

# How To Make An Effective Speech - A Checklist

Whenever you have an opportunity to make a speech to a crowd, you have an opportunity to build support or lose support for your issue, depending on whether your speech is effective. If you follow the checklist set out below you will help ensure that every speech you give builds support for your issue:

## Arrangements

- 1. arrangements made well ahead of time
- 2. call made in a professional, courteous manner
- 3. follow-up letter with background materials sent
- 4. follow-up phone call made two days before, confirm all details
- 5. presentation is announced to members - posters, announcement

## Preparation for Speech

- 6. read over background materials several times
- 7. write out speech outline or speech, practice it, evaluate it (get friends to help)
- 8. write out typical questions and answers on notecards, practice answering them
- 9. look for opportunities to explain speech content to friends, people you meet

## Before the Speech

- 10. dress appropriately and neatly
- 11. arrive 30-45 minutes early, introduce yourself to staff/contact person
- 12. talk with core members, show warmth, get to know what has happened at the group, what people care about, how familiar they are with speech topic
- 13. make physical aspects of room as helpful and comfortable as possible (ventilation, seating, microphone, sound)

## Qualities of an Effective Speech

- 14. covers key points - doesn't leave out important points
- 15. interesting - uses effective examples, stories, personal experiences, is brief
- 16. well-organized - examples, stories, statistics relate clearly to main points
- 17. clear - doesn't skip around, clear language, statistics are few and well-used
- 18. accurate - no factual mistakes, analysis is correct, speaker's role is clear
- 19. involves audience - frequently asks questions (e.g. "Are members of the audience familiar with \_\_\_"), leaves time for questions, uses role-plays
- 20. introduction and conclusion are short, get attention, summarize main points
- 21. advocacy oriented - encourages audience to share information with friends, speech takes explicitly citizen point of view, be frank and honest
- 22. audiovisuals - speech is built around effective audiovisuals, handouts

## Delivering the speech

- 23. begin on time (or when most effective), get audience attention effectively
- 24. make your delivery warm, natural, with energy and confidence
- 25. maintain eye contact, look for cues that you are connecting (smiles, interested, upright posture) and when you aren't (bored looks, slouching, fidgeting)
- 26. don't talk too fast, speak loud enough, speak distinctly
- 27. use pauses, variations in the speed, pitch of your voice, gestures for interest
- 28. avoid nervous habits like rocking back and forth, chewing gum, fidgeting
- 29. involve audience in some way every few minutes (see #15 above) by checking how many people are familiar with examples you use, agree with generalizations you make
- 30. work with audio-visuals, point to them, refer to them later