

# Public Speaking for the Commercial Diplomat

Eve Connell & Jill Stoffers

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## PREFACE

The International Commercial Diplomacy Project (ICDP) develops and disseminates world-class training materials for commercial diplomats. Commercial diplomacy is a relatively new field encompassing policy advocacy, policymaking, and negotiations in international trade and investment. To strengthen professional training in commercial diplomacy, the ICDP has created model curricula, course outlines, teaching modules, case studies, negotiating simulations, and model operational documents, and has published these training tools on its website, <http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org>.

This manual serves three separate objectives. First, it is designed to help trade policy practitioners to improve their presentation skills. Second, it is designed as a teaching manual for seminars and courses. Third, it is designed to give both the practitioner and the student a useable reference guide to other pedagogical resources.

The manual has been a collective effort. The initial draft was prepared by Eve Connell, a professional in communications techniques, graduate school instructor (Monterey Institute of International Studies) in Public Speaking, and business communications instructor at California State University, Monterey Bay. The manual was first edited by Jill Stoffers, a graduate of the master's degree program in Commercial Diplomacy at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and Geza Feketekuty, President of the International Commercial Diplomacy Project, founder of the graduate program in Commercial Diplomacy at the Monterey Institute, and a retired senior U.S. trade official.

Though the author and editor are American, they avoided an American-centric approach to provide a guide that best reflects global practice. Some degree of cultural bias is unavoidable, however. In particular, there is an American cultural bias towards direct and focused communication, and a presentation style that is lively and extroverted. Such a direct approach may not be the most appropriate form of communication in all cultural settings. In the future, ICDP plans to add regional supplements, as appropriate.

In order to avoid a gender bias, the author and editor alternate between the use of the pronouns he and she. The author and editor welcome comments from students and professionals alike. This is a work in progress and can always benefit from a broader set of insights.

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## **COMMERCIAL DIPLOMACY & THE COMMERCIAL DIPLOMAT**

Commercial diplomacy is diplomacy with a commercial twist—diplomacy designed to influence foreign government policy that affects global trade and investment. Commercial diplomacy encompasses the analysis, advocacy and negotiating chain leading to international agreements on the increasingly diverse set of trade-related issues.

The number of people involved in making and influencing trade policy has grown in tandem with the number of issues covered by trade negotiations. In today's increasingly interdependent world, trade negotiations address a broad range of government regulations and actions that affect international commerce. They cover, for example:

- Tariffs, quotas, and customs procedures.
- Health, safety, and consumer and environmental protection standards.
- Regulation of such service industries as banking, telecommunications and accounting.
- Laws concerning fair competition, bribery, and corruption.
- Industry specific subsidy programs such as agricultural support programs.

The most visible commercial diplomats are those who work in ministries of trade and industry—those who negotiate international trade and investment agreements and resolve policy conflicts that impact international commerce. Commercial diplomacy skills are also required, however, by officials in other government departments and international organizations that have a stake in trade policy, including those concerned with foreign affairs, finance, agriculture, industry, labor, health, environmental protection, bank regulation, telecommunications, air transportation, and the

licensing of professionals. Finally, commercial diplomacy skills are required by professionals and managers in the following fields of work:

- Corporate government relations departments.
- Overseas subsidiaries that interact with host government officials on a daily basis.
- Industry associations.
- Unions.
- Non-governmental organizations.

Because these individuals have a stake in the outcome of trade policy decisions, they engage in the domestic and global analyses, and advocacy and coalition-building processes that precede negotiations on international trade and investment issues. In order to influence this process, they need to be effective public speakers.

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## **PUBLIC SPEAKING AS A PROFESSIONAL TOOL: WHY DEVELOP PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS?**

### Professional Considerations

Commercial diplomacy encompasses the entire analysis, advocacy and negotiating chain leading to international agreements on trade-related issues. Commercial diplomacy is all about persuasion, for which presentations play a vital role. The commercial diplomat must make effective use of such communicative advocacy tools such as public testimony, speeches, interviews, and debates. Learning to create and present public presentations effectively is critical to the commercial diplomat and her ability to negotiate effectively.

Public presentation skills are key to success in almost any profession, but particularly in commercial diplomacy. Effective communication with professionals in business, law, the media, academia, and politics is expected of the commercial diplomat. Public speaking skills are needed not only to make professional presentations at conferences and to the press, but also to build professional networks, another key to success in the business. In their work, commercial diplomats face a particular challenge: much of their communication takes place with people from other cultures with different communication styles and native languages. This underscores the need to develop excellent public speaking skills.

