

# THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Public Speaking."

## THE FEAR FACTOR

The fear and dread linked to public speaking and oral presentations is staggering. Many people rank it as more fear-provoking than being in a burning building or on a sinking boat! Since we talk almost every hour that we are awake, just what is the big deal?

It boils down to being under-prepared or over-prepared. People who are not prepared are nervous that they will look like idiots. What is the old saying? "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt." Here are some pointers to help you with preparation:

- Narrow your scope and topic. It is hard to be an expert if you cover too much ground.
- Chunk your main points together. Put no more than 3 per 20 minutes.
- Think of questions the audience might have and weave this information into the content.
- Do your homework. Gather facts including quotes and statistics along with their sources. Be sure you only use these facts to support what you are saying, otherwise you'll sound like an encyclopedia and will lose your audience.
- Practice giving your presentation out loud, preferably in front of a mirror or camera.

Some people plan so much, the presentation begins to resemble a research project. When there is so much to remember or cram into the speech, is it any wonder your mind goes blank when you are standing in front of the audience? Here are some tips to help you remember what you want to say":

- Avoid writing your speech verbatim. It is almost impossible to forget something if you have not memorized it.
- Say it differently each time you practice.
- Know exactly how you will begin and end the



presentation. This gets you off to a good start and you also know when to stop talking.

- Move to the right or left for certain portions of the delivery. These movements or positions can anchor you to where you are in your presentation. Make sure you stay put there for a while rather than randomly roaming.
- Use note cards or uncluttered PowerPoint pages to keep you on track.

Other people just don't like their presentation and it shows. This can be the result of over or under-planning. "To plan or not to plan?" is not the question. The question is, "Will this be worth their time?" If you have a volunteer audience (they are there because they want to be), it is easier to make it worth their time. If they are required to be there, the job gets a little tougher. Here are some things you can do to please most audiences:

- Insert short stories that have a point you want to convey.
- Use statistics that get their attention.
- Involve the audience by asking them questions or assigning them short tasks to complete with another member of the audience.
- Put variety in your voice by altering the pitch, volume, and rate.
- Use the gestures and facial expressions that would accompany your normal conversations.
- Stay within the time frame.

Above all, each time you think about your upcoming presentation, see yourself doing well. Remember the most successful aspect of your last presentation. Refuse to dwell upon the negatives. As John F. Kennedy once said, "Face your fear and it will be the death of it."

## What Our Clients Are Saying

"I feel that I have grown tremendously, and this (TLC coaching) has been very helpful to me."  
Grant Wood, Chattanooga TN



## October 2002

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

DAREDEVIL DIVERS OF THE DEEP	2
ASK THE EXPERTS	2
COLD FFET	3
PRESENTATIONS AS EASY AS P.I.E.	3
CEO CORNER: "If at first you don't succeed..."	4
FEATURED PRODUCT: Y.E.S.	4

### LOOKING AHEAD:

- ◆ The November issue of *The Exchange* will focus on **Teamwork**.

### LOOKING BACK:

- ◆ For previous editions of *The Exchange*, go to our [back issues](#).
- ◆ Re-read the 06/2001 edition: **Interviewing Skills**.

**I... never could make a good impromptu speech without several hours to prepare it.**

Mark Twain



Great public speakers listen to the audience with their eyes.

#### Helpful Hints:

- Avoid using the podium as a crutch this way: never touch it.
- Keep information on slides or PowerPoint presentations to a maximum of 6 lines per view.



To learn more about it, click here!

## DAREDEVIL DIVERS OF THE DEEP

By Ben Cairns, M.A.



I'll always remember the presentation "Daredevil Divers of the Deep" because twenty-five people were at a very real risk of being shot, and I was one of them. Steve (name changed to protect

the guilty) decided to use a high powered deep sea diving spear gun in order to build interest and show how he armed his weapon underwater. Steve quickly whipped the large weapon from its hiding place and armed it. Then he swung it around the room, aiming it as if each audience member were one of the fish he was talking about killing. Several of us hit the floor, and he missed his mark.

Visual aids, when properly used, increase understanding, impact, and speaker credibility. They also help listeners to maintain attention, grasp concepts quickly, and remember what they have seen and heard. On top of all of that, good visual aids can make any presentation more persuasive. Over my several years as a public speaking instructor in the university environment, I have seen and heard some great examples of what to do and what NOT to do with visual aids. Here are some quick pointers for using a visual aid (VA) effectively:

#### Remember **TO**:

- Make it relevant.
- Make it simple.
- If written, make it legible and six lines or less.
- Make it large enough for all to see.
- Use color.
- Practice using your VA ahead of time.
- Check all equipment and logistics before your presentation.
- Make it tasteful and professionally finished.
- Be ready to not use your VA.

