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By John Williams

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About The Author

John Williams is a professional magician with his own online magic shop,
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John conducts workshops and presentations on various subjects including "Reduce Stress with Laughter" and "Simple Steps to Successful Speaking".

The material in this book was gathered and thoroughly tested over 25 years!

Ask the [EBookWholesaler Member](#) that supplied this book to you about John's other books, "Ezy Magic", "Ezy Magic Fun Book", "\$pare Time Dollar\$", the "Ezy-Ebook Guide" and "Ezy-Internet ABC". They are all published by [EBookWholesaler](#).

Dedication

To the people that helped me to learn to give better presentations and encouraged me to keep trying even when I mucked things up:

The audiences.

Thank you. *

* You'll learn in this book why you don't say it to an audience during your presentation.

Introduction

This Guide is not just for people that want to become professional speakers and want tips about increasing the impact of their presentations or how to increase their bookings.

It’s also a primer to help anyone that might have to say a few words or make a formal presentation, to promote themselves, their business or a group or cause that they support.

You get the tips and shortcuts that I learned as a magician and workshop presenter.

Even if you are not an experienced public speaker, don’t have the time or desire to learn to be one and perhaps have the irrational fear that many people share about “saying a few words”, this guide will goof-proof you as far as is humanly possible.

Every speaker has problems at times and they may be caused by their own mistakes or other people. I’ll tell you about handling those occasions too.

This book helps you to answer the casual inquiry and will also help you if you do a formal speech, promotional address, recitation (yes, a few people still do them) or an appeal for funds.



You might not do it for money but, these days, any of us could get an inquiry from the media and the future of our business or group might depend on the way we handle that.

People admire anyone who can speak well. Professional speakers and magicians undergo a long period of training. They all make their share of mistakes, learning by experience the best ways to keep other people's interest.

Most people are glad that it's not them up there on the platform, in the center of the spotlight. It's probably being in the spotlight, however small, that is the main drawback for most of us.



If you are involved in business or community activities, you need to be able to tell people about that on social or other occasions. Many of us are asked, "What do you do?" or "What is your company doing?" on social occasions or at business functions.

There are many more questions such as:

"Does this organization use the donations that I give it wisely?"

"Why should I join (or help) your organization?"

We need to answer them in a way that leaves a positive impression and doesn't sound like something we've learned parrot-fashion from a glossy brochure.

How do you answer that without losing your audience, even if it is just one person? You probably haven't got the spare time to learn the right methods and short-cuts in a formal class and it could be costly to learn by trial and error.

Remember that all of us speak and interact successfully with strangers every day.

This book helps you to prepare for most occasions when you might need to "go public", even those where you have little or no advance knowledge.

You have all the talent that you will ever have and that's about the same amount as many well-paid, successful speakers and presenters. They improve those natural abilities with years of rehearsal and experience.

This is your guide to speaking when:

- Your Group or Club needs more funds
- You apply for a new job
- You promote your business or product.
 - Writers should be able to talk briefly about their book in an interesting way to people that don't have a great interest in the book's topic and also have no interest in buying it.
 - If you have a small business, you need to be able to do the same about your main product line or service.
 - If you are an employee, you have to be able to tell people about your job without pressuring or boring them.

Most of us are Members of at least one community group; sporting, social or service club. You may be asked to present a talk to Members about your work or to other people about how they might help the organization.

This guide will help to make it more enjoyable for everyone concerned.

It should take you only about one hour to absorb most of it! That little bit of preparation will remove some of the nervous tension you feel about having to speak to any group.

Then you can use this ebook as a handy reference in the years ahead.

It will help you to finish any talk, comfortable with the knowledge that you are ready to do another one and, most importantly, that most of your audience are willing, even eager, to listen to that too.

I don't guarantee that everyone of you will get great results your next time out. That's partly dependent on you doing the required **W O R K**.

The methods are simple and effective and most are easy.

The content of this ebook will help you if you add the magic ingredient – **ACTION**. You might be surprised that many people buy a book or even several, glance through them and store them away.

All the tips and short-cuts will not spring to your mind in unexpected and perhaps critically important situations unless you have absorbed them in to your subconscious by practicing them whenever the opportunity happens.

Let's start!

Impromptu and Prepared Speaking

Did you know that most speakers and other presenters prepare their impromptu talks and off-the-cuff remarks as carefully and thoroughly as their set pieces.

I hope that you will too. That guards against the chance of dissipating or even destroying the good impression that you create with your prepared material by a rash remark that is overheard and spread by audience members or media after the event.

