



Information Note

Public Speaking

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Introduction

This information note provides practical details and tips on how to plan and deliver a speech.

Public Speaking, Making a Speech or Doing a Presentation are things that people involved in tenants and residents associations may have to do at some time in order to get your message across to the wider public.

Although speaking in public is not always an easy thing to do, there are methods you can use to assist you become more effective public speakers. Planning, preparation and knowing your subject and audience will enable even the quietest of us to persuade others to consider your point of view. Practice also helps you to become more effective.

What is Public Speaking?

Public speaking does not only have to be about a large conference or rally – but can be at your own committee meetings, public meetings, working groups, deputations to landlords and any other forums where you want to get your message across to others.

How might speaking in public affect you?

Physical responses may be experienced before and during a speech such as:

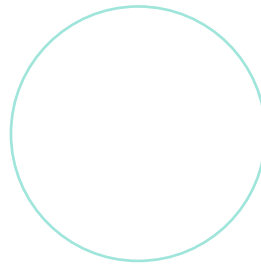
1. Sweating
2. Dry mouth
3. Blushing
4. Heart pounding
5. Stammering
6. Urgent need to go to the loo

You may come up with others – they too can be overcome.

“The Cycle of Fear”

1. Thoughts about Speaking in Public

3. Physical Response



2. Attitude and Emotions

4. Performance

Here you can see that what we think about giving the speech will affect your emotions and attitude toward the task ahead. This will in turn make you react in certain ways – perhaps you blush, fidget, stammer or look at the floor. When these aspects and others are too evident throughout your speech, your ability to get the message across is hindered.

However

- You can learn to control the nervousness
- There are methods which will assist us become better at speaking in public
- Almost everyone has to speak in public at some time in their life

Something to remember

Feeling some level of fear is actually good for you. The adrenaline created gives you the energy you need to deliver the speech. So, be positive! You have something to say, a message to deliver, information to give, knowledge to share. What you have to say is worth listening to, isn't it?

“FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY”

This is the title of a famous book by Susan Jeffries on the subject of dealing with our fears. It has now become a commonly used phrase to encourage us to challenge ourselves to do new things or continue doing things we find a bit difficult.

A structured approach to preparing a speech

Step 1 Clarify your purpose

- ◆ Do you want to persuade, inform, promote discussion, announce something, motivate others, or what?
- ◆ Write down one sentence to describe your purpose. This is to test that you are really clear what your aim is. If you are not clear, you can't expect your audience to be clear.
- ◆ Avoid having too many aims for one speech. One is best, two is manageable, three is getting difficult from what you and your audience

Step 2 Assess attitudes and interests

- ◆ What does your audience care about? Can you relate your message to this? Think how your audience might benefit from what you are proposing.

Step 3 Collect your material

- ◆ Bring together any information you can get on your topic. Sift through it and sort it out once you have it together.

Step 4 Prepare an outline

- ◆ Your outline will consist of key points, ideas or headings. First write them down in any order. Then sort them into a sensible order.

Group your key points under the following headings: Opening, Main Points, Conclusion or as laid out in many novels – a beginning, a middle and end

The three parts of a good speech

1. An introduction that should grab people's attention
2. Brief detail of the key points you will cover
3. A strong ending to remind the audience of key points

“Practice Makes Perfect”

Think about something you may wish to give a speech on or an idea you may want to ask your committee to consider acting upon. Now prepare to give your Speech or talk on this subject!

Once you have prepared your speech, give it a run through. It may be a good idea to have an “audience”, perhaps family members, other members of your tenants group or some friends or colleagues – alternatively practice in front of a full length mirror or you may wish to make a tape recording or video of your performance.

Now that you have had your practice, consider the following.

Questions	Answers
How do you think you got on?	
How was your voice projection? Could your audience hear what you were saying?	
Did you alter the tone and pitch of your voice in order to make your talk sound more interesting?	
Are you aware of any body language that would help or hinder your talk?	
Would your presentation benefit from having visual aids? (i.e. graphs, tables photos, a presentation etc) If yes, what kind?	
Do you think you got your message across? Is there anything else that may help you get your point across even more effectively?	

It's all in the planning - things to think about!

The Meeting Place

- ◆ Consider the seating arrangements
- ◆ Will the audience be comfortable?
- ◆ Is it too formal or informal?
- ◆ Do you have a “top table” (from which the presentation will be given) – do you need one?
- ◆ Do you have the right space to make your presentation / speech

The Audience

- ◆ What is their expectation?
- ◆ What do you know about them?
- ◆ What result do you want?
- ◆ Do you want them to ask questions?

Non – Verbal Communication - how we communicate without using words

- ◆ Eye contact – its important to look at your audience, mumbling into your chest or looking at the floor will lose impact
- ◆ How close should you stand to your audience? (i.e. standing behind a table puts distance between you and your audience, standing closer can be considered more friendly)
- ◆ Gestures – try not to wave your hands about too much or play with keys, pens or loose change in your pocket – this will distract your audience
- ◆ Try not to move around too much – you don't want your audience to get sea sick trying to follow you around
- ◆ Facial expression is also important – think of what will make people warm to you and your ideas

Visual Aids – such as graphs, tables photos, a presentation etc

- ◆ What kind of visual aids do you want to use and why?
- ◆ Does the equipment work? – check that it does
- ◆ Do you know how to work it?
- ◆ Remember you are the main event – aids should only help you
- ◆ Here are some things to think about when planning your speech.

