

Newcastle Speakers Club

Skills for speaking, meetings and presentations



Member's Handbook

Newcastle Speakers Club

The Newcastle Speakers Club is a place where members can learn the skills required for public speaking, to chair meetings and make presentations, in a non-threatening environment.

This resource book has been compiled to provide a reference and guide for members.

Contributors

Nigel Donovan B Comm is a business coach and facilitator with Solutions Business Development. Nigel, a founding member and the inaugural President of the Newcastle Speakers Club, has a passion for the use of public speech as a key business tool. He has been studying and teaching public speaking and presentation technique for almost ten years.

Kaye Simmons BA MAICD is a Director of David Simmons Corporate Communications and a former English/History teacher. She has recently added a training course in Effective Chairmanship and a Basic Course in Public Speaking to the services provided by her company. Kaye is a founding member and an inaugural critic in the Newcastle Speakers Club.

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INTRODUCTION

The Newcastle Speakers Club was formed early in 2000 with the aim of providing an opportunity for men and women in business to learn speaking skills, gain confidence in public speaking and learn to promote and communicate their ideas. The Club meets every Wednesday between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm for lunch. The format of meetings involves a member to chair the meeting, a stir the pot speech, four speakers are rostered to speak on the topic for the day and finishes with a member thanking those who made speeches. The critic for the day then gives their critique on the performance of the chairman and each of the speakers.

A speaking program is drawn up six weeks in advance and distributed to members so that everyone is given plenty of time to prepare for when they are rostered to speak or chair. It is up to members to try and find a substitute if they are unable to participate for any reason. Sometimes speakers are unavailable at the last moment which allows an opportunity for members to make impromptu speeches. Members are encouraged to take this opportunity to practice their skills in speaking and having to think quickly.

At each meeting, an experienced speaker is appointed to give a critique of each speech and the performance of the chairman. This is done in a non threatening manner where suggestions and comments are made to aid improvement in technique and presentation.

Part of the training process also involves members taking on the role of an office bearer in the club. This provides an invaluable insight into these roles and prepares members to take on these tasks with confidence in the wider community. These positions change every six months where members are given the opportunity to learn what is involved with the various roles as well as how to run an "AGM" style meeting involving reports and election of office bearers. In addition, the club also includes a debate at least once in the six month period to expose members to this style of speech making. On significant milestone meetings for the club, a guest is invited to come and speak at a lunch time meeting.

At the end of each six month period, the president hosts a dinner for members and their guests. At this dinner, the president chooses three or four speakers within the club to entertain guests. There is no critique on these occasions.

This booklet has been prepared to provide a guide and resource for Speakers Club members to assist them to improve their speaking and chairing skills.

SPEECHES MADE AT MEETINGS

Kaye Simmons

The whole purpose of the Speakers Club is to provide a non threatening environment where you can learn skills required to become an effective public speaker and efficient chair of meetings. To get the most out of the club, you need to practice as much as you can. This means taking the risk, overcoming your fears and volunteering to speak at every opportunity. These meetings are the time and place to experiment and try different approaches. You will be given assistance from the more experienced members of the Club as well as the team of critics who are there to help and guide you.

Yours Truly Speech

The Yours Truly speech is one given by a new member and the speech is for five minutes in duration. By speaking about something with which you are very familiar, it is an easier way to “break the ice” and making a speech in public. The purpose of the speech is to introduce yourself to the Club, telling everyone a little about yourself, your work, your character and interests.

Just like any speech, you need to carefully plan what you are going to say. Don't be tempted to tell your whole life story from your birth to the present – you won't have time to give a detailed history! Pick out some highlights or incidents that will grab the audience's attention and interest.

Because this is your first speech, no interjections by the audience are permitted.

Stir the Pot

This speech is given early in the meeting and is meant to be an opportunity for you to literally stir things up and prepare the audience for the day. This speech is for three minutes (with no warning bell) and offers you the opportunity to speak about an issue which is controversial or something which is bugging you at the time. Because this speech is short, you need to plan very carefully in terms of the purpose of your speech and how you are going to deliver it and so that it has impact on the audience. Your timing needs to be accurate – remember, it is only for three minutes!

Topic of the Day

Four speakers are rostered each week to give a prepared speech for seven minutes on a set topic. Whilst seven minutes seems a long time, it isn't really and you will be

surprised how quickly the time goes. A roster is prepared every six weeks in advance so that you are given plenty of time to prepare your speech.

All speeches need to have a structure – a beginning, middle and conclusion. Make sure that your introduction is strong and catches the audience's attention and interest. Your speech should contain some strong points and follow a logical sequence. Leave enough time to finish it off – memorably if possible.

Avoid apologizing and putting yourself down. Always try to be positive about yourself and get your message out; look at your audience when you are speaking. Don't thank the audience at the end of your speech – hopefully they will thank you. And remember; pretend to be confident, even if you aren't. When stuck, pause and breathe – listeners will think that you are pausing for effect. If you have to use notes, keep them in point form and on small cards. Avoid reading your speech word for word.

Sometimes, not all rostered speakers get to the meeting. The chairman may call on people to perform an impromptu speech on the topic. This offers you an opportunity to practice speaking without much preparation, to think quickly and use basic skills you have learned in speech making. An impromptu speech is for five minutes duration and you usually have anything from seven to twenty minutes to prepare while other people are speaking.

Thank You Speech

The thank you speech is just that – to thank the people who made a speech at the meeting. Your job is to make the speakers look good and to thank them for their time and effort – not to make a big speech yourself. Mention them by name and ask the audience to show their appreciation. At all costs, avoid doing a critique of the speech – that is not your role – so don't evaluate the speaker or the speech.

For detailed information on how to make speeches, refer to the material later in the booklet.

OVERCOMING YOUR FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

By Kaye Simmons

At a meeting of the Speakers Club in April 2001, the topic of the day was "Overcoming the fear of speaking in public". I was so impressed with the speeches that day that I prepared this article using the main points of the five speakers (with special thanks to Scott Pfeiffer) to go into the newsletter. I hope that you find it helpful in overcoming your fears of speaking in public.

Making speeches in public can be a frightening experience. The Speakers Club is a place where you can learn how to overcome this fear and learn the skills behind effective speech making.

Getting Over the Fear

We all know the signs – dry mouth, a sick feeling in the stomach, sweaty palms and the urgent need to go to the toilet. How do we ever overcome the fear of getting up and speaking? What is it that we really fear?

It all comes down to the fact that we are frightened of failure, criticism and ridicule and just looking plain silly in front of people. What you need to do is to say so what? You can only die once so forget the silly fears and take the risk and in the long run, become a much stronger person.

There are strategies to help you to overcome fear and to help you take the plunge into the unknown. One suggestion is to imagine your audience sitting in front of you in their underwear. Just that thought would be enough to make ridicule stand on its head! However, there are very practical ways to help you take the initial steps which are perhaps more practical and sustainable.

1. Have a brief plan of attack

Think about the purpose of your speech – what do you want your audience to learn or think? What do you know about your audience? It helps to know this so that you can plan what you say and how to say it.

2. Research your topic

Get all the ideas and information together and then check your facts. Then roughly put it into some logical sequence.

3. Structure your speech

Have an introduction – this is important as you need to grab the attention of the audience and it has to be done in the first 60 seconds. Then get into the main part of your speech. Go through your main points in logical sequence. Present

the information in an interesting way e.g. can you use illustrations to hammer home the point? Personal stories or similar illustrative techniques help to reinforce the message and make what you say all the more interesting. Keep the language appropriate e.g. don't use acronyms if they are going to sound like a foreign language to the audience.

4. Prepare your notes

If you must use notes, prepare them in point form. Do not fall into the trap of reading your speech word for word. This means you must be familiar with what you are going to say. It is better to just have the main points or key words written down. This will then allow you to look your audience in the eye as you deliver your speech. This is important – if you want them to take notice of what you have to say, you need to have eye contact – make them think they are special enough that you have a message just for them. If you use visual aids such as power point presentations, make sure that it is applicable, the machinery is all working and that it isn't boring. Can you add a little humour to it for example?

5. Rehearse your speech

This is important to get the timing right. Think about special effects such as pausing, using gestures, voice inflection etc. Appear confident even though you may be shaking like hell inside – don't let them know how terrified you might be! (That's where thinking of them sitting there in their underwear helps).

6. Be prepared to take risks

Be prepared to be a little different. This is where the Speakers Club is a great training ground to try different techniques and ideas. You know that you won't be torn to shreds but will instead be guided on how to succeed. Above all, practice, be prepared to volunteer at every opportunity and have a go. The jitters will soon disappear and you will feel more confident to get up and speak.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC SPEAKING

Nigel Donovan

Prologue

Communication skills are still among the most important skills a person can have in business and life. The highest achievers are consistently the best communicators. Nations have been formed and destroyed through the power of public speeches. The ability to sway and persuade; to call an audience to action is as important now as ever. When people rely increasingly on digital communication it will be the orators who will ultimately make the difference.

Most of us don't want to change the world or raise a nation through public speech but simply want to complete our task with confidence and without embarrassment. We are often called upon to give short presentations about our business, to introduce a guest, to thank a speaker or to give a toast. Wouldn't it be good if we could consistently give these speeches with confidence and aplomb? This course has been designed to provide you with "a dead set way of doing it without looking like a fool!"

1. Getting Started

This document is an abridged version of *Speaking up: a Short Course in Public Speaking* and is designed to give you the knowledge and tools you need to develop your own speaking skills and method.

A high skill level in making speeches, like any other skill, is gained ultimately through a practise and feedback loop. We recommend you take every opportunity to practise and receive feedback. By joining The Newcastle Speakers Club you have already recognised the importance of practise and feedback. The Newcastle Speakers Club helps by offering a practise arena where you can work on various aspects of your speech delivery, as well as providing the crucial feedback you need to evolve your speaking skill.

2. Speech Currency

The only relevant measure

The success of a speech is defined in this course by the **value it adds** to the audience. Did the speech achieve its objective? Did the audience understand the message? Did they laugh when they were supposed to? Did they react at the right spots? Did the

audience walk away with an understanding of the speech makers' position? Did the audience hear the argument?

Empathy with the audience is critical in this measure. You should make every attempt when constructing and delivering a speech to consider it from the audience's point of view. Are they familiar with your industry jargon? Do they care where your company came from? Will this information add value? Is the information relevant to their situation?

The only real currency

People take in information more effectively if they can see, hear and **feel** it. The more senses you can impact when giving a speech the better. If the audience can see, hear and empathise with your pain then they will remember it. If they can see, hear and feel your humorous position & if they can be embarrassed with you they will laugh and remember your anecdote and remember the point you are making.

The **best speeches have passion and drama!** Passion and drama turn good speeches into memorable speeches. If our goal as a speaker is to give a speech where people remember our message then it makes sense to add these theatrical elements.

3. Planning and Content

The simple truth is that our speeches could be vastly improved by better preparation. Your speech needs to have a purpose, a message and a structure. A few minutes planning these elements of the speech can make all the difference.

There is a real opportunity here for people to improve their speaking skill - often a small improvement in the planning of a speech can make a huge impact on the speech quality.

Step 1. Begin with the end in mind

Primary Objective: Speech Purpose

I don't measure a speech by the number of "ums" and "ahs", stumbles or the eloquence of the language and the vocal variety. These things are important but are merely component parts. They are like a positional play in football, or the grip on a golf club, they are important and the better the technique the more consistent the performance, but they are not as important as the final result - the score.

A speech should be measured by the level to which it achieves its objectives. If your objective for a speech is to get somebody to fill in a form at the end, to express some

interest in your product so you get an interview perhaps or get a proposal out, then the number of those signatures you get is a measure of the effectiveness of the speech.

A business without a purpose and clear objectives has little chance of survival. The same applies to speeches. You can tell when a speech has no purpose because the speech tends to wander and not very clear in direction.

How many speeches have you seen that appear to cram too much information in? Occasions where the presenter has not been able to edit properly and so rushes through the critical stuff because time is running out after spending too much of their time establishing context.

If you give your speech a purpose it will help you clarify your message and crystallize your thinking. Having a purpose will not only help you add value to the audience it also helps you with content selection.

The very first thing you should think about when planning a speech is to determine your *primary objective*. What do you want your speech to do?

- **Educate:** a speech that outlines facts and information that the audience may not know. The purpose of this type of speech would be to clearly articulate information in a logical manner (the purpose of this program).
- **Entertain:** an after dinner speech for example may simply require that the speaker entertain the audience. Therefore your speech would include interesting (to the audience) anecdotes or humorous stories.
- **Call to action:** this style of speech differs again. Here you may want to get the audience motivated to change behaviour. For example you may want to persuade the audience to recycle more.
- **Make a case for/against:** this speech requires that a logical argument be built in favour of your proposition. You need to be clear about what you want the audience to take away from your argument.

These are a few examples of speech objectives but you could have others. What is important is that you are clear about what you want the speech to achieve. Think about your topic and **WRITE DOWN YOUR SPEECH PURPOSE!**

Example: - the following examples of purpose all relate to the same topic – recycling mobile telephones - but the purposes are quite different. How do you think the speeches will differ for each speech?

