

Conquering the Butterfly

The Success Series: Mastering the Art of Public Speaking

By Stefan Swanepoel

Introduction

As the butterflies swim wildly in your stomach, your palms begin to sweat and your heart rate soars past 200bpm. In a few minutes you must confront a few, or even hundreds, of staring eyes - whether from the stage, in a business meeting or in a listing presentation. You wonder how could you could have possibly said yes, when your entire body is now saying “No!” Public speaking is widely acknowledged as one of the leading creators of stress, so you’re not alone in your trepidation. Hopefully this 5-Point Plan taken from The Success Series (www.iSucceed.com) can help you conquer this fluttering fear.

1. Prepare

Never be sucked into speaking about something you are not comfortable with. Know your subject. Inquire, research, collect all relevant data, prepare, prepare, and prepare... beforehand that is. Develop your own style. Rehearse. Practice your talk, but never make significant changes just before speaking.

2. Map your Talk

Create a roadmap of your talk. Write a systematic logical sequence from beginning to end. Think of attention grabbers. Think of the key messages you wish to get across to your audience. Start by contributing every fact you can find and then edit ruthlessly.

3. Speak from the Heart

This is your talk. Be sincere and be humble but never begin with an apology. Take ownership of the subject and become passionate about the message. Never read your speech word by word. Talk from the heart, make eye contact and allow voice variations as emotions, commitment, and determination flow through you and your voice.

4. Use Visual Aids

It is said that one picture is worth a thousand words, and so props are used in movies the same way you should in your presentation. Never underestimate the value of being able to show something, whether in actual form or even on the screen by using Powerpoint. Present your condensed message via an easy to understand concept. Allow your Powerpoint outline to serve as talking points.

5. Relax and Connect

You’ve prepared the talk, now it’s time to prepare the speaker. That’s you. Dress comfortably and appropriately. A good night’s rest is always recommended. Get to the venue on time and ease into the surroundings. In the final hour before your talk, relax both physically and mentally.

In Closing

Claudius the Roman Emperor (10BC to 54AD) said: “*Say not always what you know, but always know what you say.*” So relax! You’re going to float like a butterfly, and your message sting like a bee. The audience is waiting to hear from you, the expert. Educate, entertain, and energize them with your knowledge, charisma and presence.

Acknowledgement

This article is part of “*The Success Series*” by Stefan Swanepoel author of 11 books and whitepapers, and a celebrated speaker to more than 250,000 people on five continents. Stefan is CEO of The RealtyU® Group, the largest real estate education, training and career development company (www.RealtyU.com) in the US.