

PUBLIC SPEAKING - The Formula of 3

Public Speaking is a way in which we share information about a topic that is important to us. To keep the attention and interest of your listeners your topic needs relevance and captivation. Whether you're a District Governor, President, Club Officer, Chair and/or other presenter, the method to get your listener's attention (and to follow your lead) is up to you. One way you can have success as a presenter is to group information into threes:

1. Your Posture

1. Maintain a positive posture with an upright yet relaxed stance, use open hand gestures instead of pointing and avoid crossing your arms.
2. Lean in toward the audience, look at people individually, and oscillate eye contact around the room.
3. Don't hug the podium and if possible step away from it whenever you can.

2. Your Voice

1. Pace - Think about your normal pace of chatting, now slow it down. People who know you (especially) will notice you're out of character; it will grasp their curiosity and certainly get their attention to what you're saying.
2. Pause - The top speakers in the world all do one thing in common; they use pauses instead of filler words. Filler words are phrases like: and, so, anyways, whatever, umm, and ahh. Pausing after you complete a sentence/paragraph gets the audience attending because it is different to what we usually hear. For example: You could use filler words and say something like this: *"I'd like to thank all the Lions, umm, and I'd especially like to thank their partners for giving their time to this project."* Or, you could use a pause instead: *"I'd like to thank all the Lions (3 second pause). I'd especially like to thank their partners for giving their time to this event."* Try it, pausing has the audience wondering what is coming next and then the next is attentively listened to. Pausing also allows you time to make eye contact and use other body gestures (which makes up 55% of our communication skills).
3. Project - Raising and lowering your voice at key moments in your presentation validates the importance of a sentence or phrase. Now, this does not mean you speak softly or loudly throughout the presentation, just when there is something really important to share. And, if you have a quiet voice by nature, use a microphone so you don't have to raise your voice. Or, if your voice carries nicely without audio aids avoid them. The more you can mix your natural volume, mixed with moments of rising and falling voice, the more interesting the story becomes.

3. Your Speech Structure

Most, if not all Professional Speech Writers structure a speech into three parts: The Opening; The Body; and The Closing. The Opening gets the attention of the listener; The Body shares a topic, and The Closing relates back to the Opening.

1. Opening - A powerful opening is arguably the most important part of your speech; it is what you say in that first 30 seconds that gets some serious attention. There are 3 effective options to open a speech:

1. Startle/surprise your listeners with an emotional statement. For example: *"This new fundraising project will change your life forever."*
2. Peak the curiosity of your listeners by holding them in suspense for a short period. For example: *"This new fundraising project has something special that I will share with you in a moment."*
3. Or, ask the audience a question to get them thinking about your topic. For example: *"What would you say if I told you there is a new project that will change our Club's present way of fundraising?"*

Once you've engaged your audience with a powerful opening spend 1-2 minutes (maximum) sharing the topic you plan to speak about, including why this will **benefit** them. For example: *"This new fundraising project is not only dynamic, it will take less volunteer time to raise funds for the community."*

2. Body - The body of a speech has key information about the topic; information that you want the listening audience to remember and follow through on:

1. Prioritize your speech and pick 3 key items you want to share about the topic. For example: your topic might focus on **benefits**: for members; for the community and for the Club.
2. Use effective vocabulary. Use catchy phrases, quotes, easy to understand and remember acronyms, and choose words that your audience knows the meaning of (not just words to impress them). Also, use words and phrases that will not "tongue tie" you. Each person's vocabulary, dialect and style of speaking have words that sound out pure or sound out awkward. If you find yourself stumbling over words and phrases replace them with ones you're comfortable using.
3. Be yourself, avoid notes but don't rehearse your lines like an actor either. For example: Maybe you want to read out the list of Lions who helped out at an event, and then, slide your paper aside, look up and simply speak about the event like you were sharing this with friends at a dinner party. Being yourself is one of the most important strategies of effective public speaking because it is genuine; it is believable and it is real.

3. Closing - The conclusion is the last chance to nurture and convince your audience to consider your view points. It's time to pull out the "Kicker" move, such as:

1. To get the audience's full attention to your conclusion, announce when you're about to conclude your speech, e.g. "In conclusion, let me finish by saying." Once you make this statement close your speech soon after, meaning you should end within the next 1-2 minutes.
2. Summarize the points, which should connect back to The Opening.
3. Make sure that the last thing people hear from you is the one thing you want them to remember most and follow through on about your speech.

Conclusion - Timing is everything

If you present a speech and it takes more than 8 minutes, you're probably rambling. If you present a report and it takes more than 2 minutes, you're probably rambling. Some speakers might respond to this with "*Oh No! I have way more information than that to share with my listeners.*" And, the answer is, "*Yes you probably do;*" however, most listeners will fade off into dreamland if you flood them with too many details. You end up speaking to hear yourself talk, not to **benefit** the listener. Why is rambling a concern when you present a speech?

When you ramble people stop listening to the body of your speech; your powerful opening loses its power and the listening audience may not even hear your conclusion. In the end you've wasted your time; your listener's time and lost an opportunity to get people to follow your lead. The rambling problem belongs to the presenter because it is the presenter's challenge to get the listener to listen, not the other way around. Do not despair however if you like to chat because there are ways to present an effective and timely speech and get additional points across too:

1. Practice, Practice, Practice. The more you practice your speech the more time you save through delivery and the less rambling you do.
2. Handouts. At the conclusion of a speech circulate a handout that includes additional information you didn't provide in the speech. While the handout is being circulated point out 3 items on the Handout worth reading and why. Avoid giving handouts at the beginning of a speech to ensure your audience pays attention to you instead of the handout.
3. Finally, invite the audience to ask you questions about your presentation and the handout.

When you posture and sound confident; excite your audience with anticipation; provide succinct topic information, and speak in a timely manner, it shows your ability to be organized, knowledgeable and respectful of the listener's time. It's a simple formula of THREE and you can do it too.