

7. GOOD PRESENTATION

7.1 PUBLIC SPEAKING GOOD PRESENTATION: Know the needs of your audience and match your contents to their needs. Know your material thoroughly. Put what you have to say in a logical sequence. Ensure your speech will be captivating to your audience as well as worth their time and attention. Practice and rehearse your speech at home or where you can be at ease and comfortable, in front of a mirror, your family, friends or colleagues. Use a tape-recorder and listen to yourself. Videotape your presentation and analyze it. Know what your strong and weak points are. Emphasize your strong points during your presentation.

When you are presenting in front of an audience, you are performing as an actor is on stage. How you are being perceived is very important. Dress appropriately for the occasion. Be solemn if your topic is serious. Present the desired image to your audience. Look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, proud, but not arrogant. Remain calm. Appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous. Speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and show appropriate emotion and feeling relating to your topic. Establish rapport with your audience. Speak to the person farthest away from you to ensure your voice is loud enough to project to the back of the room. Vary the tone of your voice and dramatize if necessary. If a microphone is available, adjust and adapt your voice accordingly.

Body language is important. Standing, walking or moving about with appropriate hand gesture or facial expression is preferred to sitting down or standing still with head down and reading from a prepared speech. Use audio-visual aids or props for enhancement if appropriate and necessary. Master the use of presentation software such as *PowerPoint* well before your presentation. Do not over-dazzle your audience with excessive use of animation, sound clips, or gaudy colors which are inappropriate for your topic. Do not torture your audience by putting a lengthy document in tiny print on an overhead and reading it out to them.

Speak with conviction as if you really believe in what you are saying. Persuade your audience effectively. The material you present orally should have the same ingredients as that which are required for a written research paper, i.e. a logical progression from INTRODUCTION (Thesis statement) to BODY (strong supporting arguments, accurate and up-to-date information) to CONCLUSION (re-state thesis, summary, and logical conclusion).

Do not read from notes for any extended length of time although it is quite acceptable to glance at your notes infrequently. Speak loudly and clearly. Sound

confident. Do not mumble. If you made an error, correct it, and continue. No need to make excuses or apologize profusely.

Maintain sincere eye contact with your audience. Use the 3-second method, e.g. look straight into the eyes of a person in the audience for 3 seconds at a time. Have direct eye contact with a number of people in the audience, and every now and then glance at the whole audience while speaking. Use your eye contact to make everyone in your audience feel involved.

Speak to your audience, listen to their questions, respond to their reactions, adjust and adapt. If what you have prepared is obviously not getting across to your audience, change your strategy mid-stream if you are well prepared to do so. Remember that communication is the key to a successful presentation. If you are short of time, know what can be safely left out. If you have extra time, know what could be effectively added. Always be prepared for the unexpected.

Pause. Allow yourself and your audience a little time to reflect and think. Don't race through your presentation and leave your audience, as well as yourself, feeling out of breath.

Add humor whenever appropriate and possible. Keep audience interested throughout your entire presentation. Remember that an interesting speech makes time fly, but a boring speech is always too long to endure even if the presentation time is the same.

When using audio-visual aids to enhance your presentation, be sure all necessary equipment is set up and in good working order prior to the presentation. If possible, have an emergency backup system readily available. Check out the location ahead of time to ensure seating arrangements for audience, whiteboard, blackboard, lighting, location of projection screen, sound system, etc. are suitable for your presentation.

Have handouts ready and give them out at the appropriate time. Tell audience ahead of time that you will be giving out an outline of your presentation so that they will not waste time taking unnecessary notes during your presentation.

Know when to STOP talking. Use a timer or the microwave oven clock to time your presentation when preparing it at home. Just as you don't use unnecessary words in your written paper, you don't bore your audience with repetitious or

unnecessary words in your oral presentation. To end your presentation, summarize your main points in the same way as you normally do in the CONCLUSION of a written paper. Remember, however, that there is a difference between spoken words appropriate for the ear and formally written words intended for reading. Terminate your presentation with an interesting remark or an appropriate punch line. Leave your listeners with a positive impression and a sense of completion. Do not belabor your closing remarks. Thank your audience and sit down.

7.2 Personal hygiene: Our health and wellness plays a factor in how we present ourselves. To attain Speech mastery requires maintenance of our primary equipment, ourselves. This is because how we feel and function will determine to some degree how well we present ourselves.

Certainly what you say is more important than what people see. Your appearance, however, is an important aspect of your presentation skills; you want to encourage the audience to listen to what you have to say.

Remember that your presentation begins the moment someone recognizes you as the speaker. This might be in the elevator, the restroom, or even in the parking garage. As soon as you are in close proximity to your speaking location, act as though you are on stage—because you may be. Finish your preparation before you leave your car. Avoid writing down notes at the table before you speak. People might get the impression that you did not carefully prepare.

