



Top 10 Tips for Speaking at Conferences

Conference season should be a time for inspiration and energy, renewal and refocus. Make sure that your / your team's presentations this autumn achieve that. Here's how:~

1. Work at it!

The best, most "natural" speakers in the world do not wing it. Their performances are always as a result of putting in the hard yards; the crafting of the speech, the practice, the feedback, the rehearsals. Don't skimp on the time it takes. Do it well or Don't do it.

2. What do they want to know?

This can sometimes be fundamentally different from what you want to tell them! Do your homework; Make sure you know your audience, what do they want to hear from you, What are you are particularly well equipped to talk about?

3. Don't drown in the detail

Most conference audiences have a lot of speeches to listen to. They don't want and Cannot handle a lot of detail. So give them the headlines, the big issues, some food for thought. Make only a few key points BUT make them well. Flesh them out, bring them to life with stories and anecdotes. A couple of good points memorably made, are the key.

4. Be yourself

Don't try and be somebody or something that you are not, don't try and be Grandma when really you're the big bad wolf (or the other way around!) The truth will out. It will come across as insincere and unbelievable

5. Be human and not automaton

Avoid "MBA-speak" and jargon it won't make you sound better, more learned, or more believable, usually just more DULL! Use normal, day to day language. Express yourself as you would normally, don't put on a "Corporate Mask"

6. Master the geography

To pitch up 5 minutes before you're due to speak is a recipe for disaster, get details of the layout sent to you and get there early! Familiarise yourself with the layout and logistics. Where is the podium? Is there room to walk about? Where are the monitors? Where can you put your notes down? What are the arrangements for the microphone? The slide advancing? You need to know.

7. Use Visual Aids

Use a small amount of appropriate visual aids to add value to what you're saying. Graphs, video, pictures can all be great. You can do that via PowerPoint but Don't just publish your notes by bullet pointing text! Its visual valium Please Don't Do It! That's what notes are for.

8. Get Help

Don't be the lone ranger on this, get support and input on this. Ask people to input ideas for your content and structure, people to hear you rehearse and give you feedback, people to design your visual aids. The best speakers don't do it alone, whether it's professional support or just colleagues giving you some feedback, getting some input is vital.

9. Anticipate

How are the audience going to react to your speech? Are they going to love it? Hate it? Be bored by it? Anticipate their reaction and be ready to address it as part of the speech itself and in being ready for likely questions at the end. Do you really want to have to think of answers to demanding questions on the hoof under the spotlight?

10. Less is more

So there is no number 10!

1-9 is a lot to take in and do something with anyway, let's not drown here!

We have a team of experts who help our clients with their public speaking engagements. We have Business experts, actors, voice coaches, BBC presenters and script writers.

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