Typical presentations by trade policy professionals require the audience to absorb a great deal of information in a short period of time. These presentations must clearly convey the essential information on complex issues. Working in a highly interdependent arena, commercial diplomats are required to clearly explain complicated issues such as the:

- Commercial interests at stake
- Domestic policy issues relevant to trade issues
- Macro-economic impact of alternative policy options
- Interests of stakeholders and their political influence
- Applicable domestic and international legal provisions
- Impact of media coverage on public opinion.

The challenge is to convey the essence of the most important factors driving a case, while convincing the audience of proposed courses of action. An accomplished professional in commercial diplomacy can often exert an influence far beyond his or her policy-making authority. This manual provides the aspiring commercial diplomat with guidelines for making presentations in the field. Early sections cover distinguishing features of public speaking for commercial diplomacy and presentation basics. Later sections cover the particular characteristics of public speaking events, contexts and concerns.

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## **PRESENTATION SKILLS**

To deliver a message effectively, the presenter must consider the following six factors, each of which we examine in detail:

To deliver a message effectively, the presenter must consider the following six factors, each of which we examine in detail:

- Audience and context
- Content
- Organization
- Language and delivery
- Technology

### **Audience and Context**

In developing a presentation, the speaker must first consider the audience. In addition to the age, gender, and ethnicity of the intended audience, the speaker should have a feel for its socio-economic and educational status, political party and/or religious affiliation, position on the presented topic, values and beliefs related to the presented subject matter, scope of knowledge, and expectation of the speaker, the topic, and the speaking event itself. An awareness of each of these "personal" factors will affect language, delivery and content choices a speaker makes when designing a speech for public consumption. These are of particular importance to the CD professional who speaks on sensitive topics that may also encompass cross-cultural issues.

The context of the event must be familiar to the speaker as well. Context includes the venue's physical space (e.g., auditorium lay-out, floor plan, podium), equipment usage (e.g., computer for PowerPoint slides, overhead projector, VCR/TV, microphone, lighting), speech format (e.g., individual speech, panel presentation, debate, media/interpreter presence), and timing considerations (e.g., progression of speakers, time limit of speech, time of day).

Whenever possible it is best for the speaker to practice in the event venue. Familiarity with one's surroundings, including equipment, lighting and audience proximity, can only help ease speaker apprehension. If it is not possible to practice in the actual event space, the speaker should simulate the environment as accurately as possible and practice delivering the presentation as he would to the audience. A dress rehearsal will enhance any speaker's final performance.

### **Content**

Whether delivering an informal brief or formal, televised public hearing, the presenter typically is given a topic and parameters (theme, time limits, order of presentation, level of formality, etc.) to follow. In some cases the topic is thoroughly outlined. For example, a CD professional may be asked to prepare a five-minute summation of committee hearings. Here the focus is narrow. The presentation should be short but hit all the main points of the issue. In another case a CD professional may be invited to speak to industry association stakeholders. This type of presentation allows the speaker to decide on the content, though there still are parameters of which to make note.

When developing content, carefully consider the following:

- Who is the audience? The content must be appropriate for the audience. Always keep in mind the audience's implied question, "What's in it for me?"
- Discuss what you know. You have been asked to present because of your expertise or knowledge.
- Discuss what you find interesting. The audience will immediately know if you are excited about the subject or not. Your enthusiasm (or lack thereof) will keep or lose the audience's attention.
- Choose material that is new, noteworthy, or relevant. This is especially important for "old news" subjects. Make the audience understand that this is not just the same old speech, but that you have something new to offer—ideas, perspectives, facts, and analyses.
- Take into account opposing viewpoints and address them in an appropriate way: Compare and contrast, provide objective evidence to refute, and offer your supporting research or experience if facts are not available to support your views.
- Refer back to the audience. Remind them why they should be listening and what they should be taking away.

## **Opposing Viewpoints**

Any prepared speaker will consider opposing viewpoints, especially when discussing sensitive and controversial issues. This consideration not only helps the speaker in the preparatory stages, but also aids a speaker in the question and answer period. Content should be chosen carefully to show that the speaker is an expert on the subject she is presenting. Take the following steps to prepare for opposing viewpoints:

- Brainstorm all possible arguments
- Rank them in order of importance or magnitude
- Addressing the major opposition in the body of the speech. Offer examples of why the view is inapplicable, unfounded, or misapplied.

There is usually at least one person who disagrees with all or part of your presentation. Remember to stay calm, present your information in a professional manner, and answer questions in a respectful, appropriate way. Practice answering tough, hard-hitting questions with rebuttals that illustrate your points.

