

N. H. Attthreya

**PUBLIC SPEAKING
COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

in a nutshell

A Practical Manual

M M C SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT BOMBAY — 20

48

PUBLIC SPEAKING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

N.H. Atthreya

Professor Atthreya is an author, educator, consultant and concerned citizen.

Dr Atthreya is the author of over 20 books on various aspects of modern management and self improvement. He is also the Editor of a monthly, "Management Ideas" which started in 1963.

Professor Atthreya is a leading educator on organisational, managerial, and personal growth. Since 1956, he has been heading a post-experience Continued Education Centre, MMC School of Management. He has conducted workshops and seminars for several hundred organisations, on a variety of topics, and to many levels of personnel, starting with Top Management. To be fair to his calling, he spends part of the year as a student, here and abroad—he attends programmes and makes study tours; he does not confine to a narrow speciality—his concern is the total and dynamic growth of an individual professional; and he takes time off for research; and he is constantly innovating so that the learning process can be a joy. He is a member of a number of national and international organisations; and he has been often invited to present papers at several international conferences. He is a visiting professor at NITIE and Administrative College of Maharashtra Government.

Dr Atthreya is a pioneer management consultant who started the firm Modern Management Counsel in 1954. He is a Past President of the Management Consultants Association of India. He specialises in problem-solving, opportunity search and Value Engineering Management. In professional circles, he is called "Mr Idea". His company's philosophy is 'complementing and supplementing concerned Management'. The company abides by a self-imposed code of professional ethics.

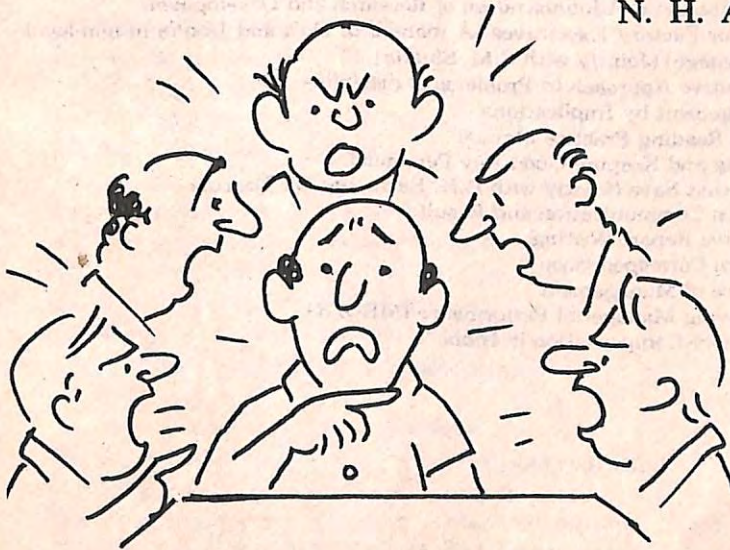
Professor Atthreya is a concerned and public-spirited citizen. He is the founder and Hon. Director of the Indian Centre for Excellence. He is on the Board of Jnana Prabodhini. He has served on a number of professional bodies and government committees. He has been an active Jaycee and Rotarian. He is listed in Who is Who in India, Who is Who in Asia and Who is Who in the World. He donates his professional services to non-profit organisations like hospitals a few weeks in a year.

Address: P.B. No. 11269 Bombay 400 020 India

PUBLIC SPEAKING COMMITTEE MEETINGS



N. H. ATTHEYA



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BOMBAY-20

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How to Select Well: Thought Processes, Techniques and Tools

The Executive Skill of Persuasive Listening

Organisation & Administration of Research and Development

Law for Factory Executives (A manual of Do's and Don'ts in non-legal
language) (Jointly with C.M. Shukla)

A Creative Approach to Problems of discipline

Management by Implications

Rapid Reading Practice Manual

Getting and Keeping Good Key Personnel

Ideas that Save (jointly with B.K. Batra and BT Dastur)

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My parents

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of the...
of the...

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Public Speaking — As Listeners Like It
by Richard C. Borden
(Harper & Bros., New York)

So You're Going to a Meeting
by Sir Walter Puckey
(Maxwell Love & Co. Ltd., London)

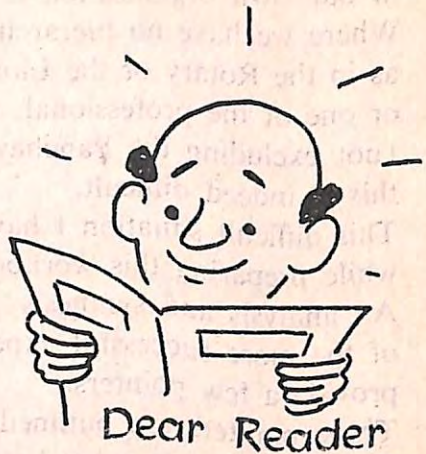
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The manuscript benefited substantially from the comments and suggestions of Mr. C. M. Shukla, Mr. Nissim Ezekiel and late Mr. P. S. Seshadiri. I am happy to acknowledge my gratitude.

The good friend who helped with the illustrations wishes to remain anonymous. A big "Thank You" to him.

N.H. Athreya



LIKE YOU, I have had opportunities of being a speaker and a listener, a chairman and a member of committees.

As a student of management-communication, I have been keenly observing who gets more results and who gets less — *and why*.

As a consultant, I have been called upon to observe, study and advise on executive communication practices in organisations.

As a course leader of communication training programmes, I have had occasion to share my study and observations.

“Communication is management”,

said one Chief Executive, presumably in his enthusiasm.

I will not go that far.

I agree, however, that communication plays an important part in managing men and things, in getting things done.

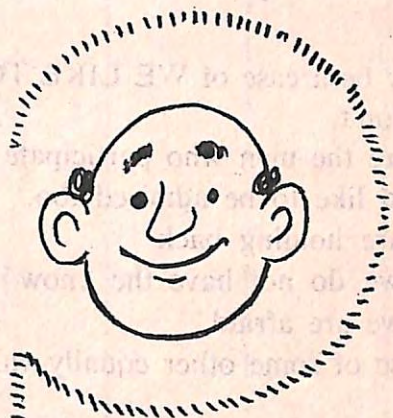
Relatively speaking,
communicating with men
in our own organisation is easy.
Where we have no hierarchical control over others,
as in the Rotary or the Lion or the Jaycee,
or one of the professional, civic or social bodies,
(not excluding the Panchayat Raj committees),
this is indeed difficult.
This difficult situation I have kept in mind
while preparing this workbook.
An analysis and synthesis
of the more successful experiences
provide a few pointers.
These pointers are outlined in this guidebook.
They can give us a head start
in acquiring some of the participation skills.
Skill cultivation, however,
is a long, arduous, though satisfying process.

Busy as you are,
you would like to read this book at one sitting.
That is why I have made it
precise, readable and easy on the eye.
It is true that *our* knowing or doing the right thing
is not enough.
Others too should.
If they do read this book,
may be, they will understand us better
and, may be, they will contribute better.
One thought, therefore, is
that we present them with a copy.
Implementing even one or two ideas outlined here
would mean a saving of hundreds of hours
in their career and in ours.

Bombay-20

15th June 1965

N. H. ATTHREYA



WHERE
ARE WE | I
NOW?

IF WE are members of a club or a committee
or are merely humble executives, we get occasions —
more as days pass by —
to do one or more of the items
listed on the following page.

What is the current status
of those items *vis-a-vis* ourselves?

It can be a case of WE DO
and we are happy about the way we are doing it.
Even so, we may not mind doing it
a bit better, if that is possible.

It can be a case of WE HAVE TO DO
and we do not quite enjoy the occasions.
If there is a way to enjoy them,
we would certainly consider it.

Or it may be a case of WE LIKE TO DO
but we don't.
We admire the men who participate and participate well.
We would like to be admired too.
But we are holding back
because we do not have the know-how,
because we are afraid,
or because of some other equally valid reason.

WHERE ARE WE?

This is a question worth asking
and worth attempting an answer to —
and this can be answered only by ourselves.

Since this is a guidebook for our personal use,
questions are posed
and blank space provided for our comments.
We may review the situation periodically —
today, tomorrow, next month, next year.



WHICH OF THESE? | 2

To introduce a speaker

To welcome the chief guest

To make an announcement

To give a brief talk

To propose a vote of thanks

To chair a committee meeting

To serve as the secretary to a committee

To participate in a committee meeting

To lead a discussion

To address a group over the mike

To

To

To

I do now	I have to do	I like to do



THESE
WHICH OF

A GOOD PROPOSITION | 3

ALL THESE we will be called upon to do.
These are aspects of practical leadership
in a democracy.

If we have to do something, it is better to do it well.

It will give pleasure to ourselves.

It will give pleasure to those who hear us.

It will give pleasure
to those about whom we speak.

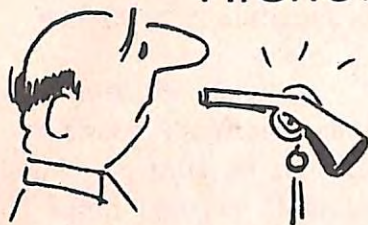
It will win the respect of others,
the goodwill of others,
and the following of others.

It will enable us
to get more done, better done in a smoother way.

Acquiring these skills is, therefore,
a good proposition.

I
FROM THE PLATFORM

USING THE MICROPHONE:



Nature
Of The
'Mike'

4

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, mumbling, and general indistinctness.
The microphone picks up
and the loud-speaker reproduces
all sounds made by the speaker.
Even minor faults of voice and articulation
are carried with their full annoyance potential
to every listener.

The pick up 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.

*Microphone ('Mike' for short) implies the entire set of microphone,
amplifier, loud-speaker, and even transmitter.



USING
THE MIKE:
Tested
Practices

5

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 to 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).
- Play down gestures, nods etc.
which tend to break
the steady stream of voice into the mike.
- Talk as though
each member of the audience were present
in a small, informal, conversational group.
- Make a special effort to be distinct
(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.

WHY
INTRODUCE
A SPEAKER
—AND WELL

6

WE WANT the speaker to give of his best.

We want the audience to get the best from the speaker.

Any move made to make these two objectives possible is worth it.

One such move is 'introducing a speaker'.

It is *to prepare the audience* to receive the speaker well.

It is to secure the highest possible degree of respectful attention.

It is to establish a harmonious speaker-audience relationship in accord with the nature and tone of the occasion.

There is no other purpose in introducing a speaker.



INTRODUCING A SPEAKER: Our Observations



WE HAVE witnessed a number of people introducing speakers.

In some cases we have approved the way they did it.

In other cases, we have disapproved.

Can we recall and review our experience under the following headings?

What we disapproved:

What we approved:

INTRODUCING THE SPEAKER: Some Guidelines

8

SOME GUIDELINES

THOSE WHO effectively introduce a speaker **do**

- Make it brief — 2 minutes or less ;
- Understand the audience psychology ;
- Commend the speaker to the audience
 - In a cordial manner
 - Referring to his background relevant to the topic of his talk ;
- Pronounce his name
 - Correctly
 - And audibly
- And STOP.



INTRODUCING THE SPEAKER:

The Audience Psychology

9

IN RESPECT of the topic and the speaker, the audience have a few questions in mind and the major ones are :

Why this subject?

Why this subject for us?

Why this subject for us now?

And why this speaker?

If we answer these questions satisfactorily *and quickly* we have done a good job of commending the speaker to the audience.

The subject, the audience, the time and the speaker are *variables*.

The accompanying examples can therefore be taken only as guideposts.



INTRODUCING
THE SPEAKER:

Illustration
One

10

WHY THIS
SUBJECT?

Lion President and Fellow Lions,

The whole world today is wondering how we are going to find the food for our mounting population. The past few months have shown that this is a grave national problem.

WHY THIS AUDIENCE? As civic leaders,
we are interested in the facts of the case.
Moreover,
we are interested in the ways out.
If the way out is only a possibility,
we can lend active support to it
at the experimental stage.

WHY THIS OCCASION? This year we have decided
to give special attention
to the food problem in our service activities.
We have decided to take guidance
from scientists, and others
with special knowledge of the subject.

WHY THIS SPEAKER? In our interpreter of
“This Food Crisis: A Way Out”
we are fortunate.
He is a scientist,
innovator and industrialist,
specialising in agricultural chemicals.
May I present to you
the Honorary Director of
the Institute of Hydroponics,
the Chief Guest of the evening,
Mr.....



**INTRODUCING
THE SPEAKER:**
Illustration
Two

||

Rotarian President and
Fellow Rotarians,

**WHY THIS
SUBJECT ?**

In about 30 years from 1925,
it has been reported,
that the percentage of deaths
due to heart sickness
has risen from 25% to 57%.
This is in the United States of America.
The same upward trend
obtains elsewhere in the West
and more recently in India too.

WHY THIS AUDIENCE? To us, heart disease is of more than academic interest. Most of us live a life that is harsh on our digestive and nervous systems. And the hectic life seems to have a relationship to heart disease. Or so we hear. Only learned doctors can tell us the facts.

WHY THIS OCCASION? In the past three months, three of our Rotarian friends had a mild heart attack and, thank God, they are fast recovering. The rest of us would like to take preventive steps and soon. We would appreciate guidance from authorities on cardiology.

WHY THIS SPEAKER? The query "Can heart disease be prevented?" will be answered today by a professor who has practical experience of the subject. He is an author, an editor, a fellow Rotarian, an international authority in his field. He is the president-elect of the World Congress of Cardiology. I present to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Chief Guest of the evening, Dr.....



IF A JOB IS WORTH DOING ... | 12

IF A job is worth doing, it is worth doing well.

According to Herbert V. Prochnow, author of *Effective Public Speaking*, a Rotarian who served as the President both of the Rotary Club of New York City and the Rotary Club of Chicago once said :

“The Rotary Club of Chicago met on Tuesday. Therefore I had a standing appointment at four-thirty Monday afternoon with the Secretary of the Club. We spent from thirty minutes to an hour and a half in planning and timing. Then with the biographical data of the speaker and any other who were to participate in the meeting, I spent such time as was necessary at home Monday evening preparing my introductions — actually writing them out in detail — then studying them. My notes were used only as a guide, and were not to be read. Tuesday noon, fifteen minutes before the meeting, the Secretary and I would double-check to determine any last-minute changes.”

We may not be able to emulate him.
We can certainly go as far as many in our country do.
They give special thought to brief the speaker,
publicise him, receive him,
treat him and thank him.

Even when we pay a speaker
we should extend him every courtesy;
all the more reason to do this
when we don't pay.
The speaker is doing us a distinct favour.
Being fair to him would mean
obtaining the services of more good speakers
and more of the good speakers.



MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT | 13

THE PURPOSE is to *inform* — about a forthcoming event.

A related purpose may be to ask for some *action*.

Though provided for in the agenda,
it is a sort of interruption.

Those who do it effectively are found to :

- Make it short
- Make it crisp
- Plan every sentence — they make every word count
- Plunge into the subject

e.g. “Fellow Jaycees,
here is some news for you”

- Name the occasion, give the place and date
 "6 June. Sunday. Sun Theatre. 10 a.m.
 A Walt Disney show at concession rates.
 For your children and their friends.
 You are welcome to join.
 Tickets: Re. 1/- each.
 You can have them from our office
 during working hours"
- Where special patronage is required,
 they distribute a piece of paper detailing :
 - What (proposal)
 - Why (logic and background information)
 - How (sought-for-action)
- Draw their attention to the piece of paper
- Emphasise specific response sought
- Request action on the distributed paper
 ("More and more of us tend to act
 only when we have a piece of paper to work on")
 e.g. "Uncared for foot-path boys call for thought.
 Someone is giving the needed thought
 in an organised fashion.
 Father Francis is doing a fine piece of work
 of looking after them.
 The details you find in the paper with you.
 You can 'adopt' one or more boys
 from the Sneh Sadan.
 It costs just Rs. 5/- per boy per month.
 Please fill the form, sign the cheque
 and hand it over to our office — yes, today.
 Thank you".

GIVING A
BRIEF TALK: | 14
Why Don't We?

SPEAKING ACCEPTABLY to groups large and small is an important leadership skill in a democracy.

We know this fact.

We know too that it is a case of matter *and* manner.

We have something to say — we have the matter.

We wish to say it well — but we don't.

Why don't we?

What does stand in the way
It can't be lack of knowledge of the subject
or vocabulary.

What else can it be — in *our* case?

Can we do some *self-analysis* right on this page?



GIVING A
BRIEF TALK:
Knowledge
Not Enough

15

ORATORY MAY be a gift.

Public speaking —

speaking acceptably to groups large and small — is not.

It is a skill like swimming, for example.

This skill can be acquired — it is being acquired
literally by thousands of people the world over.

It is actually easier for *us*
because matter is not a problem for us ;
may be the method of delivery still is.

The principles are simple and few.

But knowledge is not skill.

Skill we gain only by practice, enough practice
and (if systematic learning is preferred) guided practice.

We have to get used to the feel of the platform.

We have to get used to thinking on our feet.

We have to get used to facing an audience.

We have to acquire a sense of timing.

All these become possible
not by reading volumes of literature on the subject
nor by listening to hours of lectures.

They become possible only by doing it ourselves.

This guidebook is certainly no substitute for action.

Even without paying attention
to the focal points given here
some do speak on the platform.
Systematic development of this skill
will, however, show the difference
between public speaking and speaking in public.

On the accompanying pages is outlined
a course of action.

We can make it into a club project if we wish.



GIVING A BRIEF TALK:

16

— An Action Plan

- This can be a Fellowship project.
- We can form ourselves into a Public Speaking Group.
- This is a laboratory group, a self developmental group, where everyone is learning the skill *systematically*.
- The only competition is with oneself.
- The group can be made up of 12 to 20 persons.
- We meet ten times or more — once a week or twice a week.
- Each meeting can be of 2-3 hours duration.
- The place of meeting should be such that none of us are disturbed during the session. The meeting should be businesslike. Since practice is the cardinal element in this skill development, presence at each session and presence throughout every session is a must. It is more than a matter of courtesy — it is an act of self-interest. Our presence means support to our colleagues and learning to ourselves.
- Each session will have a leader. The leader for the session is chosen at the earlier meeting and from among the group.
- The leader will conduct the session. He will keep notes of who talked on what subject and for how-much time.

He will give a prepared 15 minutes talk on an aspect of public speaking.

Suggested topics are listed on page 34.

- This will be followed by each member of the group talking on a subject of his choice for 6 to 10 minutes (the exact time to depend upon the size of the group) plus or minus 1 minute.
- This is a prepared talk. We can have brief notes. We should, however, desist from reading a prepared paper.
- After the round of talks is over, each of us will give a 'lucky dip' talk for 1 to 2 minutes. This is impromptu. There will be no preparation time. Suggested topics are listed on page 34.
- We observe ourselves and others in action and effect such improvements as we deem desirable.
- We do *not* comment on others' performance.
- The leader, however, makes his comments on each speech on a slip of paper (one slip for one member) — but the slips are sealed and opened only one session before the last: by that time, most of the comments would probably have become obsolete!
- After this ten-session course is over, we can invite a specialist for a day-long session and get the benefit of his guidance. We can then get full value for the fees we pay him!



AN ACTION
PLAN:
Agenda For
Each Day

17

1. Election of a leader for the next session.
2. Fifteen minutes talk by the leader :
“Public Speaking Principles”.
3. Ten minutes prepared talk by each participant
on a subject of his choice.
4. One to two minutes impromptu talks
by all participants.

ON THE FIRST DAY

A copy of *one* of the books listed on page 35 —
the same book for everyone —
may be presented to each member.

It is not necessary but desirable
to study a text-book on the subject.

If time is a problem, this may be left optional.

Those who choose to read a text-book
should complete it before the course is over.



**AN ACTION
PLAN:
Topics For
Ten Sessions**

18

1. Why platform speaking for us?
2. Good preparation — why and how?
3. Audience psychology.
4. Essential elements in effective speaking.
5. How to open a talk?
6. How to close a talk?
7. How to keep your audience awake?
8. The question hour.
9. Voice and diction.
10. The variety of speech occasions.



HERE ARE some suggested topics for impromptu talk.

We can add to the list, to suit local conditions.

These topics may be noted on slips of paper, folded fourfold and kept in a 'hat'.

Each participant will pick 'his' subject for the day and give an impromptu talk for a minute — the maximum time allowed for preparation will be a minute.

If he gets the same slip a second day, he can take another subject.

One cannot excuse oneself by saying:

"I cannot talk on this subject; let me take another."

Suggested topics for impromptu talk :

- The first picture I saw.
- The book I love most.
- An accident I witnessed.
- My first pay packet.
- I won't do it again.
- The best advice I have ever received.
- What I like in children.
- If I had a million rupees.
- I was misled by an advertisement.
- My retirement plans.
- My favourite film star.
- I spent a sleepless night and why.
- I am still to figure it out why.
- Believe it or not.
- What I liked in Nehruji most.
- The most unforgettable character I have met.
- My most embarrassing moment.
- I was wrongly blamed.
- One idea that helped me to save.
- The best investment I ever made.



AN ACTION

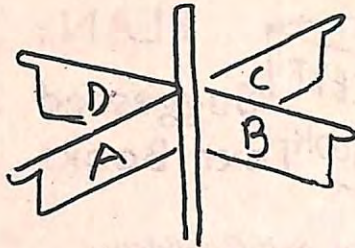
PLAN:



Suggested Text Books

20

1. *How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking* by Dale Carnegie.
Condensed edition. Pocket Books Inc.
2. *How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking* by Dale Carnegie.
(Unabridged). Taraporewalla & Sons.
3. *How to Talk Well* by James F. Bender.
McGraw Hill paperbacks
4. *How to Overcome Nervous Tension and Speak Well in Public* by Alfred Tack.
The World Works Ltd.
5. *New Training for Effective Speech* by Robert T. Oliver and Rupert L. Cortright.
The Dryden Press.
6. *Effective Public Speaking* (Original title: *The Toastmaster's and Speaker's Handbook*) by Herbert V. Prochnow.
Washington Square Press.



GIVING A
BRIEF TALK:
Some
Guide Posts

21

THOSE WHO DO WELL . . .

CHOOSE THEIR SUBJECT CAREFULLY

They choose a subject with which they are familiar or a subject in which they are deeply interested, preferably both.

This gives them, they say, a psychological advantage: they know more than the audience or/and they have unusual enthusiasm.

Depending upon the situation, they choose an aspect or two of the subject: they do *not* cram years of experience into twenty minutes.

Those who appear on the platform frequently prepare themselves for half a dozen or more talks. They may modify the title to suit the occasion.

ASCERTAIN THE NATURE OF THE AUDIENCE

They ascertain :

- the predominant age level and sex
- the general economic level
- the educational background
- the specials about the group
(attitudes, interests and status)
- the group's experience with previous speakers
- the immediate situation or occasion

ESTIMATE THE GROUP'S REQUIREMENTS

They estimate the group's requirements in respect of :

- Time
- Purpose
- Treatment
- Specifications

DECIDE ON THE OVERALL APPROACH

They ask themselves :

What shall I do — inform, persuade or entertain ?

Having set the goal,

they collect their thoughts on slips of paper
over a period of time.

They sort out these thoughts
and get them into a sequence.

They choose enough main ideas to fit the time.

BUILD UP SUPPORT FOR MAIN IDEAS

They choose appropriate statistics, analogies, quotations or evidences to support the main ideas.

ORGANISE THEIR IDEAS THROUGH AN OUTLINE

They write down main points which will apply to the following steps :

- The opening
- The body
- The close

They follow this outline, though they keep it flexible.

They write key sentences and the like legibly on 3×5 cards.

They *rehearse* their speech with the help of :

- a watch
- a mirror
- a tape recorder (where possible)

The watch, they say, tells them how much time they have taken ; the mirror how natural or tense they look ; and the tape recorder how they sound.

If these tools so suggest, they *rehearse again* — they do.



GIVING A
BRIEF TALK: | 22
A "Formula"

AFTER ANALYSING a number of acceptable speeches, Richard C. Borden has come out with a formula for formal platform speech.*

The four-step formula reads :

1. Ho hum!
2. Why bring that up?
3. For instance.
4. So what?

The first phase requires the speaker to arouse the audience's interest in what he has to say.

*I heartily commend to you the delightfully written book by Mr. Richard C. Borden. The title is : *Public Speaking — As Listeners Like It !* Publishers : Harper & Brothers.

— N. H. A.

In his opening remarks,
the speaker asks a question, tells a story,
uses an exhibit or startles his audience.

He does not open a speech
on Population Control, for example,
by saying: "I have been called upon
to talk on Population Control."

He says instead:

"Between now and the time I finish the talk
there would be 500 new arrivals in India
and every hour thereafter."

The second phase: During the second phase,
the speaker attempts to answer
the question the listener is asking:
"You caught my attention with your intriguing opening;
but why bring this subject up?
What's it got to do with me?"

Here is how a speaker motivated his talk on insanity
to an audience of parents:

"I invite you parents to consider this subject of
insanity, because *you* have most at stake.

"*Your* child, today, has almost one chance in twenty
of being confined to an asylum before he dies.

"And suppose your child escapes. *You* are still
affected. If your neighbour's boy is the victim,
records show that institutional life will claim him
for approximately seven years. The twenty-five
thousand bucks expended by the State during those
seven years, *you* will pay.

"Whether as a parent, or as a taxpayer, *you* are
vitaly interested in this subject of insanity."

The third phase : This relates to the body.

The body of your speech must be keyed to one relentless audience-demand, "*For instance*".

The speaker substantiates every statement or general assertion about the subject.

If the speaker claims that modern advertising is dishonest, his next sentences deal with tooth pastes, corn plasters, memory-training courses and fat-reducers.

The fourth phase : In this phase, the speaker tries to answer the audience's final question : "You have talked now for 20 minutes. *So what?*"

The speaker asks his audience for some specific action — some action response which it is within their power to give —

Contribute ! Vote !

Buy ! Boycott ! Investigate ! Donate !

One speaker concluded her talk on Blood Bank in this way :

"Gentlemen ! It is unfair to ask this of your hosts but I can't ask ought else. I want your blood. I want you to donate blood. I want your family members to donate blood. I want your company personnel to donate blood. You know now it is safe to donate blood. Next week my staff will be here — please bring the absentee members and their families too. At this hour of the Nation you cannot make a better contribution to the country's defence. Donate blood — right through the year."

**BORDEN'S
FORMULA:**

**Illustration
One**

23

BRUCE BARTON is urging an audience of young men to use their spare hours constructively.

My dear Jaycees,

Ho hum!

Last month a man in Chicago refused a million dollars for an invention he had evolved *in his spare time*.

Why bring that up?

You are interested in this because it confronts you with the possibilities of *your* spare time. Did you ever stop to think that most of the world's great men have achieved their true life work, not in the course of their needful occupations, but — *in their spare time?*

For instance!

A tired-out rail-splitter crouched over his tattered books by candle-light or by fire-glow at the day's end; preparing for his future, instead of snoring or skylarking like his *co-labourers*, Lincoln cut out his path to later immortality — *in his spare time.*

An underpaid and overworked telegraph clerk stole hours from sleep or from play, at night, trying to crystallize into realities certain fantastic dreams in which he had faith. Today the whole world is benefiting by what Edison did — *in his spare time.*

A down-heel instructor in an obscure college varied the drudgery he hated by spending his evenings and holidays in tinkering with a queer device of his, at which his fellow teachers laughed. But Graham Bell invented the telephone — *in his spare time.*

So what?

Gentlemen, you too, have spare time. The man who says: "I would do such and such a great thing, if only I had time!" would do nothing if he had all the time on the calendar. There is always time — *spare time* — at the disposal of every human who has the energy to use it. **USE IT!**

BORDEN'S
FORMULA:

Illustration
Two

24

FLOYD W. PARSONS is urging
an audience of depression —
discouraged business men —
to face the future with confidence.

Ho hum!

Fifty years ago an old gentleman resigned from the Patent Office because he felt his job had no future; he felt sure there was nothing more to be invented.

Why bring that up?

A great many of us today, standing in the shadow of world depression, feel like that old man of the Patent Office. For us, the wheels of the world have creaked to a stop. There is no future. Actually, *there was never a time in all history when the prosperity-creating forces of science and invention were as active as today!*

For instance!

The amazing new industry known as electronics has quickly developed into a billion-dollar business. The

simple little electron tube will give us high tension transmission by direct current over unprecedented distances — and will probably create, in power transmission alone, the need for tens of millions of dollars of additional equipment.

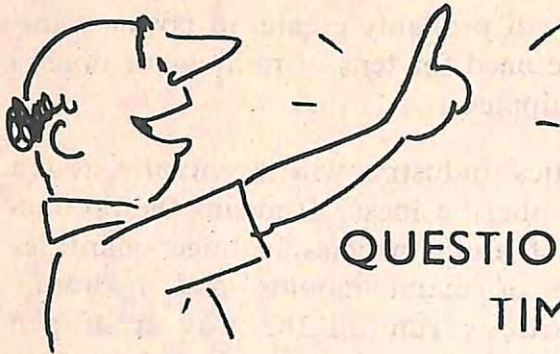
The infant plastics industry will eventually touch practically every other business. It means the production of millions of useful articles in huge quantities through the use of metal moulds and hydraulic presses. These articles run all the way from pen barrels to steering-wheels, from buttons and lipstick-holders, to furniture and imitation marble.

