



How to Design a Perfect Speech

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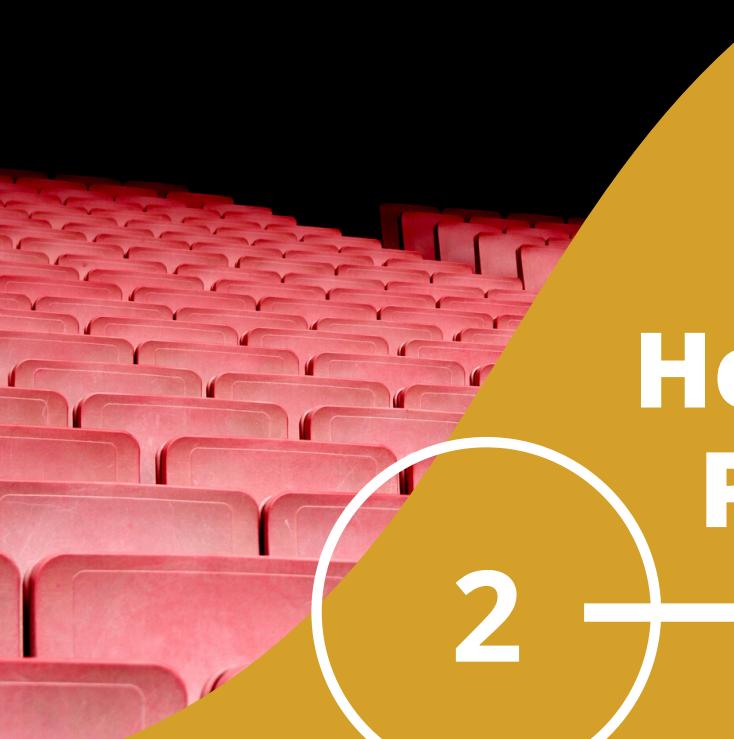
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Step #1: Focus on Your Audience

Before you start trying to figure out what you are going to say, begin by focusing on your audience. Who will be sitting in the audience, and what do THEY want from your speech? Most presenters do the opposite and think about what "I want to tell them".

If you want to design a great speech, though, focus on what the audience wants. In order to do this, you have to pretend like you are an audience member. Put yourself in their shoes. If you were going to spend your valuable time listening to this speech, what would you need to hear to make it worth your while.

Once you understand the answer to this simple question, you'll be ready to move on.



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Step #2: Create an Audience Focused Title

Think of your title as being the headline of your speech. Use it to generate attention so you get started on the right foot. In Step #1, we asked you to focus on what your audience really wants to know from your speech. If you have a good answer to that question, you can likely just use that answer as your title.

If you don't have an answer yet, again, put yourself in the shoes of your audience member and ask yourself, "Why?" "Why would I even care about this topic?" "What is in this for me?" For instance, if you are in sales and want someone to buy your widget, why? What is the benefit of your widget?

So, the title "You should buy my widget," becomes, "A Small Investment in this Widget will Save You Time and Money Next Quarter".



Is Your Title "Audience Focused"?

- Is your title generic? If other people have given similar speeches, did they, or could they, use the same title? If so, make your title more specific to the needs of this audience.
- If your audience changed, could you still use this title? If so, try again. Your title should be a specific conclusion that your current audience is most interested in.
- Does your title answer the question, "Why should I listen to you?" If not, make sure it does.
- If your audience only saw your title on a slide, would they want to hear more?
- Is your title too broad? The more broad (vague) your title, the more difficulty you will have writing the presentation. The more specific, the easier it will be to design the presentation.



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Step #3: Identify 3 to 5 Main Points

Many presenters think that the more data that they insert into their presentation, the more the audience will like it. The opposite is actually true!

Most audience members will only remember a few things that you say, and the more items that you cover, the more confused they will be. Many bullet points also makes the presenter more nervous and more likely to forget something!

There are dozens of things that you could cover, but what you really want to do is identify the golden eggs that your audience will get the most value from. Narrow down your bullets to just the three, four, or five most important things that the audience needs to know right now.



