



## Mastering "Must- Have" Speaking Skills

Speaking well in front of an audience is no longer just a great skill to have, a "plus" in the business world. Whether you're selling a product, submitting a progress report, presenting research results, training or motivating your team, or delivering a keynote address at a business conference, speaking skills are almost expected and are certainly an essential tool for success.

The good news is that public speaking is a measurable skill that can be mastered, not a gift doled out to only a few charismatic individuals.

And the better news is that when you master public speaking, you advance your career. That's because speaking helps you:

- Strengthen your leadership position.
- Build your personal brand, gaining recognition, visibility and respect.
- Increase your influence, as you put forth your ideas and information.
- Enhance your ability to promote your company and its products or services.

There are numerous books on public speaking, all offering valuable information and different angles on the topic. Keep these tips in mind to speak like a pro:

## UNLIMITED POTENTIAL



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*"Turning potential into performance"*

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Herdlinger Associates provides the vehicle to help people expand and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to achieve a higher degree of success both personally and professionally.

Our programs incorporate attitude development, goal setting and skills development into a process that results in greater utilization of the potential inherent in all people.

We help people create a plan that enables them to balance the profit motives of their business with the personal motives of their lives.

Our professional staff is committed to a common purpose:

**Developing People  
to  
Achieve Their Full Potential  
...That's What We Do!**

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### Plan

Start by knowing your audience. Who are they? What do they really want or need to know? What is their vocabulary? How much do they know already? What works with them? Be clear also on your purpose; distill that purpose into one sentence. Keep all of this in mind as you develop the structure and content of your speech and choose visuals that support—and don't sabotage—your purpose. And don't forget to build into your presentation ways to involve the mind and body of the audience.

### Practice

The more you rehearse, the more confident you'll feel and the more natural you'll sound. A solid suggestion is to memorize at least the first four minutes. Tape and time yourself. Be aware of your "vocal color," the pitch, pace, punch and passion of your delivery. Observe and analyze your posture, appearance, gestures, eye contact and energy level. The goal is not to script every movement or rise in volume, but to become aware enough in the moment to notice yourself and what you're doing while you're in front of your audience. Watch and listen to other speakers; see what works and what doesn't.

### Fear Not

If you would rather die than speak in front of others, remember this: Speaking is about them (your audience), not you. It's about communicating to the people who want or need what you know. You are the channel for this information, nothing more. When you speak in service of your message, fear dissipates remarkably.

### Prepare

Find techniques that work for you to help you warm up your body and voice, calm your mind and inspire your attitude. Prepare for the most difficult questions that might come up during Q&A. Above all, look and sound like you mean what you're saying. Own the power of your knowledge, of your performance.

As Marian K. Woodall says in her book, *Speaking to a Group: Mastering the Skill of Public Speaking*: "Speakers have power; GREAT speakers have GREAT power."

## Top 10 Powerful Questions

*The poet e.e. cummings wrote: "Always the beautiful answer, who asks a more beautiful question." Indeed, solid strategic plans, strong work relationships, high morale and improved performance are all byproducts of good questions. This potent communication tool can help you discover important information about your work, yourself, your associates, your customers—and create insights that otherwise might have remained hidden.*

*Asking questions without leading, prompting or interrupting shows that you're really listening. It encourages us to suspend assumptions, which helps prevent miscommunication, unrealistic expectations, stress, damaged relationships and unfulfilled responsibilities. Below are just a few questions that can have powerful effects on your work and life. Just be sure to LISTEN to the answers.*

1. What is it that you'd like to see accomplished and how do you see it happening?
2. What are your thoughts? Your concerns?
3. What self-limiting fears, thoughts or actions do I want to leave behind?
4. What's the most important priority to you with this and why?
5. What would you like to see improved?
6. Can you help me understand that a little better?
7. What's in the way of improved performance? How can I change that?
8. If I could change one thing in my life / business that would have the greatest impact, what would it be?
9. What prevents me from being able to place more focus on this?
10. Are my actions today compatible with what I wish to leave behind as a legacy?