## Organization

At most engagements, the speaker is formally introduced. It is the speaker's responsibility to provide appropriate information to the conference organizers and media. A good introduction should include the basics-the speaker's name, title, position, authority on the subject, and the topic of the speech.

The key to a successful message is to organize content in a logical progression. Even the shortest "speech"-such as a news brief or debate answer-should have an introductory statement, body, and a conclusion.

The introductory section must include at least the following:

- Grabber or hook
- Purpose of speech
- Main idea or topic introduction
- Agenda for what's to come in the presentation

The grabber or hook is the short opener that makes or breaks a speech. Grabbers can be questions, facts or statistics, a narrative, an introduction of a problem or a current issue. Speakers are encouraged to be creative but not to stray from the focus of the speech. The point is to draw audience members in-and hold their attention throughout.

The purpose statement comes soon after the grabber. The audience needs to know WHY the speaker is interested in the topic and WHY they should listen (audience members think, "what's in it for me?"). In the purpose statement you tell the audience what to get from the speech-should they learn something? Should they agree with you at the conclusion? Should they take action?

The main idea or topic of a speech is WHAT the speaker will address.

The agenda is more specifically what will be covered and in what order (e.g., "my three main points today consist of..."). The agenda reveals HOW information will be organized and presented. A clear progression of numbered or lettered subjects and their divisions is very helpful. A solid agenda can smoothly lead both the speaker and audience into the main content section of the speech.

The main content section must include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Body "paragraphs"
- Cohesive devices and transitional links
- Examples and details

The body of any successful speech offers a clear progression of topics, with bold opening statements introducing each section. Limit yourself to four to seven main points. The audience will most likely remember only a few.

The points in the body of a speech need to follow the order of the agenda. Each section of the body should have a topic sentence that relates to the overall thesis. All facts, evidence, and details should carefully and clearly support the claims made in the speech. Links between

sections must be clear and cohesive-remind the audience what it is you are talking about. For example, instead of saying "My next point is..." use a more content-embedded approach like "The second reason why it is imperative that China's human rights abuses are considered before allowing entry into the WTO is...". Remind the audience what you are discussing.

The concluding section must include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Reiteration of main points and theme
- Relation to current topics of discussion
- Future implications
- Lead-in to the discussion or question and answer (Q&A) period

As good speeches begin with an effective grabber or hook, they end by coming full-circle. For instance, if you began with a question, quote or narrative, reiterate its importance to your audience. It adds impact, reminds the audience of your main point, and ties together the entire presentation. Tie-in the speech topic to current events, if relevant and appropriate. Give the audience something to "chew on." Most policy-oriented presentations end with recommendations and future projections. Remember to leave your audience with a message that offers lasting impact and naturally leads them into a discussion or question and answer period, if the event calls for such.

Question and answer (Q&A) sessions can be grueling, entertaining or both. Be calm, courteous, attentive and focused on sending the correct information to the audience via this two-way communication process. After the last question and answer exchange, take additional time to sum up main points and ideas. This is to ensure that the audience will leave the event with the speaker's words and ideas in mind-not the last question and answer that was discussed. For maximum impact and presence, repeat your theme, summarize the most important findings and thank your audience for their time and participation.

## **Language and Delivery**

Public speaking is personal. Even in official settings, a speaker's charisma, ethos, and character reveals itself. Overall image and style as much as content construct a speech that carries weight and conveys professionalism.

A speaker's commitment and interest in a topic will shine through-or not-through language and delivery. Be clear on the kind of impression you hope to make and try your best to convey this feeling with language, tone, and delivery. The language must be appropriate to the audience. Tone is also important. For example, the tone used when explaining a fait accompli is very different from the tone used when trying to persuade a group to change their opinion and take action. Likewise, the delivery of the presentation helps convey the message. There is a big difference between a conversational and an authoritative tone-the latter is more appropriate when discussing a controversial issue. Observe seasoned speakers to gain a sense of the impact of language, tone, and delivery-there may be some key elements you can make your own.

## **Language and Audience Attention**

The language and delivery style of one's speech can make the difference between retaining and losing the audience's attention. One of the best ways to focus on language and delivery is to videotape speeches-your own and professional speakers'-and review these two areas. Self-

analysis is one of the most effective tools for marked improvements in presentation style.

Keep the audience engaged by using personal pronouns. Using "we" and "us" instead of "I" and "me" may keep the audience with you. Ask rhetorical or "active" questions. Use narrative to relate shared or familiar experiences. Likewise, carefully use jargon, colloquialisms and other "non-standard" language. An audience that cannot understand or follow examples will not pay attention.

