

► 3 – Organize Your Speech

Executive Summary:

Speech organization is essential to help the audience understand the message. The speech should be organized in a sequence that suits the topic

Objectives:

- *To organize thoughts into a logical sequence which helps the audience understand your message.*
- *To build a speech outline that includes an opening, body, and closing.*
- *To strive for smooth transitions.*
- *TIME: 5 to 7 minutes - or - 6 to 8 minutes.*

Organize Your Speech

You presented a topic that is believable with your Be In Earnest speech! The next step is organizing a speech.

Why Organize?

An audience can follow a speech if the speech sequence makes sense. This makes it easier for the audience to understand the message.

Organization is nothing more than thinking clearly. It makes sense to put your thoughts into an orderly manner. Talking in a haphazard manner can leave the audience confused.

If you are selling an idea, it helps to speak from the audience's point of view. Success comes when you carefully organize your approach.

The audience is commonly motivated by what "they" would like for an outcome. It can work well to provide this perception in your speech. This may motivate the audience to take action.

Good organization increases the odds of success!

Creating a Speech

It is much easier when you choose a topic you know well. A solid topic could be something that is important to you, especially if it is already embedded in your brain. There is nothing to memorize.

When you speak about a topic that you know well, your voice will sound like you know this topic. It comes naturally because you believe in what you are saying. Your voice helps the audience understand that you know this topic.

It is useful to know the purpose of this speech. Is the speech intended to explain, persuade, entertain, inspire? This knowledge can help determine the opening sentence and closing sentence for the speech.

It can help to arrange the speech contents in a logical sequence. For example, if the speech is about an event, it makes sense to describe in the order that the event occurred. To accomplish this, it can be helpful to build an outline.

Other topics could be about relatives, hobbies, early years as a kid, job experiences, vacations, fun times, surprising events, etc. It is a long list!

The challenge can be to “not” talk too long (a maximum of seven minutes). To achieve this length of time, it can work well to talk about three items (more items could take too long).

A Complete Outline

An effective speech is logically organized into an opening, a body, and a closing.

- Standard protocol is to start by addressing the Toastmaster for the Day and the audience: “Madam (or Mr.) Toastmaster, Ladies and Gentlemen”. The phrase, “Ladies and Gentlemen”, addresses everyone including guests.
- For the opening, it is important to use a statement that captures the audience’s attention! One of the easiest opening statements is a question. Commonly, a question draws the audience into the speech immediately.

Alternate openings could be a startling statement, audible noise, or image that captures the audience’s attention.

An attention capturing opening statement is commonly followed by sentences that lead into the speech topic. This sets the stage for the audience’s understanding of the topic that will be the speech contents.

It is best to not start with the speech title. The audience hears those words when you are introduced. It is best to use the speech title as the last words of the speech.

Whichever opening is used, it is important to keep the opening short, with very few words. This helps keep the audience’s attention.

- The body of the speech contains the factual support for the speech. This could be a combination of descriptive words and images.

The body could contain information from magazines, newspapers, or websites. When quoting these sources, it is important to give proper attribution. This gives appropriate recognition to others. It also gives credibility to your speech.

- The closing should summarize the body contents with very few words. Highlighting the main points can help the audience remember the speech.

Using the speech title, as the last words uttered in the closing, ties the closing to the beginning.

- Standard protocol is to end by addressing the Toastmaster for the Day: “Mr. (or Madam) Toastmaster”, then waiting by the lectern and greeting the Toastmaster for the Day with a smile and handshake.

It is good to use very few words. This makes it easier to tell the audience using your own words to describe the message. The purpose of the words is to remind you of each segment in the sequence you desire.

Using humor throughout the speech can be very effective. Humor is like glue in the brain. The humor increases the odds the audience will remember.

The best speeches are those that are remembered for a long time.

Your Evaluation

The primary focus of the speech evaluation is on the effectiveness of the speech organization. In addition, the speech evaluation could note other speaking skills such as enthusiasm and conviction.

The key part of this speech is to provide a sequence that makes sense. The challenge is to make it easy for the audience to understand the message.

Evaluation Guide for Organize Your Speech

See last page for more evaluation guidelines.

--- Evaluate the Speech, not the Speaker!

Speech Title:

Speech Evaluator:

Date:

Note to the Speech Evaluator: This speech strives to incorporate a logical sequence that helps the audience understand the speech message. It is good for the speech to have an opening, body, and closing. It is important for the Speech Evaluator to provide **many positive comments**, **one item** that could **strengthen the speech**, and **end with more positive comments!** In addition to the oral evaluation, provide answers to the questions below.

The purpose of the evaluation is to Encourage, Encourage, and Encourage!
Strive to have the Speaker look forward to giving another speech.

- How well could you follow the speaker's logic?
- What was the message in the speech, as you understood it?
- How well did the closing support the message in the body of the speech?
- How could the speech organization be made more effective?
- What could improve the speech (a maximum of two items)?
- What did you like about the speech?

Handy Dandy Speech Evaluation Guidelines

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- Strive to start with **four or more positive** comments, **one constructive** comment, end with **more positive** comments. A constructive comment example, *"The speech could be strengthened by"*
- Focus on the **Speech**. Avoid: *"you could improve"*- better: *"the speech could be strengthened by"*.
- Avoid commenting on the Speaker's point of view or facts. Focus on the **presentation**.
- Use specifics. Avoid: *"opening was weak"*- better: *"starting with a question would strengthen the speech"*.
- Use a lot of **"I"** phrases **instead of "you"** phrases. Avoid: *"you did this"*- better: *"it appeared to me"*.
- Avoid judging. Avoid: *"the speech was good"*- better: *"I liked the speech"*.
- If it is difficult to identify something that could be strengthened, ask yourself the question, **"Is this the best speech I've ever heard?"** If it is not, try to determine what could make it the best.

Evaluator:

Speech Title:

Date:

C Opening: Address Audience? Get Attention?

O Lead Into Body?

N Body: Organized?

T Help Remember? Persuasive?

E Interesting? Support Material?

N Relevant? Appropriate?

T Effective? Clear? Inspirational?

Closing: Climax? Produce Results?

Tie It Together? What to Do?

D Physical Appearance: Appropriate? Posture?

E Professional? Shirt (men) with collar?

L Zoom: Hands visible? Eyes include webcam?

I Body Language: Eye Contact? Hands? Face?

V Natural? Spontaneous?

E Overuse / Underuse? Detracting / Adding?

R Deliberate? Precise? Appropriate?

Y Vocal Variety: Volume? Pitch? Rate? Quality?

Manner: Enthusiastic? Direct? Assured?

Presentation: Visuals? Humor?

L Word Use: Clear? Accurate/Correct?

A Colorful? Vivid? Appropriate?

N Precise? Simple/Complex?

G Dull/Exciting? Jargon? Slang?

U Always/Never/Everyone Knows?

A Grammar: Proper?

G Pronunciation / Enunciation?

E Vowel Sounds?
