

TOP 10 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS



If you're just getting started, or you have some experience already and would like some tips to improve, then these are for you.

1 START STRONG

Start with something entertaining or attention-grabbing that engages your audience and reinforces why they are listening. Go with something that fits your personality – a story, joke, interesting factoid, question, or simply an image to grab their attention within the first few minutes.

2 SHARE YOUR PASSION

One of the most important things a speaker should do is establish a connection with the audience. Let your passion for the Council shine through. Why are you passionate about your RRC membership and CRS designation? Don't assume your audience is aware of your involvement with, or passion for, the Council. Tell them!

3 BE ORGANIZED AND CONCISE

When preparing talking points – create a brief introduction, body, and conclusion. Have clear main points and a transition statement between each point. Your audience will appreciate an orderly presentation of ideas, and are more likely to remember what you said, which is the whole point of speaking to them in the first place.

4 MAKE DIRECT EYE CONTACT & SMILE

To connect with your audience, make eye contact with a friendly smile. Best practice is to look directly into a person's eyes long enough to finish a thought – about a sentence or half-sentence – and then move on to the next person's eyes. This can be awkward for some – but it's important that you do this because that's what audiences want.

5 USE SIMPLIFIED NOTES

Notes should be a list of your main talking points to keep you on track so you can have a normal conversation with your audience. As you're practicing, whittle down those notes, like a little grocery list. This frees you to connect with people, to look up and to have a normal conversation in your natural personality.

6 USE CLEAR, SIMPLE SLIDES

Presentation slides should be clear and simple, and reinforce whatever point you're making at that particular time. Try to avoid loading up your slides with a lot of text or complicated animations. You're less likely to stare at or read the slides if you keep them clear and simple. It's very hard to follow if your slides are jam-packed with details.

7 CONFIDENT BODY LANGUAGE

You want to have confident body language, which includes your posture and hand gestures. Stand in one spot for a little while, share a part of your message, and then move to another spot. Don't just pace. Same with your hands – use gestures, and emphasize your ideas with your hands. Don't want to fidget. A confident posture and appropriate gestures are a big part of how you come across nonverbally.

8 CONFIDENT, LOUD AND CLEAR VOICE

Have a confident voice, where you speak loud enough to be heard in the back of the room with a nice clear volume. Use your voice effectively – enunciate, vary your tone, speech pattern and pace to show emphasis to key points. Remember to always maintain a confident, loud and clear voice. Be heard!

9 RELAX, BREATHE, AND ENJOY

Our minds work faster than we can speak. Take a pause between key points or thoughts, even take a sip of water from time to time. Try to avoid verbal clutter, fillers like “um, like, you know...”. A pause is much more effective and that moment of silence can help your audience process your last point thought.

10 PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

The more you practice, the more comfortable you'll become with your presentation. Practicing allows you to work on your techniques – direct eye contact and smile, confident body language, loud and clear voice, and finding your ideal pace and rhythm. Remember, practice leads to mastery.