

Drop the Mic:
Overcoming Fear and
Flexing Your Skills
When Speaking in
Public



michael g. strawser, ph.d.

LEGACY

COMMUNICATION

Table of Contents

BECOMING AN O.C.D. SPEAKER

ORGANIZATION

CONTENT

DELIVERY

NOTHING TO FEAR

WHO ARE YOU?

Becoming an **O.C.D.** Speaker

YOU HAVE MOST CERTAINLY HEARD THE JOKE. 'IN A RECENT SURVEY, 75% OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEIR GREATEST FEAR WAS PUBLIC SPEAKING. THEIR SECOND GREATEST FEAR, DEATH.' THIS OLD TROPE HAS CERTAINLY MADE ITS ROUNDS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING CIRCLES FOR DECADES. WHILE I DOUBT THE VALIDITY OF THE NUMBERS, THE SENTIMENT IS WORTH THINKING ABOUT. IS PUBLIC SPEAKING REALLY OUR GREATEST FEAR?

UNFORTUNATELY, FOR MANY PUBLIC SPEAKING IS 'WORSE THAN DEATH'. OUR PALMS GET SWEATY, EYES WATER, STOMACH ACHES, AND OUR MIND STARTS TO THINK ABOUT THE ABSOLUTELY WORST-CASE SCENARIO AND LATCH ON TO THAT UNREALITY AS THE ONLY OUTCOME. HOWEVER, PUBLIC SPEAKING IS MEANT TO ACCOMPLISH MUCH MORE THAN THE BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR STOMACH.

Becoming an **O.C.D.** Speaker

BEFORE LOOKING INDIVIDUALLY AT ORGANIZATION, CONTENT, AND DELIVERY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE FIRST THAT ALL SPEAKING SHOULD BE AUDIENCE-CENTERED. YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT YOU CAN ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE BEFORE SPEAKING.

BEFORE SPEAKING, TRY TO UNDERSTAND:

THE SITUATION (IN WHAT CONTEXT IS THE SPEECH OCCURRING)

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS (BACKGROUND, LANGUAGE, AGE, OCCUPATIONS, AND OTHER CATEGORIES ARE HELPFUL FOR THINKING ABOUT THE AUDIENCE AS A WHOLE)

AUDIENCE PSYCHOLOGY (WHAT ARE THE COLLECTIVE

ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, OR VALUES OF THE AUDIENCE)

THE INTERESTED AND KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF THE AUDIENCE (WHAT DO THEY KNOW AND HOW MUCH DO THEY CARE)

IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE, YOU ARE WELL ON YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS.

Becoming an **O.C.D.** Speaker

IF WE KNOW OUR AUDIENCE, WHAT IS NEXT? MANY BELIEVE THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING BEGAN IN ANCIENT GREECE WITH ARISTOTLE WIDELY CONSIDERED AS THE FIRST PUBLIC SPEAKING EXPERT. ARISTOTLE BELIEVED THAT WE HAVE THREE PRIMARY WAYS WE PERSUADE OTHERS: ETHOS (PERSUADING OTHERS BASED ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SPEAKER); PATHOS (ENGAGING THE EMOTIONS); LOGOS (USING ARGUMENT AND LOGICAL REASONING). THESE THREE PILLARS, CREDIBILITY, EMOTION, AND LOGIC SHOULD INFUSE ALL OF OUR PUBLIC SPEAKING ENDEAVORS. YET, I ALSO BELIEVE SPEAKERS NEED TO BE AWARE OF THREE OTHER DIMENSIONS THAT REINFORCE THE IDEAS OF ARISTOTLE.

Becoming an **O.C.D.** Speaker

WE CANNOT IGNORE PRESENTATION SKILLS. PRESENTATION SKILLS GIVE US POWER AND ARE TIED TO LEADERSHIP. IN ADDITION, GREAT PRESENTERS INSPIRE AND CAPTIVATE-THEY 'ASK' AND GET RESULTS. THIS SHORT EBOOK WILL ENCOURAGE YOU TO BE AN O.C.D. PUBLIC SPEAKER AND PROVIDES TIPS ON ORGANIZATION OF SPEECH MATERIAL, CONTENT OF SPEECHES, AND THE ACTUAL DELIVERY OF THE SPEECH ITSELF.

Organization

IDEALLY WE WOULD START WITH 'C' (CONTENT) BUT BECOMING A C.O.D. PUBLIC SPEAKER JUST DOESN'T HAVE THE SAME RING TO IT. SO, FOR PURPOSES OF OUR ACRONYM, WE ARE STARTING WITH ORGANIZATION. IN TALK LIKE TED: THE 9 PUBLIC SPEAKING SECRETS OF THE WORLD'S TOP MINDS, CARMINE GALLO ESTABLISHES A PREFERRED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR SPEECHES. IT IS SIMPLE AND NOT COMPLICATED. GALLO ENCOURAGES HIS READERS TO CONSIDER THEIR HEADLINE, THEIR 3 KEY POINTS, WHICH REINFORCE THE HEADLINE, AND THEN EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORTS EACH KEY POINT.

