

4-H Day at the Capitol

March 19, 2014 Concourse Hotel, Madison, WI
Mock Lobbying Practice Sessions

10 Positive Tips for Public Speaking

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech or talking in front of others is natural and even beneficial, but too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here are some proven tips on how to control your butterflies and give better presentations:

- 1. Know your material.** Know more about your issue than you include in your speech. Use humor, personal stories and conversational language – that way you won't easily forget what to say.
- 2. Practice. Practice. Practice!** Rehearse out loud with all equipment you plan on using. Revise as necessary. Work to control filler words; Practice, pause and breathe. Practice with a timer and allow time for the unexpected.
- 3. Be Yourself.** Give yourself permission to be human and real; you do not have to be perfect.
- 4. Focus your attention.** If you focus your attention on the information you are trying to convey you will not be focusing on how nervous you might be feeling.
- 5. Relax.** Do some mindfulness relaxation techniques to help you relax before your public-speaking engagement – it calms your nerves. Pause, smile and count to three before saying anything. ("One one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand. Pause. Begin.") Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.
- 6. Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize your team's support - it will boost your confidence.
- 7. Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They're rooting for you.
- 8. Don't apologize** for any nervousness or problem – most probably never noticed it.
- 9. Concentrate on the message – not the medium.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience.
- 10. Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

Please see reverse side for 10 No No's for Public Speaking!

10 No No's for Public Speaking

- **Starting with a whimper.** Don't start with "Thank you for that kind introduction." Start with a bang! Give the audience a startling statistic, an interesting quote, a news headline – something powerful that will get their attention immediately.
- **Attempting to imitate other speakers.** Authenticity is lost when you aren't yourself.
- **Failing to "work" the room.** Your audience wants to meet you. If you don't take time to mingle before the presentation, you lose an opportunity to enhance your credibility with your listeners.
- **Failing to use relaxation techniques.** Do whatever it takes – listening to music, breathing deeply, shrugging your shoulders – to relieve nervous tension.
- **Reading a speech word for word.** This will put the audience to sleep. Instead use a "keyword" outline: Look at the keyword to prompt your thoughts. Look into the eyes of the audience, and then speak.
- **Using someone else's stories.** It's okay to use brief quotes from other sources, but to connect with the audience, you must illustrate your most profound thoughts from your own life experiences. If you think you don't have any interesting stories to tell, you are not looking hard enough.
- **Speaking without passion.** The more passionate you are about your topic, the more likely your audience will act on your suggestions.
- **Ending a speech with questions and answers.** Instead, tell the audience that you will take questions and then say, "We will move to our closing point." After the Q and A, tell a story that ties in with your main theme, or summarize your key points. Conclude with a quote or call to action.
- **Failing to prepare.** Your reputation is at stake every time you face an audience – so rehearse well enough to ensure you'll leave a good impression!
- **Failing to recognize that speaking is an acquired skill.** Effective executives learn how to present in the same way they learn to use other tools to operate their businesses.