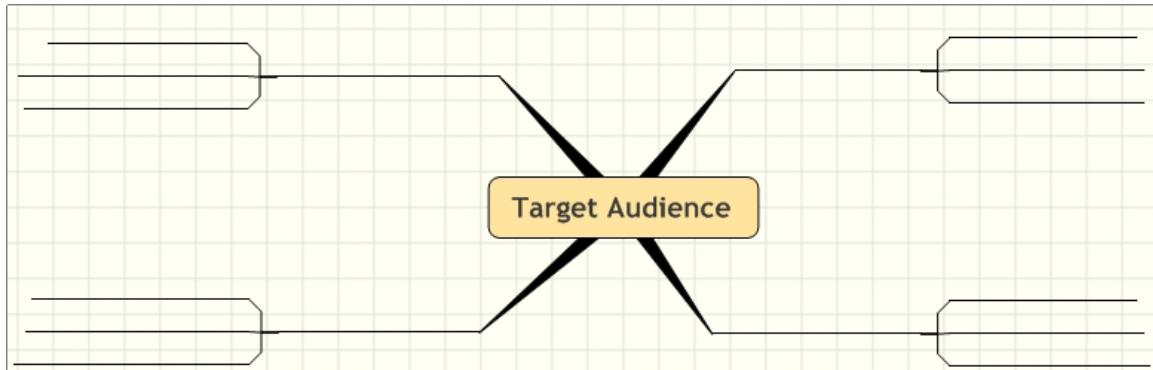
- a) “To persuade the audience to recycle their mobile telephones.”
- b) “To make a case for the importance and value of recycling mobile telephones.”

Target Audience

Throughout the writing of your speech you should be aware and make consideration for the target audience. It makes no sense to use industry jargon in your speech to a lay audience. We also need to be careful we do not make jokes about subject matter that may offend the target audience. We need to make our speeches relevant to the target audience. This does not necessarily mean we need to appeal to the entire audience on

the day. It may be that you only need influence a select group of people from within a larger audience. We need to be clear about who we are speaking to.

Use the Mind Map below to describe who your target audience is. Consider who they are, why they are there and what they are expecting.



Peroration: The last thing you say.

The audience will remember the last thing you say more easily than the rest of your speech. If your speech builds an argument or moves along well but the last thing you say is not consistent with the body of the speech then you have wasted their time. If you end by saying “Thank you” then you may have wasted your time because your message may be diluted in the memory of the audience.

The term “peroration” refers to the last thing you say in a speech. It is more than simply a conclusion. The conclusion can include a summary of the speech and while it is important, the peroration is more so. The peroration refers to the very last sentence or statement. Like the tip of an iceberg, the peroration is the last visible part of your speech, and it needs to be held up and supported by the aggregated weight of the rest of the speech.

The last thing you say is so important that we recommend you know the last thing you are going to say before you even start writing your speech. Begin with the end in mind!

Some examples of historical perorations:

“Above all, we give thanks for the life of a woman I am so proud to be able to call my sister: the unique, the complex, the extraordinary and irreplaceable Diana, whose beauty, both internal and external, will never be extinguished from our minds.”

Earl Spencer: eulogy to Princess Diana 1997

“Ladies and Gentlemen, the balloon is sinking into the abyss.”

"Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

Martin Luther King – 28 Aug 1963

Note how different these examples are but even without reading the whole speech you still get the feeling that they are final and effective statements. They feel like final remarks.

Tips:

- Generally there is no need to say **"Thank you"** at the end of your speech. You are there to add value to the audience; you are doing them a service and the audience should applaud (thank) you. If the last thing you say is "Thank you" that is what the audience will remember. So unless the purpose of your speech is to say thank you for something – don't! If you feel you must say thank you, do so after your conclusion but before your peroration.
- Sometimes when you rehearse a speech you get a feeling or sense of expectation at the end of your speech. If you feel there is something unsaid or you get the urge to add information or add an epilogue then the chances are that your peroration is not strong enough. You know you are ending your speech well when you say your peroration and it *feels* like the end.

Think about Style or Feel

Novels need good plots and themes but the author also pays a great deal of attention to the style of the prose. So too you need to pay attention to the style of your speech. Are you trying to be funny? Is the speech a serious one? Is your audience going to appreciate clever use of language or are they more likely to accept simple and direct phraseology? (Will your speech on the stock market data of the past 30 years benefit from some colour?)

Remember that the only good measure of a speech is its effectiveness in achieving its objective. The style and feel of the speech should complement the content and allow greater connection with the audience. You need to get your message through to the audience. Being able to connect is critical.

A very effective technique is to change the style during the speech as the content shifts. For example you may have everyone laughing from an anecdote using light language until you tell them the true and tragic punch line, and simultaneously change your delivery style to reflect the more serious content. Such techniques help the audience move with you and the contrast can be very effective. Such techniques also require a good deal of practise.

¹ Rushdie used an analogy of a balloon throughout his speech which asked what his life was worth after publishing his book *The Satanic Verses*. Combine this peroration with his opening sentence *"A hot air balloon drifts over a bottomless cavern, carrying several passengers."* and you can see he thought long and hard about his speech structure and the metaphor.

Choosing a style before you begin writing the speech can help you with language and decision making about the content.

Structure

Every speech, every book, every sporting event requires structure. Your speeches will be far more effective if you can master the speech structure.

Every speech needs an Opening, a Main Body and a Conclusion. If one of these sections is weak then your speech's effectiveness will suffer. Luckily there are some simple rules you can remember to test your speech for structure.

A classic rule when giving a speech or writing an essay is:-

1. Tell 'em what you are going to tell 'em
2. Tell 'em
3. Tell 'em what you just told 'em

Opening: Tell 'em what you are going to tell 'em

The quicker you can get the audience to listen to you the better. A strong and well defined opening statement can achieve this very quickly. Second only to the peroration your opening remarks are critically important sentences in your speech. See how the following opening remarks establish the context, feel and heart of the speech:

"Every trade unionist in Britain feels threatened by what the government has done."
Denis Healey - 1984²

Men politicians are in the habit of talking to women as if there were no issues that affect women.
Emmeline Pankhurst - 1908³

Friends, comrades and fellow South Africans. I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all
Nelson Mandela – Feb 1990

Your opening needs to capture the attention of the audience and to create anticipation in their minds. You should test your opening remarks by saying them out loud and feel whether they support the speech's purpose. Does your opening sentence get the speech moving, or simply delay the start for another sentence or two?

Audiences will be more responsive if they have confidence in you

² Speech made in the House of Commons by one of the most bruising speakers was made during a debate on a proposal to abolish the right of workers to be in government intelligence station.

³ Emmeline Pankhurst was the leader of the British suffragettes and the founder of the Women's Social and Political Union.

Audiences are more receptive to your message if they have confidence in you. If they think you know where your speech is headed and they can see you are working to a plan they tend to be more relaxed about your competence and focus more on your content. If the audience gets the sense that you don't know where you are going they will go on their own mental journey to somewhere else – their minds will wander or close completely.

First impressions: the audience takes in an enormous amount of information and makes (mostly subconscious) judgements during your first few phrases. They can be cruel. They will assess whether you know your material, whether you are nervous or relaxed, they will sniff out weaknesses like a lion hunting a baby buffalo. They will even determine whether you have anything of value to say at all – so make your opening count (if this scares you and you are looking for solace please refer to the section on nerves which may unconvincingly allay some of your fears).

The beginning of your speech should outline what you are about to say. Make sure the audience knows that you know where your speech is heading. This could be as obvious as “today we will be talking about” or as subtle as the opening remarks in the examples. So “Tell ‘em what you are going to tell ‘em!”

Tips:

- The Joke: there is a myth that you should “open with a joke”. There is no need to do so. You generally only have a few minutes to give your speech so every sentence is important, if you waste a minute or even thirty seconds with a joke that has no relevance to the speech then you have wasted some very valuable speech real estate. The trick is to establish a rapport with the audience as quickly as possible. This may be some humour, it could be humility, it could be excitement – whatever it is MAKE IT RELEVANT!
- Be dynamic but clear. A strong opening remark or sentence that quickly outlines the speech to come can be very powerful. Don't make the mistake of trying too hard to add impact during the opening and lose diction. All the drama in the world is wasted if the audience does not hear clearly what you are saying.

Main Body: Tell 'em

If you have clearly defined your objective, your peroration and how you will open your speech the main body should be relatively simple. The body of your speech is all about building your message.

If the audience is still listening after your opening remarks then you need to make sure the body of your speech adds value and supports the purpose of your speech.

A simple structure and plan for the body is to make a point (eg “recycling mobile telephones is easy”) then tell a relevant short story, an anecdote or provide other evidence to support that assertion.

For example:

Recycling mobile phones is easy (*main point*)

- My experience in recycling (*example/support info for main point*)
- The availability of drop off points (*example/support info for main point*)

The benefits of recycling mobile phones (*main point*)

- Saves on landfill (*example/support info for main point*)
- Removes hazardous materials from landfill (*example/support info for main point*)
- Re-use limited resources (*example/support info for main point*)

A series of statements or assertions backed up by information (best delivered as stories) is a simple and highly effective way of building a speech.

The main points of the speech should be relevant to the speech purpose and build your speech in a logical order.

Tip:

- Don't try to say too much in the body of the speech. The audience cannot take in too much information at once and your speech may lose effectiveness and become difficult to follow if there is too much information. Generally in a 7 minute speech you should not need more than 3 main points.
- Avoid digressions unless you are sure they are needed to support the speech or are part of the humour or plot of the speech. The audience will be patient enough to divert a little but too much stopping to smell the allegorical roses tends to lead to a perceived (by the audience) loss of direction.

Close: Tell 'em what you just told 'em

The conclusion of your speech should wrap up your argument. Summarise your message and focus the audience on the key points of your speech. If your speech is properly planned; your opening, body and conclusion should feel natural and progressive. Trust your instinct if the conclusion doesn't feel right then there is something wrong (it may be that some of the body is just off or that the opening is not quite right). The close should feel like a straight line in thought, a logical progression, from the opening through the main body to the close.

You should already have the peroration so double check that everything is consistent.

Structure Tips

At times we are called upon to make an impromptu speech. Times when we do not have time to plan, rehearse and measure our speech. It is here where structure can make all of the difference. If you remember the following two generic speech structures

you can call upon them easily and should be able to give a passable presentation with little or no preparation.

These are the freeze dried speech structures – just add content.

1. **Past/Present/Future:** This simple structure allows you to talk on any topic for at least a few minutes. Simply give your view of the topic or issue in the context of the past, the present and what you believe it will be in the future.

For example:
In the **Past** we did not need to recycle mobile telephones because

- _____
- _____

At the **Present** the problem of mobile telephones is such that

- _____
- _____

In the **Future** we will be required to

- _____
- _____

2. **The Accountant or Pendulum:** This structure is similar to the one above but with slightly different key words, more appropriate for a speech that is attempting to promote a balanced view of a particular issue.

Below is a speech planning template that you can use to quickly get your speech structure in order

For Example:
On the one hand some people argue the issue of mobile telephone recycling looks like

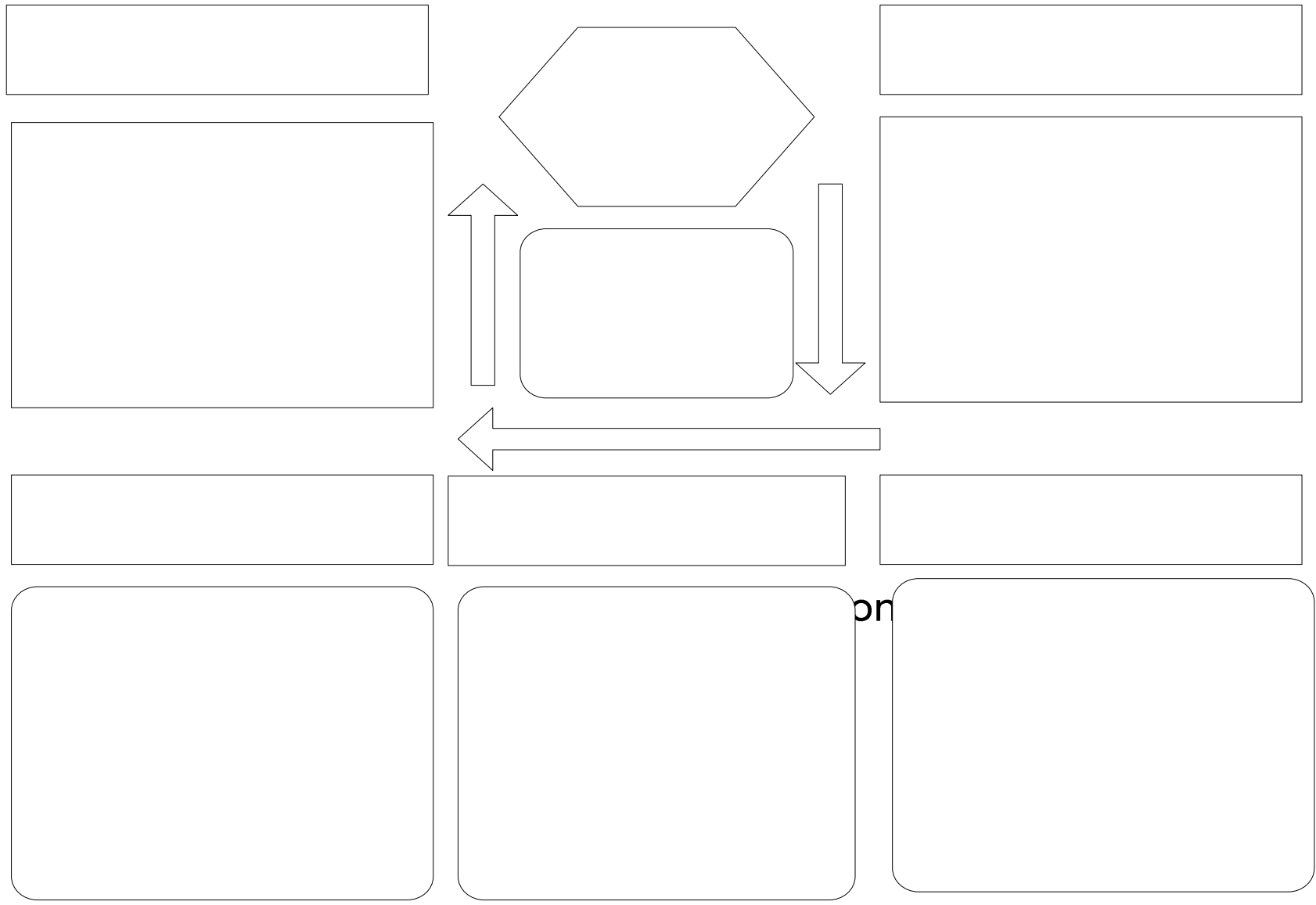
- _____
- _____

On the other hand some people argue the opposite is true

- _____
- _____

On balance the issue is more

- _____
- _____



4. Creativity and Brain Storming Material

One of the greatest challenges faced by speech writing is to crystallise your message or clarify your thinking on a subject. For example you may be asked to give a short presentation on your business to a group of colleagues. The problem is: where do you start and where do you finish? You could spend the next three days talking about your business but you are only allowed 5 minutes, how do you think through and determine what is important, relevant and will add the most value to the audience.

