



Say It Clearly

Speaking with confidence and authority is grounded in preparation and planning. Going in without a **plan** is asking for trouble. Fortunately, you don't need to be a natural leader to speak with authority, or the queen of self-esteem to speak with confidence. With the right strategy, feedback and a little **practise**, anyone can begin to speak with authority and confidence. Whether you hope to ace a meeting, improve your presentation skills or project more power and authority when speaking, consider the following tips.

1. Take ownership of the room

Who will be in the room? Find out who you are speaking to first and foremost. That way you can adjust your presentation or speech to suit them. Once you are in the room, stand front and centre. Step in. If you have an actual presentation, try to stand to the left of it. We read from left to right so it is natural for our eyes to follow that direction. When you feel confident and comfortable, it's infectious.

2. Stand like a champion

Giving presentations and making speeches is very physical. When on stage or standing before a group of people, use the 'strength stance' - position feet hip width apart and toes pointing slightly outwards. Place your weight evenly across your feet, hold your head up, drop your shoulders down, pull your tummy button in towards your spine and smile.

3. Preparing your presentation

Once you have researched who are speaking to, what their expectation is that they are going to hear, decide what type of presentation you are going to give, your objective. There are 3 main types of presentation. Persuasive, Informative, Inspirational. How you prepare and what you prepare starts with your objective. Why are you giving this presentation?

4. Get to the point

Your competition is the attention span. Rambling, unfocused speeches will earn you few supporters. A powerful presentation stays on message, is made up of short sentences and few asides, and gets to the point quickly. Do not overload your slides, if doing power point. The less click, click, click the better. Also, less words more images. We are generally a visual group so looking at an image as opposed to reading is way more effective.

5. Replace "um" with silence

In the moment, it's hard not to say "uh, um," while you try to gather your thoughts. In fact, you probably don't even know you are saying it, or you do and don't know how to stop! Don't be afraid of silence. We listen in two steps; hear the words and process the idea, so silence is giving your audience time to process what you have just said so they are more likely to remember what you have said as well.

6. Don't overcomplicate it

The quickest way to know whether or not someone knows what they're talking about is to pay attention to how many industry-specific words they use. If their vocabulary is a show of insider adjectives, chances are they are speaking more from a place of theory and less from a place of experience. Great speakers and people who carry themselves well know how to get to the point. They say what needs to be said and leave it at that. If you use language that leaves your audience confused, you aren't impressing them, you are frustrating them. Keep it simple.

7. Don't swear

Unless you've built a reputation or a persona around your "edgy" delivery, nine times out of ten it's best to leave that lingo out of the board room – even if the boss swears! When it comes to leading a room, it is in your best interest to keep the energy and the flow as positive as possible. Unless you know your audience very well, you never know where a misplaced word could lead. Don't add in an extra variable that doesn't need to be there. This doesn't mean you have to keep your language G rated. Say what you need to say, in the way it needs to be said.

8. Stick to your style

A well told story can turn a room. So can a joke or a well used prop not mention a jolly good quote. These are great to use to start and end your presentation but stick

to what suits you. Don't try to copy someone else's style and you don't have to take anyone's advice either. Including mine! Harness your personality, prepare for what the audience is expecting to hear, take a deep breath and go for it!

Speaking with confidence and authority is not always easy. Even if you have the perfect stance, a well-planned speech and weeks of practice under your belt, you will probably still feel butterflies in your stomach. So warm up with a few speech exercises that you will be able to find in the e-book or follow the videos in the videoed online learning training.