

Tips for good presentations

In the last issue of *Home & Country*, an article explained how to go about preparing a brief. The next step is presenting that brief at a hearing, to your local MP or even to your own organization. Here are some general presentation tips which apply to presenting a brief which you should find useful.

Before you deliver your speech or present your brief, it is a good idea to have the following in mind: visit the scene early; be rested and ready; dress your best; be aware that nervousness is normal; make a good first impression; and last but not least, smile.

Now... You're Talking

1. Take a deep breath
 - a) breathe deeply while being introduced
 - b) take a deep breath as you step up to speak
 - c) then force the air out of your lungs slowly.
2. Smile
 - a) look at your audience
 - b) as you exhale, smile.

3. Acknowledge your introduction
 - a) thank the chairman
 - b) make an impromptu remark, only IF YOU CAN
4. Mind your mannerisms
 - a) use gestures only if they are natural
 - b) don't assume a stiff pose
 - c) keep your hands away from your head
 - d) don't fiddle with your clothing/jewelry
 - e) don't frown
 - f) just be yourself.

How to Gain Confidence as You Go

1. Find a friend in the audience...
 - a) pick out several friendly faces
 - b) talk to these people just as you would in normal, everyday conversation.
2. Learn to use your head...
 - a) let the movement of your head emphasize what you are saying.
3. Your eyes have it...
 - a) relax your eyes
 - b) learn to smile with your eyes

- c) blink them to avoid a fixed stare
- d) let your gaze wander over the audience.

4. Speak slowly — up and down the scale...
 - a) speak a little slower than you think you should
 - b) pause frequently
 - c) forget your throat
 - d) open your lungs.
5. People are listening one at a time...
 - a) keep your delivery on an intimate, personal basis
 - b) don't press
 - c) don't be too restrained — be enthusiastic about what you are saying
 - d) hold your head high, imagine you are talking to someone in the room seated above you.

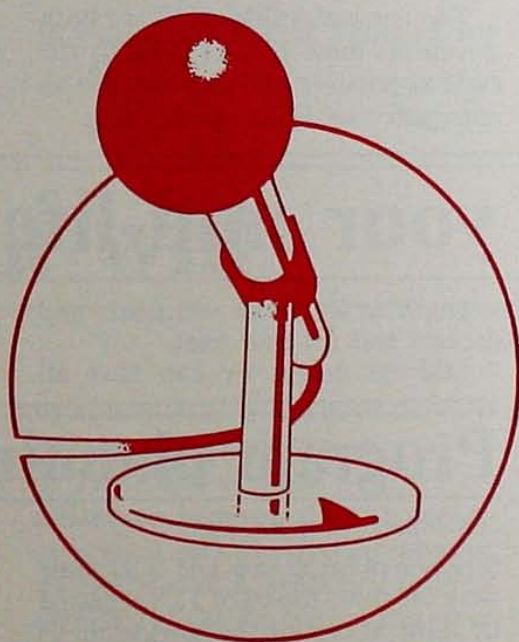
Above all, be NATURAL. And if you have prepared your speech properly, and rehearsed it so that it is yours, you will find it easier to be natural in your presentation.

How to use a microphone

1. Observe and listen carefully to previous speakers. Every PA system seems to have its own peculiarities. Some microphones require that you speak absolutely directly into them; others will sound better from an angle when you are, in effect, "speaking across" the microphone.

2. Have the microphone adjusted to the correct height and distance from you. You should never have to stand like a bent reed talking into a microphone that is set too low, nor should you stand awkwardly on tiptoe to reach a high microphone. If someone adjusts the microphone again while you are talking, carry right on. Just pretend that you do not see him. This will avoid losing contact with your audience.

3. Breathing should be quiet as possible, regular and without undue tension of muscles. Noisy breathing, in or out, can be heard on the air.



Watch for rustling papers; they'll sound like a forest fire over the mike!

4. Avoid touching or "choking" the microphone stand. The mike will make terrible noises if you cling to it or kick it. Check where all the cords are so that you don't trip on them or kick them.

5. The throat mike is convenient. Once it is adjusted out of sight as well as possible, your main problem is to avoid tripping over the cord.

6. Practice whenever possible with a recording machine to check the time factor and all pronunciations, especially if you are using a script.

7. Testing the microphone: Never blow into a microphone! Tap it lightly to ensure that it is on. Say at least one or two sentences to hear how well your voice comes over.

8. Look for opportunities to practice with a microphone.