Planning the speech

The Introduction

- ◆ Introduce yourself and who or what you represent to the audience
- ◆ What is the talk about?
- ◆ Statement of what action, if any, you are seeking
- ◆ Inform audience of the structure of the talk

The Body of the Speech – the 4 P's

- ◆ Position – the current state
- ◆ Problem – why is this an issue
- ◆ Possibilities – offer possible solutions and suggest pros and cons
- ◆ Proposal – what you want to see happen

Sum Up

- ◆ Sum up – remind the audience of what you want and your case for it
- ◆ It's a wind up, not a wind down – keep up your enthusiasm, get people on your side
- ◆ Strong ending – appeal for action or propose a solution
- ◆ Decide the conclusion based on the purpose of your talk
- ◆ Do not add any new information

Making the Speech

The following highlights some things to remember when making your speech:

1. Timing is very important
2. Have a dummy run
3. Use memory aids – e.g. notes on cards
4. Use pauses

As you can see there is a lot to think about when planning to deliver a successful speech such as: - Timing is very important, A dummy run can build your confidence, using memory aids means that you don't have to learn everything by heart, pausing at appropriate points in the speech can highlight specific points or assist you gather your thoughts.

Openers & Closers

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression”

The opening of a speech will determine how well the rest of it is received.

In the main, the opening of a speech should achieve the following: -

- ◆ Make an immediate impact
- ◆ Grab people's attention
- ◆ Focus the audience on you and your message
- ◆ Establish credibility
- ◆ Catch people's interest

Some common mistakes are: -

- ◆ **A cautious and apologetic opening**

“Er...good morning...ladies and ...er....gentlemen.

You will have to excuse me but I have aer....

slight cold...so I'm..er... sorry if I sounder...slightly bunged up”

Some people in the audience may give you some sympathy – but it has hardly established your credibility or grabbed people's attention.

- ◆ **Failure to clarify your objectives and the purpose of your speech**

People are not clear where you are going or how you will get there. They are wondering what is the point of listening to you and they will lose concentration.

- ◆ **An obvious statement or observation**

“Isn't it a nice sunny day?”

This may be appropriate if you are talking to a group of eight- year olds! It is not likely to get an adult audience jumping to attention thinking “Now here's someone worth listening to

Getting your message across

1. Making a Positive Opening

The following highlights some methods you may want to think about using for the opening of your speech: -

◆ Quotations

Benjamin Franklin once said, "There are only two things you can be certain of in life, one is death and the other is taxes". Well I believe there is now a third.....

William James, who has been described as the Father of American psychology, said, "You can change your life by changing your attitude". Today, I hope we can come to the conclusion to change all our lives and the life of our community for the better.....

"Top Tip"

Quotations are best used when, they are short and to the point. They will also make more impact if they have been made by someone the audience is likely to have heard of.

◆ Rhetorical Questions

"How many people here today would like to see an improved Estate Management Service in the area? Most of you, I expect, and today what I want to talk about is how this can be achieved"

In your local area it is likely that you will get a positive reaction from this type of opening. Now all you have to do is follow through with good options and ideas.

◆ Statistics

Using statistics can immediately grab the attention of your audience. The more dramatic the statistics, the greater the impact.

"This year 75% of tenants living in the multi-storey flats are on the transfer list..... This compares to only 10% five years ago.....What can we do about this?"

"Top Tip"

When using statistics make sure you can back them up! There may be someone who will try to discredit your argument because they don't like what you are saying.

Getting your message across

2. “Closing in Style – Some Helpful Hints”

When delivering a speech or giving a talk, many people start with powerful openings – but somehow it goes all wrong near the end. Some common mistakes are: -

- ◆ Not allowing enough time – therefore rushing to get finished before everyone starts to leave or the next speaker is due to start
- ◆ Forgetting to close – going on and on, almost putting the audience to sleep
- ◆ Finishing abruptly – everyone is sitting back listening to the speech when suddenly the speaker says “Thank – you” and sits down, giving the audience no idea that the speech was about to finish
- ◆ Apologising – thinking that it has been enough of an ordeal for the audience to listen to the speech. In this case the closing is full of negative statements that leave the audience feeling low.
- ◆ Admitting you forgot a point – “ Anyway in conclusion....oh that reminds me, something I forgot to mention at the beginning.....”

Just as the audience thinks the speaker has almost finished another point is introduced. At this stage in the speech it is best just to leave it out.

Of course in your speeches these sorts of things wouldn't happen as you will have planned and prepared properly, won't you?

Things to remember

- ◆ **Return to your opening theme**

Remind your audience of what you said at the beginning.

If you started with a quote you may refer back to it.

- ◆ **Make a challenge to your audience**

“We won’t be able to achieve change unless we take action”

- ◆ **Summarise your main argument**

Reinforce the main points of your speech by telling them again, briefly, what you have covered

- ◆ **Use a poem or a quote**

“You’ve got to be in it to win it”



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