Impromptu Speaking

What is an impromptu speech?
- Little or no advance notice.
- When called upon to:
  - Offer an opinion.
  - Share expertise.
  - Officiate in some manner.
  - Speak out in a social setting.

Workshop Objectives
- Consider common impromptu speaking situations.
  - General strategies for impromptu speaking.
  - Organizational strategies.
  - Simple memory strategies.
  - Purpose of each type of speech.
  - Specific strategies/essential components for each type of speech.
  - Practice!

When might you have to speak without much notice?
- At a celebration like a birthday or anniversary.
- Proposing a toast at a wedding reception.
- Introducing a speaker.
- Presenting an award.

When might you have to speak without much notice?
- Accepting an award.
- Giving a status report in a meeting.
- Being asked for your point of view in a public meeting.
- Deciding to call in to a talk show.

General Strategies
- Know the objectives of your speech.
- Having an organizational plan helps…
  - You remember to include key points.
  - You present relationships between points.
  - Audience “track” with you.
  - Audience remember your points.
General Strategies

- Organizational plans
  - Tell them what you’re going to tell them.
  - Tell them.
  - Tell them what you’ve told them.

- Beginning, middle, end.
  - Keep intros and conclusions very brief so you can focus time on your main points.
  - Choose a good attention-getter and a strong end.
  - Main points.
    - 2 - 5 main points.
    - Choose your best points.

General Strategies - organization

- Organizing your main points.
  - Usually present strongest points first.
  - Chronologically.
  - Spatially.
  - Cause-effect.
  - Problem-solution.
  - Topically.

- PREP system to support premises.
  - P - Premise: Females are treated inequitably in business.
  - R - Reason: They usually receive lower salaries and have fewer opportunities for advancement.
  - E - Example: A recent study conducted by...
  - P - Point summary.

General Strategies - other advice

- Past, Present, Future approach.
  - Past - The historical approach was...
  - Present - What we’ve been trying is...
  - Future - I’m recommending that we...

- Don’t try to say it all. Less is more.
- Audiences appreciate brevity.
- Never draw attention to the fact that you’re speaking “off the cuff.”
General Strategies – other advice

- Be well-read.
- Stick to topics you know about or feel strongly about.
- Side-step a lesser issue for a greater one.
  - Thanks for that question. I think the greater issue here, however is...

Strategies to remember your points.

- Jot down notes, if necessary.
- Use a mnemonic device.
  - Colorful images.
  - Linking.
- For more mnemonic devices, see www.mindtools.com.

Purposes & Strategies – specific occasions

Celebrations, Roasts, and Toasts

- Purpose: To recognize the person(s) or events being celebrated.

Roasts and Toasts.

- Roasts – Humorous tributes to a person in which a series of speakers poke good-natured fun at him or her.
- Toasts – Brief tributes to a person or event being celebrated.

Purposes & Strategies – specific occasions

Eulogies

- Purposes:
  - To commemorate the deceased.
  - To offer consolation to those in grief.

Eulogies

- Strategies:
  - Celebrate who the deceased was, what he or she did, believed in, etc.
  - Be realistic, but emphasize deceased’s positive qualities.
  - Refer to the family.
  - Consider sharing humorous or favorite memories of the deceased.
  - Showing grief is okay, but don’t break down.
Purposes & Strategies – specific occasions

Introducing a Speaker

- Purposes:
  - To prepare the audience for the speaker.
  - To motivate the audience to listen to the speaker.
- Strategies:
  - Make any necessary announcements before beginning your introduction.
  - Establish the speaker’s credibility by sharing key points of his or her:
    - Education.
    - Experience.
    - Related background.

Introducing a Speaker

- Strategies (continued):
  - Identify the speaker correctly.
  - Preview the speaker’s topic.
  - What is going to be covered?
  - Why is this important to the audience?
  - Ask the audience to welcome speaker.
- Strategies (continued):
  - Be brief: 1-2 minutes.
  - Double-check your information.
  - After the speech:
    - Thank the speaker.
    - Cite a specific example from the speech that illustrates the relevance of the speech topic.
    - Then, offer closing remarks or instructions to the audience.

Presenting an Award

- Purposes:
  - To communicate the significance of the award.
  - To honor the recipient.
  - To communicate why the recipient was selected.
- Strategies:
  - Discuss the significance of the award.
  - Discuss the criteria for selection.
  - Highlight notable things about the recipient related to selection.
  - Consider logistics:
    - Present with left hand so you can shake hands.
    - Where and when should presenter/recipient exit?
Purposes & Strategies – specific occasions

Accepting an Award.

Purposes:
- Express gratitude for the honor being bestowed.
- Acknowledge the contributions of others toward recipient’s success.

Strategies:
- Prepare, if possible.
- React genuinely and with humility.
- Thank those giving award.
- Accept gracefully.
- Close with thanks.

Giving a Status Report in a Meeting.

Purposes:
- To update others on the status of your work.
- To possibly solicit team input.

Strategies:
- Briefly review progress made before last report.
- Describe progress since last report.
- Personnel involved and their activities.
- Resources used (time, money).
- Problems encountered and solutions used.
- Expected goals/challenges before next meeting.

Expressing Point of View in Meeting, Etc.

Purposes:
- To present your point of view clearly.
- To influence listeners.

Strategies:
- State your point of view clearly.
- Demonstrate relevance of the issues to the audience.
- Use a PREP organization.
- Discuss benefits of your point of view.
- Avoid logical fallacies.
Sources

Impromptu Speaking

Please give us your feedback.