

Confessions of a public speaker, Scott Berkun, 2009

What to do before you speak:

Practice your material. It's the only way to learn how to get from one point to the other.

The entire universe of fears and mistakes goes away simply by having confidence in your material.

Relax your body as much as possible and exhaust as much physical energy before you talk.

Get to the venue early so you don't have to rush. Always do tech and sound rehearsal well before your start time.

Public speaking tips

People come to hear you speak because they:

- Want to learn something
- Wish to be inspired
- Hope to be entertained
- Have a need they hope you will satisfy
- Desire to meet other people interested in the subject
- Seek a positive experience they can share with others

Everyone stops listening when the speaker wanders far away from anything the audience cares about.

Preparing well requires 4 things:

1. Take a strong position in the title of your presentation. It conveys your point of view.
2. Think carefully about your specific audience. Know why they are there, what their needs are, what background knowledge they have, the pet theories they believe in and how they hope their world will be different after your presentation is over.
3. Make your specific points as concise as possible. Every point should be compressed into a single interesting sentence. If it takes 10 minutes to explain your point, something is very wrong.
4. Know the likely intelligent expert counter arguments from an intelligent expert audience. If you do not know the intelligent counterarguments to each of your points, your points cannot be good.

Start with a strong title. A title divides the universe into what you will talk about and what you won't.

People really want an insight. They want an angle. A good speaker or teacher finds it for them.

If you've done enough thinking in advance, all your brain needs is a little list, and most of the speaking will take care of itself.

The more effort you put into the clarity of your points, the easier everything else about public speaking becomes.

The science of not boring people

The silence before you begin speaking is the most powerful moment you have. You'll never have a greater % of your audience's attention than the silence before you begin speaking. Use it wisely.

(Medina's 10 minute rule). Never spend more than 10 minutes on a single point. Structure your entire lecture on around a sequence of points you know your audience is interested in hearing.

Set the pace and rhythm of your talk. "I have 30 minutes to talk to you and 5 points to make. I will spend 5 minutes on each point and save the remaining time for any questions"

Outline. Briefly outline how things will work in your presentation.

Practice your material in front of a clock until you get the timing down. You can't know how long each slide or point will take until you do it.

You are performing. You don't need to be perfect, but you do need to play the part. Be bigger than you are. Speak louder, take stronger positions and be more assertive than you would in an ordinary conversation.

A common mistake people make is to shrink. They become overly cautious.

Easy tricks for getting the audience involved without spoiling your rhythm:

- Ask for a show of hands
- Ask a trivia question and let people shout out the answers.
- Ask "Is there anything you'd like me to clarify?"
- Give your audience a problem to solve.

Always end early.

Think about what effect you want to have on your audience.

All successful teachers must consider these four important questions:

1. How many understand?
2. How many will remember later?
3. How many try to apply the lesson in the real world?
4. How many will succeed?

When trying to teach someone something, you must:

1. Make it active and interesting
2. Start with an insight that interests the student
3. Adapt to how the student responds to #1 and #2

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

The easiest way to be interesting is to be honest. People rarely say what they truly feel, yet this is what audiences desire most.

Good questions to ask your audience to gauge your effectiveness:

- Was this a good use of your time?
- Would you recommend this class/lecture to others?
- Are you considering doing anything different as a result of attending this lecture/class?

Get these notes here: <http://www.kimjames.net/Data/Sites/3/confessionsofapublicspeaker.pdf>

Kim James – Childbirth Education – For Childbirth Educators – Notes on Public Speaking