### Thinking Out Loud

Spoken language is vastly different from written discourse. When preparing a presentation think and speak rather than write speech notes. Jot notes in an outline format noting main points and underlining key words or phrases. If you must write down every word, make sure to practice enough in front of an audience (or into a tape recorder) so that it doesn't sound "canned." Try to imitate a conversation and get away from a stiff, stilted style. Even though speeches may be carefully planned, written, and read off of TelePrompTer's, the speaker should never sound like he is reading a script.

### Vocabulary

Vocabulary choices need to be clear, concise, vivid, concrete and correct, especially in the world of international commercial diplomacy. Using correct language is vital to overall comprehension. This is especially true when working with speakers of other languages. A speaker must consider how to best promote imagery in the minds of her audience members-listeners need to see and feel the message. Check the meaning of all key words and be sure to clearly define and to not overuse acronyms and "industry specific" terminology and jargon, especially when working with the media and/or interpreters. It is vital to the integrity of the speech to speak clearly and concisely. Wordiness and convoluted sentences certainly confuse the audience and/or an interpreter. Such miscommunication leads to grave misunderstandings and potentially serious policy implications. Consider how lawyers speak at a deposition; they use strong and precise words, short, hard-hitting sentences and phrases, and vivid imagery. Make every effort to choose and use effective vocabulary.

### Voice and Pronunciation

As for vocal quality and features, the professional speaker should be familiar with the following definitions:

- Pitch: vocal placement on a musical scale
- Volume: voice's projection and loudness
- Rate: speed of speech
- Vocal Variety: not monotone!
- Articulation: individual speech sounds
- Pronunciation: saying words correctly
- Enunciation: contextual articulation and pronunciation of words

### **Non-Verbal Language**

Language choices aside, non-verbal cues add or detract from a presenter and his message. Body language, gestures, eye contact, posture, and poise communicate subtleties of a speaker's

message. Consider examples of non-verbal behavior that aid in understanding:

- Direct eye contact with audience members conveys sincerity that words cannot.
- Moving out from behind the podium conveys honesty.
- Sitting comfortably conveys a sense of being at ease with the audience and the topic of discussion.
- Body language and other non-verbal cues add to the message being conveyed.

Unfortunately, these non-verbal components can detract as much as they add. Consider these examples:

- Jangling change in your pockets distracts the audience attention from the message.
- Fidgeting conveys nervousness.
- Staring down at the podium conveys several messages: nervousness, dishonesty, and unpreparedness.

Paying close attention to these non-verbal cues when practicing a presentation will help you convey your intended message to the audience. Additionally, try to always offer natural facial expressions, gestures, body movements, and direct eye contact with audience members to make everyone feel comfortable. Pauses allow the speaker to collect his thoughts and the audience to absorb information. Professional attire should not be overlooked. Dress should never detract from the speaker or his message. Try not to completely subdue your personal style, but err on the conservative side by avoiding too much jewelry, loud colors and patterns, and inappropriate styles, especially when the speech is being televised.

There are also certain rules of etiquette in different regions. Eastern and western speakers have different styles. The onus rests on the professional to determine which style or mode of presenting works best for any given audience.

## **Technology**

Professional presentations are enhanced with carefully used audiovisual (AV) equipment. However, simply preparing the content is not enough: Be familiar with all AV equipment before you attempt to use it in a professional, public forum and always have "Plan B," extra overhead projector slides, handouts, or backup for Power Point. If something can go wrong, it probably will. Remember that visual aids are effectively used to enhance the message, not to overtake the message—use them sparingly and effectively.

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## **COMMON TYPES of CD PRESENTATIONS**

The most common types of speeches and presentations are meant to **inform** or to **persuade**—or both. These two main types of public speaking can be packaged differently, depending on the overall goals of the speaker. Negotiations, public hearings, and briefs certainly

are more persuasive, while television interviews, panel presentations, and testimony may only serve to inform. Students and practitioners often have the opportunity to give basic informative and/or persuasive speeches; thus, a brief overview of each is covered.

## Speeches to Inform

The goal of informative speaking is to impart knowledge. Consider informative speaking as a “teaching event”. The audience is present to learn new and interesting information on important and relevant topics. Informative speeches include: speeches of **demonstration**, which show an audience how to do something; speeches of **description**, which tell an audience about the “physicality” of something; and speeches of **explanation**, which introduce a new and often abstract concept.