I use the following technique frequently and find it very useful.

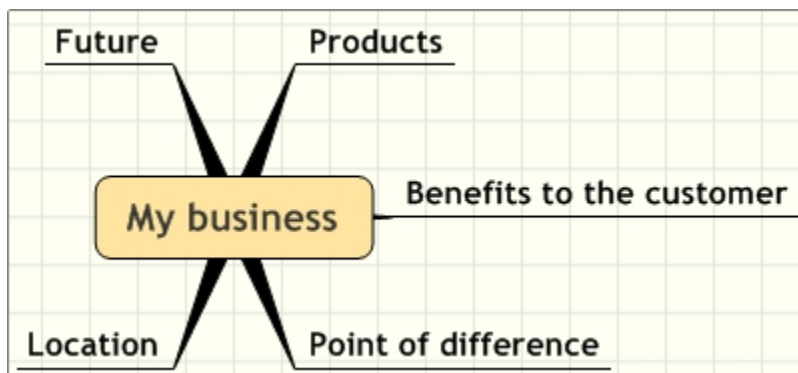
Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a highly creative tool for business, for any sort of planning, for capturing a large amount of information and particularly for speech planning.

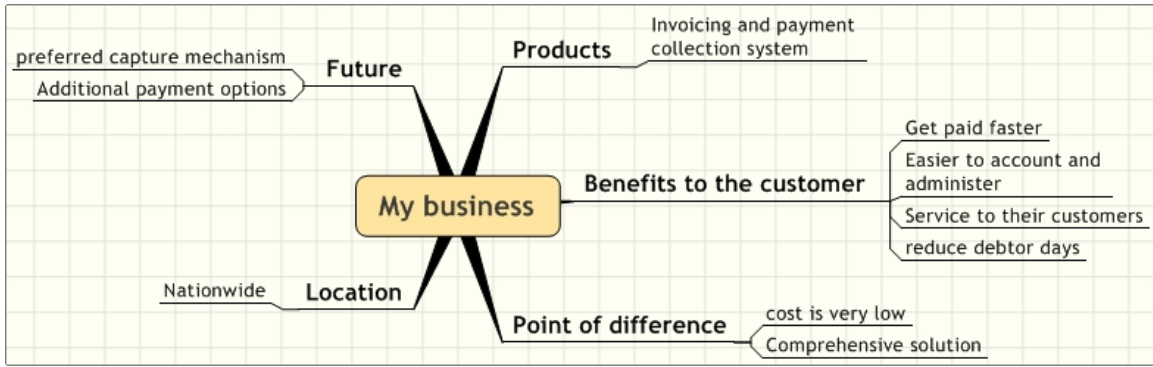
Start by writing the issue or speech topic in the middle of the page inside a small circle.



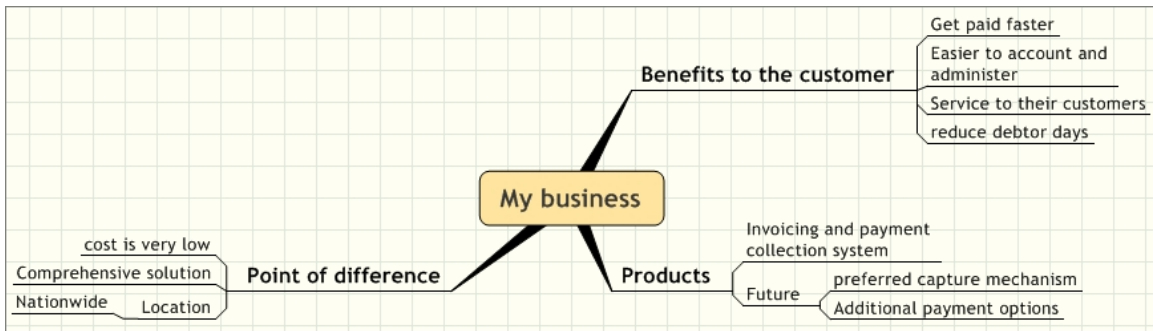
Then think about aspects of your business that you may wish to talk about and add branches to the central point.



Then think more deeply through each of the branches and add more branches



Finally re-arrange and choose the best combination and most relevant material



Now see how we have three main points with relevant things to say about each. In a matter of minutes we have clarified what we want to talk about.

This technique of mind mapping is a widely recognized method of crystallizing your thoughts and thinking creatively. I recommend a book by Tony Buzan *"Mind Map: The Ultimate Thinking Tool"* which demonstrates in much greater detail the power of this creative tool.

Brainstorming

Most of us will have done some brain storming in our time. The methods still work. Take a blank piece of paper or a white board and write whatever comes into your head about the topic. Don't worry about order and structure: just write keys words, write sentences write anything that relates to the topic. After the first few ideas are down you should build up some momentum.

Once you have a list of ideas and phrases you can begin to cull and organise them into relevant points.

Verbalise

Sometimes it pays to verbalise some of the concepts you want to talk about. When I am driving the car or in the shower and I know I may have a speech to prepare I like to verbalise the opening few sentences or some key points in the speech. I don't put any pressure on myself here to come up with a witty or dynamic phrase I simple let my brain and imagination operate at their own pace (very slow). It may seem strange but if you

say out loud, in different ways, possible speech content you will soon find you are able to get a feel for the types of things you want to talk about.

This method is essentially brain storming except that we are not writing it down but saying it out loud. The spoken word is different to the written word and some things that read well may not sound good at all when given in a speech. By vocalising out ideas the sentences we come up with are more likely to be useful in a speech and more likely sound like something you would say.

A drawback with this method is that you may say something that sounds terrific but don't capture it and forget it by the time you are ready to write it down. I find however that the exercise is useful practise and I remember the phrase (or something much like it) more often than not.

5. Technique

Skills and Practise

The public speaking magic pill does not exist! The only real way to permanently improve your speech making technique is through a practise and feedback loop. Some people may appear as natural talkers and even natural public speakers; it *is* easier for some than others. But make no mistake - they are this way because of practise. It may have been around the kitchen table, at school or in other pursuits but their ability to communicate their message is a result of practise.

Driving a car is already an analogy for so many things; now you can add public speaking. Effective drivers know the mechanics of driving a car: pedals, gear stick, steering wheel and so on but we very rarely think about them when we are driving. The actions are automatic. So, too, should technique in public speaking should become automatic.

In this course we do not spend too much time talking about technique other than to offer a general guide. Part of the reason is that all of the technique "rules" can be, and often are broken by the best public speakers. Remember speeches are effective if they have the desired impact on the audience - if they "add value". They are not measured by how many times the speaker said "um".

Don't mistake our meaning here either. Technique is important; it is just not the best measure of a speaker. Golfers with the best technique consistently achieve the lowest scores and can then take the odd unorthodox shot more effectively. A technically-correct race car driver may never crash but may not quite take the risks that will get him or her on the podium.

Eyes

As your confidence grows it will be easier for you to look at the audience. To generate connection with the audience you need to look at them. The audience will better understand your sincerity in your subject matter if you look at them.

Tips

- In a large audience look at various places around the room. Vary your gaze to make sure you look at all the audience. Make sure you give some heed to the people up the back and to the sides.
- Try not to look deliberate about your eye contact. When you are talking to a group of friends your eyes fall naturally and almost randomly upon each of them in turn. It is like counting your dance steps out loud – the audience can tell and you lose connection because you are not genuinely looking at the people.
- Don't stare at any one person or group too long or too often (this often happens when the speaker is nervous – they pick out someone they are comfortable with and talk to them, ignoring the rest of the audience). It can be very intimidating to the audience if you look at the same people for most of the speech.

Transitions and segue

A quick word on transitions and segues. First of all don't worry about them! Just be aware that the better you become as a speaker the more flowing and subtle your transitions from one point to the next. It is better, on balance, to be clear than clever but the more seamless your speech is the less opportunity the audience has to opt out and think of something else.

If you have time you might like to make an effort to work on your transitions. Plan the speech content as per normal with a big obvious structure. Then look at the gaps between main points and think how you could link these, how you can take the audience from one point to the next without losing a mental stride. Practise a few times and away we go.

Talk, don't read

We strongly recommend you look at, and connect with, the audience as much as you possibly can. If when giving a speech you read all of your notes you might as well send them an email and save everyone some time. We are talking about public speeches, not about reading the news.

When I first started speaking publicly I would read my speech almost word for word. I thought I was a pretty effective news reader but my speeches never really made an impact. It is not until you can look the audience in the eye that you really connect with

them. Why do you think the news producers go to such lengths to have a teleprompter near the camera lens so that it appears the presenter is talking to you?

We say “talk, don’t read” for a reason and it refers as much to the way you write your speeches as it does to the use of notes. In a speech, you are effectively having a highly structured and one sided conversation with the audience. You are talking to them. To make it a speech and to create a greater impression you need to add drama, passion and finesse but you are essentially talking to the audience.

Write your speech in your own language. Remember the audience can spot a fake. If your speech is written in language you are comfortable with then you are more likely to remember it and more likely to relax and connect with the audience.

It is not the cleverness of your language but the clarity of your message that makes the difference

This does not mean that if you are accustomed to swearing then you should swear during your speech. Rather you should not try to be too clever with your language unless you are well practised. Remember – does the speech meet its objective? (Your objective is usually not to show off your vocabulary but to communicate a message)

Some other reasons for not reading notes:

- Notes are a frequent cause of mishap. People lose their place and spend four or five seconds trying to find it again. Too late - the audience is gone!
- Readers feel the need to read the entire speech, even if that means backtracking to a point missed earlier – a speech train crash.

There are occasions when speeches can be and indeed ought to be read - for example, if the occasion is such that information has to be communicated verbatim (for example when Alan Greenspan presents his report on behalf of the USA Federal Reserve Bank or you are delivering a serious or solemn speech).

Remember our only relevant rule – **Is the speech effective?**

How to cheat with notes

There is a big difference between having notes and *reading* notes.

Notwithstanding all the above comments, I use notes all of the time. Remember our central premise: Make your speech effective. Our speech would not be very effective if we forgot what we were supposed to say. We must strike a balance between connecting with the audience and delivering our content.

Ideally we would remember every speech word for word and deliver it entirely without reference to anything other than the subtle feedback we get from the audience. But we do not live in an ideal world!

When delivering a speech that I cannot remember confidently enough to do away with notes, I usually have a short list of topic headings or prompts that remind me where I

am up to in the speech and where to go from there. Or I simply use the speech planning template above as my notes.

If your notes are brief enough to fit on a piece of card then you can generally operate without a lectern, again enhancing your connection with the audience. But be aware that the card can be just as distracting (see sections on distractions and the use of props).

Many presenters opt to have their notes for everyone to see; in the form of a power point presentation or as handouts for example. There are some traps to look out for.

- The audience can see what you miss.
- They can read ahead and get bored waiting for you to catch up.
- You can get distracted and feel the need to read (then explain) every word on a slide which audience can see for themselves.
- You may get ahead of yourself, making the next couple of slides irrelevant.
- You have to battle with technology.

Having your speech points available for everyone to see can be very effective, but again come back to the central premise – do they help or hinder the speech in meeting its objective? I believe power point is best used to give structure and illustration, rather than notes and bullet points.

Voice, Gesture, Pause and Props

The following is a brief overview of how to use these speaking tools effectively to enhance your technique. Again practise and feedback is by far the best way to improve in these areas.

Voice and Vocal Variety

How many speeches have you genuinely listened to where the speaker has delivered a speech in a monotone? I have heard a few and had to work really hard to keep interested. Very few people talk in a monotone. We want to hear a good speech but it is difficult if the presentation is delivered in an uninteresting manner. When speaking you do not want your audience to have to work hard to listen to you; rest assured they won't!

