



Building on Your Management Skills: Public Speaking

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**Speech is power:
speech is to
persuade, to
convert, to
compel.**
–Ralph Waldo
Emerson
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It is no secret that part of being a leader means having the ability to stand-up in front of a group of people and effectively deliver information. Leaders regularly utilize their public speaking skills whether they're presenting information to their team, various stakeholders, or business leads. A powerful presentation is engaging, focused, and memorable. While it might seem impossible to make a company's history or quarterly sales data presentation impactful, a highly skilled presenter could engage any audience, regardless of the content they're presenting. Though, as you're likely aware, public speaking skills do not come naturally. They're cultivated and honed over time with practice. Even if a leadership role isn't your career goal, improving your public speaking skills will be beneficial to your overall professional development.



Preparation is Key

Preparation is critical for a well-executed presentation. Mark Twain famously said, “It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.” Extensive preparation enables the speaker to feel confident with their content which is directly reflected throughout their presentation. The following are some tips to help you prepare for your next speech/presentation:

Who is Your Audience?

When preparing for your presentation, it’s important to identify who will be listening to your message. Analyzing your audience will allow you to tailor your message according to the audience’s interests, attitudes, and beliefs. So, get to know your audience. Who are they? Why are they here? What do you want them to do? How will they react? What is the best way to reach them?

Know Your Content

Verify that your content is accurate and well-organized before you begin to develop any visual aids or a script. Make sure that everything has been well-researched and your message is concise. Don’t just memorize your content, you should have a thorough understanding of all the information you’re presenting.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Perhaps the most important tip for your public speaking preparation is to practice your speech several times. Rehearsing your speech allows you to practice your body language, tone, and timing. Additionally, practicing gives you the opportunity to clean up and correct any errors before you present in front of an audience. Many experts recommend practicing your speech at least 10 times before you actually present it. In this case, practice may not make perfect but it’ll bring you very close!

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**The mind is a wonderful thing. It starts working the minute you’re born and never stops working until you get up to speak in public.
–Unknown**

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Bottom Line –

You’ve likely heard that many people fear public speaking more than spiders, snakes, planes, and even death. While that might be the case for a lot of people, it doesn’t have to be. The more you expose yourself to public speaking, the less you’ll feel anxiety about it. With thorough preparation, practice, and experience, you too could master the art of public speaking.

