

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>
- <http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/Organizations/umbstoastmasters/file/members/prepare/ImpromptuSpeakingHints.pdf>

Sources

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