The collective brain of your audience thinks many times faster than you can speak. Delivering a monotone speech means the audience can file your information as background and then go off and think about something else. If you create variety and interest through your voice, through gesture, and props you can regularly bring the brains of the audience back to your message.

Professional speakers make serious efforts to warm up their voice so it will be at its best for the speech (for example repeating phrases like “red leather, yellow leather” in the car on your way to the presentation can help).

Your voice should, where possible, be easy to listen to. If you have an accent or you are speaking to an audience that is not familiar with your language or expressions then you

must work that much harder to make sure the audience can clearly understand what you are saying.

As an exercise, record your speeches and listen to them to determine what your voice actually sounds like.

Pause

One aspect of vocal variety is the effective use of **pause**. Pausing is an excellent way of highlighting a point and punctuating your speech. A few seconds of silence in the right spot does some amazing things for your speech (provided you maintain connection with the audience – and not trying to find your place in your notes). It returns the audience to your speech. It can bring your last remark right, smack into the consciousness of the audience and make them consider it and its context.

Pausing can also let the audience know you are about to say something important. If you pause and then wait until your audience is ready you can then deliver a major point with effectiveness, rather than having it lost in the rhythm of your normal discourse.

Pause to replace the bad habits. We all have little bad habits when speaking. Common examples include “ah”, “um” and “sort of”. These nothing words give nothing to your speech. Replace them with silence. You will be surprised how easy it is and how much more effective your speeches feel.

Gesture and Props are all part of the drama and the visual aspect of your speech. Without these elements you might as well be on radio (but even there people can tell if you are animated). Can you tell if someone is smiling when they are talking to you on the telephone even though you cannot see them?

To gain maximum effectiveness for your speech you need to use effective visual support. Let's deal with gestures first.

Gesture

People are generally aware that **most communication is non-verbal**. This is equally true of public speeches. The audience is taking in your demeanour and posture to determine if you are telling the truth, or perhaps your feelings about your speech (if you don't look interested then your audience will not be).

My 11 year old niece is a terrific talker; she can talk for an hour without saying a single thing. Her gestures when speaking are over the top. When she wants to look surprised she really looks surprised, when she is serious her whole posture changes. She knows she has her own personality and is learning how to communicate with gesture. As a result her gesture is over the top and lacks the subtlety of an adult.

Similarly new speakers sometimes focus too much on gesture and often deliver stilted and over acted gestures. Your gesture and posture will give the audience a better feel for your meaning if done well and it will be terribly distracting if done badly.

As a general rule your gestures in a public speech will need to be a little larger than during normal conversation. This is due simply to the physical distance and number of people you are speaking to and the impact you want them to have on them. For

example, you may want to add some drama and passion by banging your hand on the lectern. The size of the gesture will be relative to the size of the audience, the amount of passion you want to communicate (and how much pain you are willing to accept on your hand).

The best gestures appear natural and support the message. For example, if you have a huge cheesy grin whilst giving a eulogy, the audience might become confused. Use gesture as an author might use headings, pictures or bullet points.

Props

Props are probably responsible for the ruination of more speeches than any of the above techniques. Props can be extremely effective when used well and extremely distracting when used badly.

As an example of their effectiveness, how many news items about obesity have you seen where the camera shows a series of overweight people (with their identity disguised) walking in the street who are overweight? They do this because it illustrates the message, it appeals to another sensory receptor, and people more effectively take the meaning when the point is well illustrated.

Props fall down when they are not properly rehearsed or they do not fit the speech. How many speeches have you seen that stalled due to a technical malfunction? Have you ever seen someone waste time and the audience's attention - while they delve into a plastic bag to find the brilliant prop?

We strongly recommend you make use of props that will advance the audience's understanding of your speech, and that support your speech objective. We caution you to think clearly about how you plan to use any prop and to practise using it beforehand.

Nerves

There are good nerves and bad nerves. If you are not at least a little nervous then you probably don't care enough about your speech or the audience. Nor will you be able to give your best performance. Good speakers are nervous before their speeches and can channel their nerves into energy that adds vibrancy or an often indefinable edge to their speeches.

My first public speech at the Newcastle Forum Club was a highly traumatic experience. I was so nervous I finished my speech 3 minutes too soon and the entire time I thought my knees were going to collapse under me. Nerves were not fun that day. Afterwards however I realised a couple of important things: 1) It didn't hurt, I had given a speech and no-one said "OK Mr Donovan, maybe you should try a different hobby"; 2) It was shorter than I expected and; 3) I wanted to try again.

The message is that it is a terrific aspect of human existence that we only grow when we move out of our comfort zone and try something a little scary. Everyone gets nervous – "Feel the fear and do it anyway!"

Denis Waitley refers to fear and False Evidence Appearing Real this is especially true for public speaking. When giving a public speech we obviously do not fear being injured we only fear for our pride. We are worried about what the audience will think. Will we make a fool of ourselves? Will we be taken seriously?

“Action cures fear!”

Tips on dealing with nerves:-

- **Prepare really well and rehearse thoroughly.** The only time I am really nervous is when I am under prepared. If you prepare well then the chances of something going wrong are greatly reduced along with the fear.
- **Speak more slowly than you think you should.** When we are nervous we tend to increase our rate of speech. If you deliberately slow your rate down you can actually force yourself to relax a little. You might also find your speech runs to time rather than being too quick.
- **Act relaxed.** Your brain is an amazing thing. If you “fake it ‘till you make it” your brain and nerves will respond.
- Practice and **develop technique.** One thing technique can do is give you confidence or at least help hide your crippling fear.
- **Use a lectern.** There is nothing inherently wrong with using a lectern (see section below) and if you can put your notes down and rest your arms on the lectern you can avoid the audience seeing that you are nervous.
- Resort to the good old fashioned “imagine your audience naked”! But beware; I have give speeches to some pretty interesting looking audiences.

Beware the brain black hole

Anyone who has given a number of public speeches will at some point experience the dreaded BLANK. This occurs when, for some reason, your brain does the equivalent of a bunny trying to stare down oncoming headlights. When this happens (and it will) don’t panic! Take a moment to gather your thoughts (the pause won’t be a long as you think it is) review your speech notes and look for something – anything - that you can latch onto to get your brain moving again, anything that will act as an anti-freeze.

This fear of a Brain Freeze is what prevents many speakers from transitioning from full notes to note headers. The Training Wheels Format for notes below is a good way of helping in the transition. Your speech is written in full with the header points highlighted. If you want to move to headers rather than full notes you may want to use this style of note format. You use it as though only the headers count. During your speech only read the headers and then deliver your speech. Then if for some reason you lose your place or nerve or forget what the header means you can quickly read/scan the notes to remind you of the point and go from there. When using the Notes Training Wheels format resist the temptation to read the notes, they are only there as a memory jogger or safety net.

Notes Training Wheels format

MAJOR POINT OR TOPIC HEADING

Write the full text for this section of the speech. Or write explanatory notes for you to jog your memory in case of emergency. I like to list a few key phrases or sentence starters.

MAJOR POINT OR TOPIC HEADING

Write the full text for this section of the speech. Or write explanatory notes for you to jog your memory in case of emergency. I like to list a few key phrases or sentence starters.

Microphones, lecterns and the stage

Microphones

Another piece of technology sent to us by the devil. There are a few key things to consider when dealing with Microphones.

- Practise. Get to the venue early and practise. Don't just say "testing, testing" a couple of times. Talk through it, say some of your speech, move around the stage area and find any black spots. Have someone help you by standing in different parts of the room to make sure they can hear you.
- Talk into the microphone. When you have a stand mic or a mic attached to a lectern this is one of the times when your body language needs to be subdued so that you say your entire speech into the microphone.
- When using a lapel mic, make sure you have tested it by talking normally and moving around the stage. Many lapel microphones can have blank spots or heavy feedback. By testing it beforehand you will know where you must stand for the best result.
- Talk – don't lean, don't shout. The mic is supposed to do the work practise and get in the habit of talking normally into the microphone.

Lecterns and the stage

You will hear people say that a lectern is a barrier between you and the audience; that you can connect better without a lectern. Well this is true but that does not mean you should always abandon the lectern.

What is better? Seeing someone shaking their notes with nerves standing next to a lectern or watching a speaker read their notes from the lectern?

What is better? Seeing someone moving around trying to find a better spot on the stage that does not exist or watching someone deliver a speech from a focal point of a lectern?

The point is – do what works best in the circumstances. I am often distracted by a speaker who stands NEXT to a lectern in an attempt to connect with the audience. Then lean back over to the lectern to read their notes. All the while they are obscured by the apparatus around the lectern.

If you are confident, and you have a stage area that is congruent with operating without a lectern then great, you will have an opportunity to connect well with the audience. But don't reduce the effectiveness of your speech simply out of some imaginary rule that it is better to operate without a lectern.

The key to your positioning on the stage is that you can clearly be seen and heard by the audience, that you are not obscuring any notes or props.

Distractions

Before we move on let's take a quick look at distractions. When giving a speech there are usually plenty of distractions.

- People could be eating their dinner
- Waiters
- Background noise
- Hecklers
- Mobile telephones
- The pen in your top pocket
- The change/keys in your trouser pocket.
- The habit you have of walking up and down the stage
- The way you keep turning your notes back and forth
- The power point slide that is supposed to be helping

Sometimes it is difficult to maintain the attention of one person, let alone a large audience with plenty of other things to do and think about. Don't compound this by creating distractions yourself. Be aware of your habits (again a good reason to join a public speaking club). Are you doing anything during your speech that the audience may find distracting from your message?

We should do what we can to minimise these distractions.

- If you are competing with dinner make sure your audience can clearly hear you above the clinking of crockery.
- Remove all items such as pens, coins, keys etc from your pockets.
- Make your notes unobtrusive: either in a folder, on a piece of card and/or kept flat on the lectern.
- Make sure the mc has reminded people to turn their phones off
- Make sure your slides are not too busy and show them only when relevant.
- Have some way of quickly dealing with any hecklers (you can either ignore and talk over, have ready some quick barbs to direct at the heckler or use their heckle to further your speech – these take practise)

6. Finesse, Power and Confidence

The next step is to build on your now-competent speech planning and effective technique and add that colour, flavour and finesse that the best speakers possess. All of the above techniques can improve your speeches to a 6/10 or 7/10. In order to reach a 10/10 you need to add something extra.

It can be in the form of a brilliant turn of phrase, a subtle but effective gesture, a well timed pause or one of a dozen other indefinable things. It is very difficult to describe what turns “good” into “superb”.

The great orators are focused entirely on the delivery of their message to the audience. Their attention is on the road, not on the gear stick and pedals, not on the map. They know where they are going; they know how to get there.

Passion

Passion is the basic, the essential ingredient. People love to hear speeches where the presenter is passionate about the subject. If you truly mean what you say and deliver with that sense of utter conviction then you cannot help but move the audience. The audience may remember your words; if structured well they should remember your central message and if you do so with passion they will definitely remember that you meant what you said.

Even if people in the audience do not agree with you, they will respect your passion.

During his famous “*I have a dream...*” speech Martin Luther King did not mumble or even talk; he spoke with such authority and conviction that no-one could have left unmoved. It was the passion combined with the brilliant structure that made his speech so powerful.

Audiences love to feel and see passion in the eyes of the speaker. Passion gives the audience a sense of authenticity. Strong belief in a speaker is contagious. Evangelical preachers know the value of passion in a speech. Union bosses on soap boxes know the power of passion in speeches.

Enthusi.A.S.M. = I Am Sold Myself

Your enthusiasm and belief in the content of your speech will make an enormous difference. Enthusiasm is contagious and enthusiasm means being sold on the concept yourself. I like to remember the equation above: Enthusiasm means - “I Am Sold Myself”.

Vocal Pegs or Sound Bites

Politicians use these all the time. Sound bites are two or three words that are easily remembered. Using rhyme, melody, alliteration or contrast, they stick in the memory of the audience. They are usually combined with a pause before or just after. How many of the following verbal pegs can you recall?

- Ease the squeeze
- Relaxed and comfortable
- Alert but not alarmed

Repeated message

In Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream" speech in Washington on 28th April 1963 he used the repeated message technique to great effect (see transcript in appendix).

He used the phrase "One hundred years later" to start four sentences in a row. He started four consecutive paragraphs with an emphatic "NOW". He then went on to use the famous phrase "I have a dream..." 11 times in just a few paragraphs. Then he finished the speech with "let freedom ring from..." repeated at the start of six consecutive paragraphs.

There is probably not a better known quote from a speech than Martin Luther's "I have a dream". That alone should be enough to convince you of the power of repeating a specific phrase, sound bite or message.

Keep in mind, repeating something too often falls into the over acted gesture category and may detract from your speech (too much of a good thing).

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions to the audience will make them answer it in their minds and if they are thinking about your speech they are most probably listening. Often called the Socratic Method (after the great Socrates himself who used rhetorical questions to superb effect), asking a series or targeted rhetorical questions can really add colour to your speech and credibility to your argument.

They can build an argument in such a way as to make it appear self evident. If the audience is with you through your questions then the conclusion you reach (if congruous) will appear to be the only possible conclusion. Rhetorical questions are a very effective tool for speeches that require building an argument.

Rhetorical questions can give the impression that the audience comes up with the ideas themselves. The audience will believe your argument best if they think of it themselves.

