

PUBLIC SPEAKING 101

How to succeed in your Exhibition presentations!

1. Pay attention to your body language

- Make eye contact while you speak
- Stand up straight, both feet on the ground, limit your fidgeting (scratch later!)
- No gum

2. Sloooooooooow doooooooooooooooooown.

Professional speakers are deliberately slow in delivery. Not painfully so, but a pace that will encourage everyone in the room to receive all the information and not be confused.

3. Practice, practice, practice!

Practice is essential to delivering a strong, sincere, and succinct message to your audience. Start out by just reading your presentations OUT LOUD from a piece of paper or computer document.

Practice your speech in front of the mirror as if you were speaking directly to someone. Pay attention to:

- Your facial expressions
- Your gestures
- Your body movements
- How welcoming you appear

When you have gentle expressions and a calm demeanor when you speak, you will be more welcoming to your audience.

4. Use the sound of silence.

This is the most common trap to fall into. It's also the easiest. When speaking, we feel forbidden to stop talking. So when we get stuck, or momentarily forget our train of thought, we unconsciously start reaching for dribble like "ummmm" and "uhhhh" to fill the void. Purposefully silence yourself in these moments until you regain your train of thought. You may think you look foolish, but you really look professional, collected, and confident when doing this. As Sir Ralph Richardson puts it, "the most precious things in speech are pauses." Use them liberally.

5. Promote camaraderie in Q&A.

You don't have to know everything, and don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something. If someone asks you a question that you don't know, do your best to reason through a response based on the research you have done on your topic. Don't be afraid to let your committee know that you aren't sure of the answer but this is what you "think." Ask your committee what they think about your ideas. Invite the audience to be a part of what your message, not just someone who consumes it. This will remove the pedestal-like perception of public speaking and encourage communal interaction.

6. Make Your Nervous Energy Work For You

Learn to channel your nervous energy into positive energy. Being nervous is a form of adrenaline. You can use it in a positive way to help give an impassioned presentation.

7. Be human. Be sincere. Be yourself.

The best thing you can do in a speech is to be ultimate version of yourself—show your personality!