Informative speeches can be effectively designed in six different ways. **Categorical** speeches are divided into segments or parts, such as the US taxation system (federal, state, local). **Spatial** speeches represent topics as they occur in physical space (civic center floor plan). **Sequential** topics are introduced as a set of guidelines or procedure to follow (decision-making guidelines within a governmental body). **Historical** topics are introduced from earliest date to most recent (events that led up to the creation of the WTO). **Comparison** speeches compare something old with something new (diesel fuel cars vs. electric cars). **Causation** speeches show how one condition generates or is generated by another (acid rain).

(Speech designs and categories from: Verderber, R. F. 1997)

## *Links*

For current transcripts of informative and persuasive speeches and public testimony, visit <http://www.ustr.gov/speech-test/assistant/index.shtml>

For current transcripts of informative speeches visit <http://www.undp.org/dpa/statements/list.html>

December 2, 2001, John J. Sweeney — Civil and Human Rights Conference  
[http://www.afclcio.org/cgi-bin/doc\\_display.pl?display=true&type=all](http://www.afclcio.org/cgi-bin/doc_display.pl?display=true&type=all)

February 26, 2001, Child Poverty and Meeting the 2015 Targets —  
<http://www.undp.org/dpa/statements/administ/2001/february/26feb01.html>

October 22, 2001, Forum of Environment Ministers —  
<http://www.undp.org/dpa/statements/administ/2001/october/22oct01.html>

January 17, 2001, Canada Equipped to Compete, Finance Minister in New York  
<http://www.fin.gc.ca/news01/01-007e.html>

“In the Next Round,” editorial by Robert B. Zoellick and EU Commissioner Pascal Lamy on efforts to launch a new trade round, in the *Washington Post*, July 17, 2001 —

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A6426-2001Jul16?language=printer>

## Speeches to Persuade

Persuasive speeches are the most lively and emotional speeches. Persuasive speeches are designed three ways: The **problem-solution** design is appropriate if an audience does not realize that a problem exists. The speaker introduces the problem and leads the audience to the solution. The **statement of reasons** design is best for audiences that agree in the topic and position but need more justification for adopting the intended solution. The speaker introduces the statement and then systematically provides supporting facts. The **comparative-advantages** design works best when an audience is unclear about which option to consider. The speaker compares and contrasts two possibilities to lead the audience to the best answer.

Audience considerations and attitude assessment are of utmost importance for the persuasive speech. Audiences may be neutral on the speech subject, opposed, hostile, apathetic, uninformed, informed, or ready to take action. The type of audience the speaker is facing—and the degree of controversy a speech topic may spark—will seriously affect a speaker’s language choices, delivery style, and speech structure.

## Links

For current transcripts of informative and persuasive speeches and public testimony visit:

<http://www.ustr.gov/speech-test/assistant/index.shtml>

“The WTO and New Global Trade Negotiations: What's at Stake,” before the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, DC, October 30, 2001, in Arabic, French, and Spanish.

<http://www.ustr.gov/speech-test/zoellick/index.shtml>

“Trade Helps Africans Help Themselves,” editorial by Robert Zoellick in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A26, May 23, 2001 (Copyright (c) 2001, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.)

[http://www.ustr.gov/speech-test/zoellick/2001-05-23\\_WSJ\\_Africa.htm](http://www.ustr.gov/speech-test/zoellick/2001-05-23_WSJ_Africa.htm)

Globalization, Terrorism and the World Economy

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/news01/01-105e.html>

## Public Hearings and Testimony

Governments invite public testimony to bring transparency and public participation into decision-making processes. Typically, those who give testimony begin by making a prepared statement (which is usually made available in writing). Subsequently, officials presiding over the meeting ask questions and challenge the positions presented in the statement. Examples of public testimony include:

- In response to allegations of corruption, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) heard public testimony. The testimony helped further the investigation and, importantly, introduced at least an appearance of transparency into the process.
- Regulatory bodies in the United Kingdom use testimony in determining gas taxes.
- When preparing for bilateral or multilateral negotiations, the United States Trade Representative's Office invites testimony from interested parties.

Often an invitation is required for testimony; one may not arrive for a hearing or meeting uninvited and expect to testify. However, those wishing to testify may always contact a committee member's office.

Public hearings give committee members an opportunity to question those testifying. The questions are meant to probe and challenge and to draw out the positions of those testifying. In cases where a committee member agrees with the position presented, he or she may ask an "easy" question, or a question that allows the respondent to elaborate further on the benefits of his or her proposal. Conversely, a committee member opposed to a presented view is likely to ask challenging or complex questions that are meant to show weaknesses with the presented position. In cases where a committee member asks a question to which the respondent does not know the answer, it is best to admit it and offer to provide an answer at a later time.