Be very careful though that the audience knows it is RHETORICAL! Don't fall into the trap of giving that heckler a chance to strike. Choose your questions carefully and make sure through body language and voice that the audience knows it is rhetorical.

Try to avoid asking a question where the wrong answer can easily be offered by some joker in the audience. This is a skill that takes practise and relies as much on you and your personality as it does on the sentence structure of the question.

Drama

Like passion, drama helps the audience feel and empathise with you and your speech. Great historical speeches have a sense of theatre about them. The presenter is highly passionate but also they use pause, gesture and voice to manipulate the feelings of the audience. They convey whether they are being tongue in cheek or deadly serious.

They emphasise major points in the speech through overt gesture and dramatic pause. All of the elements we touched on during the chapter on technique come into play to add real dynamism.

If you can add drama and conviction to your speeches then you are likely to be very effective.

Let's build a superb speech.

Firstly, we have a really well defined purpose and we have a clear message to deliver.

Secondly, we have planned our speech including our peroration and opening remarks and we have some excellent points and telling examples.

Thirdly, we write our speech with some excellent analogies, anecdotes and turns of phrase, including plenty of rhetorical questions with repeated sound bites and drama.

Fourthly, we practise and practise such that we know the speech back to front (making changes as we see fit).

Finally we deliver with our focus directly on the audience. Everything is automatic, we vary our voice we pause and gesture naturally and we feel the speech. Our passion and drama moves the audience. They cannot look away and when we deliver the peroration the audience holds its collective breath momentarily before bursting into spontaneous applause.

(well you get the idea)

7. Examples of Common Speech Types

There are some speeches that we are called upon to give more often than others. These include toasts, thank you speeches or introducing a speaker. Below are some example structures and tips for some of the more common speech types.

Introducing a Speaker

Purpose

Prepare the audience for the speaker. Have the audience ready, attentive and welcoming of the speaker.

This can be as short as a couple of lines or as long as four or five minutes. Should include any background that is appropriate to the occasion and to let the audience know the context in which the speaker is presenting. For example, if the person is very well qualified to speak on a particular subject then you might outline his or her credentials.

Per Oration

Key element is that the names of the speaker are the last words you say.

Some examples:

- “Please give a warm welcome to JOE BLOGGS”
- “To talk to us today about her view on recycling, please welcome MARY BLOGGS”

Tips

- **Don't** steal the speaker's thunder. You will look foolish and a boor if you give away the speaker's argument or express any view about the content of the speaker's address.
- **Don't** give too much praise or any condemnation of the speaker. Too much praise will look patronising, and condemnation will reflect more on you than the speaker. Even if you are introducing Ivan Milat to speak at a Backpacker Convention – don't sledge the speaker!
- **Don't** build up the anticipation in the audience too highly. If the audience expects something extraordinary it can change the whole dynamic of the relationship between the speaker and audience. If for example, the opening sentence is supposed to be quite and thought provoking and the audience is too excited to listen then a great deal of impact can be lost.
- **Do** remember it is the speaker who is special in this context not you!
- **Do** request some background from the speaker for the purposes of introduction (many regular speakers will actually provide you with most of the content for your introduction speech)

Example:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, joining us today for the first time at the Business Forum Business Thingy Dinner is our guest speaker Mary Bloggs. Mary Bloggs is here to speak to us about some of her research into recycling. Mary is an Environmental Scientist who has worked extensively in the recycling industry around Australia and Europe and joins us today in her role as Chair of the Australian Recycling Association. Please join me in giving a very warm welcome to our guest today MARY BLOGGS!”

Even this small speech has an opening, body and conclusion. It is pretty straightforward but does the job and does it a great deal better than a more flowery or patronising introduction.

Thanking a Speaker

Purpose

To make sure the speaker feels appreciated for their effort.

It may seem odd that a speech to a large group is really targeting one person but if you keep the purpose in mind then you should be more consistent with your thank you speeches and still give a speech that is interesting to the entire group.

Peroration

Key element is to draw from the crowd a sign of appreciation. Normally this is by way of applause but there are occasions where applause may not be needed.

Examples:

- “Please join me in thanking our guest speaker today JOE BLOGGS!” (lead applause)
- “Would you please thank, MARY BLOGGS?” (lead applause)

Tips

- **Do not** give a view – any view - on the content of speech or manner of delivery. You are not there to agree, disagree, critique, joke about, add to or otherwise give anything that could be interpreted as your view on the subject matter. So many speeches have lost their impact through a few (well meaning but) careless remarks. The speaker has usually gone to a great deal of effort to build to a Per Oration - don't be the one to tack on an epilogue or remark (even if everyone is thinking it).
- **Do**, if appropriate, comment on whether/how the speech impacted upon you. This is different to the above. This means, show that you listened and were interested in the speech (even if you didn't and weren't). For example, “I certainly learned some interesting things about recycling mobile telephones”⁴
- **Do** talk about the speaker in the third person (wherever possible). This means referring to them as “Mary Bloggs” not as “You”. For example you would say “We certainly appreciate the effort from our guest speaker Mary Bloggs” rather than “We certainly thank you for your effort”. The reason is one of inclusion. If you speak directly to the guest you are trying to thank, you can very easily leave out the rest of the audience. To include everyone give your thank you speech to the group not just one person.

Example

“Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure today on behalf of the Business Forum Business Thingy Dinner to thank our guest Mary Bloggs. I found Mary's speech particularly interesting and it obviously comes from a person with great experience in the industry. We particularly want to thank Mary for taking time out

⁴ There is a subtle difference between the first two points. One is expressing a view about the validity of the speech and adding/refuting the content the other is about expressing (in very general terms) something positive you can take away from the speech – some value the speaker added. If in doubt it is probably best to leave comments about the content out altogether.

of her busy schedule to be with us today. Please accept this bottle of hunter valley Semillon as a small measure of our thanks. Would everyone please join with me in thanking our guest today – MARY BLOGGS! (Lead the applause and hand over the bottle of grog)

Giving a Toast

Purpose

To make the recipient(s) of the toast feel very special AND to get the audience to be genuinely appreciative of the recipient(s)

Peroration

The last thing you say should encourage the audience to repeat the name of the recipient and take a small drink.

There are a few subtle things you need to do when giving a toast. These include a bit of crowd control. It is normal to stand when drinking a toast (sometimes you may forgo this if some of the audience would find it difficult – and therefore embarrassing) so at the end of your speech you need to have the audience stand – drink the toast – then sit down again.

The toast statement should be short and easy to repeat by the audience. You should have given all your reasons for the toast prior to the actual toast. So that all there is left to say is the name of the recipient(s) and the fewer syllables the better.

Example

- “Please stand” ...(pause for people to stand and to be ready)... (You) “to MARY BLOGGS” .. (Audience) “MARY BLOGGS” ... (all – take a drink) (you) “please be seated”. It is important to direct the crowd as efficiently as possible and as clearly as possible. You can undo a lot of good work if you are not very clear about what you want them to do.

Tips

- DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES say “Charge your glasses”. It is a nothing statement, it is a meaningless cliché and you can do much better. Whenever I hear that I think of a herd of buffalo running at some glasses. (If you want to make sure people have a glass of drink then say “make sure you have a drink ready” or something similar. Better still have the MC make sure everyone is aware that you are about to give a toast and that it would make sense for people to top their glasses up)
- When directing the audience you can use fairly direct language. If you say something like “would the audience please acquiesce to being in a standing position and venture to assume said position” then most of the audience will not know what the hell you are talking about. Compared to “Please stand”. The point here is to keep the “direct” in “directing” (also, avoid saying “be upstanding”

- another meaningless nothing of a statement often used to terrible effect in Toasts).
- Don't toast inanimate objects. There is no need to toast "football" or "the Postal Service". Remember our purpose is to make the recipient(s) of the toast feel special; it is pretty hard to make an inanimate object feel special. You should toast to a person, people or a collective of people. For example "The bridesmaids" or "Mary Bloggs" or "the Prime Minister".

Two Minute Business Précis

We are often called upon to offer a one-two minute explanation of our businesses. These are real opportunities for you to let people know how you might be able to help them.

There are many articles about how to best describe your business in short. In fact if you cannot do this then you should probably take a look at your business and see if your business plan is clear enough.

A One to Two Minute Précis is a speech. It requires an opening that will get peoples attention, a body and a close that they will remember. If done well you should be able to remember and call upon it on short notice whenever asked.

Purpose

To have the audience (defined here as your target market) clearly understand the potential benefits to them of your service.

Here is what I might say about our Successful Speech Program if called upon to give a one/two minute précis.

Consistent and effective public speaking and presentations are an important part of life in business. We need to be able to present effectively but most of us don't need or want to become a great orator. We just want a dead set way of doing it without looking like a fool. Our Speaking Up: Short course on Public Speaking is designed to provide highly practical tools and knowledge that business people can use to permanently improve their presentation and communication skills. The course incorporates elements of speech planning, delivery technique and how to add that finesse and power to your speeches. Talk to us if you are looking to permanently improve your presentation skills and want a dead set way of doing it without looking like a fool.

8. Final Remarks

There is always more to learn about public speaking and only through practise and feedback will your public presentation skills grow to their full potential. Make sure you plan your speeches properly, with a clearly stated purpose and message. Endeavour to connect as much as possible with the audience through passion, humour and drama as appropriate.

Remember your job is to add value to the audience. It is not the responsibility of the audience to understand your position, nor should they be required to listen to something that is uninteresting. It is the responsibility of the speaker to engage the audience and deliver the message. If they don't "get it" then it means your presentation was not effective. If they do "get it", choose not to agree or buy but understand and respect your view then you have been successful.

Please practise as much as you can, have great fun, use the tools provided in this program and you will permanently improve your speech success.

“I have a dream..” Martin Luther King, Jr

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity. But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free.

One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land.

So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition. In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.

This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation.

So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights.

The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges. But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of

gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. we must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" we can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be

made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning,
"My country, 'tis of thee,
sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.
Land where my fathers died,
land of the pilgrim's pride,
from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania! Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"⁵

⁵ Delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. on August 28, 1963. Source: Martin Luther King, Jr: The Peaceful Warrior, Pocket Books, NY 1968

THE BASIC SKILLS OF CHAIRING MEETINGS

Kaye Simmons

The following is an abridged version of 'You're in the Chair – An Introductory Course in Effective Chairmanship'

The chairman is the most important person when it comes to conducting a successful meeting. The chairman is the person who guides the meeting through its business, ensures that order is maintained; the correct procedure is followed and generally sets the tone of the meeting. How effective a chairman is depends on their preparation, the mechanics of their control of the meeting when in progress and on the sensitivity of their control of members.

Meetings need to have a purpose; otherwise they are a waste of time and in many cases, money. Therefore, it is important for anyone who is a chairman of a business or organisation to understand what personal attributes and skills are required to get the most out of any type of meeting, e.g. board meeting, committee meeting or a large gathering such as a conference or community organisation.

1. Purpose and Planning

1. Are Meetings Necessary?

Sometimes meetings are held just for the sake of having a meeting and with no real purpose in mind. There can be nothing more annoying and a complete waste of time and money. Many meetings are essential so it is vital that the purpose of the meeting is clear and that adequate planning and preparation takes place.

Meetings should also be enjoyable and productive for those attending. When meetings are informative, interesting, productive, structured and efficient, they are good to attend

This requires the chairman to take an active role well in advance of the meeting.

2. The Purpose of a Meeting

As chairman, you should have a clear idea of what you want to achieve out of a meeting. At the board level, it may be a planning session where the meeting will decide on some strategies to deal with a problem so as chair, you have as your aim to leave the meeting with some resolutions that will meet that need.

If it is a committee meeting, the same applies. A committee may have been set up to look at a particular issue for the board or some aspect of a business. As chair, you need to have some positive outcomes from your discussions that can be presented for consideration.

Whatever the meeting, be clear on the purpose of the meeting and your preferred outcomes. How will you know when you have achieved them? By preparing a 'benchmark of productivity' for the meeting – a checklist of what you want to accomplish, to refer to in the meeting, or to use later to compare the preferred outcomes with the actual ones.

3. Gathering Relevant Information

The Chairman is responsible for gathering information on issues that will be dealt with at the meeting. This means that some research is required and the chairman is clear on all issues to be discussed.

This may require:

- Discussing the issue with the chair of a committee – you don't want to re-hash the committee's deliberations. Know the background information so that you can quickly facilitate and expedite discussion when it arises in the meeting.
- Collecting relevant material for consideration. You may even organise an outside party to give a specialized presentation at your meeting.
- Circulating appropriate collateral material to meeting participants beforehand if it means that they will lend support to or explain the issues to be dealt with.
- If you use this strategy, ensure that everyone is 'singing from the same song sheet' during the meeting. You don't want to be interrupted by someone saying "Which document are we following?" Have them printed on different coloured paper if necessary and clearly state which report you are dealing with e.g. The Marketing Committee's report is on yellow. Do **not** fall into the trap of reading out whole reports.
- Collateral materials should provide necessary information, clarify a discussion or reinforce a point. They should never become the subject of the meeting, disrupt the flow or distract attention.

4 Preparation

There are some basic things that a chairman must do:

a. Set the agenda

The more care you take with the agenda, the more productive the meeting will be. The agenda should be more than a list of items handed out at the meeting.

