

Best Practices for Developing Speaking Skills & Your Speaking Brand

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Practice & Review

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”—Maya Angelou

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Fun Ways to Put These New Skills to Use

1. **Role playing scenarios:**

- a. Practice in the mirror or to your dog. Just start talking!
 - i. You're addressing a room of young professionals. How would you begin your speech?
 - ii. Give a five minute acceptance speech for the award of your dreams.

2. **Practicing Exercises:**

- a. Deliver and record a one-minute introduction on a topic of your choice. Assess yourself using the next two slides based on the video recording.
- b. Share your videos with peers, friends, and family and ask for constructive feedback. Then, increase the length of the speech as you get more comfortable.

3. **Utilizing Community**

- a. Goodbye book club, hello speakers club. Get together with a small group of friends or family for a PowerPoint party! Have everyone create a short tutorial in PowerPoint or Canva beforehand and present during your next hangout session. Provide friendly feedback while enjoying a meal or charcuterie board together. (Topic Ideas: My unique job explained, my favorite recipe with tips, the best place to go skiing and why). (Can also be accomplished via Zoom or virtual meet ups).

Important Preparation Tips

1. **Get to Know Your Presentation Parameters:**

- a. Know your audience, your fellow panelists, stage set up, type of microphone, and chair arrangement. Check out the presentation room in advance if possible.
 - i. Having this insight can reduce anxiety and help you prepare to the highest standards.

2. **Virtual Presentation Checks:**

- a. Test your audio inputs and outputs, video quality, battery level, lighting, background noise, and video background quality.
 - i. If possible, test these arrangements out beforehand on the same platform you will be using with another person.

3. **Stay Ready to Present**

- a. Have a great headshot and short speaker bio ready to distribute.
- b. Reach out to conferences you want to speak at and timely answer calls for speakers.

Test Your Comfort Level

1. **Highly Uncomfortable:**

- a. Self-Assessment: Notice if you avoid eye contact, have shaky hands, or experience a racing heart.
- b. Practice Tip: Start with small, supportive groups to build confidence.

2. **Uncomfortable:**

- a. Self-Assessment: You might speak too quickly, have a monotone voice, or rely heavily on notes.
- b. Practice Tip: Record yourself speaking and review the footage to identify areas for improvement.

3. **Comfortable:**

- a. Self-Assessment: You maintain eye contact, use some gestures, and have a steady voice.
- b. Practice Tip: Engage in more public speaking opportunities to further enhance your skills. Make your content simpler to digest and easier to recall. It will be more natural when presenting.

4. **Fully at Ease:**

- a. Self-Assessment: You interact naturally with the audience, use effective body language, and vary your vocal delivery.
- b. Practice Tip: Challenge yourself with larger or more diverse audiences to continue growing.

5. **Completely Self-Assured:**

- a. Self-Assessment: You exude confidence, anticipate audience reactions, and adapt seamlessly.
- b. Practice Tip: Mentor others in public speaking to refine your own skills and give back.

Test Your Audience Awareness

1. Minimal Engagement:

- a. Self-Assessment: Notice if you rarely make eye contact, read directly from notes, or fail to respond to audience cues.
- b. Practice Tip: Start by incorporating small interactive elements, like asking simple questions or using visual aids.

2. Needs Improvement:

- a. Self-Assessment: You might occasionally look at the audience but still rely heavily on notes and have limited interaction.
- b. Practice Tip: Practice engaging with the audience by sharing personal anecdotes or using humor to connect.

3. Basic Awareness:

- a. Self-Assessment: You make eye contact, use some gestures, and respond to audience reactions.
- b. Practice Tip: Increase audience interaction by encouraging questions and feedback during your speech.

4. Effective Response:

- a. Self-Assessment: You are fully aware of the audience's engagement, adjust your speech based on their reactions, and use effective body language.
- b. Practice Tip: Use storytelling techniques and rhetorical questions to maintain and enhance audience engagement.

5. Complete Engagement:

- a. Self-Assessment: You engage the audience completely, anticipate their needs, and adapt your speech seamlessly.
- b. Practice Tip: Experiment with advanced techniques like interactive activities or live demonstrations to keep the audience fully engaged.

Have suggestions for content
or resources? Contact us at
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