Another point –you are a representative of your business or organization all the time you are in public, not just when you are actively working for it.

The Reason

You can do it for money, recognition, to promote your company or your cause but there is just one prime reason for anyone speaking to other human beings:

You want to move them to action.

Get Action

What do you want your audience to do as a result of your talk?

Answer this question before anything else. Then build everything else from that base.

This will be especially helpful while you are gaining valuable experience with your first presentations - it focuses your mind on something important that is outside of yourself.

I believe that much anxiety that you might cloud your mind with, will reduce when you focus on the goal of your presentation.

Start with a clear page in your notepad or a new file in your word processor.

Set down what you want. You might want them to:

- Give funds to your organization
- Hire you for a new job
- Stop doing something they have been doing (one of the most difficult goals).

Now comes the critical question; what's in it for them?

What’s In It For Them?

Everyone is more interested in themselves than anything else.

Yes, everybody!

Some people may seem to want no personal benefit from the effort that they put in a project. That is hardly ever the case. Most of these apparently selfless people are satisfying a need they have for appreciation and recognition of their contribution.

Everyone listens to one radio station more than all others combined;

W.I.I.F.M. – What’s In It For Me?

If you want their attention, their action and their money – give them something first.

Think of any salesperson – they never say, “Buy this because I need to get some new shoes.” They focus their presentation on **what you’ll get** from buying their product.

Everyone you speak to is listening to *W.I.I.F.M.* all the time that you are talking to them. Some are just less obvious about it than others.

You have to tune in to their wavelength. Your appeal must be in line with the desires, not just yours or those of your organization.

Get Them Listening and Acting

Some types of audiences (and an audience may consist of just one person) are more difficult to get interest and action from than others.



When you are just starting off, you probably won't get some of the really difficult audiences that professional speakers have to learn to deal with such as people at some corporate functions that are required by their bosses to be there but demonstrate with body language, and sometimes words as well, that they have absolutely no interest in the subject or the speaker.

They are what I call an “Easter Island audience”!

Local Meetings

Your first audiences are likely to be from the area where you live and to share some of your interests and local knowledge.

Even people that disagree with your view of the topic you speak about can be reached by pointing out areas of common agreement and giving them an opportunity to ask reasonable and short questions at the finish of your presentation.

Media

You may be approached for comment about your activities, your business or something about a group that you are part of.

A little preparation will save you from stumbling over your answers and give readers or listeners the best possible impression of you and the organization or business.

Opportunity for Publicity

Local media may, at times, seem to be full of International and National reports with a smattering of local material provided by local Government and major advertisers.

But there is sometimes an opportunity for you to promote your business or organization that you may not realize exists.

Local media are always looking for a local angle on national stories.

If you have something that is novel, or at least unusual, and can be tied in to a hot topic, get in touch with them (after you've finished this ebook, of course). If they don't show any interest, thank them politely, record the name of the relevant person or people at that media organization and try again another time. It probably wouldn't hurt to offer your contact details to them for any time they need information or a comment about your particular topic but don't take up a lot of their time unnecessarily and don't push.

Never let any negativity show in your dealings with people - media or otherwise, but especially media. It's bad manners but also remember that a local reporter that you snarl at today may be a force at some national organization when you could really use a friendly journalistic ear.

One snarl might close that ear to you and your activities forever.

You will, at some time, get some questions that you don't know the answer to or even some that you might not want to answer.

If you don't know, tell them straight. You will make a better impression than if you bluster.

If you don't want to answer the specifics of the question, try to reply with something relevant but never lie.

If they ask to interview you, go out of your way to accommodate their requirements but don't get too sticky. In most cases, the reporter or reporter/camera person team will have a schedule to keep and several possible stories to record in a shrinking amount of time.

Tell them if you have not done interviews before – I found, when I started, that people from all organizations were willing to help me present at my best since I was as flexible as possible and recognized their own pressures and requirements.

Don't offer them anything that might be seen as an inducement! However innocent that your offer really is intended to be – many will get very uncomfortable and even be suspicious. Also, most organizations have strict rules with forms and such that reporters have to fill in, probably on their own time.

Listen to any advice they offer and remember it. People pay big money for coaching about how to present well when interviewed and you often get the information free right from the cutting edge!

The Basics

This section has advice about the side-issues that can profoundly affect the success of your talk.

Be a good audience

You should listen to as many speakers, professional and amateur, that you can afford the time and money to.

If their subject is not relevant or appealing to you, study their techniques and think how you might use or even improve on their methods.

