

**Friends of
the Earth**

Confident public speaking

Good speakers:

- do not have to be 'experts' or 'big-wigs'
- have something worth hearing (but the audience decides this not you)
- take time to prepare
- use their personality in the right way
- are fully considerate of the audience's needs
- take control to deliver to those needs
- depending on the audience or occasion a good speaker also looks the part

Fears about speaking in public:

Many people say that public speaking is difficult for them

- they think they have nothing worth saying
- they have no experience
- audiences are scary
- they are shy, nervous
- they have no time to do it properly
- they are not 'extroverts' or 'performers'

The only thing stopping anyone being an effective speaker is self-centred worry

Audiences:

FACT: audiences want their speaker to succeed – think about how you feel when you're in an audience and someone does not do so well.

- it's not in an audience's interest, or a good use of their time, to see a speaker fail
- what your audience gets out of your talk is the measure of your success.
- your job is to focus attention on your audience and give them a fair exchange for their time and attention.

A successful speaker is one who gives their audience a success

- An audience is not in the least interested in you or your subject until what you have to say has something to do with them.
- What you say must connect with people, their experiences, their hopes and aspirations.

As long as you know your subject enough (without having to be an expert) being an effective speaker on your subject becomes mainly a study and consideration of other people.

Preparation

...is the key

1. Gather lots of material - more than for the length of your talk. Use this and every aspect of your subject that enters your head including facts, opinions and quotes to draw up a list of headings or short notes. Some people draw a diagram or 'mind map' with all their points in bubbles and joined up with lines – these help structure ideas.

2. Next establish the exact purpose of your talk – make it crystal clear. Is it to inform, entertain or to persuade? Analyse what you have written down – what reaction do you want from your audience? If you can't write the purpose down in a dozen, cogent words distil it until you can.

3. Now you have ample material and a crystal clear purpose. You now need to consider your audience. Remember, their success is your success. If your talk is a technical one make sure you know the technical level of your audience. If it is a social talk your sole purpose is to make people feel good. If you don't know much about your audience find out: are they all women? Are they all former professionals? Etc.

Your task is to make your subject a concern for your audience. To do this you need to link everything you say and how you say it to them with their needs.

4. Now find a central theme, banner headline if you like, for the audience to link to.

5. Then isolate the two or three main points of your talk. Get them totally clear. Then you can build the talk around the Purpose, the People, the Theme and the main Points. You are now ready to prepare to stand and deliver your talk to best effect.

How to begin

- Once you are on your feet don't be in a hurry to launch into your opening words
- Give your hearers a second or two to stop shuffling and concentrate on you
- Never make your opening remark a cliché or an apology
- Don't ask: 'Can you all hear me?' because those who can't won't be able to reply!
- What you do say must have IMPACT. Make your first words vivid and interesting, surprising and focussed on the audience. So avoid 'I' for the moment and use 'you'
- Establish your theme and make your first main points
- Consider making a start with use of a visual aid or 3-D object
- If your talk is a lecture define the limits within which you will be discussing your subject. Give them some signposts. Let them know where you intend taking them and, above all, get them involved.

Nervous?

Good, nerves are natural and normal and a sign that you're getting ready for the event. But letting nerves take over will get in the way of focussing on your audience and giving them a fair exchange for their time and attention.

There are some techniques you can use to control nerves not least deep breathing, relaxation and visualisation of yourself giving a good speech and lapping us the appreciation.

Focusing on your purpose and knowing that you're well prepared also helps. If your mouth is dry bite your tongue as this will release saliva – or have water ready to hand and plan taking sips to make it look natural. But try to avoid alcohol before a speech – its effects tend to be exacerbated when we are nervous.

Just talk?

