

Practicing Your Speech Delivery

Any successful speaker, novice or professional, will validate that it is **ESSENTIAL** to **PRACTICE** a presentation prior to the final delivery to an audience. To not do so is to undermine your chances for personal satisfaction, making a reasonable impression upon your audience, and being able to be clear and effective with your message. **PRACTICE IS ESSENTIAL! Failing to practice is practicing to fail!**

For most situations, an **extemporaneous delivery** works best. Extemporaneous delivery entails careful preparation and ample practice. The main points/examples/ideas are deeply embedded into your memory, yet each time you present, there is an element of spontaneity and flexibility. You can be spontaneous and flexible only if you have practiced. Extemporaneous delivery is neither memorized nor read. It is conversational and communicative with the audience. The following is the "Four Day Practice Plan," which is a highly effective process for building conversational delivery and increasing one's confidence regarding giving a speech.

Day 1: Outline

Four days before the speech: Practice using your outline. Practice out loud and standing. Pay particular attention to your beginning, main points, and ending. Those parts of your speech should be delivered while giving as much eye contact as possible to the audience (imaginary or real).

Day 2: Note Cards:

Three days before the speech: Use as many note cards as you need to feel comfortable to make the transition between the outline and the note cards. Pay particular attention to your beginning, main points, and ending. Practice out loud and standing. Start being aware of your verbal and nonverbal delivery and timing. Consider video or audio recording yourself and using that as feedback also.

Day 3: Minimizing Note Cards:

Two days before the speech: Minimize the amount of information on each note card and the number of note cards. Use only the number of cards that are absolutely essential to help "jog" your memory. This will help you be extemporaneous and give you the maximum opportunity to communicate and keep reasonable eye contact with the audience.

Day 4: Polishing your Delivery

One day before the speech: By this time, you will know the speech very well. Concentrate on giving maximum eye contact with your audience. Don't continue to do this alone; have an audience to give this to! Take a moment to envision success...how you look and sound as a clear and effective speaker. Having followed this process, **you are ready!**