If the speaker produces a bad reaction in you, don't let it show – everyone can have an off-day. Give them the same support that you hope to get if ever it happens when you speak.

If you meet them at another time, be careful with your feedback. Many people ask for constructive criticism when they just want their own opinion of their presentation re-enforced!

Be subtle and suggest that they might be interested in this book - tell them your [EbookWholesaler Member's site](#). That could help the speaker without offending them and you'll have my gratitude as well.

Breaking the “rules”

You may see some experienced speakers get good results while doing or saying things that I advise you against in this ebook.

That doesn't mean that their way or my advice is wrong. They might have developed their presentation through hundreds of performances and found that their personality and

approach lets them get great response from actions or words that could be dangerous if used by an inexperienced presenter.

With this book, I’ll opt for the safest techniques that offer the most potential.

When you have some experience, you’ll have learned things that no book can teach. Bob Hope, the legendary comedian, said that he was saddened that there were less venues where inexperienced performers could be bad while learning to be good – experience is the best teacher.

Start by following this proven path – you’ll know when you are ready to divert to your own course.

Smash the mirror

Even the most inexperienced speaker can get off to a good start by focusing on the audience rather than themselves.

Anyone that concentrates on the butterflies in their stomach, the problems in their workplace or family, or other issues cannot give their best to their audience.

They might as well be speaking to their own reflection in a mirror instead of trying to connect to the audience.

This also greatly increases the effect of the “butterflies” and outside factors.

Learn by Doing ... Something Else!

Many speakers use experiences from their own lives as material for talks and presentations.

That shows your audience that you are a human being with a real life, not just a presenter, and that we have experience related to the subject we are talking about.

But everything from your "real" life should be related in your talk to the main topic. Be kind to your audience – keep on track and on time.

You may not realize that some of your other activities can help to improve your presentations, especially when you are starting out.

When I started learning magic, I overcame shyness (that didn't last long!) and low self-confidence this way. I had good teachers and learned that I always got a good response if I showed respect for my audiences by preparing my tricks and routines to the point that they were almost second nature, so I could focus on the spectators having a good time.

That included thinking up and rehearsing comments that would seem to be off-the-cuff during my presentations. That's right - like almost everyone else, I rehearse my ad-lib comments! This tactic gives you confidence and ensures that your jokes get maximum response from your audience every time. It's no use being able to think up brilliant and appropriate comments if you stumble over the punch-line!

Your daily work, meeting people and helping them, is valuable because your audiences will probably reflect the same mix of people that you encounter every day.

Add to Your People Skills

The traditional method is to join a formal speech improvement group such as ToastMasters International or to attend a workshop like mine on "Simple Steps to Successful Speaking".

I recommended the ToastMasters International program; it is a carefully graded series of talks and related activities that you are guided through by more experienced speakers in a non-threatening, friendly atmosphere.

Other clubs, such as Jaycees, also conduct workshops and programs that cover making talks and presentations. I also found the Jaycee program helpful.

Consider joining an amateur drama group or attending a drama workshop. Most groups have experienced performers and directors that will help you to improve your presentation skills.

All these groups have a strong social program that are also fun and beneficial.

You can also improve your inter-personal skills by less orthodox means.

I operated market stalls at various venues, from organized venues like the famous Salamanca Market in Hobart, Tasmania to one-off country markets and even school fairs.

You get to mix and deal with an amazing variety of people up close. The more that you improve your people skills - the more money that you are likely to make!

If you don't want to have your own market stall, put your hand up to help with any fair or yard-sale run by a group that you are a Member of or some worthwhile local organization.

Why not have a garage sale! That's like a miniature market. You interact with different types of people but with the garage sale's unique advantage; you are on your home turf.

It's a good way to start and get any shyness out of your system especially if you are not involved in sales with your regular work.

Your partner and family will also be glad to help you get rid of some of the clutter we all seem to gather and often keep far too long.

Role Models

We all benefit from critically watching successful speakers and can even learn from others who do not present very well!

But never skip a chance to see an accomplished speaker at work.

Try to keep some of your focus on their style and techniques, not just what they say. This will probably be very difficult as they spend years learning to focus your interest on their presentation, not the nuts and bolts underneath.

Don't confine yourself to those whose viewpoints are in accord with yours or the sort of presentation and the subjects that interest you.

You could learn a lot by watching analytically, presentations that don't hit your personal hot buttons.

You can learn, too, from recorded presentations but there are some things that you will only learn and appreciate by watching live human beings in action.