The immediate future will witness a revolutionary development in the use of new materials and waste materials. The ocean will be made to yield dozens of new values in the way of oils, iodine, glue, insulin, durable leather. The waste from wood-working plants will be converted into linoleum, toys, explosives, soaps, chemicals, and artificial fibers. An acid valuable in paint and varnish industries will be extracted from the wax-like coating of apple peels. Farmers will grow licorice for insulation boards, cotton for stationery and potato-bags, cotton stalks for rayon, weeds for rubber, sweet potatoes for a tasteless stamp glue, corn-cobs and corn stalks for anaesthetics, perfumes, flavours and pulp.

So what?

Gentlemen, it is a mistake for any of us to conclude that the world's work is done. Irresistible forces of invention are shaping a new prosperity. *Have faith in future.*

Reproduced with permission from Richard Borden's
Public Speaking — As Listeners Like It.



QUESTION TIME

25

ASKING QUESTIONS of the speaker is another aspect of worthwhile participation.

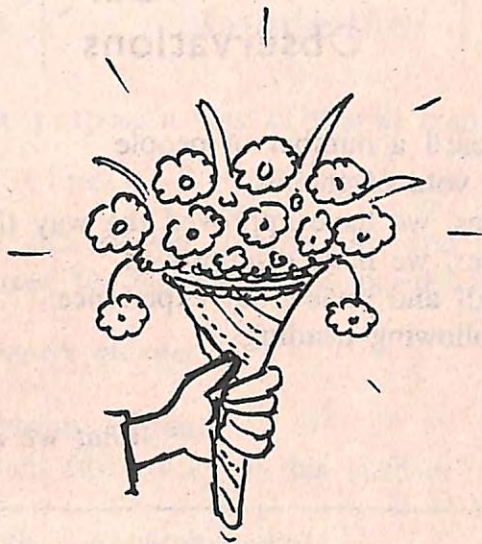
Questions are asked to break the ice, to seek clarifications, to have more of the speakers.

Those who shine at this hour are found to :

- come prepared with a question or two well-phrased ;
- pose the questions in a helpful fashion — they are never offensive ;
- proceed to the platform and state it clearly ;
- write it out clearly and pass it on to the chairman.

From the speaker's end, the following practices are observed :

- They anticipate what they will probably be asked and they have their answers ready ;
- They restate the question and then attempt an answer ;
- They side-step criminal heckling.



WHY PROPOSE
A VOTE OF
THANKS—
AND WELL

26

THIS is an act of courtesy to an invited guest.

The *purpose* is to make the speaker feel fine —
to make him feel we are a thoughtful group,
an appreciative group, a group worth meeting again

PROPOSING
A VOTE OF
THANKS:
Our
Observations

27

WE HAVE heard a number of people proposing a vote of thanks.

In some cases, we have approved the way they did it.

In other cases, we have disapproved.

Can we recall and review our experience under the following headings?

What we disapproved :

What we approved :



PROPOSING A VOTE OF THANKS: Guidelines

28

THOSE WHO propose a vote of thanks competently do :

- Make it brief — 2 minutes or less ;
- Thank the speaker for the time and talent he agreed to place at our disposal and that
in a hearty manner ;
- If occasion warrants, comment favourably on his speech
in fresh, well-chosen words ;
- Emphasising the follow-up arrangements which have emerged from the talk and
- Stop on that cordial note ;
- Not deliver another speech ;
- Not score a few discussion points.
(If he does, the poor lecturer has not really an opportunity of publicly replying, and in any case, it is rather a back-handed way of saying “thank you”)

PROPOSING
A VOTE OF
THANKS:
Illustration
One

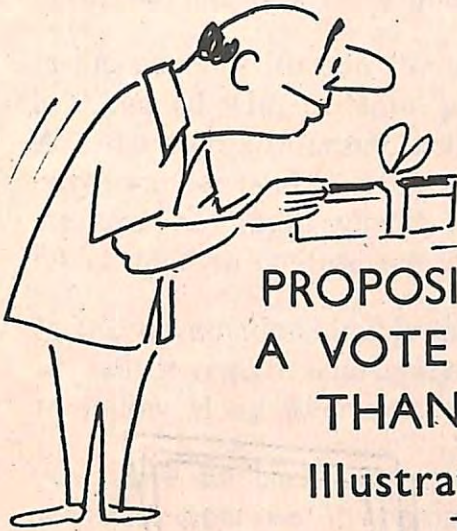
29

FELLOW LIONS :

This is the hour our speaker daily spends
with his experimental plants in his farm.
And it is so dear to him.
He agreed to spare *that* hour for us
and it is so kind of him.

Mr..... shuns publicity and platform.
He thinks : Action is the most eloquent speech.
It is doubly kind of him to have agreed
to expound his fascinating approach
to a knotty problem.
It is an eye-opener to all of us.

Thank you Mr.....
for coming and speaking to us.
We will certainly incorporate your suggestions
in our project for the year.
Thank you once again, Mr.....



PROPOSING
A VOTE OF
THANKS:
Illustration
Two

30

FELLOW ROTARIANS :

At call — 24 hours :

that is the nature of our speaker's profession.

We all know the demands made on his time and talent.

That he should have spared three hours for us is great.

We are particularly grateful to you, Dr.....
for this sacrifice.

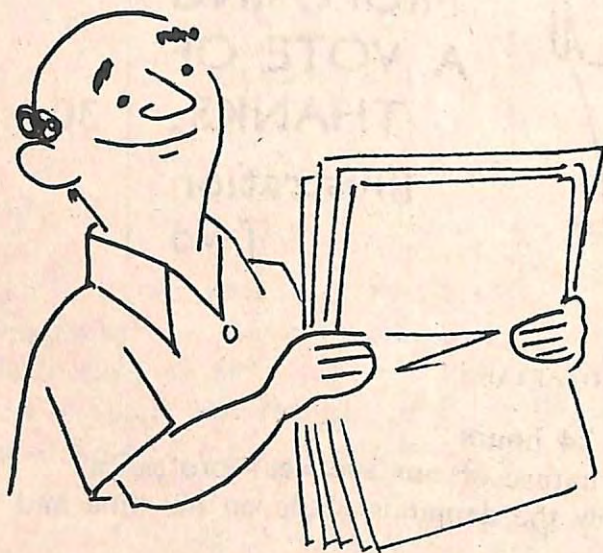
All of us enjoyed and benefited by your talk.

It was so lucid, so pleasant and so convincing.

You have given us and through us to many others
the preventive steps to be taken.

Thank you, Dr.....

Thank you very much.



PRESENTING A WRITTEN PAPER | 31

OCCASIONS DO arise
(as for example in a technical symposium)
when we have to present a written paper.
What steps can we take to make it easy for ourselves
and interesting for the audience?
Here are some tested suggestions:

AT THE PREPARATION STAGE

At the preparation stage
we may ask ourselves these questions :

1. Is the paper written in the spoken language or, is it loaded with pedantic phraseology?
Are the words informal, conversational and easy-to-understand?
Or, are they multi-syllabic monstrosities which tend to confuse the issues being presented?
2. Is the information double-spaced or, will it require a magnifying glass to follow along when reading?
3. Are there sufficient *cues* to insure that we will emphasise at appropriate intervals, that we will look at the group to establish a feeling of rapport with them?
What are some of the commonly used cues?

- (a) To insure that you won't read too rapidly, use a series of dots or dashes after the phrase requiring a pause.

Example : "This item is most important to all of us . . . and we should be aware of the fact".

- (b) To cue for a repeat, (for emphasis), underline the word or phrase or follow it with the word REPEAT in capital letters and underline.
- (c) To insure that you look at the audience and don't lose yourself in the paper, use the word LOOK in the appropriate spot.

Example : “We . . . look . . . you and you are all concerned . . .”.

- (d) Leave a two-inch margin on the left side of the paper. This will provide sufficient room for *stage directions* or visual cues (slide number etc.).
- (e) Make sure that we have not typed on both sides of the paper. One side double-spaced and clearly numbered at the bottom of the page will eliminate confusion.
- (f) Let us not staple the pages together. Maximum smoothness requires that papers be read and slid to one side when through with them.

READING THE PAPER

Now that we have prepared the script, how do we do the actual reading of the paper? We should have adequate rehearsal prior to presentation.

This would make the presentation smooth and impactful. Here are suggestions for rehearsal and presentation :

1. Read slowly and with appropriate emphasis. Don't drag it out, but do avoid a rapid delivery which tends to destroy the clarity of your speech.
2. Look at the group. Use appropriate facial expressions, but don't “mug”. An occasional smile lends a good deal of warmth to an otherwise austere countenance. Make your contact personalized.

3. Use variety in your voice qualities.
Try to achieve
an interesting and emphatic type of delivery.
Avoid the monotone as this will send your audience
off to sleep faster than a tranquilizer!
4. If you gesture (and you should),
do it where it can be seen by the audience,
not hidden behind a lectern.
The audience gets bored with a static figure
and is easily moved away
by the slightest distraction in the room.
5. Don't flip your pages over.
Slide them to one side as you finish with them,
and make sure that they are in the correct order.
6. If you have visual aids, have them all ready and,
of course, right side up.
Nothing is more irritating than the speaker
who must constantly apologise
for out-of-sequence and inverted slides.
7. Rehearse your presentation in a realistic situation.
If possible, try to have some of your associates sit
and let them critique you.
You could learn a great deal
from an honest evaluation of your presentation.
Nothing insures the development of confidence,
smoothness, and timing
like a solid, actual rehearsal or two.

Adapted from an article, 'Helping the Scientist and Engineer
Make Better Presentations', by Maurice Lubetkin
in *Training and Development Journal*, June 1967.
Used with permission.

YOUR
SOUND BOX:
Ways to Improve
Your Voice*

32

WHEN YOU think of it,
your mouth is like a musical instrument.

To sound any particular note on a musical instrument
requires a special position or action,
such as pressing a violin string
at exactly the right point
and drawing the bow correctly.

So, too, there is a special position
or action of the lips, tongue or jaw
for every sound used in speech.

The lips sometimes close
or take a slightly parted or rounded shape ;
the jaw moves up or down ;
the tongue moves into many positions.

These speech workers
have a way of shirking their jobs,
unless we give them special attention.
To insist on right mouth action for any sound
is to make sure that
that sound is formed correctly and uttered clearly.

Just thinking about your speech helps a lot.
Reading aloud at home and

*Adapted from a New Jersey Bell Telephone publication.

observing how other people speak are good ways of becoming speech conscious.

You may try these voice exercises too :

Standing before a mirror,
watch and listen to yourself
while you say the vowel sounds
in the way shown in the following list.

Carefully note your mouth action
while you say each vowel
so that it sounds exactly right.

The movements of the jaw
to produce the mouth positions shown below
permit the tongue to take the necessary positions
for the various sounds.

<i>Vowels</i>	<i>sounded</i>	<i>as in</i>	<i>approximate position of mouth</i>
A	ah	father	Open
A	ay	ate	Half open
A	aw	call	Open, lips slightly rounded
A	a	hat	Half open
E	ee	he	Almost closed
E	e	met	Half open
I	eye	kite	Open, then closing
I	I	it	Slightly open
O	o	hot	Open
O	oh	old	Open, lips rounded
U	oo	flute	Almost closed, lips rounded
U	uh	hut	Open
OI	aw-I	oil	Open, then closing

To make the consonant sounds
shown in the next list is even more important.
There is much more movement
required of the tongue and lips
and the teeth have a part.

Unless spoken distinctly,
consonant sounds may not be heard at all
or may easily be mistaken for others.

<i>Breath consonants</i>	<i>Voice consonants</i>	<i>Nasal consonants</i>	<i>Formed by</i>
F	V		Lower lip against upper teeth.
F	B	M	Lips.
	W		Lips extended in circular position.
	WH (as in "when")		Lips extended in circular position.
T	D	N	Tip of tongue against upper teeth ridge.
	L		Tip of tongue against upper teeth ridge.
TH (as in "three")	TH (as in "then")		Tip of tongue back of upper teeth.
S (and soft C)	Z (as in "maze")		Tip of tongue away from gums of teeth.
SH	Z (as in "azure") Y (as in "yet")		Tip of tongue drawn back. Sides of tongue touching upper back teeth.
CH	J (and soft G)		Tip of tongue against upper teeth ridge.
	R (as in "run")		Sides of tongue against upper back teeth.
K (and hard C & Q)	G (hard)	NG	Back of tongue against soft palate.
X (as in "ax")	X (as in "exact")		Same as K followed by S, or G followed by Z.

If your speech isn't as clear and distinct as you'd like, may be your lips, tongue and jaw need limbering exercises to make them more flexible and expressive.

Here are some good ones :

To exercise the lips

1. Extend them forward in open, circular form ; relax and return to normal.
Repeat several times.
2. Starting lips closed, puff them apart with the breath (as for "p" in "part") and repeat rapidly.
3. Repeat, adding vowel sounds, as "pah", "pay", etc. Repeat using "b".

To exercise the tongue

1. Mouth well open, curve tip of tongue upward to touch gums just back of front teeth, and return to normal.
Repeat several times, gradually speeding up.
2. Repeat, sounding "lah" each time tongue is lowered.
3. Again repeat, successively using the sounds "tah", "nah" and "lah".

To exercise the jaw

1. Drop jaw with muscles relaxed, far enough to permit inserting two fingers between upper and lower teeth.
Return to closed position, repeat several times.

2. Repeat, sounding the syllable "mah" each time as jaw is dropped.
3. Repeat, using the sound "maw".
Avoid forcing or stiffening the jaw.
It should drop loosely.

Uniformity in speech is achieved when the vowel sounds and consonants are always given their fair and proper value.

If the words seem to be tongue twisters, repeat the phrase slowly, until one makes the sounds correctly and articulates them smoothly. Then say them faster and faster, until one can speak them with a smooth cadence at normal speed.

Here are some tongue twisters for fine consonant and vowel practice —

- A — Asthmatic artists artfully ate assorted apricots.
- B — The bridge bus brought bright Bridget Black back.
- C — Clever Cora contentedly chews candied cottage choose.
- D — Droll dromedaries drowsily drink dripping dew drops.
- E — Eight eaglets easily eat eight eel's eggs.
- F — Fancy four fat friars fanning flickering flames.
- G — A great gray grizzly guzzled green gooseberries.
- H — Hearty healthy Hiram hilariously heaves heavy hogs heavenward.
- J — Jack's jolly jazz jaded jilted Jennie.
- K — Katherine's kind kin knitted Kit Kersey kilts.
- L — Lilly likes lic'ing luscious licorice.
- M — Mary May munched Mumpy Maggies Marachinos.

