experience with them, I have found they will not, in general, accept unsupported statements.

There are a few other warnings to be given about this portion of your plan, but they concern the higher realms of oratory and elocution. If you will abide by the above rules you will present a complete case, particularly for businessmen and a case that they can clearly understand.

Conclusion

Sometimes called the "perorations", this section of your speech is considered by many authorities to your idea home in the form, and in a size, that your audience can take away with him. They will mostly do this, because there is an established rule that an audience remembers longest what they heard last.

Many speakers end on a note of weakness, leaving matters in this air, and many do not know when exactly to stop. They go on repeating arguments previously used and become tiresome.

Rule No. 3

Always aim to present your speech in a way that it will be enhanced, and not be ruined. Rise from your

chair slowly, go round the back of it, lift it bodily and put it back against the table, then straighten up and take your time before commencing.

Also never pace up and down while delivering your speech. This gets to a state where the audience will notice your antics before they will notice what you are speaking about.

Don't put your hands in your pockets or fold them across your chest. Balance yourself on your two feet and clasp your hands behind your back. This will make you face your audience squarely with your chin up. And don't forget no subject is so serious that you cannot smile.

Use your hands to gesture whenever it is necessary to make your meaning clear to your audience. Don't gesture at any other time. But always use gesture when you want to be emphatic and whenever further explanation than the words themselves is necessary.

Don't say "Thank you" at the end of your speech, the audience should be thanking you, which they no doubt will. Always be decisive in your conclusion, end on a note that the audience can remember. Walk slowly and deliberately to your seat and sit down.

Finally, there is one warning that the author gives to all public speakers. Never speak to an audience with words that they cannot readily understand. And don't "show off" your vocabulary by choosing the longest words you can find to describe a certain matter. There is a basic English word for every thought you wish, to transmit. Don't clutter up your speeches with anything else.

Speaking at a conference

Undoubtedly, as professionals you will be voicing opinions, etc. at business conferences. You may have the occasion at a conference to address the other conferences. If the latter is the case, observe the above rules for public speaking and come fully prepared for your talk.

The following rules apply to the larger part of conferences when discussion is the rule:

1. Realise the conference belongs to you.

2. Recognise the success of the conference rests partly with you.
3. Enter into the discussion enthusiastically.
4. Give freely of your experience.
5. Confine your discussion to the problem before the chair.
6. Say what you think and don't hold anything back.
7. Make your remarks impersonal and free from prejudice.
8. Listen alertly to the discussion.
9. Be patient with other members.
10. Appreciate other members' points of view.
11. Avoid monopolising the discussion.
12. Always assist in reaching decisions.
13. Be a good sport when the discussion goes against you.

If you study and practice the above rules you will become a most valuable conferee at any business conferences.

Conclusion

Finally trust yourself. You have something to say. Say it in direct straight words. The audience has libraries and newspapers at home. But they have not got you. They have come to hear you. Then give them yourself. And above all—**HAVE COURAGE.**

How and What to Prepare When You're Asked to Speak

The unpardonable sin in public speaking is inadequate preparation. By public speaking I do not limit the definition to formal addresses, from a platform at a scheduled time on a prepared, theme before a captive audience. I mean speaking on any point, to any group beginning with you and any one other person.

The difference between an effective speaker and one who is not is not their experience, or the creative competence of their ideas, but their ability to organise and prepare an effective address, both informally and formally. An effective speaker uses a relatively few simple tools of speech which greatly assist him.

Cicero once said there were five essentials in speaking:

1. Determining exactly what one should say.
2. Arranging the material in proper order and with good judgment.
3. Clothing the speech in well chosen words and carefully phrased sentences.
4. Fixing the speech in mind.
5. Delivering it with dignity and grace.

Let us look at these same elements in their 1967 clothes as practiced by the teaching methods of Toastmasters international.

I. The speaker

- a. He is at ease before his audience (practice achieve this).
- b. He is dressed for the occasion.
- c. His posture is erect.
- d. His coat is buttoned.
- e. He does not sway from side to side.
- f. He keeps his hands out of his pockets.
- g. He maintains eye contact with his audience.