Copycats don't have nine lives

.... and they can end up very miserable in this one if they copy a more successful speaker.

It's usually a funny story that gets “borrowed” and dropped in without much thought when the copyist has a talk to give.

Where the original speaker had carefully worked on the material, maybe for years, so that it became a shining jewel in their presentation, the copyist will usually sling it at the audience, perhaps with pale copies of the gestures and emphasis that the originator had used.

Oops!

Not only does the stolen material not add brightness to the other speaker’s presentation, it tends to destroy any continuity that they had before.

There is only one original. If you fill your talk with second or fifth-hand stories, you’ll only get a second or fifth hand response. Successful speakers occasionally use joke book material in moderation but they put something of their own into everything they do and they never put it in until without polishing it first.

If you ever use someone else’s story, give them credit right there in your talk. You might be surprised who members of your audience may be in contact with through the Internet and, anyway, it’s simply the right way to do it.

Apart from that, people that are interested in the subject that you speak about may well have read the story in its original form. If you credit the source, they respect you more. If you don’t, they will certainly give you less respect.

Imitation is not flattery

I understand someone being so impressed with a speaker’s mode of presentation that they might be tempted to “clone” it. You probably realize the problem – an imitation will never get the response or the rewards, financial and otherwise, that the originator does and probably also reduce their chance to get the most benefit from their own potential.

Our best option is to examine our own qualities and experience and build on the best of those.

Record only Yourself

Don't record anyone else's professional presentation unless you have specific prior permission from everyone involved – the speaker, organization and even the venue may have their own strict rules (usually total prohibition).

There are good reasons for this. The speaker may use some of the presentation to produce commercial recordings or the organization that pays the presenter may have secured the rights for that presentation for its exclusive use.

Venues also have their own policies about recordings – audio, video and photography on their premises. Even semi-public areas such as shopping centers may have restrictions on this. They may not always enforce them but it's wise to check so that you save any embarrassment and possible hassle.

Your voice may shock you!

The first time that you hear your own recorded voice, you will probably be very surprised. Now you realize just how much those close to you really love you if they put up with that!

Yes, I'm joking.

Most people tend to neglect things they get at no cost – their feet, teeth and voice are three examples.

The condition of all three can probably be improved with most people but the voice usually requires the least money.

We'll concentrate on it because it is the most relevant to our subject.

Common problems with our voice stem from “lazy” jaws and reckless attempts to change our natural register. If you have a higher than average tone range, don’t try to keep it artificially low. The strain will tend to make it sound even worse!

If you, like many people, tend to keep your mouth closed while you speak to people, you’ll have to work on removing that habit.

Both faults may improve rapidly if you are prepared to do some, preferably private, exercise.

The results will be well worth the effort and also benefit other areas of your life, not just any speaking that you may do.

The exercises that I recommend are facial stretches and humming – nothing hard or particularly dangerous but I don’t accept any responsibility for the outcome, especially if you get too enthusiastic with the stretching too quickly.

Stretching;

You need to get used to using facial muscles that have probably got quite comfortable in retirement.

Remember, do all these in strict privacy.

- ✓ Gently stretch your mouth in a very wide smile a few times.
- ✓ Now, stretch your whole mouth in a large “O” shape a few times.
- ✓ Now stretch your lips forward as if you were going to kiss a frog (or person) that you don’t like very much and don’t want to get close to.

Repeat the exercise and, silly though it may seem, your speech pattern will show a noticeable improvement in a few weeks. You can help a little more by trying to consciously remember to move your jaw and your lips when you speak for the first few days.

Humming, or better still – singing, will also give good results.

It will, at the least, help you to establish in your own mind your natural tonal range. There are three natural levels to the voice that we each have. The middle one is the most comfortable for our vocal equipment, so it is also likely to be the most pleasant for anyone that hears us speak.

Just humming, or singing, up and down a scale may exercise your vocal cords more than a week’s regular conversation. Belting out new verses of a ballad (with vigor, please) also can help to tone them up.

When you have found those three natural levels, consciously maintain the middle tone when speaking and just use the upper and lower registers for brief emphasis. After a short while, the new habit will be in place and not require any conscious effort or attention.

Video is even Better

Get yourself on video as soon as you can. It can be very helpful for your progress to see yourself on even a small screen. If you have access to a camera, ask someone to film you during a mock interview or two.

You probably won’t get the variety of shots that you get in a professionally recorded and edited session, but the experience can be valuable.

If you are interviewed by professional media, you will probably have to record a copy for yourself or have someone else record for you if it’s a live-to-air interview.

