

SPEAK OUT IN PUBLIC!

HOW TO BE A DYNAMIC,
CONFIDENT AND ENGAGING
PUBLIC SPEAKER

MATT CHURCH



21

Twenty One Ways To Better Public Speaking

Matt Church



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About the author

Matt Church is Australia's Personal Leadership Expert. In his spare time he develop the Thought Leaders of tomorrow.

He is the author of 5 organically published works and countless digital publications such as this e-book you are about to read.

Matt is a Certified Speaking Professional with the National Speakers Association and was recently awarded the coveted Nevin Award for service and contribution to the industry of professional speaking in Australia.

His national best Seller Highlife 24/7 is still in print and available through all good book stores.

Some websites by the author...

www.mattchurch.com

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1

Get a Message

Say something worthwhile!

Even a speaker with no style will be compelling if what they say is worthy. Spend time first figuring out what you have to offer others before you worry about how you say it. Then from a place of substance you can begin the essential work of packaging up your message so that others consider it.

1. Write down everything you know on a topic and then circle the key words.
2. From that list of key words you can then look for relationships between words.
3. Then write down any questions that come to mind on the topic
4. Turn these questions into statements or declarations
5. Try to draw a picture that sums up your thoughts

The centre of every great speech is a great message.

2

Fix Nervous with Service

Nerves are a result of incorrect focus.

When we focus on ourself or our audience too much we get nervous. While it may appear helpful to picture your audience naked or to focus on a spot just above their head you are simply changing focus for the sake of changing it. A deliberate change of focus may be more helpful.

Where do you pay attention...

1. 'I' or me focused
2. 'You' or them focussed
3. 'We' or us focussed
4. ON the message
5. ON the delivery process

Advance how you think about nerves by moving your attention onto points 3, 4 and 5.

3

You're On Before You're On

Turn on before you turn up.

If your nervous tension disappears after a few minutes of speaking then you simply have "starter's gun" nerves. It is this that makes most people pace nervously in the wings before they get up to speak. If this is you, it may be helpful to put the image of a sprinter and starter's gun in mind, but make sure that the gun went off well before you started speaking.

1. If possible, mingle beforehand with audience. Ask questions that get them on topic and you thinking about your message.
2. Put a topic handout on the seat so people can get into your message and what you are about before you start speaking.
3. Play music to warm up the room.
4. Send out an email to attendees letting them know who you are and what the session is going to be about.
5. If at a venue-based conference consider a room-drop the night before relevant to your topic.

You get to choose when your session actually starts.

4

Plan to be Spontaneous

Be prepared.

A well timed one-liner or considered response to a heckler requires thought. Consider what situations you are likely to be in and plan a response well in advance. This way you will be composed under pressure.

Some situations to plan for

1. Your speech time is halved
2. The audience has been drinking for several hours before you go on
3. You're up against a televised sporting event
4. A mobile phone goes off
5. An evacuation alarm is sounded

Prepare to be surprised.

5

Give Big Answers

Make your answers broadly interesting.

When faced with questions from the audience it is the presenter's job to make the answer interesting to as many people as possible. You do this by answering the question in an abstract way. Even if the question is of a specific nature, a skilful presenter turns the answer into something broadly appealing. As an expert you should know these themes and be able to draw an question up to that source theme.

Tips ...

1. A question on my uncle's gout could be answered with discussions about fluid retention and the body's internal drought mechanism
2. A question on staff morale could be spun into a dissertation about human engagement and principle centred leadership.
3. A question on file management could be re-positioned as a discussion on the evolution of productivity

Answer little questions with big answers



Move and Groove

Move with purpose!

One of the most distracting habits a presenter can develop is poor body movement. Every move you make should support your message. If you are talking about big things, make a big movement. Some people pace in an attempt to engage the audience when all they really project is a sense of indecision about their direction.

1. Stand still when making important points.
2. Move with a medium to slow pace from one part of the stage to the next if required.
3. In the Western world, the audience left is the past and the right is the future. Move from left to right as your point unfolds.
4. Move into the audience if you wish to create better engagement.
5. The centre front of the stage is the most powerful area to communicate inspirational messages.

Move with purpose.

Read Books, Not Speeches

Don't read your speech!

Only those whose words get scrutinised, translated or pulled apart should read their speech; even then it is a communication compromise. We can read your speech online or in an abstract. If the speech is for those in the room (as opposed to some audience outside of the environment), you are better talking from knowledge and adjusting the content to suit the audience dynamics.

Tips ...