II. The speech-delivery

If you do not believe in your material, your message, your objective, you cannot conceal this from your audience. There is difference between speaking and acting. Don't act the part when you speak. Audiences are extremely perceptive in knowing when you are 'performing' as opposed to speaking.

Every speech has three fundamental segments, opening, body, conclusion. Each has its own specific functions and must be organised to achieve its purpose.

The opening gathers attention, states the subject to be discussed, and gives the audience an understanding of purpose.

The body should be carefully prepared, and logically arranged statement of ideas the speaker wishes to convey. It should be divided into several main parts, two, three or four each part of which is a complete unit, so the audience will find it easier to keep the essential ideas in mind.

The body also represents a progression of ideas arranged in a pre-

ordained sequence leading to the pay-off the speech.

The conclusion is a summarization in a few brief sentences, the main idea from the body of the speech. It leaves a call for "action" according to the purpose. It also leaves an audience with a "long to be remembered" key idea when they leave.

Although more sophisticated patterns of speech organisation exist, it is recommended that they be pursued only after much study and practice in the other basis style, has been achieved.

We are not actors, orators or elocutionists from a bygone era. Yet to deliver a talk in a continuous tone of voice would be deadly to say the least. Each speaker must introduce a range of pitch and volume into his voice according to his ability and the emphasis be placed on the portion of the speech involved.

Having previously decided that your hands should stay out of your pockets, it now becomes necessary to say what to do with them. The fact is that studied and calculated use of hand gestures are among the most exacting, seemingly intangible, subtle, yet effective of techniques on good speaking. The essentials of effective gestures may be concealed by their forms, their positions and the significance of each. You normally combine a form and a position in actual use.

A supine hand—palm upward—addresses, affirms, permits, shows openness and geniality, connotes welcome or pleading, asking or receiving.

A prone hand—palm downward—covers, suppresses, prohibits, indicates secrecy and negation or disapproval.

Three major factors in a speech are how the speaker presents himself, how he delivers his address, and the specifics involved in opening and closing the talk. Here are ideas on how to arrange your material, ways to add tasteful sparkle, and suggested gestures which will help you be most effective. The author has put his ideas into practice at many AMS chapter and area meetings.

An idea (finger—extended—warns, threatens, points out, emphasizes and isolates specific things.

A clenched hand—thumb always outside—defies, challenges, denotes intensity, determination or extreme emphasis.

A vertical hand—palm turned upward 45% to wrist—drives away, indicates opposition or abhorrence.

Both hand used together compare, contrast, separate or join.

A speech comes alive when you introduce methods of making it sparkle. Some of the more common techniques are: humor, colourful word phrases, statistics, anecdotes, witticisms and epigrams, amusing definitions, unusual facts, biographical references (or autobiographical) similes—quotations, proverbs, and visual aids (a) charts, (b) pictures, (c) posters and slides.

III. The speech courtesies

- a. Always recognise the man who introduced you.
- b. Identify yourself with the organisation before whom you are appearing.
- c. Never, never apologise for yourself, your background, or the audience.
- d. Adhere religiously to the allotted time given to you. Never exceed that time, is fast, if you find yourself running to the end of your time, shorten your body and move in on your conclusion.
- e. Never close a speech by saying "Thank You". Delivering a well organised speech is the best thanks you can give them for inviting you to address him.
- f. Learn the names of the presiding officials, distinguished guests, and their proper method of pronunciation, so you can acknowledge their presence.

The information above is admittedly basic, but will give you some guidelines when you are next called upon to make a speech.

Client/Audience Psychology

A client/audience likes

(a) Simple English is a prime essential. Don't use words that are strange to you.

(b) Simple phrases, short sentence structure. Frequent pauses and rests. The audience likes to absorb one idea at a time. Simplicity is your guide.

(c) A knowledge of the subject. Don't attempt anything you are unfamiliar with unless you've done some research.

(d) A speaker who sticks to his time, complete your talk in the time allowed. Keep faith with your Chairman and audience. Speak to influence and please your audience.

(e) Sincerity, Don't bluff. State the facts. No speaker was ever yet criticised for being enthusiastic. Sure you'll feel foolish at first so what. Dig in and give them the deal from the heart.