It’s doubtful that a television or radio station will voluntarily supply you with a copy of any interview that you do – it’s not worth bugging them because you may need co-operation from them another time.

You may have spent a lot longer being interviewed than is ever used – remember that I mentioned reporters often have several possible segments to capture every day.

Don’t ever say that you were misquoted or taken out of context unless it’s a really serious issue. For most situations, understand the pressures that media people work under and realize that small misunderstandings will be driven from the public’s consciousness by the next Hollywood engagement!

If you can develop a reputation as a cooperative source with reliable information and the ability to express yourself, media organizations will tend to call you after a while.

Keep in mind that major networks and programs monitor small news stories on regional stations, looking for possible sources or guests.

You never know where that quick 2 minutes on the local news might get you.

Your Audience

Let’s look at the most important part of any presentation – the audience.

Many inexperienced speakers have a mind-set that their audience will be hostile. The truth is that you can expect a fair deal from them when you start. Most people are there to hear what you have to say or are at least prepared to give you the benefit of the doubt.

Smart speakers value every audience very highly – they’re mostly strangers that give their time and may even pay to hear you. Whether or not you get paid with money, a responsive audience will give you such great emotional satisfaction that you’ll be hooked – actively seeking more of it!

You’ll be “hooked”!

Whether they agree with the views you express or the way you do it, most will be polite and respond well.

Audiences make allowances for someone that makes a genuine effort if the speaker treats them well in return.

Volunteers

The most valuable members of an audience are those brave people that respond when you ask for someone to come on to the stage or even just respond to you from where they are in the audience.

They didn’t come there to be part of the show and they’ll probably get no reward for leaving the cozy anonymity of the audience.

And they know that they risk being made a fool of! There are still a few speakers who will belittle volunteers to try to boost their own image.

Never forget to thank volunteers! If someone comes on to the stage from the audience to help, I always thank them as they arrive and then ask the audience to thank them again when they return to their seat. The audience applause also adds to the good impression the booker gets of the speaker!

Questions

I always arrange some time for questions unless the program demands that we omit them.

This is where you can really interact with your audience and help them one-to-one. Of course, most questions will probably be fairly general and your short, accurate answer will help more than just the person that was brave enough to raise their hand and put their problem in to words.

It's essential to treat all questions, however basic or even misguided, with respect. Answer them all with the same professional, friendly attitude. There are often a few people too shy to ask their questions but your attitude and responses can draw them out.

The questions help you too.

They show what points, if any, you did not explain clearly enough. Maybe there were even some that you missed entirely! You can cover them now and also use the points raised to improve your future presentations. They show the parts of your topic that matter most to your audience.

They also show you very clearly the mood of your audience after the main part of your presentation.

The questions have another use – you can use them when you start to create hand-outs, special reports and even books. My first books about Magic were based in part on questions that were asked at my workshops and responses from readers of my magic newsletter. There's some more information about creating your own reports, etc in the

Chapter “Your Products”. And please don’t skip it even if you are not interested in speaking professionally. You can use the tips there to create products related to your organization’s aim and sell them to raise more funds.

No thank you or apology

I’ll put this advice here because mentioning how I thank volunteers brought it to my mind.

It’s better that you don’t thank an audience for listening or apologize for any slip during your program or a late start.

Surprised at such discourtesy?

Thanking the audience tends to diffuse the effectiveness of your talk or other presentation by taking attention away from the points that you want them to remember and act upon. The best “thank you” is to give them the most powerful performance that you are capable of.

Don’t apologize for any slip-up because that also may reduce the strength of the bond you’ve built with them. Just get on with your talk and show that you are too professional to be thrown by such distractions.

And don’t apologize for a late start because you are always ready to start on time, aren’t you?!

BTW I’ve concentrated on your interaction with the audience. You also must always be considerate of all the other people who are involved in the presentation.

NEVER over-run your allotted time.

Hecklers!

It's inevitable that anyone who gives a few talks to public groups will get some negative reactions occasionally. This may range from people that disagree with the content of your talk to people that are under the influence of something or just want to parade their own inadequacy in front of your audience.

Traditionally, many speakers have dealt with them by rehearsing and unleashing some sarcastic barb in their direction. There are even books that have nothing but pages of snappy "put-downs".

But there's a problem. However misguided or arrogant the abusive person is, they are a member of your audience.

They also probably have some friends among the audience (sometimes that can be very hard to believe). If you use those tired and sometimes nasty jibes, they may gain more friends instantly while you lose some. And any statements that you make under whatever provocation, may be used as a reason not to use you for other occasions.