- N — Nine neutral noble numbskulls nibbled nine nutmegs nightly.
- O — Old ole Olson often owes Olga oats.
- P — Peter Penn prefers picking peppery pickles to pickling peppers.
- Q — Questing Quakers quietly quoted querulous quips.
- R — Roaring rivers rise rendering ridged rocky road.
- S — So we say "Still the sinking steamer sunk".
- T — Ten totally tired toards tried to trot to Tarrytown.
- U — Ulyssès usually uses useless uniforms.
- V — Verbal virulence gives vicious vividness to Van's verse.
- W — Whining winds whip wispy weeping willows.
- Y — Yeoman's youngsters yelp and yodle at Yankee yarns.
- NG — Long ago, in Long Island, they were singing, swinging, dancing, prancing and playing.

Now try these.

Read the following sentences aloud, slowly enough to give every sound its proper value and to be conscious of your mouth action.

They will give all-round exercise to your vocal apparatus and at the same time some mighty useful ideas to carry about with you.

1. For distinct enunciation, every word, every syllable, every sound, must be given its proper form and value.
2. Think of the mouth chamber as a mould, in which the correct form must be given to every sound.
3. Will you please move your lips more noticeably?

4. The teeth should never be kept closed in speech.
5. As your voice is the most direct expression of your inmost self, you should be careful, through it, to do yourself full justice.
6. You may know what you are saying, but others will not, unless you make it clear to them.
7. Through practice, we can learn to speak more rapidly, but still with perfect distinctness.
8. Good speech can be achieved through conscientious practice.

Practise further

by reading or talking aloud, also in front of the mirror, to see how well you can use the correct mouth action in ordinary conversation.

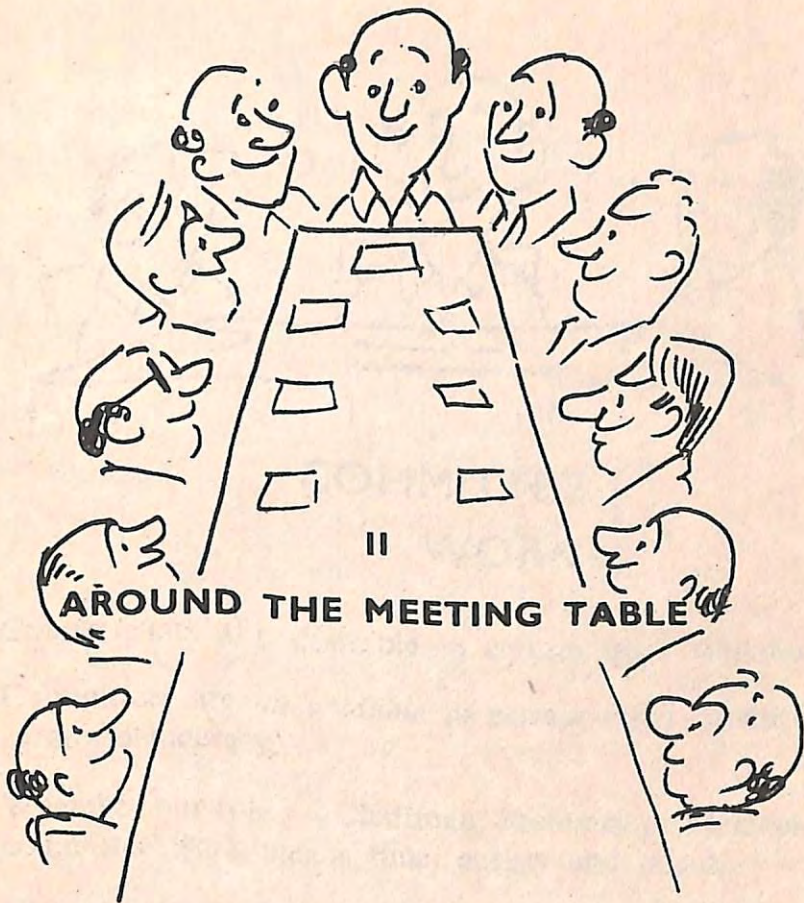
Continue to listen to your own voice as you practise, so that you can detect any faults.

Probably the best "voice mirror" you have is your own hearing.

Ask yourself frequently, "How do I sound?"

A slightly expensive way of finding it out is to tape your telephone talk and listen back.

A less expensive way is to club your ears as you speak and listen.



AROUND THE MEETING TABLE



COMMITTEE WORK | I

COMMITTEES ARE desirable in certain work situations.*

Committees are *unavoidable* in certain other situations, in any democracy.

Whatever our role — Chairman, Secretary or Member — committee work means time, energy and talent.

This investment, we all wish, should yield good returns.

A study of committees at work provides clues for obtaining such returns.

*Results-oriented folk call meetings

- when they must be sure their message will be understood
- when they want to get others' reactions and stimulate two-way communication
- when they need more facts, expert opinions etc.
- when they need creative new ideas, approaches and solutions
- when they must depend on others to carry out decisions
- when they want to build better teamwork

Certain committee practices and participation skills make this possible.

For our discussion we are taking a voluntary, heterogeneous group like Rotary. Relatively speaking, a **company group is easier to handle**

Even items of minor importance have been mentioned for the simple reason that in group-work every little thing counts. The pointers have to be applied with care and judgement. Development of appropriate participation skills takes time.

No hint, however, need be taken as rigid. In fact, nothing should be done that will spoil spontaneity. In its very nature a discussion meeting has to be flexible. We have to formulate practices to accommodate the variables in the situation before us.

A committee gets good results if the leader *and* the members understand and apply the basic psychological principles that ensure participation by every member — in thinking and doing.

Though, in the final analysis, mastering the art of leading *and* participating in a committee is essentially a process of 'learning by doing', there are many tested practices for guiding a group discussion to a productive conclusion.

It is these practices that are outlined in the following pages.

NEED THESE BE TRUE? | 2

NEED THESE observations be true?

- A committee is a group which keeps minutes and loses hours.

MILTON BERLE

- When you do not wish to commit yourself, committee yourself.

*

*

*

- There are few phrases in business more pregnant with possibilities for commercial suicide than "Let's call a Meeting!"

People call meetings because they can't or won't think the problem out themselves, because otherwise they might become personally responsible for a decision, because in similar circumstances a meeting always has been called, or because they don't know what to do if left to their own initiative. They very rarely call them for the right reasons, invite the right people, or make it possible to achieve anything except general exhaustion and frustration.

ERIC WEBSTER

*

*

*

- A committee comprises of a bunch of the unfit, appointed by the unwilling, to do the unnecessary.

*

*

*

- A committee is a gathering of important people who singly can do nothing, but together can decide that nothing can be done.

FRED ALLEN

*

*

*

- The best committee is a committee of two when one is absent.

E. V. LUCAS

COMMITTEE PRACTICES: Our Experiences

3

FROM WHAT we have seen or heard,
can we comment on the following aspects of committees?

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>What we disapprove</i>	<i>What we approve</i>
Purpose for which it is called		
Composition and size		
Agenda and intimation		
Seating facilities etc.		
Duration and timing		
Conduct of the Chairman : as the meeting commences		

Let us write our impressions freely. Our experience is important.
That is why the workbook approach has been adopted.

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>What we disapprove</i>	<i>What we approve</i>
Conduct of the Chairman : during the meeting		
Conduct of the Chairman : as the meeting concludes		
Conduct of the members : as the meeting commences		
Conduct of the members : during the meeting		
Conduct of the members : as the meeting concludes		
Conduct of the members : after the meeting — minutes etc.		
Conduct of the members : other aspects		

THE PURPOSE

4

WHEREVER MEETINGS are fruitful, we observe that they* meet with a clear purpose.

The general purpose of a meeting is :

- Joint communication
- Joint co-operation
- Joint responsibility for decision
- Individual responsibility for carrying out the decisions.

But the special purpose is often one of these :

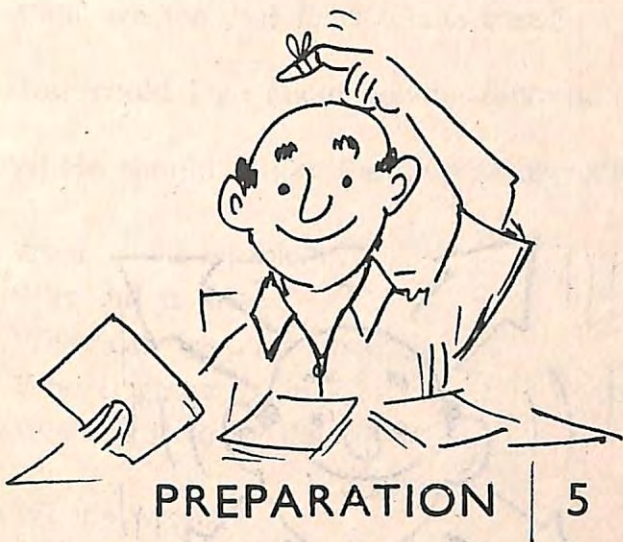
- To solve a problem
- To exchange information
- To receive instructions
- To arrive at common understanding about a line of action.

They seem to want *results* — results in terms of decisions carried out, actions taken, things done.

They treat it on a par with financial moves or market strategies.

They tell themselves they are dealing with a valuable resource — **the time and talent of busy and expensive men.**

*The chairman, the secretary *and* the members.



PREPARATION | 5

GOOD DISCUSSION meetings are preceded by good planning and preparation.

The chairman and/or the secretary are found

- to choose the topics carefully — they are 'discussable', of interest to the group, and within their competence.
- to select appropriate phases of the topics
- to prepare an outline which contains
 - a statement of objectives
 - introductory remarks
 - notes for the development of the discussion
 - notes to be used in the concluding remarks.



PREPARATION:

“Formula” Analysis

6

IF THE committee meets to solve a problem, a preliminary analysis is made by the chairman and/or the secretary. Certain ‘*formula*’ when used provide for an exploration of the topic in an analytical manner and leads towards definite conclusions.

Here are samples of what are commonly used :

- What is the problem I am trying to deal with ?
- What are the real facts of the case ?
- How could I go about solving this one ?
- Where should I take the help of my colleagues ?
- What is the problem ?
Why did it arise ?
What can be done about it ?
Who is going to do it ?
When is it to be done ?
- What's wrong ?
Evidence..... Cause.....
What can be done ?
- Errors..... Causes..... Remedies.....
- What's wrong ? Responsibilities.....
Possible actions — advantages and disadvantages
of alternative methods —
decision as to best procedure.
- Problem.....
Effect of present method or policy.....
Suggestions for improvement.....
Evaluation of suggested methods.....
Conclusion as to method to be adopted.....
- Need..... Cause Remedy..... Action.....
- Problem.... Reason.... Solution.... Action....

THE COMPOSITION* | 7

EACH MEMBER is picked up as a resource :

- The idea man
- The informal 'communicator'
- The compromiser who can help smooth things over
- The technical expert
- The man who should give his 'blessing' to the project
- The guy who has all the facts
- A key member of the section which might block this project
- Representatives from interested groups which could sell the project

They make sure there is a common denominator of interest.

*Says Walter Puckey and rightly : "As the spark plug is to the engine, as the heart is to the body, so is the chairman to a meeting. It is he who must accept responsibility for the objective, the order of events, the continuous feeding of inspiration to those present, the completion of the agenda and the realization of the objective". In the current Indian context, however, every member should feel *equally* responsible for the successful outcome of the meeting. Hence the need to make the composition of a committee purposeful. Incidentally, you will love reading the racily written book, *So You're Going to a Meeting?* by Walter Puckey.



THE OPTIMUM SIZE

8

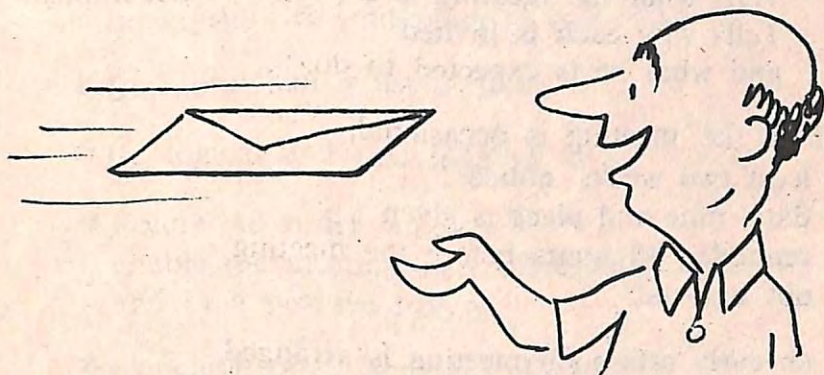
EXPERIENCE suggests that fifteen is about the maximum for effective group-thinking or talking-it-over. A larger committee tends to break into 'sub-committees'!



THE DURATION | 9

THE duration

- Is stated in the agenda —
the commencing time and the concluding time
- Is generally sufficient to cover the subject
- And brief enough to hold the interest of the group
- Is generally no longer than 90 minutes —
the preference is for 45 minutes
- If it has to be longer
 - There is a sizeable tea break.



ADVANCE INTIMATION | 10

If a series of meetings is planned, the series is planned several months ahead and the dates circulated in advance to all concerned. (This is found to help travel and hotel arrangements among other things).

- If a series is planned,
each meeting is fixed on a recognisable day,
such as "the first Tuesday in the month".
- Where the meeting is periodical,
the next meeting date is agreed upon
as also a tentative agenda ;
and this is announced before the meeting is adjourned.
- A formal intimation is sent
at least 72 hours before the meeting,
with a request that the members confirm.
- The intimation
 - Says how long the meeting will last
 - Tells why exactly the meeting is called
 - Tells what the meeting is expected to accomplish
 - Tells why each is invited
 - and what he is expected to do.
- Where the meeting is occasional,
at least two weeks' notice
of date, time and place is given.
A reminder 48 hours before the meeting
is not unusual.
- If an early afternoon meeting is arranged,
the members are got together for lunch.
- It is worth repeating at this stage.
The suggestion is not
that *all* that is mentioned in this guide-book
should be done.
These *are* done **except in times of emergency** ;
and they are found to help.
Depending on the occasion,
we may choose for our own application
one or more of these or a modification thereof.