Key elements should include:

- Time, place, and duration of meeting
 - A list of items to be discussed in sequence, detailing (for each item) who will lead the discussion, time allocated and importantly, the objective: information sharing, discussion only, decision required, or problem to be solved, etc
- b. Read the minutes of the previous meeting. This ensures that the meeting can check or follow up on resolutions from that meeting.

- c. If this is the first meeting of a group, you need to outline the aims and objectives and prepare a preliminary brief as to what you hope will be achieved.
- d. In a business situation, prepare a list of people who should attend the meeting. Check that you have included all the essential people you need to be there.
- e. If you are a participant (and not the chairman) in a meeting, you also have certain obligations in your preparation for a meeting.
 - Read your agenda well in advance
 - If appropriate, read the minutes of the previous meeting as a reminder of previous discussions which may be relevant.
 - Ensure that if you committed to a task, it has been completed.
 - Research agenda items and if necessary, ask questions or seek clarification from the relevant staff involved.
 - If it is a problem solving type of meeting, prepare so that you can contribute in a positive manner.

Arrive at the meeting on time. It is rude and inconsiderate to be late.

5. Organisation

As chairman, you should arrive at the meeting venue early. That way, you can ascertain if the room set up is suitable and any special requirements are in place. If you are going to use equipment, ensure that you have it set up in advance and that it is working. Make sure that you have everything that you require for the meeting.

Timing is also a key element. Be aware of the length of the meeting. If it is to be a long meeting, ensure that refreshments are available and that if appropriate, a suitable break can be made in proceedings.

2. Setting the Agenda

Every meeting has an agenda. It may not have been written down, discussed or even thought about, but it is there all the same. Whoever controls the agenda controls the meeting. A written agenda prepared by the chairman means that the meeting cannot be hijacked by the private agendas of others.

A written agenda gives a clear outline of the path of the meeting and should be circulated in advance. This allows participants to focus on what they are to do before, during and after the meeting. It acts as:

- A plan of the meeting to aid preparation.
- An objective control of the meeting's progress
- A measure of the meeting's success

There should be no surprises. If anyone wants to introduce an item without warning, the meeting's permission must be sought. Participants deserve the courtesy of knowing in advance what items are to be discussed. That allows them to prepare and thus facilitate discussion and quick resolution of issues.

The agenda is the responsibility of the chairman. You may be assisted by the secretary of the organisation or the CEO in a business. An agenda should have a logical order. Common items should be linked. It may be helpful to include time devoted to each item if you are running to a strict time schedule. Remember to allocate sufficient time if you

know an issue is going to be difficult or contentious. Where items are listed for discussion they should include at least one verb, indicating what the group will do.

3. Leadership

A good chairman should possess the following qualities:

Leadership	Sense of pride
Readiness to co-operate	Sense of responsibility
A quick thinker	Ability to delegate
A mediator	Friendliness
Impartiality	Good organizational skills
Knowledge of procedures	
Confidence	
Enthusiasm	
Tact	
Efficiency	
Objective	

Leadership from the chairman is the key to success for control over the meeting. Above all, you must show leadership. How you assert that leadership will depend on the type of meeting and how formal the meeting is.

Leadership falls into three basic styles. It is possible that you may use all three styles within a single meeting.

- A **directive or authoritarian** style allows others little scope; the chairman is heavy-handed, allows little discussion and dominates, particularly in imposing decisions without putting matters to a vote; there is a tendency not to disagree with the chairman in case it is held against the one disagreeing.
- A **participant or democratic** style permits other participants room to influence members during a meeting, through open discussion and argument; decisions are made by consensus or voting.
- The **laissez-faire** or '**abdication**' style allows a free rein to the members, where there is no attempt to follow rules of good meeting practice and the chairman is impotent by preference or inability.

What is most important is to recognize when to use the appropriate style. The laissez-faire style for example, would be used very little or not at all. Above all, the chairman has to provide leadership. When choosing a style, it is worth reflecting upon the effects that different approaches may have on achieving your goals and to consider the context of a specific meeting. The type of meeting you are chairing will largely determine the

leadership style you use. For some people, this may require a conscious effort to modify your desire to control everything or conversely, to allow a 'free for all'.

Authoritarian/ Directive		Democratic/ Participant			Laissez-faire/ Passive	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The chairman is the dominant person and controls the direction of the meeting		The chairman guides the direction of the meeting by influencing and using skills. Participants can influence the direction of the meeting			The chairman has very little influence over the direction of the meeting	
The chairman is the focal point of all communication		The chairman allows interaction between participants.			There is no focus from the chair and the chairman is largely bypassed by participants.	
The chairman tells and informs		The chairman asks questions and allows participants to contribute information			The chairman contributes very little	
Problem solving and decision making is largely done by the chairman		The chairman encourages participants to assist in the decision making process and problem solving			The chairman has little or no part in the decision making and problem solving process	

4. Managing Meetings

There is a relatively stable set of procedures called '**standing orders**' that occur within any formal meeting. These include motions, voting and taking minutes. Having this level of structure and formality allows the meeting to have a framework in which to conduct the meeting, improve efficiency, enables everyone to be heard and have their viewpoint considered and enables everyone present an equal vote.

Different organisations have different rules or standing orders but most follow the same basic set of rules which have evolved from the parliamentary system. As the chairman, it is your responsibility to establish those rules (if they are not already understood) at the beginning of the meeting e.g. if it's a more formal meeting, "all debate must go through the chair and discussion will take place through motions" or if it is a brainstorming meeting, "people will put forward ideas and then we will agree on the ideas to be put forward". In the latter style of meeting, the chairman would act more as a facilitator and drawing out discussion to achieve the aims of the group whereas the former example requires decisions and agreement so a more strict set of rules needs to be in place.

The technicalities of debate, motions, points of order and voting

The important business of any meeting is embodied in a series of motions which are proposals put to the meeting in a formal manner for the purpose of obtaining decisions on the questions under discussion.

1. Motions

Motions should be expressed in the affirmative form and begin with the word 'that'. They must be seconded and both the mover and seconder must be present. Most motions propose to take some definite action. They should be clear and concise and the exact wording handed in writing to the chairman. If the chairman accepts an oral motion, the secretary should write it out at the mover's dictation and the chairman should read it aloud and ask the mover to confirm that it is correctly worded.

When a person moves a motion from the floor, they say "I move 'That.....'"
The chair should then ask for a seconder who indicates by hand or voice that they are doing so. The mover then has the right to explain what they are proposing in their motion. Usually there is a time set for each speaker (five minutes) in more formal meetings. When the mover has finished, the chair should then ask the seconder if they wish to speak to the motion (they may or may not want to and if they do, it is for three minutes).

The chairperson then states that the motion is open for discussion. If several members rise at once, it is wise to ask if there is any opposition to the motion and anyone wishing to speak against it at this stage should be given the floor. There is no point in allowing several people to speak if they are all in agreement and if that is the case, the vote should be taken at once. There is no point in wasting time. Throughout debate, the chairman should select speakers alternately for and against the motion.

Right of reply.

If opposition has been expressed to a motion, the mover has a right of reply before the motion is put to the vote and this speech concludes the debate. If there has been no opposition, there is no need to reply. In replying to the discussion, the mover of the motion must not introduce any new matter but address only arguments raised.

Withdrawing motions

The mover of a motion may withdraw it, but only with the agreement of the seconder and consent of the meeting. Once a motion has been moved and seconded, it becomes the property of the meeting and cannot be withdrawn or altered by the mover without unanimous consent of the members. The only other way of altering a motion is by amendment or addendum.

Unless standing orders specify the length of speeches, no member should be allowed to speak for more than five minutes. A limit of three minutes is usually ample. A speaker's time can be extended (by a motion) if they have an important contribution to make.

Putting the Motion.

When the discussion has concluded, and the mover has replied, the chairman again reads the motion and puts it to the vote.

"I now put the motion. All those in favour raise your hand. All those against raise your hand. I declare the motion carried/lost". Note: the chair may simply say "all those in favour, those against (relying on the voices). I declare it carried/lost."

Rescission of Resolution.

Once a motion has been passed and become a resolution, it should not be rescinded except on notice of motion and forwarded to all members. Many organisations have a period within which a resolution may not be rescinded. However, there are times when information received subsequent to the passing of a resolution makes it appear inadvisable to carry out the decision made. This may require a special meeting in between regular meetings to deal with the matter or it can be held over until the next regular meeting.

Notice of Motion

Sometimes a motion can be put on notice prior to a meeting by providing the secretary with the motion in writing. The secretary should circulate the motion before the meeting and place it on the agenda. (It should be the first item for discussion after the formal proceedings have been dealt with).

To submit a notice of motion, it should be presented in the following form: "I wish to give notice that I will move the following motion at the next meeting, 'That...."

A notice of motion should not be dealt with if the mover is not present at the meeting.

Amendments and Addenda

Anyone can move an amendment to a motion. An amendment is where a motion's wording is altered or amended in some way. It requires a mover and a seconder. Several amendments may be allowed for the same motion. An addendum is where wording is added to the original motion. It also requires a mover and seconder. Any amendment should not be a direct negative of the original motion.

How to deal with them.

Amendments must be taken in correct order. They should be taken in sequence, as they affect various sections of the motion.

Discussion of amendments may take place but only so far as they affect a particular part of the original motion which is being amended.

The original mover and seconder may agree to accept the amendment in which case it automatically becomes part of the motion.

Putting the Amendment - Order of voting.

These are voted on in the order they are received. The original motion is read, followed by the amendment. The chairman says "All those in favour of the amendment? All those against? The amendment is carried and now becomes part of the original motion.

Amendments are voted on before the motion as amended is finally voted on.

2. Points of order

Members may ask the chairman a question on procedure at any stage except when another member is speaking. Members may also rise to a point of order if they feel there is any infringement of the accepted rules of procedure. Points of order are allowed on the following grounds:

- that the offending speaker is going beyond the scope of the question
- that the speaker is using inappropriate language
- that the speaker is breaking some rule of the organisation
- that the speaker is infringing standing orders or some accepted rule of debate

It is then up to the chairman to rule on the point of order. It is either accepted and the speaker is forced to withdraw or dismissed.

Chairman's ruling.

This can be challenged if the person who raised the point of order thinks the chairman has ruled incorrectly. If this happens, it has to be done as a motion as follows:
"I move dissent from the chairman's ruling."

There has to be a seconder and the meeting then votes. There can be no further debate other than the chairman giving a reason for their ruling.

The motion is always put in the affirmative in such a procedure i.e. "That the chairman's ruling be upheld." All those in favour? Against? I declare it carried/lost."

In some organisations, the Vice President may be required to take the chair for the purpose of this vote.

No Confidence Motion

If a chairman proves to be hopelessly incapable and inefficient, or continually autocratic and overbearing, the members of the meeting have their remedy in a motion of no confidence in the chairman. A notice of motion should be circulated to all members and the Vice President should take the chair. If the motion of no confidence is carried, the chairman must resign. If the vote of no confidence is lost, the original chairman resumes the chair.

Voting

When putting the vote, the chairman may not indicate their voting intentions. However, if the voting is locked evenly, the chairman may use the casting vote.

5. Step by Step: Getting Through the Meeting

Opening the meeting

To stand or to sit? This will depend on the type and size and formality of the meeting and the preference and confidence of the chairman. Usually if the chairman stands, it is a measure of authority and that attention and silence are required from meeting participants. If you are chairing a meeting where the purpose is brainstorming or problem solving, a more relaxed approach would be appropriate and the chairman should remain seated. For a very large meeting, it would be more appropriate to stand when addressing the meeting.

Begin on time. If you begin late, everything gets behind and participants may leave their arrival later and later. If they know you are punctual, so will they be.

Begin by saying "I declare the meeting of open at (whatever time it is) and welcome everyone here and thank you for your attendance."

Make sure that everyone has a copy of the agenda. This is the time to establish your rules for standing orders if appropriate. If it is a more informal information gathering meeting, you might outline what you hope to achieve and set out the guidelines that you as the chairman are going to use.

You then work your way through the agenda. As you do this, continually check with the secretary or minute taker that they are getting all the required information written down.

Deal with agenda items as follows:

Apologies: You need a motion "That the apologies be accepted" which has to be moved and seconded. You then put the motion to the meeting "All those in favour? Against? I declare it carried/lost."

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: A motion is needed for the minutes to be received and adopted. If there is business arising from the minutes, this is done at this point. If you know that issues from the previous meeting need to be reported on, list them on your agenda under business arising from the minutes so that participants know that they will be discussed and they are prepared.

Correspondence: A motion is required for the correspondence to be received. Once that is done you can then have business arising.

Items for Discussion: This should be the main part of the meeting. As the chairman, you need to:

- Briefly introduce each item, outlining what is to be discussed. If necessary, call on people to present their report/information or lead the discussion. If it is a motion, ask the mover to formally move and then speak to their motion.
- Give everyone a chance to take part in the discussion. If necessary, ask them for their views.
- Make sure that people stick to the point and don't ramble. Be firm on this and if necessary use humour to get around the issue.
- Sum up the discussion of each item in a neutral way so that everyone is clear on what is being voted on. You may also need to sum up discussion as the debate progresses to keep everyone on track. This is also vital for the minute taker so that they are clear on what is being decided by the meeting.
- Close the debate on issues when the discussion is complete – don't let it run on and on. Be proactive and say "I think we have fully canvassed this issue. I'll put it to the vote."
- Take notes (where needed) to reach decisions and cast the deciding votes if needed. However, casting votes should be used sparingly.
- Make sure that people take responsibility for actions being taken and set a deadline for things to be done.