Remain calm and answer their comments in a restrained and polite manner. If they don't wake up to themselves, other audience members in their vicinity will almost always get the message across much better than you can.

Your position is physically separate from the audience. You must always avoid anything that could create a perception of "Us" – the audience and "Them" – you and the other speakers.

Start Talking

Butterflies as Big as Buffaloes

Every speaker and entertainer that I know, no matter how experienced they are, still gets a flutter near their heart when it is almost time for them to perform or present.

This is good!

If I didn't feel that emotional tingle, I don't think that I would connect as well with the groups that I speak to – I'd seem cold and aloof, not a regular human being.

But “butterflies as big as buffaloes” are another matter.

You have to get them under control and you can do that before you even reach the venue!

Remove the “butterflies” with these three steps:

Prepare yourself and your material as best you can

Whether you're preparing for an interview, a talk or your “30 second intro”, it's worth checking the facts. You only have to do it once and then you can't be embarrassed by anyone derailing you by pointing to mistakes.

Focus on the outcome that your audience will get by doing what you say.

Put your focus on their desired outcome. That brings the focus off the antics of the butterflies or your sore foot.

Keep everything as simple as possible.

Simplicity is not only elegant, it can be a lot safer. There are plenty of things to keep check of when you talk. You also have to be aware of your audience’s mood and respond to questions, etc.

Rehearse your ad-libs

Your first talks will probably be fairly off-the-cuff.

It’s important that you rehearse for them! Few professional performers give us unrehearsed material in public. Those that do already have considerable experience or never get the chance for much more experience.

You will have the advantage if the subject that you have to talk about will be one that you know well – yourself, your activities and business or a cause or group that you support.

Practice for these situations when you attend relevant meetings or discuss the matters with other people.

At meetings, try to think how you would answer questions that may be raised and how you would present the material that the speakers give.

When you discuss the subject with other people or see discussions and articles in the media, try to collect in an organized fashion snippets of information and sources where you can get more.

Always note the source of any information with the piece of information that you record and may rely on for speech material some time later.

Start With a Story

If it’s relevant, short and the point is not too far from the beginning, a real-life story with people or other creatures that the audience members can bond with, will make a great start for your talk.

It will help you as well because you have rehearsed the story. Those first few familiar sentences let you focus on the mood and composition of that particular audience – your mind is not occupied with having to search for the next thing to say. This sort of opening also gives your vocal cords time to “warm up”.

Manager of First Impressions

A potential customer, or a potential supporter of a group that you support, may first hear about your business or your group from advertising or other media exposure.

But the first direct contact with a Member of the organization is a critical part of forming the lasting impression that will influence all their actions from then on.

You usually have no more than 30 seconds to put across a word picture of your activity or group.

You can't use pressure and humor is tricky too when you don't know the person you're speaking to or the reason for their interest.

Try to get the **most important benefit** across. Trying to cover too many aspects of your subject will confuse the listener at this early stage.

Be sure that the person that you are speaking to will relate to the particular benefit or feature.

Concentrate exclusively on this contact for those couple of minutes. Memorize and repeat their name, make comments that indicate genuine interest in the points, even criticisms, that they make.

Ensure that you have pointed them to the next step; signing the Membership form, writing the check or whatever.

Humor

I can't explain “funny” but I know it when I see it.

You probably feel that you know what's “funny” and have a couple of really good stories that you will use. You know they'll get a massive reaction!

But will your audience find them all that funny?

If you have material that always gets a great laugh from all audiences then you will be on your way to millionaire status if that's your goal.

Audiences are all different. An audience of red haired people will probably appreciate a joke about red heads but tell a slightly demeaning story about a red haired person when there are only one or two in your audience and you risk alienating them and perhaps a sizeable number of the rest of the audience.

The best approach is to put a positive spin on any story that you tell which might reflect on any of your audience or any group.

Magic tricks are not out of place in a talk (you knew I would say that?). But keep it relevant and never pull the audience's focus off your main objective.

It's unwise to make fun of any other person; speaker, M.C. or anyone else because the audience and the target of your joke may have a quite different “sense of humor” to yours.

If you have a “bit of business” that you want to use that involves someone else on the program, make a prior arrangement with them and possibly even let them get the laugh.

What? You find and prepare the joke but let someone else get the biggest laugh?! Think of the most successful comedians that you like. You will find that many of them favor

routines where they are the butt of the joke. It works a lot better for many of them than being a perpetual winner. It’s also helps you to get the best reaction from your audiences.

