

Speak with Confidence

The Art of Developing Presentations & Impromptu Speaking

*Use this system as a guide, but don't be afraid to modify it to fit your needs.
Remember the keys to delivering a successful presentation are careful preparation,
connecting with your audience, and learning to speak with confidence and authority.
The most important key - is practice - practice - practice!*

COMPANY/ORGANIZATION PROFILE

It is important to develop a feel for the company/organization for which you will be speaking. Ask questions of the person organizing the event. The more you know, the more confident you will be. Gather information through their magazines, newsletters, brochures or web site. **Make sure you understand what they want you to accomplish.**

AUDIENCE PROFILE

The most important part of developing an audience profile is discovering the needs of your audience. **Your goal is to fill those needs!**

Again, ask questions! Use the following information as a guide

- Name of company/organization and your contact person
- Address, City, Zip, Phone, and E-Mail
- Date of presentation and the time you are scheduled to speak
- Location of the event
- Who is your audience?
- What kind of people are they?
- Are they from a company, an organization or the general public? Do they have a common bond?
- How large is the audience and what is the percentage of men/women/children?
- What is the theme or purpose of this event?
- What is your topic and how much time do you have for your presentation?
- What is the knowledge level of the audience?
- Are there speakers before you? After you?
- What are their topics?
- Room size and seating arrangement
- Is there a lectern?
- What kind of AV equipment will be there?
- Will there be a meal served? (If you are eating - some foods & beverages can create dry or coated throats for speakers.)
- Who will introduce you? (Always write your own introduction)

Keep your introduction simple. Try this format: What are you going to talk about? Why is it important to the audience? What are your credentials for giving this presentation?
You can rearrange this format, but use all three elements.

CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Many speakers lecture to their audiences or seem to ignore them. On the other hand, effective speakers are always looking for ways to connect with their audiences. They learn to read the audience's reaction to their presentation. They master the use of stories and examples to give their points ***staying power!*** Visual aids, props, handouts, and audio equipment are tools to be used to help drive home their points. ***They design the presentation to involve the audience!*** The size of your audience doesn't matter. You need to connect with them if you want to communicate with them.

1. Write down the point you want to make.
2. Next list examples and experiences that can be turned into stories or visual aids. **(Personal stories are powerful and have the most impact)**
3. Refer back to your audience profile. Ask yourself, will this story or example connect with my audience? If the answer is yes - use it. If the answer is no - keep working!
4. ***Use a story or an example to drive home every major point!***

BODY LANGUAGE

Your body language sends a stronger message than your spoken word! When you are introduced it is important to look poised and confident. You want your gestures to seem natural. **Your eye contact and facial expressions help connect you with the audience.** How do you accomplish all of this when your heart is thumping, your hands are shaking, and your stomach is doing flip flops? It takes practice and some attitude!

- Know your material inside and out! Understand that the audience wants you to succeed! Remember that the speaker is in the position of power when in front of an audience! **(A Panel or meeting is a small audience)**
- Generally, the fear a person feels in front of an audience is strongest during the first few minutes. Before you are introduced try relaxing by breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Say the word relax, over in your mind. If possible, stand at the back of the room. When you walk to the front of the room, you get rid of excess energy.
- Plant your feet, stand tall, and start your presentation. Speak to the center of the room, turn to one side, work back to the center, and then turn to the other side.
- When you are speaking from a seated position sit up straight but stay relaxed. Rest your hands on your lap or on the table until you need to use them for gestures. Make eye contact with the people in front of you or at the table and take command of your topic.

ORGANIZING YOUR MATERIAL

Organizing your material is easy. Most presentations don't need to be written word for word. We write material to read not speak out loud. It is very difficult to read a speech and connect with an audience. There is a time and place for a written speech but most presentations work best without writing them out. Also, you don't need to use 3 X 5 cards. They can end up out of order or be dropped on the floor! Trying to memorize a presentation is a prescription for disaster!

