

SPEAKING FOR SUCCESS

It's been said that many of us would rather die than get up in front of a group and have to speak with any level of comfort. Too often the childhood scenario of being in front of the classroom ruminates in our brain and in a second, we are back to being that timid kid at the front of the class stammering, and hoping the recess bell rings to save us.

The truth is whether you are offering a toast at a wedding, introducing business colleagues to each other, or actually presenting at a meeting, powerful presentation skills are a terrific asset and immediately communicate your level of personal power.

In our consulting practice, we find with a heightened awareness, most people can improve their communication skills to in many areas of their personal and professional life, even if they are not professional speakers. Here are a few things to remember when presenting:

1. TEST the sound equipment BEFORE the event or meeting. Nothing is worse than annoying feedback or a microphone that cuts out or isn't working. Get there early and check out the equipment with the Audio Visual department. The biggest mistake made is testing the microphone close to your mouth, and then presenting with the microphone a foot or more away.
2. Learn to use a MICROPHONE effectively. So many presenters frustrate their audience because they turn away from the microphone as they speak, have it too low to make it effective or worse, mumble their words. Others may speak too loudly, which is equally annoying. Practice, practice, practice.
3. DRESS for success. Neat, clean, professional dress is key, unless you are an entertainer or a celebrity. The rest of us need to look the part.
4. Basic EYE CONTACT is essential to make the connection with authentic and personal connectivity to one or a hundred people. Be sure to make eye contact with those you are passing as you walk to the front of the room. This initiates a more personal and real experience for those about to hear your presentation.

5. Be conscious of your BODY LANGUAGE. Your confidence or self esteem will be easily read by your audience if you are unsure of yourself. Any communication you deliver is more about the message, than you. Being prepared will help you communicate in a more relaxed, but powerful way.

6. OUTLINE your presentation in short bullet points on a card or sheet of paper to help prompt you during your presentation and to keep you organized. Don't freelance it or read it word for word. Trying to remember everything you wanted to say and backing up to add it later will impact your credibility.

7. If you are using VISUAL AIDS or power point in your presentation, don't rely on it so heavily you are not relevant to the program. Go to black between slides, keep the words LARGE and avoid the impulse to put too much on each slide. If they are reading the screen, it detracts from you as the presenter.

8. STICK to your allotted time. Don't go beyond the time allowed or you may wreak havoc on the rest of the program timing.

You don't have to be a professional to deliver a report, a toast at a wedding or honor a high achievement by an employee. Delivering the best you is the best policy for any communication opportunity that allows for your special leadership and expertise to shine.

Terri Murphy is one of the industry's leading consultants on the integration of traditional marketing and communication with today's Web and Internet tools. Her expertise is developing and growing customer relations to create a more profitable business model for Fortune 500 corporations and real estate companies nationwide. She has 24+ year career in the real estate industry and holds the GRI, CRS, LTG & CREC designations. She is the CIO for U.S. Learning, Inc. and a frequent spokesperson for sales industries nationwide. Copyright© 2005, Terri Murphy. All right reserved. For information about Terri's presentations, contact the Frog Pond at 800.704.FROG(3764) or email susie@frogpond.com; <http://www.FrogPond.com>.

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