Be careful not to use jokes that will only be clear to a few of the audience members or other people on the program. You usually have less time than material, so make the jokes you use have maximum impact on the greatest number in your audience.

Be natural. You’ll get the best effect by staying the sort of person that you are in “real life” because that’s the character you have rehearsed most. Even people that always get a laugh among their friends can find it difficult to get the same results with a group of relative strangers.



If you adopt a special character for your presentations, you also bring a lot of extra work on yourself. You have to be that character for the duration of your presentation or maybe just for the joke you are telling. You can probably do it, but just be aware that more than usual rehearsal and planning is required.

Equipment

Microphones

To paraphrase Will Rogers, “I’ve never met a microphone I didn’t like”.



If there is a microphone available in good working order, don’t avoid it. Be kind to your vocal equipment and respectful of your audience – let them hear you.

Our model, in the picture, is a great example – a BAD example.

He’s fiddling with his glasses, using notes (and they’re big ones which will interfere with contact between the speaker and the audience). The notes will distract even more when they inevitably fall all over the stage!

He’s doing one thing right, talking straight into the microphone, ensuring that his audience (if there are any left) can hear him.

There are 2 types of microphones, those that pick up sound from a whole arc around them and those that mostly pick up sound only from directly in front of the mouth (didn’t realize I knew all this technical stuff?)

Remember to ensure that it’s switched on when you want to be heard and make doubly sure it’s switched off any time that you don’t.

Don’t blow into the head of a microphone to check if you can hear the sound from the speakers! You may gently tap it on the head which will be much healthier for you, the microphone and other people that may use it after you.

If you are giving your talk in a venue with a real sound system and someone actually operating it, be doubly careful that you don't cause problems with unexpected loud noises. These people are generally very patient but everyone has a limit.

If you are demonstrating something while standing behind a microphone on a stand, hold the demonstration items on the audience side of the stand, especially if they make a noise.

Lights

If you are expecting to give talks or other presentations in large halls or on stages, find some way to get some experience first.

The experience of looking in to almost blinding lights while trying to maintain the impression that you are reacting to the actions and sound from your audience takes practice.

Watch many performers acknowledge people in the audience when, quite often, they might not be able to see them because of the strong lighting.

You also need to get up the back of an appropriate venue so that you can see how large your slides and other displays will look to spectators back there – like they were made for ants, very small ants!



White Boards

The model in this picture is doing well. He is facing his audience, indicating that he's practiced enough to be confident about his equipment and that tells all of us that he respects his audience enough to put the extra time in.

This is a posed shot, of course, so we’ll ignore the microphone just like he is. The lectern is not doing anything to improve things either.

Will he ever have something fail? I’d say yes. But he’s probably rehearsed, or at least thought through, what he will do in those situations as well.

Slides

These may be from an overhead projector or a computer-based presentation.

Always check the projector or other equipment yourself.

You would think that a company like Microsoft, for instance, would never have a glitch in its computer based presentations. Maybe they’ve just been unlucky at the presentations I’ve seen? No, everyone will have those sort of days. The professionals expect and plan for them.

Don’t put too many words on a slide. More than about six short lines is often too much.

Don’t just stand there reading the text off the slide. This is necessary when there’s too much for the audience to absorb in the time available but you will never put that much on a slide anyway, will you?

Paperwork That Works for You

You can improve the reception for your talk and its potential to generate further business for you or Members for your organization in the future by preparing a few papers to accompany your talk. You may feel they are unnecessary and, while it's true that some will be ignored or dumped in the nearest waste bin , you could get enough referrals and feedback to make the time invested in creating these materials very worthwhile.

Ask yourself whether it's worth your while to donate an hour's work on your word processor and a few dollars to the local Instant Print franchise for the possible return of a couple of extra paid speaking engagements, an in-house workshop or maybe an extra dozen members for your organization?

Hand-outs

You should provide your audience with free notes that cover the highlights of your talk. That's being courteous and helpful but these handouts can also be of great help to you!

Put your contact details, including your website address. Use at least one page for a short bio and details of your services and products.

Add testimonials if you have some where you have the writer's permission to include their contact details. Don't use any anonymous testimonials or ones that don't have some way for the reader to contact the person that wrote the testimonial directly.

Feedback

This is vital in your quest to improve your presentations and the results that you, and your audiences, get from them.

You will obviously get immediate feedback in the reaction of your audiences to your talk but it is worthwhile to seek feedback through simple forms that you provide to each participant.

