



The Raphael Report

**Observations on marketing,
advertising, sales and
promotions
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"They asked me to speak at their next meeting ... and I'm scared to death!"

A recent survey asked people what they feared the most.

Death came in seventh.

Giving a speech came in first!

Here are the "Ten Biggest Fears" in order: Speaking before a group, heights, insects and bugs, financial problems, deep water, sickness, death, flying, loneliness and dogs.

Most people are scared to death to give a speech, but there is a way to overcome this fear: PREPARATION and practice.

If you know your audience, your subject and your message, you can gain the confidence to succeed.

Before you give that all-important speech at your place of work or to your employees or peer group, the practice part of the equation can be managed by speaking at other venues before tackling home ground.

Finding a place to speak is easy. There are more than 25,000 meetings taking place in the U.S. every day!

Don't worry about having the talents of a professional speaker. Worry about knowing what you're going to talk about. That's easy if you choose a subject specific to your knowledge and experience. Most non-professional speakers don't do that, so your audience will usually be surprised and interested in what you have to say. Here's why: "Ninety percent of speakers are boring," says New York executive speech coach Ralph Proodian.

Call your local Chamber of Commerce for a list of the civic and charitable groups in your area. Drop a note - or simply call - the Program Chairman of these organizations and offer a 20-minute luncheon talk to their group about "little known secrets" of your business. Make the title provocative. Examples:

"When Someone Tells You They've Been Framed, It Might Be A Compliment." (Art gallery)

"What You Can Believe and Not Believe In The Ads You Read." (Ad executive)

"What A Car Dealer Tells You And What He Doesn't" (Automobile dealer).

Besides giving you practice, many times this foray into speaking can bring you additional business.

"I speak at local Chamber of Commerce meetings. That short speech brings in lots of new business." --Annette Neyman, Frame Craft, The Woodlands, Texas

There are many books written with dozens (or hundreds) of pages this size on rules for speaking. Here are just a few Dos & Don'ts to remember when you receive the OK that you'll be next weeks' speaker:

1. **DO know your audience.**

We put this first because it's the most important. How you talk to a civic club is different than how you talk to a teacher's group, which is different than how you talk to a group of senior citizens. Know your audience before you talk to them. Who are they? What do they do? Is there a common characteristic? Do they have a special charity? Do they give an annual award? What are they known for in the community?

When you have this information from the Program Chairman, make sure you mention these characteristics in the beginning, middle and end of your talk. Makes the audience feel good you took the time to find out about them before you came.

2. **DO get to the point quickly.**

Can you write out the theme of your talk in one sentence? If you can't...try again. The audience only has a two or three sentence description of who you are in their weekly program. Many do not read the short synopsis. Follow this basic three-step rule and you're on your way to a good talk:

- Say what you are going to say.
- Say it.
- Say what you said.

You could begin with, "Twenty minutes from now you'll know most everything about my business that I learned in the past 20 years."

Remember: The first 15 seconds determines if the audience is interested in what you have to say. One way to have them like you: smile! That's contagious.

Look at your audience. That means NOT reading your talk. Write down the key words on 3" x 5" cards. Arrange them in order. Then, while you're talking, your eyes can sweep across the audience. It's like an embrace. But don't keep looking at one person. You'll make that person uncomfortable.

3. **DO be enthusiastic.**

Benjamin Franklin once said, "If you are not excited by your message, how can you expect your audience to be excited by it?"

If you're interested in what you're saying, your audience will mirror your interest and remember what you said. A Yale University study said your audience will forget 40 percent of what you say 20 minutes after you finish. Within half a day, they'll forget 60 percent. Within one week, 90 percent. What they won't forget is your excitement and enthusiasm.

4. **DO use anecdotes.**

I once asked famed speaker Bill Gove how to give a great 30 minute speech. "Easiest question I've ever been asked," he said and then answered: "Tell 30 great one-minute stories."

5. **DO use audio visuals.**

If you can. Here's why: People generally remember half of what they both hear and see.

6. **DON'T take a drink of water while facing the audience.**

Distracting. If your throat is dry, turn to the side while drinking. Hint: warm water is better than cold.

7. **DON'T lean.**

Don't rock back and forth. Imagine your feet are locked in cement.

8. **DON'T pause in the middle of a sentence.**

Unless you're doing this for a specific effect. Otherwise your audience will think you've forgotten something.

9. **DON'T use distracting gestures** like patting your hair or scratching your head or pulling on an ear or playing with your glasses . . .

10. **DON'T talk too long.**

Keep within the time limit you are given. Don't keep looking at your watch because every time you do, the audience will do the same. Put your watch on the podium so you can see how you're doing with the time you are allotted. Or simply turn it around so it faces the inside of your wrist.

Your ending should be something they will remember. A slogan, a poem, a story. Or a reward. Example: Just before you finish speaking, tell everyone you have a gift for everyone in the room. One idea: a gift certificate for the next time they visit your business. (Check with the Program Chairman first to be sure this is OK.)

When it's all over you will have two personal rewards:

1. Networking: The more people you meet and talk to the more business you will do (don't forget to bring a *lot* of business cards).
2. The free meal.