Any Other Business/General Business

- Keep it as brief as possible.
- Ask if there are any other matters that should be discussed. Beware of the "hobby horse" type of participant here – they often want to take over the meeting at this point!

- As far as possible, get people to put items for discussion on the next agenda, especially if they require more time for consideration or background information.

Closing the Meeting

- Run over which people are responsible for action points if necessary. Check with participants that they are clear on what they have agreed to do after the meeting.
- Make sure that the secretary has everything noted (you should be checking this throughout the meeting)
- Fix the date, time and place for the next meeting. Say “The next meeting will be held on..... at”
- Thank everyone for their attendance and contribution.
- Declare the meeting closed and note the time e.g. “I declare the meeting closed at 10.30 am.”

After the Meeting

Once the secretary has written the minutes (this should be done as soon as possible after the meeting) check them for accuracy. Check that people who have been delegated tasks (especially those who are prone to forget) are taking the action listed in the minutes.

You also should conduct an audit or assessment of the meeting for your own purposes.

6. Importance of Minutes – the Chairman’s Responsibilities

To be effective, groups need to keep a record of their activities. Minutes should be a record of what takes place at meetings. At the Board level, accurate minutes are vital in terms of corporate governance and director’s responsibilities.

The role of the chairman can be vital in ensuring that the minutes are an accurate report of what was discussed. As the meeting proceeds, the chairman should continually summarize discussion and decisions reached so that the minute taker is clear on detail. This is also an effective tool for meeting participants to know what the essence of the debate is and where they are heading. It may even be necessary to occasionally check with the secretary during the meeting that they have taken the notes down accurately. The chairman should check with the secretary, as soon as possible following the meeting, the draft of the minutes so that obvious mistakes can be corrected before they are then circulated to all members of the committee.

7. Evaluating the Meeting

To really become an effective and confident chairman, it is essential that you continually review your role and look at how you can improve. After the meeting is over, it is often a very useful exercise for you as the chairman to consider how effective and efficient the meeting was and whether it was successful. Establish if the goals for the meeting were achieved. Think about the discussion and decisions that took place and ask if they were appropriate or if they could have been handled differently. Also consider the participants in the meeting in terms of their role and effectiveness and how you related to them. Think of how you could have handled things differently to achieve more positive outcomes or been more efficient.

A useful checklist that you can use is attached at the end of this article.

8. Dealing With the Annual General Meeting

An annual General Meeting usually falls into two distinct sections. The first is where reports are given by various office bearers reporting on the activities of the organisation over the last twelve months. The second part involves the election of the new office bearers. An ordinary meeting may then follow at the conclusion of the annual general meeting.

The agenda will look much the same as an ordinary meeting. There will be minutes from the previous annual general meeting (AGM). They are read (or previously circulated) and confirmed on a motion which is moved and seconded. Correspondence addressed to the AGM should also be dealt with. Be aware that matters usually dealt with in an ordinary meeting should not be dealt with at the AGM. Special business such as altering the constitution, meeting times and frequency should also be decided at this time.

Reports

Each office bearer is required to present a report to the AGM on the activities relating to their particular role in the club or organisation. The report should be in writing as well as in a verbal form. The written report should be circulated just before the verbal report is given to the meeting. The two reports should be part of the minutes of the AGM.

When delivering your report, beware of falling into the trap of just reading the written report. Your speech should outline the points which you need to make and should be used to fully explain some points which are briefly mentioned in the written version.

Probably the most important written report is that given by the treasurer. It should give details of the financial activity of the organisation over the period explaining the income and expenses of the organisation and provide sufficient information to members to see where and how their money has been managed. A detailed report in writing allows for examination and if necessary, questions which the treasurer can then explain.

Dealing With the Technicalities of Reports in a Meeting

On delivering your report to the meeting, you should conclude by saying “I move that my report be received.” The chairman should then call on a seconder for the report. It is appropriate to then ask if there are any questions relating to the report. Once this has been dealt with, the report then has to be received formally by the meeting.

The chairman should then put the motion “That the report be received. All those in favour..... All those against..... I declare the motion carried/lost”.

Exception

The President is usually in the chair and as such cannot move motions from the chair. So when he/she gives their report, they need to ask for someone from the floor to move and to second their report and then put the motion “that the report be received” to the meeting.

Dealing With the Election of Office Bearers

After all reports are given and any business arising from them is dealt with, the meeting then should move into the election of office bearers.

All people standing for office should be nominated and seconded by members of the club or organisation, preferably in writing (or according to the organisation’s constitution), which is handed to the Returning Officer (or Secretary) before the meeting.

To begin the elections, the returning officer or someone delegated by the meeting to chair this section should declare all positions vacant. Note: if the current chairman is standing for re-election, they should not participate in this part of the meeting but vacate the chair and someone else e.g. returning officer conduct the ballot.

Each position should then be dealt with, beginning with the President. The chair should state “I have a nomination of, nominated by and seconded by..... There being no further nominations, I declare elected as President.

Of course, if you have more than one person nominating for a position, a vote needs to be taken. This can be done by a show of hands or by ballot. If a ballot is used, this needs to be dealt with, counted and then the chairman declares the result.

The same process is used for all remaining office bearers until all positions are filled. If there are no written nominations for a position, the chairman can then call for nominations from the floor. A person still needs to be nominated and seconded and the person needs to be there to accept nomination (or has indicated to the meeting beforehand in writing that they are prepared to accept the position). Should a position not be filled at the AGM, it is the usual practice for the incoming executive to fill the position at a later date or to run an election after calling for nominations for that position at another time at an ordinary meeting.

9. Resources

A Chairman's self test

How good a chairperson do you think you are?

For each statement, rate yourself from 1 to 4

1= never

2= sometimes

3= often/usually

4= always

1	Before a meeting I make sure that I know how a formal meeting should be run	1	2	3	4
2	I make sure I am well prepared for the meeting	1	2	3	4
3	I begin the meeting at its scheduled start time	1	2	3	4
4	I make sure participants understand the minutes of the previous meeting	1	2	3	4
5	I explain the purpose of the meeting clearly to all participants	1	2	3	4
6	I follow the agenda for the meeting	1	2	3	4
7	I make sure that participants always speak through the chair	1	2	3	4
8	I know each participant's motives and hidden agenda	1	2	3	4
9	I make sure all participants are fully involved in the meeting	1	2	3	4
10	I allow all points of view to have a fair hearing	1	2	3	4
11	I make sure participants don't ramble or be aggressive during discussions	1	2	3	4
12	I don't express my own views until the end of the discussion	1	2	3	4
13	I make sure the Secretary takes full and accurate minutes of the meeting	1	2	3	4
14	I make sure all participants know what action to take before the next meeting	1	2	3	4
15	I make sure participants know the date, time and place of the next meeting	1	2	3	4

Total score:
Add up your scores for each statement

What does your total score suggest?

51-60 You must run pretty effective meetings!

44-50 You must run quite effective meetings.

38-43 You could run more effective meetings

15-37 Plenty of room for improvement

Which areas do you need to work on to improve your chairing skills?

Meeting Agenda

Title of Meeting

Date, time and venue

Apologies for absence:

Minutes from Previous Meeting:

Business Arising:

Correspondence:

Business Arising:

Reports:

Items for Discussion:

General Business:

Date, time and venue for next meeting:

Close of Meeting:

Meeting Evaluation

Task/Relationship	Yes	No
The meeting had a clear purpose		
The agenda was prepared and distributed prior to the meeting		
I talked to key players about key or difficult issues before the meeting		
Each agenda item received sufficient time		
The meeting commenced on time		
Time was used to the best advantage and was monitored		
The meeting ended on schedule		
Objectives for the meeting were clearly established at the outset		
Objectives of the meeting were met		
Ideas were expressed freely		
Everyone at the meeting received a fair hearing		
No one tended to dominate the discussion		
Everyone made the contribution I wanted and/or needed		
As chairman, I summarized from time to time during discussion		
There was a high degree of honesty and openness		
Differences in opinion were thoroughly discussed		
I felt satisfied that I had the opportunity to influence the decisions		
Solutions to problems were carefully assessed		
Creative solutions were developed		
The decision –making process was fair		
Problems were carefully diagnosed		
The acceptability of decisions was high		
Actions to follow were agreed		
Participants listened to one another		
I finished the meeting with a summary of decisions made		
The draft minutes were checked and distributed soon after the meeting		
I followed up with those undertaking action		

DEBATING

Kaye Simmons

A debate is basically an argument between two teams which is conducted under fairly strict rules. Participating in debating takes skill and team work and requires skills in thinking, listening and speaking. If you are debating, you need to listen carefully to the opposing arguments, think very quickly and be able to express an idea in a convincing manner and deliver that idea using your speaking skills. Debating will often put you in a position where you will have to argue the opposite to what you believe in. For this reason, debating is a good tool to develop your skills in thinking quickly on your feet, developing an argument in an impromptu speech, all in an atmosphere of team work with two other speakers.

THE TOPIC

If a debate is a form of an argument, then there logically has to be something to argue about. This is called the topic. The topic will always start with "That..." and can cover current issues of importance or philosophical concepts or ideas. As with any argument, there are two sides to the topic.

The side that agrees with the topic is called the **affirmative** or government and the team that disagrees with the topic is called the **negative** or opposition.

Some example topics are listed below:

That beauty is better than brains
That the best way to ensure peace is to prepare for war
That man is a slave to habit
That it is better to plant a cabbage than a rose
That freedom is a myth

DEFINING THE TOPIC

If a debate is going to take place then it must be agreed in advance what the debate is going to be about. Thus, it must be agreed what the topic means. Deciding and explaining what the topic means is called 'defining the topic'. The job of defining begins with the affirmative. The first speaker of the affirmative must explain what they believe the topic means. The negative may choose to agree with or choose to challenge the definition presented. However, if it challenges the meaning, it must be careful otherwise the debate could end up with two definitions. If the negative has a different definition, it

must be given by the first speaker for the negative who should clearly outline why they are challenging the affirmative's definition and then propose a better definition.

The team's case should be based on one or two central themes and material to support these themes should then be used as the basis of the team's argument. When defining the topic, consideration should be given to words in the topic such as "should", "must", "too", "more" etc as these words in the topic could affect the subject's interpretation.

DEVELOPING A TEAM LINE

Because debating is a team event, it is important that the three speakers work together as a team and make careful preparation before the debate takes place. The team line is the basic statement of 'why the topic is true' for the affirmative and 'why the topic is false' for the negative. Once the team has decided on the definition of the topic, the team should then express the central theme of their argument in a sentence which can be repeated during the debate.

The team then should work together to develop their argument and allocate defined tasks to each speaker. The best way to do this is to do a quick brainstorm on all the ideas then put them into a logical sequence. They then can be divided into logical sections and allotted to speakers. You also need to consider all the arguments that you think the opposing team will use and have counter arguments ready to use. Of course, team members will also have to think quickly during the course of the debate for counter arguments to use against the other side.

THE ROLE OF EACH SPEAKER

In a debating team, each speaker has specified roles that they must fulfill to play their part in the team. These tasks are outlined as follows:

1st Speaker for the Affirmative:

- Define the topic. This may mean that you set the debate if the definition has more than one meaning or is not clear.
- Present the team line. Outline the case (i.e. allocate the arguments you are going to use) that you and your second speaker are going to use. This allows your audience to see where you are going.
- Present the first half of the affirmative case. This is where you develop the first part of your argument. You need to develop a couple of points and then briefly recap and state how your next speaker will build on the case.

1st Speaker for the Negative:

- State whether you accept, reject or modify your opponent's definition or propose your alternative.

- Outline the case for the negative
- Begin the rebuttal of the affirmative's case (spend only about a quarter of your time doing this – your 3rd speaker will do most of the rebutting)
- Present the first half of the negative's case as for the first speaker for the affirmative.

2nd Speaker for the Affirmative:

- Reaffirm the affirmative's team line and if necessary rehabilitate the team's definition of the topic
- Attack the negative case. Your rebuttal should concentrate on a few central issues which you can attack. However, in doing this, **never** attack the speaker personally, only attack their argument used in their team's case. About a third of your time should be spent in rebuttal.
- Present the second half of the affirmative's case.
- Summarise your team's case and contrast what you are saying with the case of the negative

2nd Speaker of the Negative:

- Reaffirm the negative's team line and re-establish or consolidate your team's case.
- Rebut some of the main points of the affirmative's case. About a third of your time should be spent doing this.
- Present the second half of your team's case.
- Summarise your team's case to date and try and do it in context by looking at the approach of your opponents.

3rd Speaker for the Affirmative:

- You need to reaffirm your team's line.
- Most of your time will be spent rebutting the negative's case. This will take up about two thirds to three quarters of your time.
- Present a summary of your team's case. In doing this, contrast it with your opponents case and show how your team has the stronger argument (you need to convince the audience).
- Give a strong conclusion for the team argument.

3rd Speaker for the Negative:

- Reaffirm your team's line. This should be done as strongly as possible.
- Rebut all the remaining points of the affirmative's case. In doing this, contrast it with your team's case. This should take up the same amount of time as the affirmative's 3rd speaker.
- Present a summary of the negative case. Do not introduce any new matter except to refute the affirmative's case.
- As strongly as you can, compare and contrast your case with that of the affirmative. Round off as strongly as possible the case for the negative.