A client/audience dislikes

(a) Too long getting started in to subject.

(b) Too much speech for the time assigned.

(c) Too many points—too much material—too much uninteresting detail.

(d) A displeasing voice—husky or harsh—monotonous—too low—stuttering—stumbling—indistinct—slurring—hesitant delivery.

Don't forget the audience is time-conscious. Use fewer words and present more ideas. The voice is most important in making your speech acceptable to the audience.

The Ten Commandments of Public Speaking

First:—Thou shalt not commence thy speech with apologies.

(don't warn your audience that they are going to be bored. They will find out soon enough).

Second:—Thou shalt not fill thy speech with statistics.

(Statistics are full and people do not—and will not—remember them).

Third:—Thou shalt not be overly sentimental.

(While "audience of one" may like considerable sentiment, those of larger numbers do not appreciate it usually).

Fourth:—Thou shalt not exaggerate. (Makers of exaggerated or highly coloured statements do not gain much. The way of the oratorical transgress or is hard and your vocal sins will find you out).

Fifth:—Thou shalt not be sarcastic or unfair.

(Audiences are quick to discover any trace of unfairness in a speaker).

Sixth:—Thou shalt not be dull.

(Why worship the false gods of the ordinary, the obvious and the common place? The word is full of interesting illustration, fresh facts and absorbing anecdotes. There is no excuse for a dull speech).

Seventh:—Thou shalt not murder the King's (or Queen's) English.

(No—not even criminally assault it' speakers should take the vow of vocal chastity and remain more or less true of it. Further the vocabulary problem can be solved by bringing the speaking vocabulary up to the limit of the reading one).

Eighth:—Thou shalt not wander from thy subject.

(The "reminiscent urge" often leads speakers into difficulties. Also do not "be reminded" of jokes and stories so much that your speech is weakened).

Ninth:—Thou shalt not steal the time of thy audience.

(Speakers who get up, unprepared or otherwise, and give their audiences nothing of value, interest or amusement, do literally steal the time of those they speak to. Here err ye not).

Tenth:—Thou shalt not be long winded.

(Have mercy on the audience. Why add to the sum total of human misery? Do not miss three or four good places to conclude).

Using the Microphone: Nature of the 'Mike'

The Mike is a help—provided we know its nature and provided we adjust ourselves to its nature. The mike carries the most delicate inflections and rich overtones of voice, to every listener in a large gathering which otherwise would reach only the listeners seated in the first few rows.

The mike, however, cannot improve upon the quality of its input. In fact, the microphone may only increase the obviousness of such faults as slurring, numbling, and general indistinctness. The microphone picks up and the loudspeaker reproduces all sounds made by the speaker.

ker. Even minor faults of voice and articulation are carried with their full annoyance potential to every listener.

The pickup can be multi-directional. Often the pick up is uni-directional. Where it is so, the speaker's area of movement is limited to the voice cone.

Using the Mike Tested Practices

Those who handle the mike to good effect:

- * Check it before speeches commence to see that it is working correctly.
- * Arrange a further check just before they speak (Two checks are better than one).
- * Make certain there is 'engineering' help to adjust amplifying equipment of their needs.
- * Make sure the mike is not too high or too low, adjust it before they begin to talk (any fumbling around with gadgets during a speech irritates the audience).
- * Adjust the distance between themselves and the pick up—this depends on the pick-up ability of the mike (often between 9 and 15 inches)—so that they do not 'blast' the ears of the listener—they watch the audience to see it is listening comfortably).
- * Stand still and certainly within the right range.
- * Keep their hands off the instrument (A slight tap on the mike may mean a loud bang to the audience).
- * Plan down gestures, nods etc., which tend to break the steady stream of voice into mike.
- * Talk as though each member of the audience were present in a small informal, conversational group.
- * Make a special effort to the distance (remember that you are mostly 'voice only' to the larger portion of the audience).
- * Stop speaking in case the loudspeaker system fails, until the fault has been remedied.
- * Request that the mike be set aside if they are sure they can reach the last man in the last row.

Reference

Dr. N. H. Atthreya's seminar on Public Speaking.