#### Remember **TO AVOID**:

- Facing away from the audience and talking to your VA.
- Standing in front of or blocking your VA.
- Using dangerous items or animals.

- Adding too much detail or information.
- Using a slide show that makes you a sideshow.
- Over-relying on your VA to carry your speech.
- Passing out handouts during your presentation.

Sometimes a very simple visual aid can have much greater impact than an array of technical innovations. A faded eight by ten-inch glossy photo of a long ago deceased father was used in the most compelling speech that I ever heard about the love and unending sacrifices of a special parent.

A CEO walked into the boardroom and wrote \$100 on the flipchart in green. Then, he talked point-by-point about how the company needed to act and perform in order to make that the value of its stock. He would repeatedly gesture to the number as he asserted "if we do that, here is where we will be in 12 months!" A visual aid can make your business presentation more understandable, believable, and compelling. Mean what you say and show what you mean; it's not just a slide show anymore!

## ASK THE EXPERTS



#### Dear **TLC**,

What suggestions are there for an employee that continues to cause trouble among his work partners and tries to make his boss look bad and lose his/her job?

Facility Manager

#### Dear **Manager**,

This employee may have different perceptions of what needs to happen and how it should happen. We recommend giving this person a serious dose of listening in a private session. Ask them an open question. You won't like what you hear at first, so be prepared to avoid jumping in and talking. Nod your head, pause, say "uh-huh." Make sure you do not interrupt in any way. After he or she winds down, ask a few questions that begin with "how" or "what" that might uncover this person's opinion towards the solutions.

## COLD FEET



Remember the last time you had to speak to a large group of people? Unless you are a professional speaker, you probably had "cold feet." And even the professionals experience this.

Having "cold feet" is a common expression used to reference a person who has a lack of confidence, a strong fear, or second thoughts about doing something. Standing up and talking in front of an audience can be one of the most dreaded things a person can do.

But what do chilled feet have to do with speaking? The answer may surprise you! This American expression dates back to the 1800's. During the Civil War, a soldier who eagerly wanted to be engaged in battle was said to be "hot for action," or quick to fight. Even today, we describe a person with a short temper as "hot-headed" (but we will save that one for another article).

The thought of war is frightening. Even for highly trained soldiers, fear may cause them to run when fired upon. In moments of intense emotional stress (fear, shock, sadness...) blood is directed away from the extremities and to the major muscles. This reaction can cause a person to feel that their hands and feet have been chilled. So when someone is said to have "cold feet," they are apprehensive about going forward with the task at hand.

Although getting "cold feet" starts in your mind, it also has physiological effects. The next time you have a speech to deliver, make sure you practice thoroughly and are comfortable with the material. This will make your speeches better and can prevent you from having cold feet!

## PRESENTATIONS AS EASY AS P.I.E.

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

Over half of the population of the United States is more comfortable talking in smaller, more intimate groups than in front of larger crowds. In corporate America, most likely you will be called upon at some point to deliver a speech in front of a group of people. You might have to give a presentation to a group of people whom you do not know. For most of us, even small, familiar audiences can make us nervous. Whether your speech is impromptu or thoroughly planned, make sure you have a main purpose.

Determining your main purpose can make

your speech easier for the listener to follow and easier for you to deliver. A speech that is easier to deliver allows you to sleep a lot better the night before, and be more confident the next morning!

If you experience tension or nervousness during your speech, think of something enjoyable and sweet, such as pie. Not the pie that you eat, but the acronym, P.I.E. P = Persuade; I = Inform; E = Entertain. Almost every speech will fall into one of these areas, or a combination of them. Let's look at each one in more detail.