### ***Links***

For information on writing and submitting public testimony visit:

[http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual\\_writing2.htm](http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual_writing2.htm)

[http://www.ustr.gov/speech-test/zoellick/zoellick\\_3.html](http://www.ustr.gov/speech-test/zoellick/zoellick_3.html)

<http://www.brtable.org/issue.cfm/9>

### **Negotiations**

People and agencies negotiate to achieve results they could not achieve on their own. Negotiations range from small, informal discussions to formal, orchestrated meetings, and include everything in between. We negotiate all the time, though we may not call it as such. A discussion

among people from the same organization, such as a project team determining how to divide up work, is an example of a small, informal negotiation. A WTO meeting discussing trade and the environment is a large, formal negotiation. No matter what the size or scope, individuals can move toward successful resolution by using positive verbal and non-verbal language.

Approaching an issue from opposing viewpoints is implied at the outset of most negotiations. That said, verbal and non-verbal language assists in bringing parties closer together. Harmonizing verbal language includes:

- Using the term “partner” and “counterpart” instead of “opponent” or “adversary” when referring to negotiation counterparts.
- Asking open-ended questions to draw out the main points of your counterpart.
- Summarizing or restating the main points of agreement or disagreement, so that all parties are clear what is being negotiated.

Non-verbal language can also assist in bringing parties closer together:

- Consider sitting on the same side of the table as your counterparts rather than across from one another.
- Create a calm atmosphere: uncross arms, sit comfortably, and take deep breaths. This will calm you and add a calming presence.
- Show that you are listening: nod your head, make eye contact, take notes, and paraphrase.

The goal of the negotiation is to find a mutually agreeable solution. Verbal and non-verbal language can help set the right tone.

### ***Links***

For information and tips on how to prepare for interest-based negotiation visit

[http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual\\_writing2.htm](http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual_writing2.htm)

[http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/agric\\_e/negs\\_bkgrnd01\\_nutshell\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/negs_bkgrnd01_nutshell_e.htm)

### **Briefs**

Briefs are concise summaries used to inform others of issues or events. They can be used to update readers on current status or to provide background. They can be formal, such as a press

secretary giving a brief to a press corps; or they can be informal, such as a junior staff member updating her boss on the content of a series of meetings. No matter the level of formality, a brief should include a short but strong introduction with a grabber, topic sentence, and agenda. Keep explanation of points clear and concise. Offer a conclusion with future projections and considerations of issue. For information and tips for writing and submitting briefs visit

[http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual\\_writing.htm](http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual_writing.htm)

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## **CD SPECIFIC ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRESENTATIONS\_**

### **Working with the Media**

Working with the media can be a stressful experience, especially during times of crisis and when discussing sensitive topics. Some basic guidelines for speaking in front of the camera will aid the commercial diplomat during press conferences, interviews, and news briefs. It is important to remain calm (by breathing deeply, slowly and consistently) and to stay on topic by focusing on the questions being asked. Remember to look directly into a camera and towards an “actual” audience.

### **Working with Interpreters**

Working with interpreters takes some thought and planning. For information on working with interpreters, see [http://www.aiic.net/en/tips/conforg/10\\_golden\\_rules.htm](http://www.aiic.net/en/tips/conforg/10_golden_rules.htm). Also see <http://www.aiic.net> for additional information on conference interpreting guidelines.

Further information on how to prepare documents for working with interpreters can be found at: [http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual\\_writing2.htm#](http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/manual_writing2.htm#)

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## **SUMMARY COMMENTS**

The most important elements of presenting for the CD professional are consideration of audience, context of event, content choices, language and delivery, organization, technology usage, and media presence. Both informative and persuasive speaking are necessary during debates, negotiations, hearings, or briefings.

Choosing a topic that is of interest to the speaker first and foremost is critical for audience

attention. Consideration of the speech event context will also help the professional formulate a delivery plan that is most effective and appropriate.

Language use should always be clear, concise, concrete, and correct. Appropriate use of terminology, including acronyms and jargon, should be properly considered for intended audience.

The information should be properly packaged to fit a particular group's needs and interests. Organizational features include an introduction with grabber; purpose statement; preview/agenda; body with clearly ordered examples; and conclusion with summative comments. All information should connect with the intended audience and their expectations, goals, attitudes, and demographics.