THE AGENDA in effective meetings is found to :

- Be short
- Cover a few subjects, but well
- Be crystallised and planned well
- Be more than a list of items
- Be logical and tied together
- Follow an order which will enable the meeting start off enthusiastically and in a positive fashion
- Conclude on a confident climax note
- To carry not the item "any other business"
- Carry brief notes of a factual nature on each item of the agenda.
The notes conclude

What we wish to discuss is.....

What we wish to decide is.....

What we wish to accomplish is.....

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS | 12

THE SEATING

- A square or rectangular or round table is preferred.
- So each can see the other.
- Where there is no table,
they place the chairs in a semi-circle
with the leader in the centre.
- They avoid the class-room seating.

VENTILATION, LIGHT ETC.

The place of meeting is so chosen
that distractions and disturbances are minimum.

Good ventilation, glare-free lighting,
and noise-free location are preferred.

Phones and messengers are suspended
for the duration of the meeting.

Perhaps the logic of these arrangements is
that the more comfortable the members feel,
the less irritable they will be!

Other facilities that we find are :

- A clock that everyone can see
- Ash trays
- Pads and pencils
- Glasses of water
- A blackboard along with chalk and duster —
this tool is often found to make the discussion
more purposeful *and* less time-consuming
- Or easel and paper pad.



BEFORE THE DISCUSSION STARTS

13

- The chairman makes sure everyone knows the others. Comments like “Are we sure we know each other?” are common.
- The chairman briefly (in say 3 minutes) clarifies
 - What the group is to discuss ;
 - What they will together strive to accomplish.
- Some chairmen write out the objectives of *the* meeting on the blackboard.
- The chairman gives the members five to ten minutes ‘think time’ — to let them familiarise themselves with the agenda papers.

“I know this is *one* of the many committees you attend. Would you like to quickly refresh yourself on the agenda? You may make any notes you wish.”

- The chairman announces (if not in so many words) certain ground rules. For example, he may say :

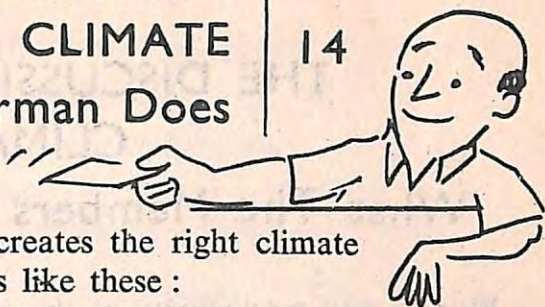
“We are here because the subject calls for group thinking. We are here because all of us can contribute to a *good* outcome. So that it may be smooth going, may we say : Only one of us will talk at a time. None of us will monopolise. May we say that three (3) minutes at a time and not more than ten (10) minutes in all should be the maximum for each member. Of course I am not using a stop watch. Also, may I say, if we stray a little, it will be in order for our friends to hint at it and we won't feel offended? We will avoid side-talks and private dialogues. I know I am saying the obvious. You should bear with me if I am a little conservative.”

- He seeks their views regarding priority and time allocation (approximate upper limit) for each item of the agenda.
- He is also found to mention who will lead the discussion on what item of the agenda. Sometimes the initials figure in the agenda.
- He keeps a time table even if he does not publicise it and he seems to keep intermediate time-targets to make sure of the final time.

THE DISCUSSION CLIMATE

14

What The Chairman Does



CONSCIOUSLY OR NO,
the effective chairman creates the right climate
by resorting to practices like these :

- He makes it obvious
that the topic is worth discussing
and with the people present.
- He does not pose as an expert even if he is one.
- He urges everyone to contribute his views and ideas.
Though he limits the discussion only to the subject,
he encourages a free flow of ideas.
- If oldtimers are reticent, he asks, for example,
“I wonder what the veterans of long experience
would say about that.”
- If women in a mixed group are silent, he may say :
“We have not heard from the ladies on this.”
- He is alert to compliment a member
for his contribution,
“That is a nice point, don't you think, gentlemen ?”
“Isn't that a point we ought to consider ?”
“In the light of Mr. Kamath's comment,
do we want to modify our conclusion ?”
- He brings out all points of view —
he does not evaluate, he does not display partiality
for any particular opinion or group :
he just plays the catalyst.

THE DISCUSSION CLIMATE

15

What The Members Do

WHERE THE productivity of the meeting is high, there is a permissive and accepting climate for members.

In part this is brought about by the following practices on the part of the members :

The members share responsibility with the chairman for the success of meeting

- By being prompt
- By addressing the chair ("Mr. Chairman, sir")
- By speaking loudly, clearly and slowly enough for everyone to hear easily
- By listening attentively
- By regulating the tone of voice
- By disagreeing agreeably
- By constantly having an eye on the common objectives
- By being considerate to the chairman, to the subject
and to the other members

The members support the fellow-members

- By reserving judgement
- By being slow to take an opposing stand
- By allowing others to express themselves

- By not interrupting
- By conceding the point of view of others
- By appreciating worthwhile ideas
- By avoiding personal asides and attacks
- By avoiding activities that will distract the attention of members

The members support the chairman

- By giving thought to what they say *and* the way they say it
- By being alert
- By protecting his status as leader
- By integrating points of view
- By coming to the aid of the chairman when issues become heatedly controversial

When they disagree, the members

- Start with a statement like "You have a point there"
- State the other man's point and get an agreement
- State their position in relation to his point pleasantly and clearly
- Support their position convincingly but in a controlled manner
- Restate their position and then
- Conclude
- Avoid voting on an issue if they can help it
- Agree to defer the discussion
- Agree to talk it over outside and after the meeting

CHAIRMANSHIP PRACTICES | 16

THE CHAIRMAN'S skill is in some ways difficult to analyse and learn. However, there is a process or pattern that has been found useful. It consists of four steps which make it possible for the meeting to move logically toward the reaching of the committee's objectives.

The four steps are :

- Approach
- Drawing out
- Acceptance
- Summation

The *approach* step largely consists of :

- Introducing the topic
- Defining the purpose of the meeting
- Limiting the scope of the meeting
- Indicating the procedure to be followed
- Developing the proper attitude and arousing the interest of the members

The *drawing out* step consists of :

- Gathering facts
- Getting opinions
- Obtaining reactions to points made by the chairman
- Asking pertinent questions
- Recording views and ideas of group

The *acceptance* step is one of :

- Stimulating cross discussion
- Getting the ideas evaluated
- Organising, screening and combining ideas
- Drawing conclusions

The *summation* step gives :

- The highlights of the discussion and the major conclusions agreed upon
- The review of actions that will be taken as a result

DISCUSSION PHASE | 17

- Every committee meeting — a successful one — has two phases in effect :
Discussion phase and
Implementation phase.
- The Discussion phase prepares us to make the decision and the Implementation phase helps us develop plans to carry it out.
- The following is the profile of the discussion phase frequently observed :

Taking each item on the agenda,
the chairman briefly states the problem ;

Poses a question or two as 'kick off' ;
Plays the catalyst ;

Moderates the talking-it-over
by questions, statements and soothing humour
and by reflecting content and feelings.

For example, he may say :

"Mr. Mehta brought up a disadvantage
from *his* point of view.

How would it affect the rest of us ?"

Or, two members argue in favour of a point, while two are opposed.

Those four have been talking about 15 minutes.

The chairman enters the picture saying :

“We have certainly had a lively discussion on this question.

Some of us believe that (summarise pro arguments) and others believe that (summarise con arguments).

What do the rest of us think about that ?”

To a member saying :

“I think we do a terrible job around here on freshers”,

the chairman may reflect :

“You feel that our present practice leaves much to be desired.”

Summarises from time to time and more particularly :

After one member has spoken at length,

After a conflict of opinion between two or more members,

And after definite conclusions have been reached.

Integrates the discussion and spells out the conclusions quickly and crisply ;

Sometimes charts the progress of the discussion on the blackboard ;

And exhibits a fine sense of timing — he senses when the group is ready to move on to another point.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

18

THE EFFECTIVE committees normally conclude with a blueprint for action with a what-when-who.

- The chairman postulates the decision and gets the members to examine the consequences.
- Questions like these figure on the blackboard :

What does it mean ?

How does it relate

to other projects, activities, policies ?

Is this decision possible ? Is it realistic ?

How about cost, time facilities,
availability of people to carry it out ?

What are the possible effects of this
on other sections ?

- He tries to test understanding
and member commitment :

Is everyone clear as to what this means ?

Is each one willing to go along ?

Are there any other doubts or misgivings ?

Does anyone see any major pitfalls ?

- He gets a blueprint for action
and a follow-up programme :

Who does what ? Schedule of time, place ?

Who will coordinate ?

How about follow-up reports or meetings ?

Who will follow-up and report by what time ?

Will there be interim reports ?

- He shares the conviction that
“unless a meeting produces results *afterwards*,
then no matter how successful
it seems to be *at the time*, the meeting has failed.”

THE ART OF USING QUESTIONS | 19

THE QUESTION is one of the chairman's leadership tools.

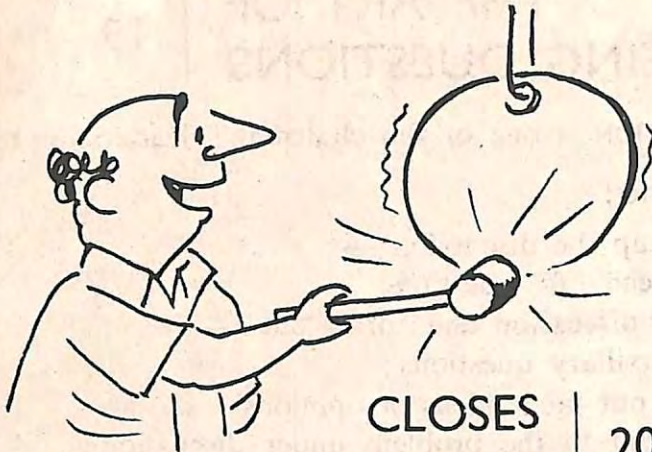
He uses it to :

- Open up the discussion — the 'lead off' question ;
- Guide discussion and 'draw out' — the auxiliary questions ;
- Draw out facts, ideas or opinions pertinent to the problem under discussion ;
- Get the group to evaluate or weigh the facts, ideas or opinions ;
- Bring the discussion back to the subject ;
- Make sure the group considers all pertinent aspects of the problem.

He seems to prepare the major questions in advance.

We find that

- he phrases the questions clearly and concisely ;
- he constructs questions which will require participants to draw on their experience ;
- he makes the questions require explanation of a view point — he uses 'why' and 'how' frequently ;
- he asks the question of the whole group rather than of a specific member ;
- he avoids questions that will arouse antagonism ;
- he avoids personal questions and ones that will seem sarcastic ;
- the words he selects and the tone he uses are particularly helpful.



CLOSES IN TIME

20

- The chairman is found to conclude at the agreed time.
- He does not wait for a reminder or pressure from a member.
- If the business is over before time, he promptly concludes the meeting.
- If more time is thought necessary at this sitting, it is agreed upon *at the beginning*, not as an after-thought.
- Members do not go away in the middle of the meeting — this is held a matter of common courtesy.
“We have our main business too”
people that stay on are heard to say.
- The chairman advises members :
“If you have to go away in the middle, please do not inconvenience yourself by part-attendance. Our other friends will understand.”

AFTER THE MEETING

21

- The minutes are brief, and to the point.
- The minutes are in the form of content — not proceedings.
Decisions arrived at are mentioned, *not* who said what.
- The emphasis is on decision taken, the blueprint for action agreed upon, the schedule for follow-up.
- A *pro forma* of this kind is put to good effect.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Action- decision</i>	<i>Who to get done (Initials)</i>	<i>By what time to act and report</i>
(Items listed serially to facilitate reference)			

- This is sent within 48 hours of the meeting.
- Where there is an Executive Secretary, the organisation part of the before, during and after is left to him.

TOWARDS STILL BETTER MEETINGS

22

BECAUSE OF their implications in terms of time and effect on the nerves, conscious steps are taken "towards still better meetings". Here are a few practices :

- An item like 'Review' figures in every agenda.
"What would we do differently if we had to do it all over again?"
- The chairman asks :
"How could we have done better, faster, smoother — any thoughts for the future meetings?
If you find it embarrassing to speak out, you may write a note and give it to me — *now*.
Let us give ourselves five minutes for this."
- An impersonal and judiciously edited summary of this review is distributed along with the minutes.
- Other steps taken include :

The proceedings are occasionally tape-recorded and played back.

A specialist is invited to sit in and offer suggestions.

How to Wreck a Conference

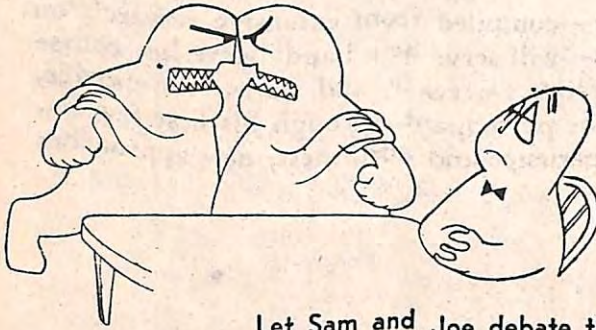
Conference-wrecking is among the most ancient of the arts, dating back at least as far as the Stone Age. Some of the methods used by Neanderthal Man to break up discussion or silence an opponent are, in fact, still popular today.

To wreck the modern, highly organized executive conference, however, requires a certain refinement of approach. Crude cave-dweller tactics have long since been replaced, in business circles, by subtler though no less effective techniques. Those outlined below—compiled from extensive research on thousands of meetings—will serve as a handy refresher course for the veteran conference-wrecker and carry the novice, whether as chairman or participant, through his first few sessions. As he gains experience and adroitness, new approaches will suggest themselves.

If you're chairman . . .



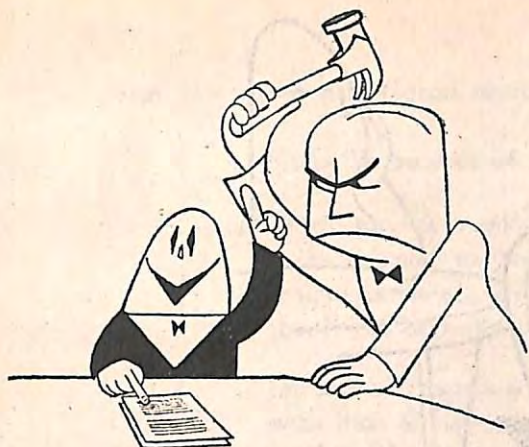
If you've compiled 10 pages of advance information that was sent to everyone, read it aloud and explain the footnotes.



