

Speechwriting

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SLIDE 1: Cover

Let's build upon some of the communication skills you may have already developed elsewhere ...

SLIDE 2: Unit 1 Overview

... and apply them to speechwriting as a form of persuasion. Many of the same techniques and tactics in preparing the written word apply to the spoken word as well – formulating and delivering a message that connects with the mindset and aspirations of your audience.

And we'll wrap this video up with tips for preparing a brief elevator speech that you might spontaneously use to persuade single person at a moment's opportunity.

SLIDE 3: Prepare for the Presentation

A little later in this video you will find a number of resources with tips on how to improve your speechwriting and delivery skills. Among these useful tips are: > to prepare yourself thoroughly in advance. So many fears about public speaking can be > overcome simply by knowing so well just what it is you want to say, and > keeping your focus on just how you might benefit your listeners with your message. > Keep your message simple, don't over-reach into areas beyond your expertise, > project enthusiasm, and > keep control of your pacing and interactivity with the audience.

SLIDE 4: It's Not What You say ...

And remember so much of effective communication rests not in the exact words that we are saying, but in just how it is that we say them. > Try to keep some spontaneity to your speech – reacting to audience cues. Either rely on bullet-point notes or memorize your speech in advance so your eyes are on the room, not on a script. > Keep your hands out of your pockets, > your stance steady, > your gestures under control. > Let each member of the crowd feel you are talking directly to them. > Keep their attention on you rather than a screen in the dark – you are the star of the show, not the slides. > And if there is a camera in the room, just ignore it.

SLIDE 5: Best Speaking Speed

An important aspect of how we say the words we are speaking – is the speed at which we speak them. The ear and brain can only run so fast to keep up with a motoring mouth. > Research shows a speaking speed of around 160 words a minute is the best pace for holding your audience attention. That may sound fast, but it really isn't. > It comes out to about 3 words per second – or about this pace: from now to now. From now to now. That means we speak some > 40 words in 15 seconds. Of course, we may > slow down our speed for greater impact, or speed up our speech to convey a sense of urgency. > Here is a 40 word reading. You can pause the video now or return to it later, and practice your own pacing. At the right speed, it should take you about 15 seconds to read the entire text aloud. Go ahead and practice it a few times. Remember in an actual presentation your nervousness or adrenaline may cause you to speed up ... so simply repeat to yourself a few times, slow down ... slow down.

SLIDE 6: The Elevator Speech

Life sometimes comes down to 60-seconds – or the time it takes to travel between floors on an elevator. An opportunity presents itself, and are you prepared to grab it? I had a student who once got on an elevator with Steven Spielberg ... he was tongue-tied for anything to say, so he simply did a few quick dance steps. Steven smiled, but got off at his floor with no lasting impression.

> To avoid your own tongue from getting tied ... here are a few topics you should be able to speak on if the instant presents an opportunity ...

- > In a job search: You should be able to briefly summarize the kind of position you are looking and qualified for.
- > If you are conducting research: You should be able to quickly explain why it deserves funding.
- > If someone asks you a little about your background: Be able to talk succinctly about some of what you've done, and what you are currently doing.
- > During a job interview, it is common you may be asked about your life goals: Why are you hoping to accomplish some particular success ... and how might that be important to others?
- > And a philosophical belief: One prominent TV journalist often asks her favorite question, "What do you know for sure?"

SLIDE 7: Perfect the Pitch

There are a many useful YouTube videos on how to prepare an elevator speech if you search a little bit, so I won't repeat those here. But here is a quick summary of a very useful video ... if you can pause the play and review these tips.

SLIDE 8: The Pieces

In such a short amount of time as 30-to-60 seconds, you won't be able to cover many points, so make sure you keep a focus on your message ... with succinct talking points such as Who You Are ... What You've Done ... What You Can Offer ... and MOST IMPORTANTLY ... How Can You Help Your Listener.

SLIDE 9: Sample Pitch

And as we wrap this topic, here is a sample of my own 40-second elevator speech. I've given versions of this countless times. You may need to modify your speech on the fly for relevant details, and the amount of time you have to speak it. But it will never hurt to have some general comments in your pocket that you can pull out and put to use in a flash.

SLIDE 10: Conclusion

So there are some quick tips on public speaking and personal presentation. One of the best ways to get over any jitters is simply to be prepared ... so I hope this does you some good.

Here are some links to pages with free materials on communications and educational resources you might find useful – those that I share with my students at universities in California. And we'll see you next time.