- Don't ear-bash your audience - use pauses and silence for effect
- Eye contact, smile + move around the room and interact if you feel okay doing so
- Let some of your thoughts reach you audience through their eyes
- Support at least one of your main points with a visual or 3-D prop
- And because you do not have to include everything in your speech you can anticipate some questions which your audience may ask about your presentation and have answers ready for these. If you leave anything out of your speech you can prompt you audience to ask about that.

Visual aids will:

- promote awareness; interest; understanding; acceptance
 - bring clarity to what you are saying
 - provide evidence to support your message
 - stimulate responses from your audience (humour, questions)
 - show people things which they may not see in their everyday life
- *Visual*: they must be able to see the point clearly. Too often speakers use condensed word slides which nobody can read. This detracts rather than 'aids' a presentation
- *Aids*: it must help the audience grasp the point; it can also help shift an audience's attention i.e. from staring at a screen to looking at you
- In certain types of talk you could even get your audience touching a prop

Your voice

- many people fret about their speaking voice
- some people find it help if they get into 'presentation mode' to help themselves 'lift' their normal voice
- be yourself but if you are not used to speaking to an audience practise your presentation voice - you may need to adopt a 'presentation mode' out of consideration for your audience
- use your voice to be heard comfortably - for you and your audience - but don't bawl like a Sergeant Major
- don't be afraid to use a microphone if one is provided. Test where to hold it or how far you need to be from it. Remember, if you turn your head away the sound will drift in and out. If you choose not to use one make sure your voice projects without shouting – otherwise use the microphone
- it is rude and inconsiderate to presume that people can hear you just because you cannot be bothered to use a microphone properly or at all. Don't ask if people can hear at the back because those who can't will hear you to be able to reply.
- vary the pace and pitch of your voice
- use pauses and silence - don't be afraid to stop to allow an idea to sink in

The venue

- If you can visit the venue beforehand to check out the space, consider how you can use it, think about how visuals might work and how much you need to project your voice.
- If this is impractical arrive in good time to plan how you may need to alter your talk and how you were going to deliver it to account for the conditions and equipment

Using notes

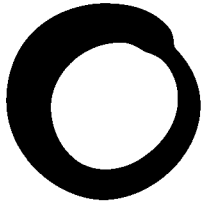
Have notes to hand but try to avoid using a wad of them as they will form a barrier between you and your audience. Experiment to see how much you can manage without notes. It's okay to refer to them from time to time e.g. to read a quote.

- at the very least reduce notes to the bare minimum, say ten key 'prompt' words, on numbered cards - trial it this way to get comfortable doing this.
- Visual aids and 3-D props (e.g. an apple) can also help trigger or remind you of the sequence of your talk – and also create pace and variation for the audience.

Be prepared to change things at the last minute because the projector fails or similar.

Remember:

Your audience want you to succeed
Your success is giving your audience success
You have prepared, you know your subject and you are in control...
...so take control



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6 steps to preparing your talk or presentation

1. What's the subject?

- be clear in your mind about what the talk is, and is not, about

2. Prepare – brainstorm stage

- make unstructured notes or 'mind maps' capturing your thoughts and ideas that you might want to include in the talk. Don't edit this – leave nothing out

3. Prepare – the thinking stage

- Purpose: write this down in one or two short, clear sentences

- People: consider who are you presenting to? What do they already know? Are they likely to be interested in anything in particular? How do they link with you and your subject? How can you make connections to them with what you will be saying or showing? Also find out how many people are you presenting to?

- Theme: decide on a theme or key message of the talk

- Main points: identify the 2/3 main facts which will support your theme / message

4. Structure the talk

Opening - work on an opening that will give impact

Signposts - to give a clue to where your talk is going

Main points - the core of your talk

Summarise - as reference points, markers and to aid structure

Close – leave them with something to remember

5. Visual aids – slides, 'powerpoint' or simply 3-D props (e.g. an orange, a wind up radio, a drinks can you can crush dramatically under your foot...) FACT: 82 per cent of all information we retain comes to us through our eyes

6. Run through – check timing, pacing and any use of visual aids, props.