Get Their Real Opinion

Now, I will tell you the way to get the very best feedback right from "the horses' mouths". Arrange for someone that you know is reliable to be in the bathroom of the venue as soon as you finish your presentation! You really need one man and a woman, each in a stall in the relevant convenience when the crowd leaves your presentation to get the best results from this.

The feedback that you get this way will be plain, unvarnished impressions of people that have just seen your presentation. You will find out things that they would never say to you or even put on an anonymous feedback form!

Try this once and you will find it is worth the cost of the book!

You probably will be unable to do this yourself because you have to stay in the room for subsequent parts of the program, to meet with the people that booked you or to operate your "back of the room" table.

Get Paid For Free Talks

When you have gained some experience and are being sought after for talks, you will find that some of the people that want you to talk for the benefit of their organization's members don't feel that they can or should pay you for your trouble.

You may choose to accept some of these bookings (but please make sure that they don't pay anyone else involved with the event either). That's fine.

You may be able to give your talk for free and make good money at the same time.

The speaker's version of "Abra Cad Abra" is "Back of Room Sales".

You can seek their agreement that they provide a volunteer (why should you be the only one?) to supervise a table, usually at the back of the venue, where your books or other related products are displayed for sale.

You can offer them a commission on sales but probably shouldn't make it too high as you are already providing your talk.

Negotiate whatever deal that you are comfortable with that they will agree to.

If they don't agree, it's up to you whether you accept the freebie or wait for a booking from an organization that puts a higher value on your contribution to their event.

Most speakers give some free talks. They learn to be careful. Check, first of all, if the organization that is in charge of the event is one that you want to be associated with. Then check where any funds raised at a function where you are donating your services will end up

Your Products

Speakers get opportunities that workers in regular jobs probably envy; trips, accommodation and great money for what seems like "just an hour's work"!

There's a lot more involved than the "on-stage" stuff, as you learned by reading this ebook.

And there's no hospital plan, superannuation or other benefits unless we fund it ourselves.

That's why this chapter could be one of the most valuable in the ebook! You will find it useful, even if you aren't interested in speaking professionally.

I don't mind if you adapt some of these tips to create products that your organization can sell to raise more funds. I probably won't even ask for a commission!

Each time that you prepare a talk, store your notes and a complete copy of your presentation. Be particularly careful about recording sources for anything that you quote or even paraphrase in your work.

Add questions and other feedback after each presentation.

You can soon start to use the time when you revise and update your presentation for another, potentially very profitable, purpose as well.

Prepare hand-outs of supplementary material that add value to your presentation and get your contact details into every audience member's hand for a short while at least.

Write articles (they're just hand-outs or letters presented in a particular format). You can submit them to general magazines, magazines that specialize in the subject or you can offer them to the organization that booked you to be run in their in-house magazine.

Always put a copyright notice and your contact details on everything. It won't stop some people stealing your material, but it might reduce it some.

You also may get inquiries from other people and organizations that either want to book you to speak or reprint your articles.

Provided you do not assign the rights to anyone, you can compile your articles and special reports into a book, printed or electronic like this one.

You can sell it or give it away as a bonus to audience members (these “back of room” sales can add up to more than your fee sometimes) and you can also submit it to traditional print publishers or eBookwholesalers (<http://ebookwholesaler.net/offer.php>)

At first, they might only cover your dry-cleaning but these extra income opportunities help with your expenses and, as you progress, can help you to fund your own benefits.

It's important to get permission from the organization that booked you to be able to offer your product(s).

Please, always do it in a low-key manner. You may have seen presenters that act like their life depended on you buying their \$295 course.

I attended a presentation a few years ago at a venue with two separate doors to the foyer and amenities. The organizer must have been disappointed with the sales at his table during the first break. At the second break, one of the doors was kept locked and everyone had to go through the other door where the sales table was located. From the comments I heard then and for days afterward, he did his sales and future bookings no good at all with that obvious tactic.

If you are not a professional speaker but do presentations to support an organization, you can still produce a book, booklet or ebook from your material. Sell this at Club meetings

and other functions, apart from your presentations. Send it to other groups, perhaps in other countries. You might inspire someone there to do their own version (and buy their own copy of this book),. They could then send a copy to your Club with permission reprint it and offer it for sale also.

Questions?

If you have any questions about your speaking and presentations that I may be able to help with, please use the contact form at <http://www.ezymagic.com>

This book is intended to smooth your path to more and better presentations. Please let me know of your successes and your questions.

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