Organization

ONE ADDITIONAL FRAMEWORK IS THE SET FORMULA.

S- SHORT ANSWER/SUMMARY: WHAT IS THE SUMMARY OF THE CONCEPT YOU WANT TO COMMUNICATE OR THE BOTTOM LINE IDEA YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN?

E- EVIDENCE: WHAT DATA POINTS SUPPORT YOUR SUMMARY IDEA?

T- TRANSITION: HANDS THE CONVERSATION BACK TO THE LISTENER. THIS COULD INCLUDE ACTION STEPS OR QUESTIONS.

THERE ARE OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL REALITIES TOO. YOU MAY WANT TO FRAME YOUR CONTENT CHRONOLOGICALLY (IF A TIMELINE IS HELPFUL) OR MAYBE YOU ARE TRYING TO PERSUADE SOMEONE AND HAVE DECIDED A CAUSE-EFFECT-SOLUTION STRUCTURE IS BEST. NO MATTER WHAT UMBRELLA YOU USE, YOUR SPEECH MUST BE WELL ORGANIZED AND CLEAR.

Content

THE SPEECH CONTENT IS DRIVEN BY THE SITUATION, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND IN SOME WAYS THE AUDIENCE. BECAUSE OF THESE REALITIES, CONTENT SHOULD BE RELEVANT, SIMPLE, UNIQUE, BRIEF AND INTERESTING. YOUR CONTENT MUST BE MESSAGE DRIVEN AND AUDIENCE-CENTERED. STAY ON MESSAGE. WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO: KNOW, THINK, OR DO DIFFERENTLY AS A RESULT OF HEARING YOUR PRESENTATION? EARLIER I MENTIONED ARISTOTLE. HIS CONCEPTS OF SPEAKER CREDIBILITY, LOGIC, AND EMOTION ARE IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER AS YOU THINK DEEPLY ABOUT PRESENTATION CONTENT. ARE YOU DEMONSTRATING CREDIBILITY THROUGH THE CONTENT YOU SHARE? HAVE YOU INFUSED CONTENT THAT IS LOGICAL AND EVIDENCE-DRIVEN? ARE YOU ALLOWING THE AUDIENCE TO EMOTIONALLY CONNECT TO YOUR CONTENT? THESE ARE ALL IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS.

Content

THE MOST EFFECTIVE PRESENTERS USE THE SAME TECHNIQUES AS GREAT STORYTELLERS: BY REMINDING PEOPLE OF THE STATUS QUO AND THEN REVEALING THE PATH TO A BETTER WAY, THEY SET UP A CONFLICT THAT NEEDS TO BE RESOLVED. WHAT STORY DOES YOUR CONTENT TELL YOUR AUDIENCE? PRESENTATIONS ARE STORIES AND YOU MUST DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO PRESENT THE NARRATIVE. WILL YOU USE SLIDES? HAVE YOU OUTLINED AND PLOTTED YOUR NEXT IDEA? HOW DOES EVERYTHING FIT TOGETHER? IF YOU DO USE VISUALS, PREPARE YOUR VISUALS BY USING ONE IDEA PER SLIDE, KEEPING YOUR PRESENTATION SIMPLE, AND INCLUDE FRESH VISUALS.

Delivery

SOME ASSUME THAT PRESENTATION DELIVERY IS A 'FIRST AMONG EQUALS' BUT ORGANIZATION, CONTENT AND DELIVERY ARE ALL WEIGHTED EQUALLY. DELIVERY IS THE HOW. HOW YOU ACTUALLY PRESENT YOUR SPEECH. I LIKE TO THINK OF DELIVERY AS DEMONSTRATING AN EXECUTIVE OR COMMAND PRESENCE. THE CORE CHARACTERISTIC OF AN EXECUTIVE PRESENCE IS THE ABILITY TO PROJECT GRAVITAS—CONFIDENCE, POISE UNDER PRESSURE AND DECISIVENESS. FURTHERMORE, COMMUNICATION—INCLUDING SPEAKING SKILLS, ASSERTIVENESS, AND THE ABILITY TO READ AN AUDIENCE OR SITUATION—AND APPEARANCE CONTRIBUTE TO A PERSON'S PERCEIVED EXECUTIVE PRESENCE. OFTEN PEOPLE WHO EXHIBIT EXECUTIVE PRESENCE EXUDE A "WOW FACTOR," OR MAGNETISM, AND ARE ABLE TO EASILY INFLUENCE OTHERS. THEY OFTEN SPEAK UP, USE STRONG AND CLEAR LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATE WITH PASSION AND ENERGY, AND DISPLAY POSITIVE BODY LANGUAGE BY STANDING TALL, MAKING EYE CONTACT, OFFERING A FIRM HANDSHAKE AND USING AN AUTHORITATIVE TONE OF VOICE. BE CONFIDENT AND EXUDE AN EXECUTIVE PRESENCE WHEN YOU PRESENT.

