



# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



The Better  
Speaker Series



WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE



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The Better Speaker Series

## TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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# THE BETTER SPEAKER SERIES

Toastmasters International's *The Better Speaker Series* is a set of presentations offering instruction on basic speaking skills. Designed to be delivered by members to their clubs, presentations in this series provide new speaking techniques and facts that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

Presentations in *The Better Speaker Series* may be offered by any club member and require 10 to 15 minutes to present.

## CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM

"Know Your Audience" addresses the importance of researching and understanding the people who will be listening to your speech so that you might best serve their needs—as well as your own. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ CD of a PowerPoint presentation to be viewed along with your speech

### ***In Your Own Words***

*The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.*

Here are some tips on using this outline to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster including vocal variety and gestures.

## USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. You are encouraged to use them. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, you will need a data projector, a laptop computer, a table to support them, and a screen for viewing.

In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If you cannot arrange for projection equipment but still would like to use visuals, you may copy the material on the visuals onto a flipchart. Do this before the presentation. Use a heavy marking pen that does not seep through the paper, and write on every third or fourth page so succeeding visuals will not show through. Also, make your letters large and heavy with plenty of space between them.

Follow these tips when using visual aids:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners. Place your projector so it projects a large, high, undistorted image on the screen. Focus the image.
- ▶ Bring spare equipment, including a projector bulb, extension cord, extra marking pens, etc.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flipchart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flipchart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. Do not talk to the screen or flipchart. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

## **EVALUATION AND THE ADVANCED COMMUNICATOR SILVER (ACS) AWARD**

Because this is an outlined presentation, for presenting it you will not receive credit toward completing a manual speech project, but you may receive credit toward your Advanced Communicator Silver (ACS) award. Ask your vice president education to assign an evaluator for your presentation.

Conducting any two presentations from *The Better Speaker Series* and/or *The Successful Club Series* is one component of qualification for ACS recognition. For further details, please view the Toastmasters International website: [www.toastmasters.org/membereducation](http://www.toastmasters.org/membereducation).

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

## Introducing the Presenter

### TIPS FOR THE PRESENTER: WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series*.
- ▶ Explain why “Know Your Audience” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* (Item 1167E) for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

### TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCER

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.



# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

## Outline

### INTRODUCTION

Speakers want to share knowledge and move an audience to share their viewpoint. To do this, they must send their message in such a way that it is easy for the audience to receive and understand it. The speaker must know who the audience is and fine-tune how the message is sent to the audience in order to succeed.

### VARIABLES

There will always be diversity among a group of individuals but a typical audience has several characteristics that distinguish it from other audiences. Consider the following variables when tailoring a speech to the interests of an audience:

#### ▶ Age range

When a speaker knows what kinds of events the audience has experienced, he or she is able to use statements that are meaningful to the audience. These statements help the speaker to establish why his or her ideas are relevant and of interest to the audience.

#### ▶ Male/female ratio

Depending on the organization or situation, an audience may be primarily or exclusively composed of one sex. If this is the case, select the language, examples, and line of reasoning accordingly. Effectively delivering a message means gearing the speech to the specific needs and interests of an audience.

#### ▶ Occupational and economic status

A speaker can assume that an audience comprised of persons sharing a specific occupation has a certain level of specialized knowledge. Using professional jargon with such an audience would be appropriate. Using jargon or referring to specialized knowledge that is unfamiliar to the audience can be confusing and could be perceived as arrogant.

Economic levels also help to define an audience. A speech topic that appeals to an affluent audience would be less likely to appeal to an audience of middle-class manual laborers.

Whatever the occupation or economic status of the audience, the speaker's goal is to ensure his or her message is perceived as significant to the audience's lives and experience.

#### ▶ Educational background

The educational status of an audience can make a significant difference in a speaker's approach, wording, and focus. Avoid being perceived as patronizing by keeping the speech level just a bit higher than that of listeners but be cautious of using language that exceeds the audience's understanding.

#### ▶ Political orientation

Some groups pride themselves on being open-minded, but others take firm positions. Be aware of an audience's general attitude when deciding whether the speech focuses on a topic or merely refers to it briefly.

V1

- ▶ **Leisure activities**

Awareness of an audience's extracurricular hobbies and activities helps speakers further understand the audience's interests and needs.

V2

## **KEEP THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION**

Visit the venue in advance or talk to the event host to gather information about:

- ▶ Room acoustics
- ▶ Seating
- ▶ Lighting
- ▶ Temperature control
- ▶ Outside noise
- ▶ Other possible distractions

When selecting the best way to hold your audience's attention, also consider:

- ▶ Time of day
- ▶ Concurrent events/activities
- ▶ Practicality of breaks for lengthy presentations

V3

## **WHAT DOES THE AUDIENCE WANT TO KNOW?**

Discover what it is that the audience wants to know. Figure out which approaches have worked before and which have not by:

- ▶ Asking the event host what the audience already knows
- ▶ Scanning any publications specific to the audience
- ▶ Contacting local officers
- ▶ Consulting references on the Internet and in periodicals
- ▶ Talking with someone who has either spoken to the group or is an actual member

V4

## **SPEECH OBJECTIVES**

A speaker must recognize what the audience's goals are and fashion a presentation that meets those objectives. The most common speech objectives are to:

- ▶ Inform
- ▶ Inspire
- ▶ Persuade
- ▶ Entertain

## CONCLUSION

A speaker does not need not adjust his or her own opinions or talk only about what the audience already agrees with in order to effectively send a message. But the more a speaker knows about the people in the audience – backgrounds, interests, preferences – the easier it will be to establish the best way to deliver a specific message to a particular group.

Researching an audience in advance also will help a speaker feel knowledgeable and confident. Nervous tension will convert itself into positive energy, and instead of being disabled by fears of the unknown, a speaker will be ready to convert a room full of strangers into a captivated and speaker-friendly audience.



## Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ How effective was the speaker's introduction in helping the audience understand the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series* and the presentation itself?
- ▶ Was the presenter adequately prepared? How heavily did the presenter rely on notes?
- ▶ How did the speaker use vocal variety to enhance this presentation?
- ▶ What other techniques did the speaker use to personalize and augment the presentation? Were they effective? How?
- ▶ Did the speaker display the visuals smoothly and at the appropriate times? How could the speaker improve?
- ▶ What aspect of the speaker's presentation style did you find unique? Why?
- ▶ Did the speaker present the material clearly and simply so audience members could easily use the information to improve their own speeches?
- ▶ What could the speaker have done differently to make the presentation more effective?
- ▶ What did you like about the presentation?



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