Technological trends such as the use of PowerPoint (or other slide show presentation aids) can further enhance how the message is presented. Always practice with actual AV equipment before presentation. Know how to effectively use microphones, lights, the overhead projector, and computer in the speech venue.

Presence of media and/or interpreters gives the professional speaker an added edge. Consistent planning and preparation will ease stress for the CD professional.

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## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Communication Theory**

Communication theory is a body of knowledge that refers to how oral and written messages are sent and received, interpreted, coded, and decoded. References are provided below for those interested in learning about communication theory, as well as leadership communication theory.

### **Education and Training**

One can find a variety of training programs for enhancing public speaking and presentation skills—there are professional organizations such as Toastmaster's International and academic programs at colleges and universities. A self-motivated practitioner can certainly do well on his own—especially with the aid of videotape analysis and peer feedback to help shape improvements. Some organizations and businesses even send employees to weekend workshops and short-term training courses to hone skills. Time commitment may be an issue—but understand that presentation and speaking skills improve over time. Even the most seasoned of speakers can make improvements during her career as emphasis on different elements in presentation style fluctuate and change.

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## REFERENCE MATERIALS

### Text

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- [http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/powerpoint/eve/connell\\_frameall.htm](http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/powerpoint/eve/connell_frameall.htm) Public Speaking Skills for CD – Power Points slides and instructional notes
- <http://members.aol.com/DOWESNEY/extemp.html> Extemporaneous speaking as a forensic activity – guidelines and helpful tips
- <http://www.overview@speechwriting.com> Professional speech writing team
- <http://www.presentingsolutions.com/effectivepresentations.html> Tips on presenting/communicating effectively
- <http://www.toastmasters.org> Toastmaster's International Public Speaking for Professionals Organization

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## **PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS – TIPS AND GUIDELINES**

### **Audience and Context Tips**

- Conduct preliminary audience analysis;
- Investigate context of event;
- Consider expectations of speaker, event organizer, audience;
- Practice the presentation in the actual venue. If this is not possible, simulate and improvise!

### **Content Tips**

- Choose content appropriate and relevant to event, audience, theme (*why this topic for this group and event?*);
- Establish professional credibility and authenticity early on in the speech (what is your expertise/authority on the topic?);
- Make sure main points and themes are limited for more impact and to avoid information-overload;
- Be aware of others' viewpoints, biases and prejudices and address if appropriate;
- Acknowledge all sides of an issue, when appropriate.

### **Organizational Tips (some from Brydon and Scott, 1994)**

- Organize content in a basic, easy to follow structure that includes a solid opening, body, and conclusion;
- Begin and end every speaking event with impact;
- Mention key points and main ideas to keep speech theme consistent throughout the presentation;
- Use cohesive devices and transitions effectively within the body of a prepared speech;
- The audience will decide in the first few minutes of the presentation whether to listen to you or not. Catch their attention right away with an effective grabber or hook;
- Be creative and interesting. Discuss the most relevant portions of your research;

- Make sure main points are clearly stated at the beginning of the presentation in an agenda or preview;
- Use facts, figures, statistics and other sources to establish credibility but do not simply overwhelm the audience a list of numbers. Communicate meaningful, useful and relevant information;
- Pay attention to transitions between sections and speakers. Make sure these flow smoothly instead of being choppy and awkward;
- Maintain professionalism throughout the entire presentation. The audience makes judgments on you from the second you stand up until you take your seat after the Q & A period;
- Over-prepare for your speech;
- The question and answer period should enhance the presented information. Announce at the onset that questions will be taken after the presentation;
- Restate questions into the microphone for the audience. Speak directly into the microphone when answering. If a particular question requires a lengthy response, be brief and concise and then offer to talk with that person after presentation conclusion;
- Answer questions directly with facts to back up answers;
- Take questions from different audience members;
- Announce when end of question and answer period will be by stating “one final question”;
- Allow question and answer period to be lively – and always summarize main points and essential themes at the end of this session.

### **Question and Answer Tips (some from Brydon and Scott, 1994)**

- Mention at start of speech that Q&A session will take place at the end of the presentation.
- Repeat question back to speaker to give time to consider answer as well as to let all audience members hear.
- Keep answers clear and concise. Refer back to points made during the presentation.
- If you do not know an answer try to redirect or redefine the question and discuss a related issue that you do know about. If this does not work, do not fake it. Say you do not know and offer to check into it and follow up later with the questioner.
- Maintain composure – do not fall prey to hostile audience members’ tactics.
- Challenge assumptions made in question-formation.
- Point out hypotheticals used in question formation.
- Take care with multifaceted questions. Be sure to answer all parts of the question(s).
- **Focus on main points of presentation whenever possible.**

