

CLD1-10



# Speaking for Success

## *How to Influence Others*

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Communication plays an important role in society; traditionally, public speaking has played roles from recruitment to persuasion, from informing to initiation. Because public speaking plays such an important role in society, learning to be an effective speaker can lead to more successful results for any group or organization. To be a truly effective public speaker, there are a few basics one must first understand—different types of speeches and when to use them, the integrity necessary when speaking to an audience, and how to reduce anxiety and boost confidence when speaking in public.

### Types of Speeches

There are many reasons why one may have to speak in public. Three common reasons for speaking in public are for information, persuasion or ceremonial purposes. For each, we will introduce the purpose as well as provide a few tips for effective speaking.

#### *Informative*

The informative speech is a common type of speech given in a variety of settings. The purpose of this type of speech is to present the audience with information, often a small but useful chunk of information. If the speech is a success, the audience should walk away with new knowledge. A few tips for effective informational speaking:

- Chose a topic the audience will find interesting.
- Keep things simple. Don't pack too much information into the speech, or people may get lost.

- Attempt to teach the audience rather than trying to change their minds.

#### *Persuasive*

Another common type of speech is the persuasive speech. The purpose of a persuasive speech is to change people's attitude or behavior about something. Therefore, being a good speaker is important, but the more important issue is to actually get the audience to change their minds. A few tips for effective persuasive speaking include:

- Deliver your speech with passion. No one will believe a dull, unexciting speaker.
- Try to find common ground with everyone in the audience, even those who disagree with you.
- End the speech by asking the audience to take a specific action.

#### *Ceremonial*

A ceremonial speech is given to mark an important occasion in an individual's or group's life. These speeches can be emotional and moving but also fun. Eulogies, wedding toasts, graduation or acceptance speeches, and award presentations are all ceremonial speeches. A few tips to give the best ceremonial speech:

- Tell stories about whomever the speech is about. Details bring the person alive and engage the audience.
- Double-check to make sure the personal information presented in the speech is accurate.
- Be appropriate. Don't make tasteless jokes or tell inappropriate stories. Use common sense.



*"To speak and to speak well are two things. A fool may talk, but a wise man speaks."*

— Ben Jonson

## Integrity behind Public Speaking

Being the speaker carries with it certain responsibilities. The speaker is responsible for what he or she says. What's more, by recognizing some basic ethical considerations you can gain audience trust and support. When possible, support the main points with solid evidence. If a quote or other material is taken directly from an outside source, make sure to give credit where credit is due. Lying and fabrications are not only unethical but also turn the audience against the speaker. Name-calling and mudslinging will turn an audience against the speaker even faster. Grossly exaggerating or distorting facts, suppressing key information, and condemning people or ideas without revealing the source of the information also are unethical. In the end, it is integrity that will win out every time.

## Reducing Anxiety

Many people fear speaking in public and lack confidence when in front of others; but believe it or not, speaking gets easier as you gain confidence. Plus, being a little nervous can be just enough to keep you on your toes when presenting in front of a crowd. The following tips can help you reduce your anxiety when speaking in public:

- Be comfortable with your setting. If possible, visit where you are going to present and get familiar with the area.
- Visualize success. Imagine yourself in front of others being confident and giving a strong presentation. If you see yourself performing well, you probably will.
- Don't think about your speech right before you give it. Thinking about your speech before you give it can make you more nervous. Instead think about something pleasant or listen to the presenter who speaks before you.

- Be prepared. If you understand the topic, the audience will appreciate you more and this will boost your confidence.
- Don't forget to breathe! Take deep, regular breaths and stand tall, loose, and relaxed.
- Let your voice be heard! Project your voice so listeners can hear you.
- Concentrate on the message you are giving. This may sound simple but taking the time to make sure your audience understands your message will mean you don't have time to feel nervous.

## Summary

Effective public speaking is important for getting your point across in a variety of situations. Three important aspects for effective public speaking include understanding different types of speeches, realizing the integrity behind effective public speaking, and learning to feel more confident and less anxious when speaking in public. By understanding these basics and putting them to good use, any individual can shine at public speaking.

## References

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