THE STORY BOARD

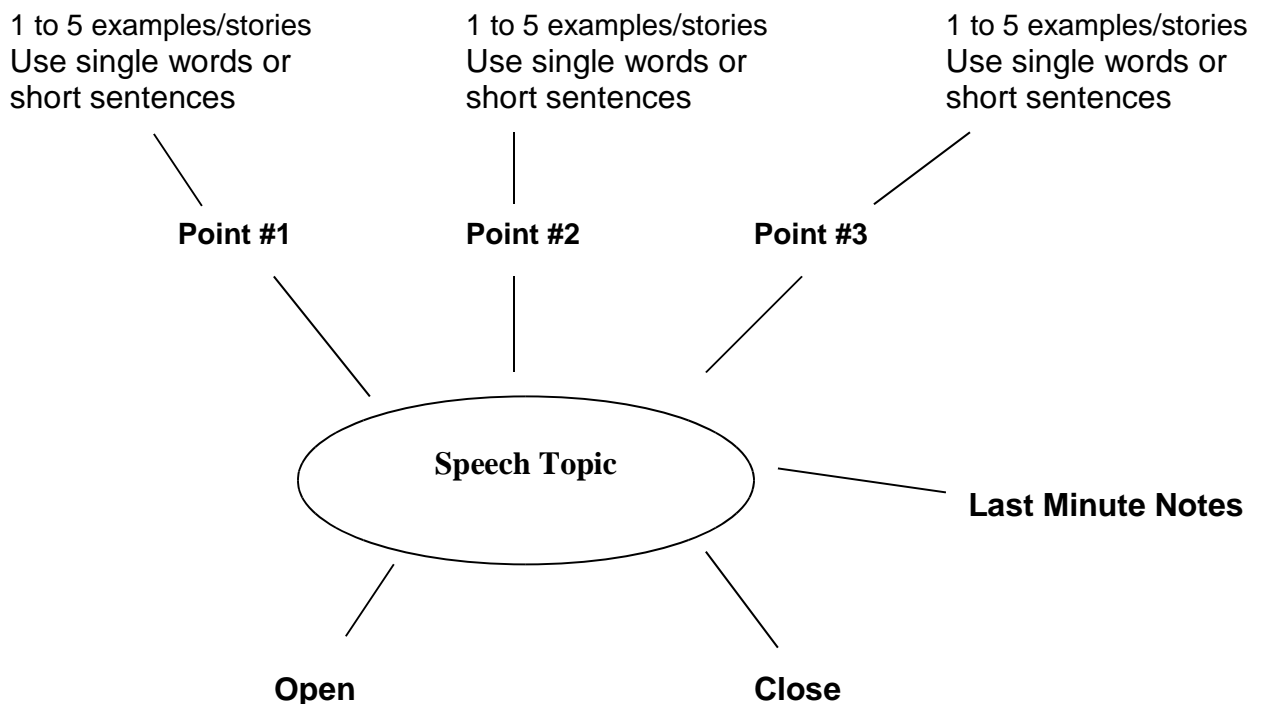
1. Words are like keys. When you read or hear a word it will unlock your train of thought.
2. Use single words or short sentences for your story board.
3. During the opening - you want to grab the audience's attention, break the barrier between you and the audience, and lead into your presentation.
4. The body of your presentation should flow from one point to another. Most presentations are divided into 3 to 5 sections with a main point for each section. The reason most presentations use 3 to 5 points is: one point can be argued, and two points can leave room for doubt, but three to five points create a strong statement. This is especially true if they are backed up with examples and stories that drive home your points. It is not uncommon to have 1 to 5 examples or stories for each point.
5. When you close, recap your main points and tie them into your opening statement. This will bring your presentation full circle and your audience will know you are finished.
6. Remember the story board will act as a guide for you during your presentation. All you have to do is set it on the lectern or table. When you need a prompt, look down at the story board, find the prompt and continue on with your presentation. However, it still requires practice on your part to do a good job!

The following two examples are variations of the same system. The first example is a standard story board form. The second example is a form of mind mapping, branching or webbing. Use the format that works for you!

