

SPEAKING IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING

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Preparation

1. Speak about what you know - you are the expert!
2. Think & write in threes (three points, three sub-headings).
3. Plan the amount of material you will use based on the time available.
4. Prepare your written notes in large type, important words in bold or highlighted.
5. Rehearse out loud, not just in your head, ideally in front of someone.
6. Rehearse in the room you will be presenting, with all the props.
7. Warm up your body and voice before your presentation.

Connection to Audience

1. Look at individuals in the eye.
2. Look at participants in all areas of the room in a random pattern.
3. Start with the "sunflowers" - open faces sending you "positive energy".
4. Land "positive energy" even when you are think you are receiving "negative energy".
5. Have a clear purpose; connect to your own passion:
"I want to find a way to get _____ to be or do _____."
6. Vary your tactics for interest and success.

Body Language, Gesture & Movement

1. Stand up straight, spine long, body relaxed & open.
2. Breathe!
3. Avoid protective or repetitive gestures.
4. Use specific descriptive gestures as another language.
5. Avoid repetitive movement; move with purpose.
6. Use movement through space to "signpost" transitions.

Voice & Articulation

1. Breathe often & deeply.
2. Activate body resonance - speak from chest, not throat.
3. Relax the jaw, lips, tongue, & soft palate.
4. Move your mouth when you speak.
5. Use silences between points - land them!
6. Lengthen your important words.
7. Calibrate your volume to the room.

Using Your Notes

1. Be really familiar with content and structure of your material.
2. Practice "grab & give" - get the line off the page and give it to audience.
3. Take your time to land your points.

Using a Microphone

1. Don't speak *to* the microphone - let it be the augmentation of your vibration.
2. Land your energy to the far corners of the room.
3. Circle the microphone when speaking to people at your sides.

Using a Podium

1. Stand balanced on both feet, pressing your hands gently on the podium surface.
2. Don't hunch over the microphone.
3. Avoid grabbing the podium.
4. Come out from behind the podium at your first chance!

Handling "Hecklers"

1. Three kinds of questions: people who genuinely want to know something, people who want to show how much they know, people who want to knock you off.
2. Respond with warmth to all three: "great question", "glad you asked that", "wonderful point", "interesting response".
3. Put off long discussions to after the meeting: "let's talk about that after we're done", "I have the data in my office", "let me e-mail you with more information".
4. Answer questions with your own question in mind: "how does this question and my answer to this question advance my objective?"

Costume

1. Understand (or make best guess as to) dress code of audience.
2. Dress one "notch" up - simple lines, strong colors.
3. Wear comfortable shoes - avoid unstable heels or clothing that constricts your breath.
4. Keep your hair out of your face.