Let Sam and Joe debate their personal differences for the length of the meeting, thus providing good clean entertainment for all.

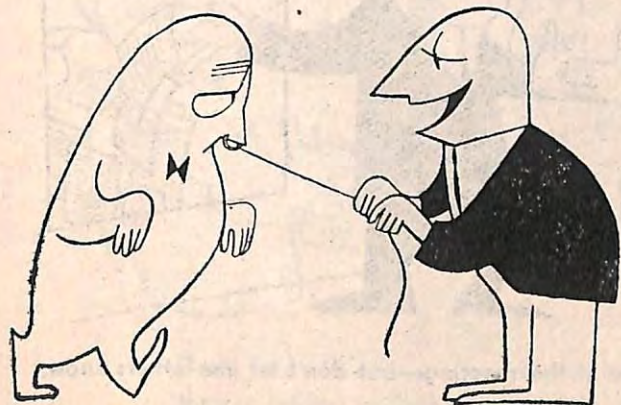
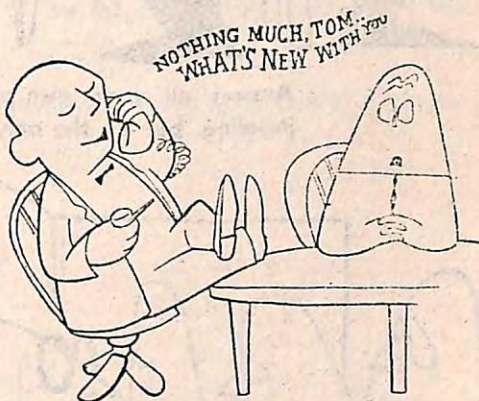


Or, insist that Sam and Joe are really in agreement, and prove it by misquoting both of them. This will unite them in an attack on you.

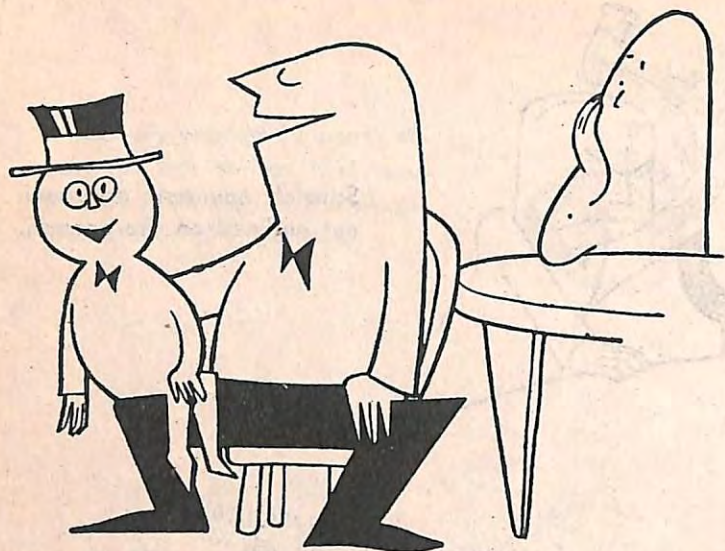


Squelch any new approach not outlined on the agenda.

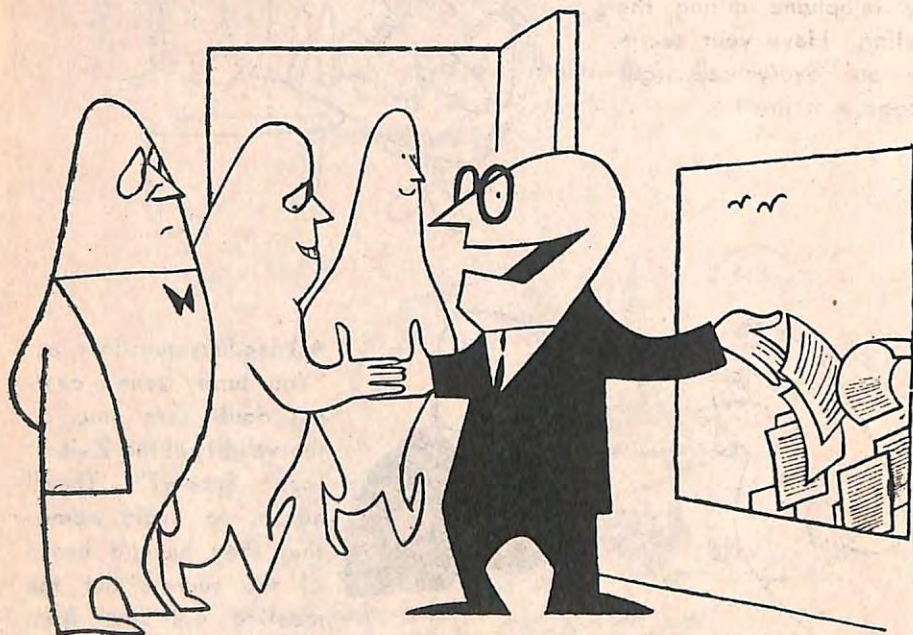
Don't snub any friends who may telephone during the meeting. Have your secretary put every call right through.



Ask leading questions, as: "You surely aren't casting doubt, are you, on the validity of the Zwibelfoos Survey?" They'll agree, to avoid admitting they haven't heard of the survey, but the meeting will sour from this point on.



Answer all your own questions. It may take some juggling, but it's the only way to insure the right answer



Change the decisions reached at the meeting—but don't let the others know. (It might hurt their feelings.)

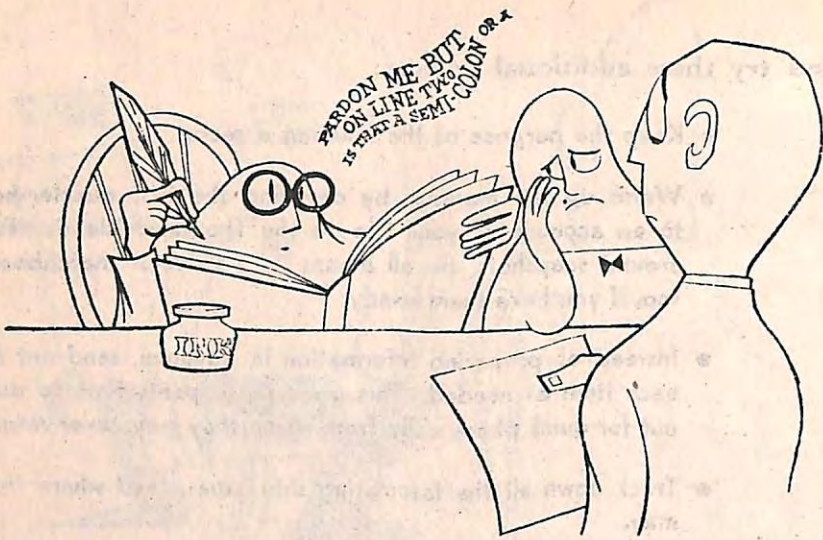
. . . and try these additional devices:

- Keep the purpose of the meeting a secret.
- Warm up the meeting by devoting the first quarter-hour to an account of your trip to the Thousand Islands. Pass around snapshots, by all means . . . souvenir matchbooks, too, if you have them handy.
- Instead of preparing information in advance, send out for each item as needed. This gives participants time to duck out for quick phone calls, from which they may never return.
- Track down all the fascinating side issues, lead where they may.
- Twist other people's remarks to suit your purpose.

If you're a participant . . .



Don't listen to others; they will only confuse you. Use the time while they're talking to think up your next remarks.

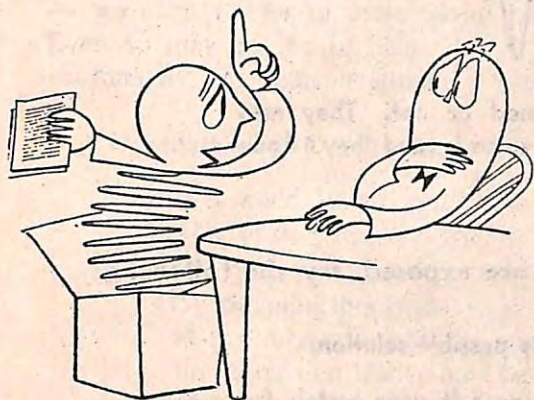


Take careful notes on everything, including date, time, temperature, and barometer reading. If you don't catch every word that's said, ask for a recap.



Defend yourself! Anyone who openly disagrees with your viewpoint probably has it in for you.

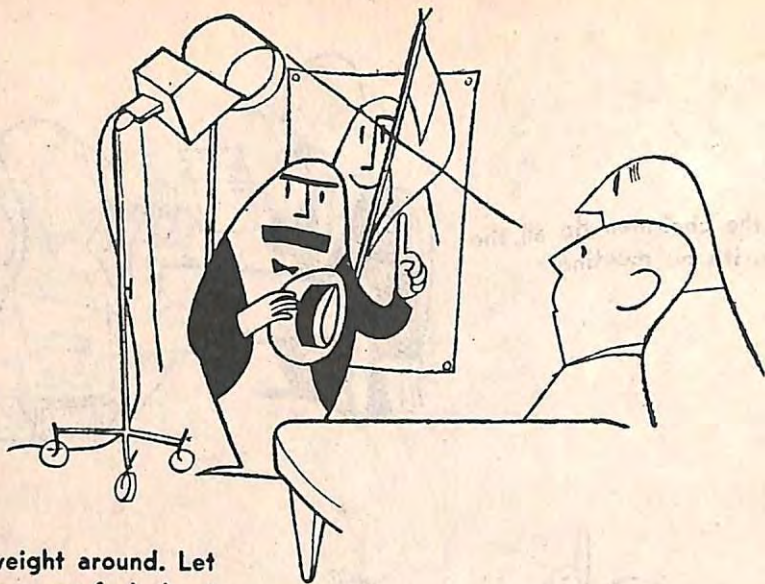
Let the chairman do all the work. It's his meeting.



Rise frequently to points of order.

Side with the majority, regardless of your real opinion.





Throw your weight around. Let them know how you feel about every subject, whether you're informed or not. They may not get much out of this, but if your voice is loud they'll know you're a man to be reckoned with.

. . and if all these maneuvers are exposed, try the following:

- Come prepared with the only possible solution.
- After the first 15 minutes, consult your watch frequently. If this isn't noticed, drum your feet or tap your pencil briskly on the table.
- Bring a voluminous report (the more charts the better) on every aspect of your own operations, indexed according to sales, freightloadings, intermodular bias correlation, etc. Each time one of these subjects is mentioned, read the appropriate section from your report.

- Text by LYDIA STRONG
- Drawings by AL HORMEI

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The Difficult Situations: Hints

THESE HINTS* we can treat only as background information — we cannot refer to them when the situations turn up!

Even so they can be of help.

Fortunately, the difficult situations are few and far between.

A. *Discussion gets out of control*

- (1) Discussion leader can pause in his talk.
The obstreperous members will probably subside.
- (2) Use eyes' control.
By directing his eyes at the members who are out of control, the discussion leader may be able to attract their attention and bring them back into the discussion.
- (3) Stand up.
The physical action of standing at the head of the discussion table will direct attention to the leader.
- (4) Use blackboard —
to summarize, guide discussion, illustrate.
Other aids can be introduced :
films, charts, handout sheets.
- (5) Direct a question to the offender.
- (6) Direct a question to the senior member
whose position may carry weight
and bring the discussion to order.

*Extracted from Johnson & Johnson's (New Brunswick, U.S.A.) in-company manual on conference leadership.

- (7) Introduce a new phase of the subject.
- (8) Forcefully but tactfully call for order.
- (9) If disorder is extreme, call a recess.

B. Members lose sight of subject

- (1) Using direct question,
ask how this discussion is related to the problem at hand.
- (2) Gradually tie in the remote discussion with the main topic.
Reshaping of members' contribution
is one of discussion leader's most important tasks.
Should he admit it? Reject it? Select from it?
Expand it? Develop it by drawing out the speaker?
Lead from it to a conclusion?
- (3) Introduce new material closer to the central theme.
- (4) Kid members with remarks to the effect
that "this discussion is interesting
but not exactly what we are here to talk about."
- (5) Summarize what has been discussed up to that point.
- (6) Use the time to take inventory
of the progress of the discussion or to plan the next step.
- (7) Avert digressions by carefully planning the discussion,
announcing the plan to the group, and adhering to it.

C. Group doesn't talk

- (1) Diverge slightly from main topic
to introduce some item of more general interest
which can then be related to the main theme.
- (2) Start a discussion or stimulate an exchange of views
by directing a question to someone who knows the answer.
- (3) Use a yes-or-no question,
then follow-up with a why question.
- (4) Address an overhead question to the group,
preferably of a provocative nature.
- (5) Show by your questions
that you are alert and interested.
- (6) Don't use questions
that may antagonize the group
or put a member on the spot.

- (7) Make an intentional misstatement which members will challenge, or temporarily take a positive stand on a controversial point.
 - (8) Relax the group by telling a pertinent story.
- D. Group refuses to accept conclusion of the leader*
- (1) Leader may have to compromise.
 - (2) Guide the discussion closely so that same conclusion comes from group in different words.
 - (3) Use the relay question.
When members challenge leader's statement have another member answer the challenge.
 - (4) Take a poll of the members.
- E. One member of the group is opposed to the leader*
- (1) Permit other members to answer his questions or objections.
 - (2) Let member's point go as a statement and pass over it.
 - (3) Poll group to show him he is in a minority.
- F. Group members argue heatedly with each other*
- (1) Leader takes control of situation by summarizing or lecturing till group calms down.
 - (2) Leader interrupts and asks a question.
 - (3) Leader asks the last speaker to repeat his comment.
 - (4) If argument is relevant to the discussion, have two of the opposed members role-play their positions.
- G. One or more members of group are timid*
- (1) Ask questions this individual can answer.
 - (2) Compliment him when he makes a good point.
- H. One member chronically objects to views of leader and other members*
- (1) Try to find out why he is so hostile.
 - (2) Prevent his participation as much as possible.

- (3) Reword his contributions to make them more acceptable.
- (4) Allow group to gang up on him
(e.g. by use of "relay" question).
- (5) Encourage other members
to show annoyance with his contribution.
- (6) If possible, let him see that he is in a minority.
- (7) Use a "reverse" question.

I. *Subject matter discussed is beyond jurisdiction of members*

- (1) State that it is beyond their jurisdiction
and pass on to another subject.