1. Write your first draft long-hand then chunk it down into 'shuffle-able' segments .
2. Learn the 5 segments of your speech, not the words.
3. Summarise the whole speech into one sheet of paper.
4. Memorise your key points, but not necessarily their order of delivery
5. Create a visual that summarises your whole speech, and if lost refer back to it

Reading is a solo activity for adults.



Paint Pictures with Words

Show your point while you tell it.

Any picture representation of your idea will increase audience engagement dramatically. The use of a big picture visual allows people to wander on purpose. We cannot speak fast enough for the human brain, so it is natural that some of your audience are not listening to your words. Allow them to think about your point ahead of you by giving them a visual framework – a map to guide their thoughts.

Use ...

1. Models, based on geometric shapes like circles triangles and squares
2. Metaphors and analogies, based on every day life examples that people would know
– e.g. the role of a compass or learning to drive
3. Icons and symbols that convey meaning without the need for explanation
– e.g. a stop sign or crucifix
4. An actual picture of your point
5. A graph, but without too much detail

Paint word pictures.

9

Use the Mathematics of Retention

Don't make too many points.

Five points plus or minus two is the rule. We tend to retain what we can count on one hand. Presenters who presume to teach 21 tips in 21 minutes are pretty content-centred and are really not respecting the mathematics of retention.

Tips ...

1. Have 3-7 core messages to your presentation.
2. Every 7-15 minutes or so, introduce a new point
3. Always have less rather than more. Fear makes us over-prepare content.
4. Have a "bare bones" version of your speech prepared, with 1-3 points only
5. Always have one overarching point for every speech and make this very clear

Less is more.

10

Balance Your Ask/Tell Ratio

Ask and tell your audience something.

If you always ask, then you should tell; and vice versa. We have a tendency to either present our information in a telling way or an asking way. Both are essential; they are the yin and yang of communication. Notice if you are leaning to one or the other, and develop the complementary opposite.

Points...

1. Make a point clearly, then ask a rhetorical question on that point.
2. Sometimes you ask before the session so you can tell more during the live session.
3. Present a series of questions as a fact-find or diagnostic tool on your topic.
4. Use other people on videos to make telling comments so you can ask and facilitate.
5. Ask at the beginning of a presentation what people want to cover and then tell in response to that agenda.

Ask sometimes, tell sometimes.



It's All About You

You are the presenter!

A teacher and a scientist use references to back up their message. When you are speaking it is better to be the only one on stage. Quotes from other people tend to diminish your presence. Audience members may find themselves wishing they were hearing from the person you are quoting rather than you.

How to use quotes and references...

1. Have quotes on PowerPoint but don't refer to them or read them out.
2. Have a references handout with suggested reading lists, etc.
3. Be memorable in your own phrasing; create quotable comments.
4. Quote people and studies as stories rather than short sayings.
5. Present your take on the field of expertise. Don't rehash others!

Don't share the stage.

12

Use Repetitive Variety

Say the same thing differently.

There is an old adage in public speaking that is a little out of date – it goes something like "Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them". The problem with this is that people want a stimulating session with surprises and new insights. Your audience no longer tolerates the slow walk-through of your ideas on PowerPoint.

Points...

1. Find your core message first.
2. Find a way to make that relevant to the audience's environment.
3. Find a picture that makes your point.
4. Come up with a non-related analogy to make your point.
5. Source a historical example of your point.

Say the same thing differently.

13

Make Them Laugh, Make Them Cry

People connect to emotions and energy.

Everything you say has an emotional element. Find that element several times in your presentation and create an energetic journey for the audience. Create moments of laughter, moments of sadness, moments of focus and moments of hope. Map out your presentation with an underlying energetic platform.

Tips ...

1. Match your initial energy to the feeling in the room. If they are up, start up; if they are down, start slow.
2. Ramp up the pace slowly, stepping up incrementally the degree of energy in the room.
3. Don't be afraid to allow an energetic fall in the room. And audience thinking is a good thing.
4. You lead the energy. If you feel up, the audience will follow; if you feel down, so will the audience.
5. Always create hope; and finish with a positive energy.

Take your audience on an energetic journey.

14

Don't Let the Turkeys Get You Down

Tell difficult people less detail.

Aggressive people tend to attack detail and content. When communicating to a difficult or hostile audience don't use examples; create frameworks for discussion instead. Get agreement in principle before you unpack the detail of your plan.

Tips ...

1. Seek to agree on context, strategy and themes.
2. When you do present detail, align it to the agreed context.
3. Be careful of the assumptions you make about your topic.
4. Name the problem before you address the issue.
5. Find out in advance the ultimate solution the audience is seeking, and connect to that often.

Don't get bogged down in content; get agreement in context.

15

Be You

Stay true to yourself.