Be sociable in the activities that precede your speech. Look pleasant. Meet and greet people and show a genuine interest in the other person. This is not the time to be sitting by yourself pondering your presentation. Show by your expression and actions that you are engaged in the activities which precede your presentation.

Wear clothing suitable for the audience you are speaking to. If you are not sure, ask the program planner when you are learning about your audience. When possible, dress one notch up from the audience. For men that might mean wearing a sport coat with an open collar if you know your audience will be in knit shirts and slacks. For women this might mean wearing nice slacks and sweater when speaking to a casual retreat where women will be in jeans. For most occasions in a hotel or event center, a suit and tie or silk blouse is always appropriate. Do not wear clothing that can be distracting, which might mean avoiding flashy jewelry or flamboyant shirts and scarves. For some people, of course, the flamboyant look is

their trademark. Your appearance should blend in well with your content and the audience to which you are speaking.

Once in a setting where there was a young man who was frustrated at what he perceived to be a negative attitude from the participants. Over half the audience was in suits and ties, dresses and high heels, with a few people in jeans, sweatshirts, and sneakers. The speaker was in jeans with his shirttail out and wearing sandals. There was nothing wrong with his dress if he'd been in the audience, but it adversely affected his rapport with some of the people there. Someone privately suggested he tuck in his shirt and wear a sport coat to the next session, and he wisely took the advice. He was amazed at the difference his effort on his appearance made on the attitude of his audience. His content was excellent but was overshadowed by how he presented himself.

Check yourself in the mirror of the restroom before you enter the meeting room to make sure that everything about your appearance is in place. About a year ago I was in a hurry to make a noon banquet speech and I skipped the restroom look. When I got back to the car after the speech, I realized I had unbuttoned the top button of my shirt and pulled my tie loose earlier in the day, and I had looked that way throughout the speech. I'm sure I appeared as though I'd had more than food at lunch that day!

Look confident even though you may feel nervous about your presentation. Avoid the worried, furrowed-brow look. Smile a lot. Walk with a bounce in your step. Emanate that "I am in charge" aura. You will certainly have that confident look when you are speaking and you will want to show it in the minutes before you speak as well. The incongruity of looking too serious and worried and then smiling and acting enthusiastic as you speak may negatively affect your credibility.

When you are introduced, walk to the lectern with erect posture, quick steps, and a smile on your face. Before you actually speak, look at the audience to make eye contact with several people, and then begin.

Personal appearance is an often disregarded part of communication and presentation skills.

When you are speaking in public you may be representing your organization or just yourself, but it is still *you* in the front line. It is *you* that the other person, group or audience sees and before you have time to open your mouth and give an account of

yourself, certain assumptions, both consciously and subconsciously, have been made.

First impressions are very important - they can be about attitude as well as dress.

Visual impact is at least as important as verbal impact, people will very quickly make assumptions based on your facial expressions, the clothes you wear, how well groomed you are and your body language.

Facial Expressions

Little can be done to alter your face but a lot can be done about the expression that is on it. However the day started and whatever minor crisis has occurred along the way, people have not come to meet you with a dark expression on your face. It is your duty - to yourself as well as to the organisation that you represent - to convey a calm, friendly and professional exterior, despite how you may feel inside. Smile and appear optimistic.

Personal Image:

The reflection that stares back at you from a mirror is not necessarily a true likeness of the face known to family, friends and colleagues, because they will see you off-guard, in repose, concentrating on a task or listening to them. How many people can honestly admit to looking in a mirror without altering their expression? It is quite natural to 'play to a mirror' possibly by raising an eyebrow, pulling a face or smiling at the reflection. This is why people often feel self-conscious when they see a 'bad' photograph of themselves.

The Real You:

It is human nature to make compromises. All individuals change their approach depending on the people they meet and what they feel is expected from them. Your 'on-duty' self, the one who functions in public, is different from your 'off-duty' self, the one concerned with home, family and friends. Everyone has many and varied roles in life. You can be one person and be a parent, son/daughter, brother/sister, friend, adviser, patient, client and consumer all in one day.

These differing roles all require their own particular qualities and skills in personal communication and can also call upon different requirements of attitude and appearance, i.e., of visual image. Your external image (appearance) is how you are

seen by the world, whereas the real you (not a role model or the person you would like to be) is someone who is honest with themselves.

Clothes and Grooming

What sort of external image is appropriate to the organization you will be speaking to? Only you can answer this question. Due to the nature of the work, some organizations are happy for people to be casually dressed, whilst others may expect smarter attire. It is important to be suitably dressed within expected limits.

Nobody expects you to be packaged into something you are not, but your appearance is a reflection of your own self-esteem and you should aim to present yourself to your best possible advantage. Whilst you might be casually dressed when working within your organization, a more formal approach may well be preferable when representing your organization at an external meeting.

Good grooming and a tidy appearance is preferable, whether casually or more formally dressed.