J. *Group is upset or discouraged about outside events*

- (1) The injection of humour or spirited comment
may divert them from their anxieties.
- (2) If they persist
in introducing their troubles at the discussion,
let them air their feeling
until, finding relief in having done so,
they are ready to proceed
with the subject of the discussion.
- (3) Show the positive elements or possibilities
in these "outside" events.
- (4) Initiate action to take care of these events.
(e.g. a group of supervisors, during a training discussion,
complained they had no say
in selecting their subordinates.
With their approval, their complaint
was taken up with their supervisor and, as a result,
they were given a voice in the selection).

K. *Superior sits in on discussion*

- (1) Treat him like any other member of the discussion.
- (2) Don't put members in a situation
that might embarrass them before their superior.
- (3) Don't allow superior
to sit apart and aloof from the group.
- (4) Discourage note-taking by superior during discussion.
Members may think he is recording their comments,
and are likely to play a role or be silent.



How to Attend a Conference ?

S. I. Hayakawa

THE PURPOSE of a conference is, of course, the exchange of ideas, the enrichment of our own views through the support or the challenge provided by the views of others.

It is a situation created specially for the purposes of communication.

Since I am a student of semantics, I am going to venture some observations on the process of communication in the hope that, whether my observations are correct or not, the very fact that I make them may at least help to make the reader aware of the problems of communication that confront participants at any conference in addition to the problems inherent in the subject matter.

There are two aspects to communication. One is the matter of output — the speaking and writing, involving problems of rhetoric, composition, logical presentation, coherence, definition of terms, knowledge of the subject and the audience, and so on. Most of the preoccupation with communication is directed toward the improvement of the output, so that we find on every hand courses in composition, in effective speaking, in the arts of plain or fancy talk, and how to write more dynamic sales letters.

But the other aspect of communication, namely, the problem of intake — especially the problem of how to listen well — is relatively a neglected subject.

It does not avail the speakers to have spoken well if we as listeners have failed to understand, or if we come away believing them to have said things they didn't say at all. If a conference is to result in the exchange of ideas, we need to pay particular heed to our listening habits.

A common difficulty at conferences and meetings is what might be called the *terminological tangle*, in which discussion is stalemated by conflicting definitions of key terms.

Let me discuss this problem using as examples the vocabulary of art criticism and the discussion of design.

What do such terms as "romanticism", "classicism", "baroque", "organic", "functionalism", etc., really mean?

Let us put this problem into the kind of context in which it is likely to occur.

For example, a speaker may talk about
"the romanticism so admirably exemplified
by the Robey House by Frank Lloyd Wright."
Let us imagine in the audience an individual to "romanticism".
His reaction may well be
"Good God, has he ever seen the Robey House?"
And he may challenge the speaker to *define* "romanticism" --
which is a way of asking,
"What do *you* think 'romanticism' really is?"
When the speaker has given his definition,
it may well prove to the questioner
that the speaker indeed doesn't know what he's talking about.
But if the questioner counters with an alternative definition,
it will prove to the speaker
that the questioner doesn't know what *he* is talking about.
At this point it will be just as well
if the rest of the audience adjourns to the bar,
because no further communication is going to take place.

How can this kind of terminological tangle be avoided?
I believe it can be avoided if we understand at the outset
that there is no ultimately correct and single meaning
to words like "romanticism" and "functionalism"
and "plastic form"
and other items in the vocabulary of art and design criticism.
The same is true, of course,
of the vocabularies of literary criticism,
of politics and social issues,
and many other matters of everyday discussion.
Within the strictly disciplined contexts
of the languages of the sciences,
exact or almost exact agreements about terminology
can be established.
When two physicists talk about "positrons"
or when two chemists talk about "diethylene glycol",
they can be presumed to have
enough of a common background
of controlled experience in their fields
to have few difficulties about understanding one another.
But most of the words of artistic and other general discussion
are not restricted to such specialized frames of reference.

They are part of the language of everyday life — by which I mean that they are part of the language in which we do not hesitate to speak across occupational lines. The artist, dramatist, and poet do not hesitate to use the vocabularies of their callings in speaking to their audiences ; nor would the physician, the lawyer, the accountant, and the clothing merchant hesitate to use these words to one another if they got into a discussion of any of the arts.

In short, the words most commonly used in conference, like the vocabulary of other educated, general discussion, are public property — which is to say that they mean many things to many people. This is a fact neither to be applauded nor regretted ; it is simply a fact to be taken into account. They are words, therefore, which either have to be defined anew each time they are seriously used — or, better still, *they must be used in such a way, and with sufficient illustrative examples, that their specific meaning in any given discourse emerges from their context.*

Hence it is of great importance in a conference to listen to one another's statements and speeches and terminology without unreasonable demands.

And the specific unreasonable demand I am thinking of now is the demand that everybody else should mean by such words as "romanticism" what I would mean if I were using them.

If, therefore, the expression, "the romanticism of Frank Lloyd Wright Robey House" is one which, at first encounter, makes little sense to us, we should at once be alerted to special attentiveness. The speaker, by classifying the Robey House as "romantic", is making an unfamiliar classification — a sure sign not that he is ill-informed but that he has a way of classifying his data that is different from our own.

And his organization of his data may be one from which we can learn a new and instructive way of looking at the Robey House, or at "romanticism", or at whatever else the speaker may be talking about.

Since a major purpose of conferences is to provide ample opportunity for conversational give-and-take, perhaps it would be wise to consider the adoption, formally or informally, of one basic conversational traffic rule which I have found to be invaluable in ensuring the maximum flow of information and ideas from one person to another, and in avoiding the waste of time resulting from verbal traffic snarls.

The rule is easy to lay down, but not always easy to follow : it is that *we refrain from agreement or disagreement with a speaker, to refrain from praise or censure of his views, until we are sure what those views are.*

Of course, the first way to discover a speaker's views is to listen to him.

But few people, other than psychiatrists and women, have had much training in listening.

The training of most over-verbalized professional intellectuals (which would include most people who attend conferences) is in the opposite direction.

Living in a competitive culture, most of us are most of the time chiefly concerned with getting our own views across, and we tend to find other people's speeches a tedious interruption of the flow of our own ideas.

Hence, it is necessary to emphasize that listening does not mean simply maintaining a polite silence while you are rehearsing in your mind the speech you are going to make the next time you can grab a conversational opening.

Nor does listening mean waiting alertly for the flaws in the other fellow's arguments so that later you can mow him down.

Listening means trying to see the problem the way the speaker sees it —

which means not sympathy, which is *feeling* for him, but empathy, which is *experiencing* with him.

Listening requires entering actively and imaginatively into the other fellow's situation and trying to understand a frame of reference different from your own.

This is not always an easy task.

But a good listener does not merely remain silent.

He asks questions.

However, these questions must avoid all implications (whether in tone of voice or in wording)

or skepticism or challenge or hostility.

They must clearly be motivated

by curiosity about the speaker's views.

Such questions,

which may be called "questions for clarification",

usually take the form,

"Would you expand on that point about . . . ?",

"Would you mind restating that argument about . . . ?",

"What exactly is your recommendation again?"

Perhaps the most useful kind of question at this stage

is something like,

"I am going to restate in my words what I think you mean.

Then would you mind telling me if I've understood you correctly?"

The late Dr. Irving J. Lee of Northwestern University

has suggested another form of questioning

which he describes as "the request for information

concerning the uniqueness of the particular characteristics

of the condition or proposal under consideration".

I shall simply call these questions "questions of uniqueness".

All too often, we tend to listen to a speaker or his speech

in terms of a generalization,

"Oh, he's just another of those progressive educators",

"Isn't that just like a commercial designer?",

"That's the familiar Robjohn-Giddings approach",

"That is the old Bauhaus pitch", etc.

It is a curious and dangerous fact — dangerous to communication,

that is — that once we classify a speech in this way,

we stop listening, because, as we say,

"We've heard that stuff before."

But *this* speech by *this* individual at *this* time and place

is a *particular* event,

while the "that stuff" with which we are classifying this speech

is a *generalization* from the past.

Questions of uniqueness

are designed to prevent what might be called

the functional deafness which we induce in ourselves

by reacting to speakers and their speeches
in terms of generalizations we apply to them.

Questions of uniqueness take such forms as these :

“How large is the firm you work for,
and do they make more than one product?”

“Exactly what kind of synthetic plastic
did you use on that project?”

“Are your remarks on abstract expressionism and Jackson Pollock
intended to apply equally to the work of De Kooning?”

Something else that needs to be watched
is the habit of over-generalizing from the speaker's remarks.
If a speaker is critical of, let us say,
the way in which design is taught at a particular school,
some persons in the audience seem automatically to assume
that the speaker is saying that design shouldn't be taught at all.
When I speak on the neglected art of listening,
as I have done on many occasions,
I am often confronted with the question,
“If everybody listened, who would do the talking?”
This type of misunderstanding may be called
the “pickling in brine fallacy”,
after the senior Oliver Wendell Holmes's famous remark,
“Just because I say I like sea bathing,
that doesn't mean I want to be pickled in brine.”
When Alfred Korzybski found himself
being misunderstood in this way,
he used to assert with special forcefulness,
“I say what I say ; I do not say what I do not say.”
Questions of uniqueness, properly chosen,
prevent not only the questioner but everyone else present
from projecting into a speaker's remarks
meanings that were not intended.

All too often, the fact that misunderstanding exists
is not apparent until deeper misunderstandings
have already occurred because of the original one.
We have all had the experience of being at meetings
or at social gatherings at which Mr. X says something,
Mr. Y believes Mr. X to have said something quite different

and argues against what he believes Mr. X to have said.
Then Mr. X, not understanding Mr. Y's objections
(which may be legitimate objections to what Mr. X didn't say),
defends his original statement with further statements.
These further statements,
interpreted by Mr. Y in the light of mistaken assumptions,
lead to further mistaken assumptions,
which in turn induce in Mr. X mistaken assumptions about Mr. Y.
In a matter of minutes,
the discussion is a dozen miles away from the original topic.
Thereafter it can take from twenty minutes to two hours
to untangle the mess and restore the discussion
to a consideration of Mr. X's original point.
This is a kind of time-wasting which I should like to help avoid.

All this is not to say
that I expect or wish conferences to avoid argument.
But let us argue about what has been said,
and not about what has not been said.
And let us discuss not for victory but for clarification.
If we do so, we shall find, I believe,
that ultimately agreement and disagreement,
approval and disapproval, are not very important after all.
The important thing is to come away from a conference
with a fund of information —
information about what other people are doing and thinking and why.
It is only as we fully understand
opinions and attitudes different from our own
and the reasons for them
that we better understand our own place in the scheme of things.
Which is but another way of saying that while
the result of communications successfully imparted is self-satisfaction,
the result of communications successfully received is self-insight.
Let us attend conferences and take part in them
not only for the sake of increased self-satisfaction,
but also for the sake of increased self-insight.

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Why Discussions Go Astray?

Irving J. Lee

THE POINTS of breakdown in group discussions are many and varied.

Much of the time they coincide with the failure of participants to understand each other.

Sometimes they occur when the participants understand each other too well.

Very often it is by the expression of differences of opinion and interest that ideas are clarified and solutions worked out. But whenever the controversy and conflict signalize a loss of rapport, so that the participants seem to be talking at or past rather than with each other, then the differences should be recognized as disintegrative rather than productive.

A comprehensive catalogue of such disintegrative patterns is not yet available, but the following are typical :
When the argument moves from the issue to the personalities ;
when colloquy between factions is marked by such ' ego-statements ' as " You're absolutely wrong ",
" I've had years of experience on this ",
" I know what I'm talking about ", etc. ;
when a speaker identifies himself so thoroughly with an issue that criticism of it is construed as an attack on him ;
when one participant fails to deal with a question or argument raised by another who continues to call attention to the failure ;
when inaccuracy or falsification is charged ;
when there are discrepancies in the assertions of ' the ' facts, etc.
It is worth noting that these do not mean that breakdown is inevitably at hand.
On occasion they are manifested with maintenance of rapport.

On the assumption that the study of the sources of conflict might throw light on the processes of understanding, patterns of disintegration were looked for in fifty discussion groups. This essay summarizes some of the preliminary findings which came from focusing attention on the character of the understanding shown by the participants of what was said.

It was realized in the early phases of the investigation that ' understanding ' was a many-faceted phenomenon. As a working basis, six possibilities (considered neither exclusive nor exhaustive) were isolated.

Understanding₁ = the following of directions.
A understands₁ a time-table,
when by following the printed instructions,

he is able to board the train he wants.

A understands₁ *B*,

when he does what *B* tells him to do in the way *B* wants it done.

Understanding₂ = the making of predictions.

A understands₂ *B*,

when *A* is able to predict accurately

what nonverbal action *B* will take after the utterance.

Understanding₃ = the giving of verbal equivalents.

A understands₃ what *B* says or writes,

when he is able to translate the verbalization into other terms which *B* admits are adequate approximations.

A understands₃ *B*,

when he is able to describe what *B* wants

in terms admitted by or acceptable to *B*,

whether or not *A* wants the same thing.

Understanding₄ = the agreeing on programs.

A understands₄ *B*,

when they will undertake any agreed upon action,

whether or not there is verbal agreement.

Understanding₅ = the solving of problems.

A understands₅ a situation or problem,

when he recognizes the steps that must be taken

for its solution or resolution

regardless of the facilities or his ability to take such steps.

Understanding₆ = the making of appropriate responses.

A understands₆ the proprieties, customs, taboos,

works of art, of music, poetry, architecture, etc.

when his responses to them

are of a sort considered appropriate by *B*.

SIMPLICITY AND PROPER EVALUATION

Much of the professional concern of those interested in the improvement of 'understanding' in communication centers around the means whereby a speaker or writer can 'say it clearly' or 'put it into plain words'

so that the processes occurring in understanding_{1,2,3} can be facilitated.

The effort is to reduce the verbal specialization, complexity, incoherence, compression, diffuseness, vagueness, generality, and impersonality by any or all of the known devices of reduction, amplification, concretion, iteration, variation, dramatization, and visualization.

Throughout the study an effort was made to determine the relationship between the conflicts and the degree of clarity of the statements made.

The method of analysis

consisted mainly of questioning the participants involved both during and after the discussion

for their understanding₃ of what was being said.

Despite the incompleteness of this procedure

there is some evidence that, had the speakers been trained in the rhetorical techniques of simplification and attraction, a sharper understanding₃ would have resulted.

As the observations continued however it was noticed

that no matter how clearly the participants said they understood₃ the arguments

the points of conflict still remained

and, indeed, were in many instances sharpened.

It was as if this rhetorical emphasis

dealt with a symptomatic or marginal matter rather than with the fundamental dislocation.

After twenty of the group discussions had been analyzed and after the sectors of controversy had been re-examined, another definition was added.

Understanding₇ = the making of proper evaluations.

A understands₇ *B*,

a thing, a condition, a situation, a happening, a relationship, etc.