Finding out how to stay yourself when you are on stage is key to being a more effective public speaker. When nervous or inexperienced, we tend to do things different to our norm. Resisting this and being you is the key to be engaging. We don't want a partial facsimile in a live presentation.

Tips ...

1. Find your own style.
2. Wear what makes you comfortable.
3. Don't talk small or apologise.
4. Exaggerate the energy; project a large you.
5. Do some work on yourself so you are less likely to lose yourself when you speak to groups.

Don't fake it in front of an audience; simply exaggerate it.

16

Stuff Happens – it's OK

Acknowledge interference.

When something goes wrong and it's not your fault, be cool enough to acknowledge it. Continuing robotically with your message highlights your need to deliver and get off the stage. Be cool with stuff going wrong and bring it out into the open.

Points...

1. If someone walks across your stage you may have a one liner ready like "don't worry it's just a stage you're going through."
2. Playfully pose for the photographer as they try to catch you in an action shot.
3. If you stuff up a word, laugh and say something like "Ha! There goes my brain running faster than my mouth... Nice – it's usually the other way around."
4. If the AV technician needs to adjust your wireless microphone mid-flight, you may want to say something like "Look, I don't have time to dance with you."

Stay cool. It's not about perfection; it's live. Make it real.

17

Use Power Tools Wisely

Know how to use the tools you have.

A master tradesperson never blames their tools. They know how to choose the right tool for the job and use it to its best ability. The same goes for all the audio-visual tools we use.

Points...

1. When there are more than say 30 people in the room, use a microphone, even if you have a big voice.
2. PowerPoint is for visuals only. Don't write, then read a speech on PowerPoint.
3. Use thick markers and big images when drawing on flipcharts and whiteboards. Change colours often.
4. With larger audiences – say over 100 – use electronic whiteboards, document cameras, or graphics tablets when you need to write or teach a point.
5. Prepare to communicate your message without any audio-visual tools.

Use your audio-visual tools wisely.

18

Make it a Conversation, Not a Presentation

Work less when you speak in public.

Most of us tend to talk too much and engage the audience less when we speak. When you stop presenting at people and start trying to engage them in conversations (sometimes one way), you get better feedback.

Points...

1. Get people working in small groups or with the person next to them. Keep the time intervals short and the direction clear.
2. In the middle of your session, have people document their most valuable idea so far. Then get a few to feed that value back into the live session.
3. At some point get a 'volunteer' up on stage and use them somehow in your presentation. Be kind and have fun.
4. Videotape (on your handy cam) some audience members in advance for their opinion on your topic. Play this back in your session with live comments from you between each interview. Low tech is OK.
5. Interview somebody live for part of your session.

Don't be a talking head.

19

The Message Continues Once You're Gone

Make a difference.

Great public speakers use speaking as a means to an end. They don't get caught up in the speech. They realise that the speech is simply part of a larger process. So what is the bigger process that your speech is part of? Scope that out for people so that they know what you're thinking and where your message fits in the scheme of things.

Points...

1. Map out the larger process that your speech is part of, and address this is your speech.
2. Suggest action steps for people in your sessions.
3. Have an email follow up system that automatically reminds people of their commitment made during their session.
4. Send out a white paper or e-book after your session as a bonus to those who commit to reading their notes within 3 days of attending your speech.
5. Find ways to stay in relationship with your audience. Collecting emails for permission-based e-zines is a great way to do this.

It's not over when you stop talking.

20

Be Careful Whom You Listen To

Only consider qualified feedback.

We tend to review feedback forms and focus on the one negative comment rather than the 99 positive ones. Because the feedback is so personal and the experience so acute, we tend to give the feedback more merit than it warrants.

Points...

1. If you are responsible for the feedback mechanism for another, filter feedback so that hurtful or unconstructive comments don't get to the presenter.
2. Ignore anonymous feedback that you can't follow up on.
3. Check that the people giving the feedback are qualified to comment on their expressed point of view.
4. Make feedback a positive experience by choosing to ignore the personal comments and chunking the point up to a higher useful idea.
5. Get a summary of the feedback as a group snapshot to get an idea of how you went.

Focus on the stuff that makes you better.

21

Get a Speech Coach

The best use a coach.

Tiger Woods has a coach to help him get better. If it's good enough for him why wouldn't you employ a speech coach to help you speak in public as well?

Points..

1. Join Toastmasters and get some experience, then join the National Speakers Association in your country.
2. Read books on presentation skills.
3. Join our online coach program.
4. Contact one of the coaches in our online directory and get some live support.
5. Make a video of yourself presenting and send it to our office. We will provide a comprehensive review.

Get help – You don't have to do this alone!