

7 Tips for delivering your speech



Do you dread speaking in front of others but want to make sure you drive home your point? How you deliver your words is just as important as what you say. Voice, body language and eye contact are just a few areas that can either command attention to your message or detract from it. What you say won't cut it if the physical attributes are a mess.



If you're getting ready to deliver your first speech or you've delivered several, here are some quick tips to put into practice.



1. Tone

Your voice will either draw in your audience or alienate them. Avoid speaking in monotone, the tone that stays the same and neither rises nor falls. When you say something exciting, show that in your tone. Monotone bores people and puts their minds to sleep. Then they check their watches. Change your pitch throughout your speech. Give your presentation in front of a trusted friend or advisor and allow for feedback.

3. Eye contact



Make it a point to look at individuals. Don't look at the wall above all the heads. And don't stare too long at any one person lest you make him or her uncomfortable. View your audience as individuals, not as a crowd. Their facial expressions will tell you whether they understand you, or agree or disagree with your comments. Eye contact will also help you to be more conversational.

2. Volume

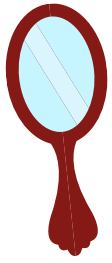
The size of the audience, the layout of the room and surrounding internal and external distractions will dictate your volume control. Even if you use a microphone, outside noises – such as an ambulance – means you have to speak louder. When you begin, you should address the back of the room and ask if they can hear you. If not, speak up. Look at the audience. Don't lower your head or it will restrict your voice.

4. Poise

Your body language and poise affects your audience. If you indicate nervousness or you're uncomfortable, they will be too. If your arms and body are flailing about, your audience will be edgy (or concerned). Relax. Give your presentation in front of a mirror during your preparation. Do you look confident? Cool? Then your audience will be too.



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5. Mannerisms and gestures

Do you have a nervous tick? When you give a presentation, are you constantly moving your arms? Do you continue to push up your glasses on your face? Do you shift from one foot to the other? Awkward mannerisms are a sign of nervous behavior. Remember, if you are nervous, you will make your audience uncomfortable. Practice your gestures in front of a mirror. Don't force them, but be natural. Again, think about having a personal, one-on-one conversation with someone. Then do that in front of your audience.



6. Word whiskers

Word whiskers are words haphazardly thrown about in speech as another indication of nervousness and lack of preparation. They include: "um," "ah," "so," "and everything," "like," and other words that don't belong in an intelligent sentence. Think about what you want to say; practice your speech to the point you feel comfortable, and again, relax. This will help you avoid using those annoying words which will detract your audience from your thoughts.

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7. Avoid alienating your audience

It's helpful to understand your audience before you deliver your speech. Although we cannot please everyone, there are some topics best left to the dinner table that have no place in a professional setting (this depends, of course, on the theme you are delivering). But these include: politics, religion, race, nationalism and using vulgar language. These are sensitive topics and likely irrelevant to your goals.

Avoid adding your opinions, especially during question and answer portions. You need facts and sources. If you don't know the answer to something, admit it, but state you will follow up with that person, and then do it.



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