Body of Presentation

<p>Point #1</p> <p>1 to 5 examples/stories</p> <p>Use single words or short sentences</p>	<p>Point #2</p> <p>1 to 5 examples/stories</p> <p>Use single words or short sentences</p>	<p>Point #3</p> <p>1 to 5 examples/stories</p> <p>Use single words or short sentences</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grab attention 2. Break barrier 3. Move into body of presentation 	<p>Last Minute Notes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recap your main points 2. Tie back into your opening

Open
Close



YOUR VOICE

- Your voice delivers your spoken message. It carries your enthusiasm, energy, convictions and beliefs! It can betray the unprepared speaker with um's and ah's.
- Whenever possible, practice your presentation out loud. Pretend you are speaking to the back of the room. Practice by reading stories and articles out loud. Sing! Give your voice a workout and develop a good vocal range. Before you speak, drink water. Stay away from coffee, alcohol, milk, and foods that can coat or dry out your throat.

ROOM SET UP

How is the room going to be set up? This information can help you prepare for your presentation. Most room setups follow a basic pattern.

- **Theater Style** - chairs are lined up in rows facing the lectern.
- **Classroom Style** - attendees are seated at tables facing the lectern.
- **Boardroom Style** - attendees are seated around one large table.
- **Dinner/Luncheon Style** - attendees are seated at round tables.

The speaker may be seated at a head table. There are many variations to these formats. Use the information to help visualize your audience while you practice your presentation.

AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT

- There are tools of the trade for every profession. For speakers and trainers the tools are AV equipment. There are two basic microphones you will use. One is hand held and the other will either clip on your clothing or hang around your neck. The microphone may be wireless or connected to the sound system by a cord. If you are using a wireless system make sure you turn it off during breaks.
- The biggest challenge a new speaker has with a hand held microphone is keeping the head of the mic near his or her mouth. You need to move the mic with your head when you turn your head to speak. You can practice your presentation by holding an empty paper towel tube in your hand. Pretend it is the microphone!
- The only limit to the number of visual aids available to a speaker is his or her imagination. Visual aids can help drive home your points. They help you look polished, and they can act as a guide for your presentation. You can use Power Point, a flip chart, overhead projector, slide projector, posters taped to the wall, and items held in your hands. Remember, the person in the back of the room needs to be able to see the visual aid. The fewer words you use on the visual aid, the better. Color is a wonderful visual aid but use it wisely.

Don't talk to the visual aid - talk to the audience!

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

Many people are afraid of the impromptu speech. The idea of working without notes or time to prepare is frightening. It shouldn't be. The reality is that we deliver small impromptu presentations all the time. It might be a simple question. For example, what did you do last night? A fellow employee might ask you how to do something. The point is you are delivering a small impromptu speech. The secret to impromptu speaking is following a simple process.

- Develop the ability to listen - really listen! In our culture we don't spend enough time developing our listening skills. We have a tendency to jump forward with our answers when we don't completely understand the question. Most people prefer talking to listening. Learn to listen with your ears, eyes, and sixth sense.
- When you know you are going to be involved in an impromptu situation, prepare for it by getting plenty of rest. Eat smart and get some exercise.
- Learn to clear your mind of noise. Focus on the question. Remember to relax by breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Use the same process you use for developing your presentations with the focus on one point! Try to use a personal experience for your example.
- The impromptu starts with your body language. Approach the impromptu with the attitude that you are the expert. Let your body language send the message that you are in command. Look people in the eye and speak with conviction.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Use your story board when you practice your presentation. On the day of your presentation place your story board on the lectern or table. It will be there if you need it.
- Remember, the shorter the presentation - the more practice it takes. The longer the presentation - the more leeway you have.
- Dress sharp and shine your shoes. Step into the restroom before you speak and check yourself in the mirror. Are your teeth clean, buttons buttoned, hair combed, tie knot straight and is your zipper zipped?
- Learn to write your own introduction. Use these elements - you can organize them in any order: Who are you? (What gives you the right to be delivering this presentation?) What will you be speaking about? (What is the topic?) Why is the topic important to the audience and what is in it for them?