(i.e., nonverbal phenomena), or what is said about each,

when his response is to it rather than to something else ;

when his sizing-up of anything, any situation, etc.

is free of identification of it with anything else ;

when his taking account of it

is not affected by assumptions of which he is unaware ;

when what he says about the situation, etc. fits it, that is, neither distorts, disorders, oversimplifies, overcomplicates, overgeneralizes, negates, adds to, takes from, nor artificially separates it. A understands, anything, then, when his diagnosis, at any moment, is free from identifications and when he is cognizant of the structural relationships discoverable both in what is talked about and in what is said.

The emphasis in the study of the remaining thirty group discussions was turned to a descriptive listing of the kinds of misvaluations manifested. Three of the most persistent are here set out.

THE PREVENTION OF PROJECTION

Bertrand Russell introduced the term propositional function, concerning which Cassius J. Keyser observed that "it is, perhaps, the weightiest term that has entered the nomenclature, in the course of a hundred years." Roughly, a propositional function is a statement containing one or more variables.

By a variable is meant a term whose meaning or value is undetermined and to which one or more values or meanings can be assigned at will. A propositional function becomes a proposition when a single value is assigned to the variable.

A significant characteristic of the propositional function (e.g., " X are scarce", "Shakespeare was a great writer", "Religion is an opiate", etc.) is that such a statement is neither true nor false, but ambiguous.

If to X is assigned the single, more definite value "Houses for rent in 1947" and we say, "Houses for rent in 1947 are scarce", the propositional function has become a one-valued true proposition.

"Negroes are cowards" is to be considered a many-valued statement and therefore indeterminate.

But assign to the variable "Negroes" the value "Pvt. Woodall I. Marsh of Pittsburgh, of the 92nd Div.,

who won the Silver Star for taking twelve wounded paratroopers out of the front line to safety, fording a raging torrent in his truck, after an officer had said it couldn't be done", and the resulting statement is a proposition, but now a false one.

A rather considerable amount of the talk in the discussions was carried on in statements containing many-valued variables as if they were single-valued. Much too often a permanence and a specificity were assumed in the speaking, where on closer analysis there could be found only processes and varieties, even though concealed by the terms as used. Difficulties were to be expected (and they occurred) whenever the distinction was not recognized and wherever there was confidence that single values prevailed. It should be noticed that difficulty arises not because variables are used, but only when they are presumed to be something other, i.e., identified with nonvariables.

Some surprise was shown at the San Francisco Conference on World Security when the Polish question became a source of controversy, as both the American and the Russian delegates took for granted a nonexistent singularity in value in the variable 'democratic'. Democratic₁, concerned with the protection of minority opinions, is not democratic₂, the Soviet notion of racial equality and Communistic dominance. It is not argued that the awareness of the semantic distinction would have dissolved the difference in interests at the conference — But in terms of our findings it is believed that the awareness might at least have exposed the source of the friction which grew out of the belief of each delegation that the other was behaving badly, since had not both agreed on the necessity of 'democracy' in Poland?

The mechanism involved here can be put in focus by comparison with the simplicity-clarity doctrine. This view would locate the trouble in the word 'democratic', making it the 'barrier rather than the medium of understanding'. Our view suggests

that it might be equally cogent to note the projection-response, i.e., the assumption of a listener that he knew how the term was being used.

At the heart of the projection-misevaluation is the belief that there are values or meanings in terms. But values and meanings are assigned to terms by a human nervous system. But so pervasive is the unexamined notion that words can have exact meanings compounded in and of themselves, in the way a tree has branches, that it is often difficult to persuade a listener that in discussion the other fellow may be assigning a value to his variables which is not at all the one the listener would assign if he were speaking.

In the thirty group discussions the projection-developed conflicts arose mainly at three points : in the exploratory phase where the effort is to locate and expose the problem to be talked about ; in the search-for-solutions phase where the conflicts of interests arise ; and in the formula phase where effort is directed to the search for a program of action on which agreement can be reached. Present findings suggest that irrelevant discords which arise because of failure to uncover the individual values assigned to variables, and because of the unconscious assumption of the participants that each knows how the variables are being used by the others, are an irritating influence on the rest of the discussion.

Obstructionists, either naive or sophisticated, can readily tie up any discussion by insisting on the fixing of all variables. This is the age-old sophistry which insists that terms be defined once and for all. But no definition can prevent a speaker from assigning other values to the variables, either by design or accident, as the discussion continues.

In fact, the investigation revealed that there is most danger of by-passing when the members of the group hold fast to the belief that since the term has been given a definition everyone will use it in just that way. But it should be clear that no matter how terms are defined, the necessity of analysis for the values being assigned in the course of the talk still exists.

STATEMENTS OF FACT AND INFERENCE

A rich source of misunderstanding, was the belief of many of the participants in the factuality of their assertions. It was rarely sufficiently realized that a statement of fact can be made only after someone observes some thing or relation. Any utterance made prior to observation or when observation is not possible involves an inference or guess. One cannot speak with more than some degree of probability about what is to happen or about what happened before records were made.

Nor, because of the recalcitrance of nature and life, is it possible to be factual about a host of present perplexities. Thus, in 1947, can anyone do more than conjecture about the precise cellular functions which end in cancer?

Although in discussion people are quick to assert 'the' facts on any topic, it makes more than a little difference if instead of giving statements which fit observable phenomena they give their conjectured version of what was observed. An example may make the point.

IN AN OHIO STATE HOSPITAL

. . . the attendant yelled at a patient to get out off the bench so that the worker-patient could sweep. But the patient did not move. The attendant jumped up with an inch-wide restraining strap and began to beat the patient in the face . . . "Get the hell up!" It was a few minutes before the attendant discovered that he was strapped around the middle to the bench and could not get up.

The attendant observed one thing but assumed in his response something more.

i.e., a reason for the patient's immobility.
His analysis of the situation added to what could be observed and must, therefore, be considered inferential.

It seems unlikely that a discussion can be carried entirely on a factual basis using only statements based on the observations of the participants or anyone else. Any argument which seeks to prove that what is true of some, must be true of many cases, which concludes that if a program did or did not work in one place, it will or will not work in an essentially similar place, which supposes that certain effects will follow from the operation of indicated causes — such typical lines of argument have an inferential basis which calls for little explication. But if conclusions and suppositions are presented as if they were factual and thus necessarily certain rather than tentative and probable, then, an identification is at work which must affect the decisions being reached. Furthermore, if inferential utterances are passed off by participants in a discussion as if they were factual or as if they had the same degree of probability as factual statements, then there is created an atmosphere in which the search for understanding, on the issue tends to be subordinated to the vigor of the contending speakers, with the issue decided by attrition rather than by the adequacy of the assertions.

DEFINITION-THINKING

Pete Hatsuoko had been born in this country, though one of his parents had been born in Japan. He went to the public schools and received a degree from the State University. He had never been to Japan. He could not read or write Japanese. He knew only a few Japanese phrases used in family small talk. After his induction into the Army, he was assigned to the Infantry. The orientation program included talks on the nature of the enemy. The captain in charge thought

Pete should give one of the talks on "The Japanese Mentality." Pete tried in all candor to explain that he knew practically nothing about Japanese life and culture, that both his and his father's education had been received in this country. "But you're a Japanese," argued the Captain, "and you know about the Japanese. You prepare the talk." Pete did — from notes after he had read an Army handbook and a half-dozen popular magazine articles.

The evaluation of the two men may be analyzed as the prototype of a pattern which occurred frequently in the discussions.

In a sense

communication between them stopped when the conversation began.

The issue was faced on quite different grounds by each.

Pete oriented his thinking about facts.

He talked in terms of them.

He was, as far as is known, making statements which could have been verified or at least investigated.

The Captain, on the other hand, seemed preoccupied with associations

stirred up inside his nervous system by an accident of phrasing.

The verbal classification "Japanese" received his attention so that Pete's talking was neglected.

It was as if the label Japanese

served as a stimulus pushing off the Captain's thinking in a direction removed from the situation.

The direction can be plotted by his definition :

"A Japanese is a person who knows about the Japanese.

It follows, therefore,

that Pete Hatsuoko is a person who knows about the Japanese.

It follows, therefore, that Pete Hatsuoko can give the talk.

Other factors in the situation need not be considered."

The Captain's misevaluation

can be viewed as a response to his private verbal definition as if it were something more.

The point being made is not that there is anything sinister in the Captain's private conjuring up of images.

It is enough to note that the behavior

which resulted was of a kind very different from that

which would have taken account of the outside phenomena. Furthermore, decisions made on the basis of verbal associations, no matter how elaborate, are not the same as nor commensurate with those derived from consideration of facts.

The point, in short, is this :

evaluations based on the private elaboration of verbal formulae are not the same as nor should they be equated with evaluations based on verifiable descriptions or observations.

What is important here

is not the particular dodging of the issue by the Captain, but that this is a type of reaction which is in evidence in a very wide variety of human situations.

Two examples are given.

According to a popular account.

George Westinghouse designed a train brake operated by compressed air.

After it was patented he struggled to convince railroad men of his invention's value.

Cornelius Vanderbilt of the New York Central is said to have replied :

“Do you mean to tell me with a straight face that a moving train can be stopped with wind ?”

The mechanism of the misunderstanding may be generalized thus :

1. The issue was presented by reference to something nonverbal and observable.

2. *The reply was oriented by a verbal definition.*

“What is wind? Something less solid than iron.

A nonmassive thing like wind cannot stop an iron train. Therefore the proposal is to be dismissed.”

Our discussion experience suggests that the misunderstanding would move directly to overt conflict were the conclusion to be personalized by some such assertion by Vanderbilt as, “Westinghouse, you're a fool.”

That this sort of generalized verbalistic orientation to situations is not without its significance in human affairs

is, perhaps, sharply presented in Hartley's study of the attitudes of 500 students, using a slightly modified form of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale with the names of some 35 ethnic groups.

In the list were included the names of three entirely imaginary nationalities : Danirean, Pirenean, Wallonian.

It was found that on the average there was as much prejudice directed against the "none-such" groups as against any other. One concludes that the thinking was in terms of the words, since there were no facts on which the thinking could be based. Or as the investigator puts it :

"From the point of view of the experience of students, they must represent groups completely unknown in reality. Even if some students may have chosen to consider the Pireneans to be people who live in the Pyrenees ; the Wallonians, Walloons ; and the Danireans something else ; the fact that they tended to do this is in itself significant.

In reality there are no such groups, and for the attributes an individual may assign to them, we must look to the individual for the explanation, not to the group."

The identification of these two broadly characterized modes of thinking in the discussions was rarely as neatly etched or as readily explainable as in these examples, in which the point of conflict is readily evident and from which the heat of controversy is absent. For the most part the misevaluation was concealed by the complexity of the subjects under discussion. When the topics had to do with government and religious activities; labor unions, propaganda, prejudice, taxation, health and social insurance, etc., the argument on even the local and specific issues was often observed to develop around a backlog of readily defined associations which the participants had on the terms "communism", "bureaucracy", "labor racketeers", "big business", "government spending", "Wall Street", etc.,

quite apart from the fitness of their formulations with the immediate and particular aspect of the topic being talked about.

In one group during the course of the study an attempt was made to correct the misunderstanding : of the participants.

That group, which was observed in five different discussions, was made up of people who manifested to an unusual degree this orientation by definition.

The leader, a man of some experience, had on occasion sought to move the talk from the definition to the factual level and for his effort was accused of taking sides.

In an attempt to explain

the type of reaction which was producing unnecessary strains he set up a simple demonstration by means of a conventional formula.

They had been discussing the advisability of continuing the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

Three recorded speeches

each favoring the continuation of the FEPC, were played.

The group was then asked to rank the speakers *A*, *B* and *C* according to the effectiveness, logical soundness, etc., of the argument.

B was judged the best with *A* and *C* following.

A month later the three speeches were replayed for the group with but one change in the instructions.

It was explained that speaker *B* was a Negro.

A was then judged the most effective with *C* second and *B* third.

Such a result can, perhaps, be accounted for in many ways.

But the notion that the members of the group

in the second playing of the records were diverted from the speeches to a concern with the definition-associations of the word Negro is nevertheless suggestive.

CONCLUSIONS

These three types of reaction which lead to misunderstanding by no means exhaust those which have been catalogued.

They are presented as indications

of a source of conflict and breakdown

in a rather limited series of discussion situations.

Suppose participants could be so trained that they did not project their own values into variables, did not respond inferentially as if they were responding factually, and did not identify definition with fact-thinking, etc., would it follow that problems and disagreements in discussions would be thereby solved or resolved?

Little in our findings so far could either support or raise doubts about such a conclusion.

What is conceivable is this :

the study of the sources of misunderstanding might, if the lessons were well learned, keep people from the moments when their talk leads to unnecessarily created controversy.

Such antiseptic might, perhaps, create the atmosphere in which solutions become possible.

Only then would it be desirable to explore the means leading to understanding.

It is not yet clear to what extent on-the-ground-training in the patterns of proper evaluation will lead to a reduction in the points of disintegration in group discussions.

The possibility of locating and charting such points, however, suggests that discussion leaders might well be made more sensitive to the signs of their development.

Study might then move to the investigation of means by which such oncoming conflicts can be arrested or deflected.

One further conclusion seems inescapable.

Where the basic orientation of a culture makes few semantically critical demands, it will not be surprising if men are isolated from each other by their very modes of communication.

This is but a way of implying that progress in "understanding" does not require either the correction or simplification of the language in use, or the creation of special abridgments, but rather that progress depends instead on a reorientation of attitudes toward the verbalizing process itself.

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Public speaking Committee meetings

in a nutshell

This is a book for the practising executive, for the working leader in industry, government or elsewhere. Success on the platform as a speaker means much to you. You know participation skills can mean prestige, pleasure, profit and positive power.

The many occasions you are called upon to introduce a speaker, propose a vote of thanks, give a brief talk or conduct a committee meeting are verily opportunities. To do these well is an art and it can be mastered. This book tells you how. It is practical, precise, sharply relevant and easy to read. It is so written that you will not easily forget the hints, the suggestions, the apparently minor but significant devices by which you can make a better impression on groups.

Meetings occupy 60% or more of an executive's time. Half this time can be saved! Meetings are expensive, meetings are frustrating, unless someone puts them on the right tract. That someone may be you. Consider the gratitude you would earn, the recognition you would win, from your audience. This is the book to strengthen your persuasive power, to polish your manner and enliven your wit. You will be a different man at meetings once you have absorbed the valuable lessons summarised here.

The hints are based on the author's experience as a trainer and consultant both in India and abroad extending over half a life-time.