

# **How to Write and Deliver a Speech That Will Get You Clients**

**By Caterina Rando**

You are standing in front of a room full of potential clients. Everyone is seated on the edge of their chair. Your introducer eloquently conveys your credentials. The room is quiet, and full of anticipation. It is time for you to begin. You stand, knowing you must catch and hold the attention of the audience, convey confidence and share your ideas. You are well-prepared and feel at ease. You know you have a stellar presentation, you have worked out the kinks in your delivery and have incorporated the following success strategies on how to write and deliver a great speech.

## **Tips for Writing a Great Speech**

1. The first step is to ask yourself what you hope to accomplish with your presentation. Without an outcome in mind, your speech may be bland and even boring. Once you know what you hope to accomplish, you can begin.
2. Decide the major "must make points" of your presentation. Do not over pack your presentation with information. If your speech is less than thirty minutes, do not have more than five major points you want to convey. When you are giving a speech in an effort to get clients you want to also do the following:
  - \* Inform your audience on your subject
  - \* Establish yourself as an expert and a resource
  - \* Encourage your audience to take action
3. Unless you are a comedian, do not open with a joke. Leave humor to the humorists. Instead, open and close with a personal story and relate it to your topic- everybody loves stories.
4. When it comes to speaking and storytelling stick with what you know. Do not tell a story about something that is unfamiliar to you. When telling a personal story paint pictures for the audience with your words. Describe colorful images the audience can see in their minds.
5. Until you are an experienced confident speaker, consider writing out your speech. After writing it out completely, edit it, then go through it again and take out any words or phrases that seem unnecessary. Practice in front of the mirror or a supportive spouse or family pet.
6. Bring your whole speech to the podium or front of the room. Make sure you number the pages in a large size font, so you will not mix them up. Write a shorter outline for quick reference.
7. Regardless of the topic, use quotes. Audiences like quotes. Use interesting sources that the audience can relate to and refrain from quoting dead presidents. Check out <http://www.wordsofwomen.com>.
8. Anecdotes, current event items and facts that you can reference can add credibility and interest to your presentation.

9. Be sure about your pronunciation and grammar. Get any questions answered. Be confident that everything you say is accurate.

10. Keep sentences short so you can breath in the right places.

11. Consider tape recording your speech in your own voice and playing it over and over to accelerate learning. The better you know your speech and the more you have practiced, the more you-- and your audience-- will enjoy it.

### **Tips for a Great Delivery**

1. **ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY SPEECH FILLERS** from your communication. Fillers are words and phrases such as "umm," "well," "it is sort-a like," "it's kind-a like." These take away from the message you want to convey. Some of the words and phrases to eliminate include: "you know," "I think," "I'm sorry," "just," "but," "should," "like," "um," and, "a," etc.

2. **USE THE POWERFUL PAUSE.** Do not be afraid to have a moment of silence between sentences. A pause, after a thought and prefacing a response to a question holds the attention of the listener.

3. **BREATHE** from the diaphragm. Breathe deeply and often.

4. **PACE YOURSELF.** Do not talk too fast or too slow.

5. **PHYSICALLY POSITION YOURSELF POWERFULLY.**

Be aware of your posture when you speak. Slouching, tilting your head and crossing your arms or legs diminishes the message. Stand up straight, shoulders down, feet firmly planted and knees unlocked.

6. **PROJECT YOUR PRESENCE.**

Your voice is the herald that carries your message. Speak from your diaphragm not your throat. Keep the sound in the low- to- medium range. This projects authority. Speak loudly enough to be easily heard. Focus on speaking with enthusiasm, and energy and create color with your voice by using vocal variety.

7. **GESTURES.**

Do not be a statue, consider occasionally exaggerating a gesture. Speaking from a platform is different than holding a one on one conversation. Use your whole body when you speak.

8. **CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.**

Use a lot of eye contact. Speak directly to individual members of the audience. Do not take your eyes off your audience or focus on a point over their heads. Every word you say should be spoken into the eyes of one of the beautiful people in your audience.

9. **COMMUNICATE CONFIDENCE.**

Make a conscious effort to project yourself confidently. This is as important as the message. Good posture, projection, smiling at times all project confidence.

## 10. WARM UP.

Take a few minutes before you begin to warm up your body. Move around and do some vocal exercises to warm up your mouth and your voice.

### **Pre-presentation do's & don'ts**

- Have a glass of water near you, located in a place that can not easily be knocked over. Do not drink ice cold water since cold water can tighten your vocal cords. Only drink room temperature water. Your mouth may get dry and you want to make sure you have some water nearby.
- Use audio visual equipment only after practicing with the technology five times. Have a couple of lines to say when the technology seems to be slowing down your presentation. Have a Plan B in the event all technology fails you.
- Do not start your speech by using warm-up phrases like "thank you for that great introduction," "gee, it is great to be here." Jump right in with your rehearsed, opening story.

### **Handouts That Can Get You Clients**

Always have something to give to audience when you speak. Audience members will forget you when you walk out the door if they do not have a part of you to take home with them.

- In addition to information on the topic discussed, consider giving participants an article you have written on the topic. This makes you look like an expert. Always have your brochures and business cards displayed.
- When applicable include a flyer on your upcoming seminars or where you will be speaking next or any other event you would like to invite your audience to.
- Put your business name, address and phone number on the bottom of each sheet of paper you give your audience.
- Many speakers use an evaluation form to ask audience members for feedback on how their presentations can be improved. While you have to be pretty thick-skinned to do this, it can be very helpful.
- Design a sheet asking audience members for their contact information. Consider including qualifying questions to help you determine if you should follow up with an individual. For example "Do you or does your company use (fill in the blank with your product or service)?" or "Would you be interested in a complimentary consultation to discuss (fill in the blank with your product or service)?"
- To make sure everyone turns in their form, hold a drawing, give away one of your products or services.
- Consider making a special offer good only for a certain period of time for everyone in your audience. Give each person a customized coupon with the offer written on it. Or send them an electronic coupon after the event.

- Some savvy professionals give everyone in the audience a specialty item with their business information on it, such as a pen, a pad of paper or an eraser. You will make friends with your audience members when you give them freebies and if they keep this item on their you will be remembered.

Start with a few of these tips that seem right for you, then add a few more. Speaking is a skill that can take time to develop. The more you do it, the more clients it will bring you and, eventually, you will find that there is no place you would rather be than in front of an audience sharing your message. Enjoy.

Caterina Rando, MA, MCC, is author of "Learn to Power Think," a keynote speaker, success coach and trainer. She helps people invigorate their professional and personal lives and create the results they want. To find out about her book and other resources, visit <http://www.caterinar.com>. Caterina can be reached at 415-668-4535 or by email at [cpr@caterinar.com](mailto:cpr@caterinar.com).