**Persuade:** When giving a persuasive speech, you are trying to get your audience to agree with your point-of-view or to change their current opinion. Examples of persuasive speeches are:

- Wanting a prospective buyer to partner with your company
- Demonstrating how your new idea is better than an old one
- Convincing upper management of the need for a purchase

**Inform:** You will find a lot of presentations are primarily informative. The purpose of an informative speech is to share information. You have no stake in what the audience believes or will agree to, you are just delivering data. Some examples include:

- Providing a status update for organizational goals
- Giving a progress report to a company
- Sharing statistical data

**Entertain:** Here you provide a sense of enjoyment for the audience. Some types of entertaining speeches are:

- Keynote addresses
- Luncheon or after-dinner speeches
- Guest speaker at a convention or banquet

You can include portions of entertainment in any presentation you make to make it more interesting. Add a quick story or example to liven up an informative speech.

Remember that knowing and stating your purpose helps you and the listeners. Before you dread your next speech, think about what you want to accomplish. Use relevant examples and stick to the purpose to make delivering your speech as easy as P.I.E.!



Remember to...

- Begin a presentation with a question, quote, statistic, or short story to add interest.
- Insert questions, quotes, statistics, or short stories in the middle of your presentation to hold audience interest.

A good speech is like a pencil; it has to have a point.

A reporter, coming upon a big story, telegraphed his editor. The editor replied, "Send six hundred words." The reporter wired back, "Can't be told in less than twelve hundred words." The editor replied, "Story of creation of world told in six hundred. Try it."

In order to speak short upon any subject, think long.

H.H. Brackenridge



**All the great speakers  
were bad speakers at  
first.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**O Lord, please fill my  
mouth with worthwhile  
stuff, and nudge me when  
I've said enough.**

### **FEATURED SERVICE: Keynote Speaker**

If your company or professional organization is holding a special event for 2003, now is the time to contact Beverly Inman-Ebel or Vincent Phipps for a keynote presentation. We promise to make your audience laugh, learn, and want more. Contact us at 1-888-BECAUSE for topics and fees.

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## **CEO CORNER: "If at first you don't succeed..."**

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP



Being a professional speaker is a funny business. I don't mean strange or unusual, rather slap your leg and hold your stomach

funny. When organizations pay me to speak at national meetings, they do not see the humor that has molded me into the keynote speaker that I am today. If you are ready for a chuckle, read on.

As the first speaker after breakfast, the technician clipped the lapel microphone onto my dress, placing the control box at the back of my neck. He assured me that although it was in the "on" position, no sound would be amplified until I was on stage. About a half hour later, forgetting all about the microphone, I decided to make a quick trip to the ladies' room before speaking. After I left, the Chair of the organization went to the podium to conduct some business before my introduction. Therefore, the amplification system was activated and the sounds of the bathroom (use your imagination) were broadcast to everyone back in the convention room.

Another time I was on live television, giving an impromptu presentation regarding the virtues of donating money to your local public television station. One of the gifts contributors could receive was a dictionary of British slang. I spontaneously flipped open the book and gave the television audience a pop quiz. "Do you know what 'telly' means?" I asked before supplying the answer. I unmethodically opened the dictionary to another page and heard myself say over live TV, "Do you know what a spotted dick is?!" The bank of volunteer phone operators, the cameramen, and my co-host were howling.

The producer was screaming in my ear via a hidden earpiece. The phones started ringing off the hook. And by the way, it means 'currant pudding.'

I was once speaking to a relatively cozy audience in New York when I referred to an unnamed character in my story as a "poor schmuck." I noticed immediately that my audience stiffened. Following the presentation, a Jewish couple approached me and scolded me for using a Yiddish word that I obviously had no idea of the meaning. ('Schmuck' refers to the male sex organ.)

Some time ago, I was asked to be on a distinguished panel. I arrived late due to jammed traffic and incorrect directions in an unfamiliar city. The meeting facilitator quietly met me in the back of the room and pointed to my assigned place on the riser to the far left. Practicing my walk that makes no sound, I climbed the portable metal steps and sneaked across the platform as someone was speaking. I managed to pull out my chair from the draped table without a sound. As I sat however, the fourth leg of the chair was hanging off the riser and the chair and I landed on the floor with deafening noise. Talk about making an entrance!

If I can make a living through speaking publicly after all of these disasters, surely you can enhance your career by getting up in front of people knowing that even the worst times will one day make you laugh. Step up. Speak out. Live your dreams!

### **FEATURED PRODUCT: Y.E.S.**

Y.E.S., You, the Effective Speaker is a multiple-day training that gives you the building blocks and time to practice and receive critiques on what will make you an effective speaker. This training can occur in a group or in individual coaching sessions. Call 1-888-BECAUSE for details.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [[tlc@talklisten.com](mailto:tlc@talklisten.com)] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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