Nothing to Fear

WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR...BUT PUBLIC SPEAKING. WE ARE SWITCHING FROM THE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL. EVERYONE CAN ACHIEVE THE "PILLARS" (O. C. D.)- BUT YOU CAN SEPARATE YOURSELF IF YOU TRULY EMBRACE A CONFIDENT AND REALISTIC MINDSET. 30-40% OF INDIVIDUALS STRUGGLE SIGNIFICANTLY WITH PUBLIC SPEAKING APPREHENSION. THE PHYSICAL SIDE EFFECTS OF THIS ANXIETY INCLUDE (GET READY): SWEATING, NAUSEA, INABILITY TO SPEAK, QUIVERING VOICE, MUSCLE TENSION, CONFUSION, SHAKING KNEES, DIZZINESS, INCREASED HEART RATE AND OTHER PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS. IF YOU STRUGGLE WITH THESE THINGS KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

BUT WHY DO YOU FEEL THESE THINGS? WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF? IF YOU SIGNIFICANTLY STRUGGLE WITH PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY YOU MAY NEED TO CHANGE YOUR MINDSET. VISUALIZE YOUR SUCCESS. IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE AND ABOUT YOUR MESSAGE YOU WILL INEVITABLY BE THINKING LESS ABOUT YOURSELF. AS YOU SPEAK, FIND ADVOCATES IN THE ROOM. WHO IS GIVING YOU POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE EYE CONTACT? WHO SEEMS LIKE A FRIENDLY FACE.

Nothing to Fear

WE HAVE COMMUNICATION ANXIETY BECAUSE WE ARE
FOCUSING ON:

SELF NOT OTHERS.

MESSING UP NOT MESSAGING.

WORST CASE NOT BEST CASE.

YOU WILL NEVER BE A PERFECT SPEAKER. THAT IS NOT THE
POINT. THE POINT IS TO BE EFFECTIVE. OVERCOME YOUR
ANXIETY THROUGH PREPARATION AND CHANGING YOUR
MINDSET.

Who are **you**?

THE KEYS TO BEING AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTER? KNOW YOURSELF
AND KNOW YOUR MESSAGE. WHO ARE YOU, WHAT IS YOUR STYLE
AND WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO COMMUNICATE?

WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

WHAT DRIVES YOU?

Who are **you**?

SOME FINAL ADVICE:

SPEAK, ALWAYS. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW.

DATA IS POWERFUL. DO NOT OVERWHELM, HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANT DATA POINTS, AND LEAVE WHITE SPACE.

USE VISUALS, AVOID OVER-TEXT, STORYBOARD YOUR PRESENTATIONS.

HAVE A PLAN FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.

michael g. strawser, ph.d.

I understand the art of communication and its strategic importance for your organization. Effective communication can help you manage complex business problems and reach new heights.

How can I help:

Strategic Corporate Communication
Talent Optimization and Employee Engagement
Nonprofit Consulting
Instructional Design/Teaching and Learning/Instructor Coaching

Who can I help:

Individuals, large and small businesses, and professional/nonprofit organizations

Results:

Increase effectiveness, diagnose challenges and solve problems, enhance customer interaction, and drive profit and stakeholder engagement.

As an Assistant Professor of Communication, and experienced consultant with Legacy Communication Training and Consulting, I have developed a communication-based expertise to help you solve challenges in your organization. I am available at reasonable rates as a speaker, generational consultant, internal communication consultant, business strategist, communication coach, communication skills trainer, corporate consultant, freelance trainer/facilitator, or corporate trainer. If you have other questions, visit my website: www.legacyctc.com or email me: michaelstrawser@legacyctc.com for additional information.

Gallup Strengths: achiever, learner, significance, futuristic, focus

PI Behavioral: venturer

Enneagram: 8w7 (nonconformist or maverick)

DiSC- D Style (direct, firm)



published books

Instructional Communication in Professional Contexts

Conducting a Communication Audit

Multigenerational Communication in Organizations

Emerging Trends in Higher Education

Transformative Student Experiences in Higher Education

New Media and Digital Pedagogy

Engaging Millennial Faculty

Leading Millennial Faculty

The COVID-19 Impact on Higher Education Stakeholders and Institutional Services

Higher Education Implications for Teaching and Learning during COVID-19

[Connect](#) with Me

Learn about [Legacy Communication Training and Consulting, LLC.](#)

[TEDx: Rising Above Generational Stereotypes in the Workplace](#)