Impromptu Speaking

“off-the-cuff”
"It takes me three weeks to prepare an impromptu speech."

--Mark Twain
Impromptu speaking in real-life

- Being asked by your boss to give a project update at a meeting
- Accepting an award and being asked to say a few words
- Giving a toast at a special event
- OTHER IDEAS???
Rising to the challenge...

- Decide quickly what key message will be
  - Tell them what you are going to tell them
  - Tell it to them
  - Tell them what you told them

- Jot down a brief outline of main points
  - Use stories & personal experience to highlight ideas
  - Decide how to transition for point to point
• Craft a strong intro & conclusion
  • Start off with confidence
  • Have a conclusion that ties message together
  • Don’t leave to chance
  • Don’t end with…”and that’s all I have to say about that…”
Methods to Determine Content

• **PREP Method**—expressing an opinion
  • **Point** Make your point (Opening)
  • **Reason** State your reason for making the point (Body)
  • **Example** Give an example to justify your previous remarks (Body)
  • **Point** Drive home the point again. Link back to opening.

• **Past, Present, Future Method**—comments on a particular topic
  • **Point** Make your point (Opening). Be brief.
  • **Past** What happened in the past. Reflect on a past issue. (Body)
  • **Present** What is happening today (Body)
  • **Future** What will/could happen in the future (Body)
  • **Point** Drive home your opening point. Remind audience point of your speech. (Conclusion)
Fundamentals of impromptu speaking:

1. State your viewpoint in beginning & start strong.
2. Choose a specific illustration, experience or example.
3. Don't try to cover too much ground.
4. Absolutely never apologize.
5. Finish conclusively.
How to keep it flowing...

- Take your time.
- If you go blank (often happens in transitions)--use 5 second stall.
  - "I have often wondered about that."
  - "I am glad you asked that question."
  - "Did you ever wonder. . . .?"
- Remember to get attention and introduce topic
- Connectives are a great way to keep your speech moving.
  - Be creative & have fun.
What if You Draw A Blank?

• Pretend like you're pausing on purpose as if you're letting your last point sink in.

• Try re-stating your last point or reviewing what you have covered.

• If you need more time to think, you could try asking the audience a question.
  • "Do you have any questions?"
  • "Can everyone hear me okay?"
  • “Have you ever wondered?”
Techniques to Delivering a Better Impromptu Speech

- **Give yourself time to prepare**
  - Take deep breaths & Rise slowly
  - *Remember:* You don’t have to start the speech immediately

- **Feel confident**
  - Look at audience and smile. Stand tall.
  - Don't slump, fidget, put hands in your pockets
  - Speak and act in a confident manner

- **Slow delivery**
  - Gives you time to think ahead
  - Audience has time to absorb and react to what you are saying
  - Helps you reduce umms and ahhs

- **Focus**
  - Be brief and to point
  - Talk directly to the audience and adapt to their feedback
  - Maintain good eye contact with the audience
  - Don't ramble or say too much on the subject
• **Other Methods (Body)**
  - Cause, Effect, Remedy
  - Before, The Event, The Result
  - Who, What, How, When, Where
  - Good, Bad, Indifferent
Delivery is key

- Maintain eye contact with audience
- Use facial expressions (i.e. smile)
- Avoid verbal crutches---PAUSE
VERBAL VIRUSES

• Meaningless words & fillers (Um, Uh, Er, And, etc.)

• Problems caused:
  • Distract listener
  • Detract from message
  • Drain impact

• Where do they come from?
  • Sloppy speech habits
  • Nervousness
  • Not being prepared
  • Fear of silence
Verbal Virus Remedy

- **DIAGNOSE**: Knowing is half the battle
  - Must be aware of crutch
  - Must actively try to overcome
- **PAUSE**
- **BREATHE**
- **PRACTICE**
  - Think before you talk
- **GET HELP**
  - Enlist friends to give feedback
  - Try recording yourself speaking & observe
Other Resources

Websites with helpful TIPS

- http://homeworktips.about.com/od/speechclass/a/impromptu.htm
- http://www.ljlseminars.com/imprompt.htm
Sources

- University of Hawai'i Maui Community College Speech Department--
  Impromptu Speaking Tips
  www.hawaii.edu/mauispeech/html/impromptuspeaking.html