Outline Your Speech

Based on what you know about the audience, right now, what would be **the most important thing that the audience needs to know about this topic?**

What is the second most important thing?

What is the third most important thing?

Remember, you can't cover everything that you know about the topic, so create a short outline of the three to five most important things that the audience needs to know about this topic.

These most important items become your bullets.



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Step #4: Add Illustrations and Examples

The best way to reinforce a good bullet point is to use a real life example, story, or illustration.

Examples from your own personal experience are very powerful and easy to deliver. So, if you are speaking about a topic that you know very well from personal experience, use your stories to explain the bullet points.

A great way to identify good stories for a bullet point is to read the point to yourself, and think, "That reminds me of the time..." This forces your brain to recall specific instances from your experience related to the topic.

If you don't have a personal experience related to the point, come up with an example or illustration to explain it better.



Use Stories to Avoid Memorizing

Stories are your friend when you speak, because you don't have to memorize anything! If you are telling your audience about something that you've experienced, just play the movie in your head and tell your audience the details.

Your own stories are easiest to deliver, so don't discount their power. "But my stories aren't that interesting," or "I'm just not a good storyteller," are things that I often hear as a public speaking coach. Well, if that really is the case, make sure and register for a local Fearless Presentations ® class in your city, but don't underestimate yourself. What is common practice for you is likely very uncommon to people outside of your department or industry.

A great sidebenefit of stories is that they allow you to insert a little humor into your presentation as well. Remember that in addition to informing your audience, you also have to entertain them. Funny stories are a good way to do this!



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Step #5: Add Some Showmanship

Stories are the best way to keep your audience in tune with your presentation, but you also want to add a few additional types of showmanship, if possible.

Analogies - Compare the point that you are making to something totally unrelated, and your audience will remember your point better! For instance, a presentation without a clear structure is like driving down a busy street.

So many things are going on around you, that it is difficult to keep track of all of the details. However, when someone gives you directions to follow with a few clear landmarks, it's much easier to find your way. That is what your bullet points should be, landmarks to help your audience find their way.



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A Good Quote - from a recognized expert allows you to temporarily borrow the credibility of that expert. However, make the quotes short and easy to remember. For instance, Winston Churchill once said, "A good speech should be like a woman's skirt: long enough to cover the subject and short enough to create interest."

A Good Visual Aid - When people think of visual aids, they automatically think of a PowerPoint slide. Now, however, a poster, prop, sample, and sometimes even a verbal description can also be a great visual aid. A client of mine once created a 10-foot poster of a project map, and used that one poster as their only visual aid for a one-hour presentation.

In many of my classes, I use handouts as visual aids so the audience can take the visual aid with them. Whatever additional items that you use to make your bullet points memorable, add a little meat to each bullet point. You will be less likely to get difficult questions after your speech.



Final Thoughts

If You:

1. Begin with the audience in mind.
2. Come up with a good audience focused title.
3. Narrow down what you want to say to just a few of the most important bullet points.
4. Add in a few stories to clarify or explain each bullet point.
5. Add a little showmanship.

You will create a perfect speech!

If, at any point in the process, you have trouble coming up with items, back up a step and look for an error. For instance, if you have trouble coming up with stories, you might have bullet points that are too vague. If you have trouble coming up with bullet points, you might have a title that is too broad. Make the correction, and the next step should be much easier.



Additional Resources

Below are a few additional resources that may help you design and deliver better speeches:

Free Phone Consultation: Need help with an upcoming presentation? Call one of our instructors tollfree at (800) 975-6151 for a free 15 minute consultation.

Online Speech Creator Course: We have an online version of this entire course complete with video sessions and an MP3 download, printable handouts, and sample slideshows.

Learn more: <https://www.fearlesspresentations.com/online-presentation-courses/>

Attend a 2-Day Fearless Presentations ® Class: Want to eliminate public speaking fear permanently? Want to learn how to design fantastic speeches quickly and stress-free? This class can help!

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