### **Language and Delivery Tips**

- Be clear, concise, correct with all language usage;
- Consider non-verbal cues (eye contact, body language);
- Observe professional speakers in the field;
- Never read a speech - communicate directly to the audience. When reading, the voice is lost in the podium and eye contact is non-existent. Use notes in an outline form with key

words and short phrases;

- Use a conversational quality to convey enthusiasm and spontaneity;
- Consider elements of voice: pitch, volume, rate/pace, tone, variety, articulation, pronunciation and expressiveness;

Use voice to underline and *highlight* main points. In practice, ask: is this the voice that I would like to listen to if I were in the audience? If not, work on changing it through further practice and perhaps by audio taping yourself and playing it back for critique or by modeling voice after admired speakers;

- Avoid fillers (um, ah, yeah, you know, like) Just breathe and pause, which will only last for a few seconds. The audience will not notice and the pause will allow the information to be absorbed by the audience and give the speaker a chance to collect thoughts;
- Breathe deeply and quietly to calm nerves;
- Use video/audio tape and/or colleagues and peers for feedback.

## **Technology Tips**

- The use of audiovisual equipment is a necessary part of any good, professional presentation;
- Plan in advance (graphics, handouts, music) in order to become familiar with materials, practice how to use them effectively and make changes if necessary;
- Do not go overboard on graphics. The audiovisual aids are to enhance and support well-founded research;
- When using graphics, make sure that they are easy to read from all seats in the audience. It is best to use bullet points, short phrases and key words only;
- Use a standard color scheme and format so each slide presented has the same "look" - too many colors, fonts, and images are distracting;
- Be prepared. Know how to use a microphone and the computers before the speech. As the speaker, do not turn and look at the screen. The audience does not wish to see the back of your head and your voice will be lost behind you;
- Prepare Plan B - Power outages occur. Equipment explodes. Handouts get wet. Materials can be ruined. Always be ready with another way to deliver information effectively and professionally. And, if something does go wrong, remain professional. The audience assesses your credibility from the minute you enter a room until you leave - not solely when you are addressing them directly, from the podium.

## **Informative Speech Tips**

- Be ready to impart knowledge and understanding to audience;
- Choose an appropriate style and design to effectively organize and present;
- Use lists and numbers to explain factual information in a vivid and digestible manner;
- Offer new perspectives and insights for audience members to consider;
- Engage in lively question and answer or discussion periods.

## **Persuasive Speech Tips**

- Communicate all information in a reliable and responsible manner;
- Establish credibility to speak on the subject early;
- Speak with charisma, enthusiasm and above all, conviction;
- Consider audience beliefs and values prior to speech construction;
- Be aware of audience bias and prejudice on current, controversial issues;
- Consider ethical consequences of decision-making;
- Choose speech designs appropriate for anticipated audience attitudes;
- Anticipate and prepare for opposition.

## **Working with the Media Tips** (some from: Brydon and Scott, 1994)

- Be clear on discussion topic ahead of time by contacting TV or radio station;
- Tell your story – or somebody else will – and not always correctly;
- Time is limited – be clear on key points that must be conveyed to the audience – both on and off camera;
- Memorize main points;
- Use anecdotes and narrative to stimulate delivery;
- Be sure to look directly at the camera – and at the interviewer – for a natural gaze;
- Be conservative in dress and style – stick to solid colors. Wear contacts instead of glasses, if possible;
- If seated during a taped interview, do not cross legs. Sit on the front third of the chair to appear more alert and interested;
- Glance at note cards during breaks and commercials – never on camera;
- Practice answers to questions ahead of time – anticipate the tricky questions and be ready with clear, concise, sharp responses (say it all in less than a minute!).

## **Working with Interpreters** (from AICC and Prof. David Sawyer, MIIS)

- Book interpreters/events in advance;
- Brief interpreter in advance on conference or event subject;
- Brief interpreter in advance on specific, technical terms, especially acronyms and abbreviations;
- Fully inform interpreter in advance of expectations (from additional engagements to actual speech/presentation expectations);
- Offer briefings prior to conference or event;
- Provide all resources, background information, related topics;
- Get to know interpreter – person, professional, voice and language style;
- Keep steady tempo – pauses and interruptions are uncomfortable;
- Be honest about your language abilities;
- When working with a skilled interpreter, it is not necessary to stick to manuscript;
- Act calmly during question and answer period;
- Do not use an interpreter if unclear or untrustworthy about confidential information;
- Employ the best professional as you would an accountant or legal advisor.