HOW TO DO EFFECTIVE REBUTTAL

Besides presenting points in favour of your case, your team will also spend time criticizing or rebutting the arguments presented by the other side. There are a few things which should be kept in mind when you do this.

1. **Logic** – you can't just say that the other side is simply wrong. You need to show why they are wrong. You need to logically show how the other side's main points don't make sense or are misguided and are not logical. This is often very challenging and requires quick thinking but it can be one of the most enjoyable aspects of debating.
2. **Pick the important points** – try to rebut the most important points of the other side's case. With a bit of practice, this task becomes easier. Wait until the team has presented their main themes or points before you begin targeting in on them.
3. **'Attack the idea, not the person'** – do not criticize individual speakers, criticize what they say.

PRESENTATION BY THE INDIVIDUAL SPEAKER

There are three major areas on which you will be judged and marked on when giving your speech in a debate. These are matter, method and manner.

1. Matter

Matter is what you say and is the substance of your speech. This should be logically organised in arguments and examples to back those up. You need to provide 'evidence' and 'facts' to back up what you say. For example, in the topic 'That zoos should be closed', you might give an argument that in zoos, lions have only 200 square metres to live in where in the wild they may have 2000 square kilometers to roam in.

Any examples that you use should be relevant to the topic. If you give examples that have little or no relevance, it makes your speech weak and lacking substance.

Matter should not be presented as a long list of examples. Use the strongest examples to illustrate the point you are making and use a common link to build on.

2. Method

Method is the way you organise your material. Your method should reflect team unity and logic.

- Unity is created by everyone in the team being aware and understanding the definition, what the other speakers have said and what the team line is. Each

team member should reinforce the team line and be consistent with what has been said by other team members. If this doesn't occur, the team no longer appears as a unified force, is disorganized and the impact of your case is lost and you will be marked down.

- Like any good speech, your speech must be structured well. You need to have a clear idea of your own arguments and the examples you are going to use to reinforce them. You need to present your ideas in a logical and clear way. The same applies when you are rebutting the arguments used by the opposing side. Attack each of their arguments in logical sequence and as they are presented. That way, the other team's case can be systematically demolished. (Use your speech template to plan your speech).
- Organise your speech in terms of time. Adjudicators will mark you down if you waffle just to fill in time and if you spend too much time on one point and then have to rush through all the other points, you will lose any impact you had. You also need to speak strictly within the time allocated – you will be marked down if you go over time and the adjudicator will disregard what you say after the final bell.
- Method should also show that there is logical organisation of your case, teamwork, and your effectiveness of your position in the team.

3. Manner

Manner is how you present what you have to say. It is much the same as for any type of speech making except your purpose is already defined for you i.e. to convince the audience that your argument is the correct one. You will be marked on the way you present your argument, stance, quality of voice, gesture, persuasiveness, sincerity, audibility and conviction

There are some things that need to be noted which you should consider.

- Cue cards. Like making a speech at any other time, do not write your speech out in full. Make a few points on a small palm card to help guide you through what you want to say. This is especially helpful when you are rebutting the other side's case. If you can jot down the main themes that they introduce and how you can argue that they are wrong, you can systematically go through the process and not miss anything. Part of team work is to write down things that fellow team members can use to add to their time for rebuttal as well.
- Eye contact is a very important tool when debating. You need to convince the audience that what you are saying is right even if it is totally contrary to how you might personally feel and good eye contact helps to make what you have to say more convincing.
- Voice. When trying to convince someone that what you have to say is the truth, use of voice is very important. Change in volume and pitch and use of speed can be important tools. Use of dramatics, while not overdone, can also be helpful.
- Body. Your body is a tool there for you to use. Make hand gestures deliberately and with confidence. Stand with confidence and use your head and eyes to good effect.
- Nervous habits. Avoid them as much as possible. Keep your speech as confident and forceful as possible so get rid of any nervous mannerisms and habits you may have.

- Language level. Get your level of usage at the right level. Don't be too formal while at the other extreme; don't get too informal. Use language with which you are comfortable.

MARKING SCHEME

There is a standardized marking scheme out of 100 for debating used by adjudicators as follows:

Matter:	40 marks
Method:	20 marks
Manner:	40 marks

The average for any speaker is 75 and most marks won't vary much more than 6 or 7 either side of that mark.

HANDY HINTS

- Remember that individual debate speeches are just that: a beginning, middle and an end. You can use your speech template in preparing a speech for a debate.
- Don't resort to personal attack – target the argument, not the presenter.
- Stick to the time limit. Anything that you say after the time allocated will be ignored by the adjudicator. If you go over time, in all probability the adjudicator will penalize you (method).
- Avoid using sweeping generalizations but rather use specific points that can be backed up with good solid examples.
- Don't continually look at the opposing team. Your job is to convince the audience and the adjudicator that your argument is the right one so address them.

ADJUDICATING DEBATES

An adjudicator's job is to assess each team's case and decide who has convinced them more. It is a matter of your opinion as to which side has persuaded you the most. The following points can be used as a guide to help you reach that decision.

Matter:

For each team:

- Have the teams used several arguments to support the team's case?
- Did they support these arguments with relevant examples?
- Did the team produce matter that was directly relevant to the topic?
- Did they effectively rebut the key arguments of the other side?
- Were they able to expose flaws in the other side's case?
- Did they effectively defend their own case?

For each speaker:

- Did they have examples to support their arguments?
- Were their arguments well explained?
- Did they prove their casual links?
- Was their matter simplistic or sophisticated?

In giving your decision, consider the following:

- Give both positive and negative feedback
- Try to analyze the arguments rather than the technical aspects of the debate
- Provide the debaters with practical advice on how they can improve their skills
- Don't enter the debate yourself. Keep your comments brief and to the point.
- Don't give speaker by speaker analysis unless it is necessary. Keep your comments general as they apply to the team.
- Give a brief summary of what the debate was about.

Method:

For each team:

- Has each member of the team separate and distinct points?
- Has each speaker referred to other team member's matter so that their argument is linked?
- Has the team moved logically through their case?
- Have they effectively rebutted the other side's case?

For each speaker:

- Did they have a logical sequence to their presentation?
- Did they clearly explain their points?
- Did they produce an argument and then an example or did they merely present a list of examples?
- Did they speak to the time allocated?

Manner:

For each speaker:

- Did each speaker look at the audience?
- Were they engaging?
- Did they speak too fast?
- Did they vary their voice?

Marking

Manner and matter are marked out of 40 while method is marked out of 20. Marks should reflect your adjudication and be confined to the following guide:

- Margins must be within the range of 1-10 points (1= an extremely close win, 2-3= a close win, 4-6=a clear win, 7-8=an emphatic win, 9-10= the two teams were of an entirely different standard).
- Speaker's scores should be in the range of 70-80 points.
 - 70 : is very poor
 - 71-72: is pretty ordinary
 - 73-74: below average
 - 75: average
 - 76: a solid above average speech
 - 77: a good speech
 - 78: a really good speech
 - 79: an excellent speech
 - 80: so outstanding it's unbelievable!
- You may have to adjust individual marks in order to create an actual result. In terms of the competition, the most important part of marking is that it they reflect the performance of the two teams.

ADJUDICATOR'S MARKING SHEET

Topic:

Affirmative	Negative
1st Speaker:	1st Speaker:
Total:	Total:
2nd Speaker:	2nd Speaker:
Total:	Total:
3rd Speaker	3rd Speaker:
Total:	Total:
TOTAL:	TOTAL:

ROLES OF OFFICE BEARERS

Kaye Simmons

One of the things the Speakers Club does is to give the members the opportunity to experience the various roles one finds in an organisation. Usually, a member begins in the role of whip and then moves on to be the treasurer, the secretary and finally, president of the club. The positions change every six months at a bi-annual meeting. By standing for office in the club, a member can get first hand experience and training under the guidance of the critics and more experienced club members and can then confidently take on these positions in the wider community.

President

Ultimately, the Club is in the hands of the President. The buck stops here. The President exemplifies – in style and ability – the Club itself.

He or she:-

- Chairs important meetings, general meetings, committee meetings and dinners.
- Ensures that everything is in order for each regular meeting.
- Welcomes guests and new members at meetings.
- Reminds other officers of their duties if necessary
- Takes charge in emergencies.
- Arranges and presides over a formal dinner at the end of term (start early on arranging for this).
- Maintains and updates the President's Book.
- The President does things his or her way, while respecting the Club's traditions.

The President is often the public face of the Club.

Secretary

The Secretary is a very important part of the organisation and keeps the weekly program flowing smoothly.

He or she:-

- Prepares the speaking roster – usually six weeks in advance – and distributes it to all the members. This is usually done by email and posting it on the web site.
- Choosing suitable and varied topics, debates, exercises in meeting procedure etc. and including members of the Club in a variety of speaking tasks.
- Distributes meeting agendas and minutes to committee members.
- Assists the President in welcoming guests and new members to the Club.
- Maintains and updates the new member's kit.
- Fills in for the President in emergencies.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for handling all monies for the Club.

He or she:-

- Collects membership fees as set by the Club at the beginning of the year.
- Collects meeting fees at each meeting.
- Is responsible for paying catering fees as agreed by the supplier.
- Responsible for payment of all accounts as approved by the committee.

The Whip

The roster co-coordinator or whip is a learning and socializing position. This officer would usually be expected to assume all other offices in turn.

He or she:-

- Contacts (by email or phone) and confirms rostered speakers for each meeting.
- Prepares an agenda for weekly meetings for the chair and sends it to them the day before if possible.
- Prepares copies of the agenda for the critic, secretary and president.
- Keeps a record of speakers each meeting – those who give their prepared speech, those giving impromptu speeches, thank you speeches etc.

Critics

The critics are appointed according to the constitution of the club. They are a team of experienced speakers and their role is to help individual speakers to develop their speaking and chairing skills. These people are available for advice and assistance for any member as well as providing critiques at the conclusion of meetings

The Committee

The committee is made up of the club's office bearers and the critics. It meets every month for half an hour before the lunch time meetings to discuss issues relating to the functioning of the club and its development. These meetings are chaired by the club president and the secretary keeps minutes of the meeting which are circulated to committee members. It is the duty of the President to report any major decisions of the committee to the membership at the lunch time meetings.

ORGANISING A DINNER

Kaye Simmons

Each six months, the Speakers Club holds a dinner where the Club can put itself on show and allow members to speak in a formal situation. It also provides an opportunity to gain experience in organizing a social function.

The organisation of the dinner is the responsibility of the President in consultation with the committee and it is held towards the end of the presidential term.

It is important to begin organising as soon as you move into the position. The following things need to be done:

1. Organise and book a venue

This should be done as early as possible, especially if it is in the second half of the year. There are some important considerations to be made in choice of venue apart from the obvious one of cost. Some important considerations should include:

- The dining area is not shared with the food preparation area (so speakers are not competing with crashing dishes etc
- Choose a venue which can adequately seat up to 50 people and allow flexibility in seating so everyone can see and hear the speakers.
- Noise level is appropriate. In some restaurants the noise level becomes unbearable with large numbers of people. Guests want to have conversations with each other as well as hear the speakers and entertainers!

2. Choose your Theme

Think about a theme for the evening – it should reflect something about you or what you want to achieve for the night. Look through the Presidents Book to see past dinner themes if you are stuck.

3. Speakers and entertainment

Line up your speakers for the night well in advance so that they can prepare, especially if you set a theme which needs a bit of thought. If you want to include additional entertainment, get that organised early. You may have to consider additional things like amplification, piano, lighting etc. so get those items organised early. Ensure that any equipment being used during the night is in working order on the night **well before** guests arrive.

4. Other organisation

- Decide on menus etc with the venue six weeks in advance so that you can establish the cost of the dinner. You also need to decide if drinks will be included in that cost or do guests purchase/bring their own. Consult with your committee if the cost of the dinner requires a subsidy.

- Get invitations out six weeks before the event. Include details such as date, time, venue, cost, where bookings need to be made and dress code (formal or smart casual etc)
- Discuss with the venue what you require on the evening. Go through your running sheet with them so that they know when people will be speaking so that you don't have unnecessary disruptions during these times. You also need to fit in with them in terms of serving meals and clearing plates etc. Clarify arrangements for the service of drinks, especially if you are supplying drinks up to a certain amount. The bar needs to let you know when the limit has been reached to avoid the embarrassment of a huge drink bill that isn't expected at the end of the evening.
- Prepare your dinner programs about a week in advance for placement on tables. Also prepare for yourself a detailed running sheet with times. As chairman for the evening, it is your responsibility to ensure that things run to time and that you stick to the agenda. Have a starting and finishing time. Give a copy to the catering staff so that they know what is going on.
- Once numbers are finalised, organise seating arrangements e.g. tables for members and their guests or individual placements. It is also helpful to have a seating plan available for guests to check, especially if seating is by tables so they can quickly locate where they are seated. Make sure that your room is arranged in such a way that speakers/entertainers are not disrupted by passing traffic when performing.
- Think about decorations etc for tables. Do you need money to cover this? If so, consult with your committee to determine a budget.
- As the host of the evening, it is also your job to receive and welcome guests on arrival.
- If in doubt at any time organising your dinner, seek advice. There are plenty of members who have gone through this experience and who are willing to help. This should be the pinnacle of your term as President and you don't want to stress out so just ask for help if you need it!

NOTES