Delivering Ideas: Strategies for Impromptu Speaking

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Abstract

◆ Delivering Ideas: Strategies for Impromptu Speaking

  ◆ A universal truth: An idea communicated poorly, no matter how compelling it may be, stands little chance of survival in today's business climate. The success—or failure—of our ideas hinges on our ability to communicate, often with little or no notice: The status meeting, the phone call from the Director, the meeting with the customer, or the job interview. The truth is that we are always "on." Every time we speak, we are making a presentation of sorts. In this session we will debunk the myths about impromptu speaking, discover how and why impromptu speaking skills are important to our success, and learn easy-to-use techniques for impromptu speaking effectiveness. By the end of the session, we will have developed strategies and patterns we can use to give us greater confidence for our day-to-day business and personal interactions.

Agenda

- **Setting the stage**
  - Fears
  - Importance
- **Raising the curtain**
  - Don'ts
  - Do's
  - Dirty Little Secrets
- **Taking a bow**
  - Action Items

Setting the stage

Fears

- **High Stakes**
  - Will I get the support/agreement I need?
  - Will I get the job?
  - Can I get my money back?
  - How will this affect my reputation?
- **Sheer Numbers**
  - Speaking in front of even moderate-sized groups can intimidate
- **Unprepared**
  - Can't rehearse
  - What if they ask me something I don't know?

Importance

- There is no "private speaking"
  - Every time we speak we are making a presentation
- Ability to influence
  - Formal presentations are not the norm
- Ability to lead
  - Feeling follows action

Questions?

Raising the Curtain

Don'ts

- **Don't apologize**
  - Some things are worth apologizing for
  - Others aren't
    - **Damage your credibility**
    - **Expose hidden weakness**
  - First and last impressions
- **Don't say too much**
  - Wall of words
  - Damage your credibility
- **Don't ignore your mother's advice**
  - Sit up straight
  - Keep your elbows off the table
  - Watch your language

Do's

- ### The Pause that Saves
  - Give the audience a moment to process
  - Adds emphasis and drama to key points
  - Enhances contrasting points
  - Gives you time to think, breathe
- ### Move intentionally
  - Draw in different parts of the audience
  - Emphasize points
- ### Make eye contact
  - Demonstrates confidence, sincerity
- ### Color inside the lines
  - Tell a story
  - Position, Action, Benefit
  - Past, Present, Future

Tell a Story

→ Tell a story in CODE

- **C**reate the scene
- **O**utline the problem or conflict
- **D**escribe what happened
- **E**nd the story

Tell a Story

◆ Example: We're asked for a status report for a project we've been working on for a couple of weeks.

  ✦ (Create) The project has moved into the testing phase. Two of the latest rigs were installed on Monday in Lab 5.

  ✦ (Outline) When we ran our initial benchmark, we discovered some instability in the BIOS as shipped.

  ✦ (Describe) We immediately contacted the vendor to make him aware of the problem. We sent over some crash logs and participated in a conference call with the vendor on Wednesday afternoon.

  ✦ (End) The vendor has root-caused the problem and expects to deliver a fix to us on Monday so that testing can resume.

Position, Action, Benefit

- ### Position
  - Your stake in the ground
  - What you believe or would like to do/see happen

- ### Action
  - The steps you'd like to see the audience/team/group/person take

- ### Benefit
  - What's in it for them

Position, Action, Benefit

- Example: How can your team contribute to our cost-cutting efforts?

  - (Position) I believe that our team can cut costs by reducing the amount of waste paper we generate.

  - (Action) I'd like us to consider eliminating header sheets, turning double-sided printing on by default, encourage each other to do multi-up printing–or not print at all–and to start making better use of the recycling containers that are available.

  - (Benefit) The benefit to our group will be measured in the cost of using fewer sheets of paper overall. It will also be measured in green benefits as we reduce the amount of paper we send to the local landfill.

Past, Present, Future

> Past
>> The way it was before

> Present
>> The way it is now

> Future
>> The way we plan for or desire it to be

Past, Present, Future

- Example: The details about a recent schedule slip.
  - (Past) Our original schedule was developed with the information we had in hand at the time. The team has been working on the project for almost a month now. They have made significant progress. In the course of this work, however, we have learned quite a bit.
  - (Present) For example, we now know that our original assumptions about the API were too simple. Also, the UI requirements have changed. The date changed to reflect the reality of this new work.
  - (Future) Later this week I have a meeting with the QA team to talk about ways that we can increase the overlap between development and test, possibly to the extent of reducing the effect of this schedule slip on GA by as much as 50%.

Dirty Little Secrets

- **Use a head start**
  - Even just a few minutes notice can make a big difference
- **Anticipate**
  - We know it's coming
- **Practice**
  - Practice makes perfect—or close enough
  - Memorize a pattern

Questions?

Taking a Bow

Action Items

- ◆ Do's
  - Tell a Story
  - Position, Action, Benefit
  - Past, Present, Future
- ◆ Dirty Little Secrets
  - Use a Head Start
  - Anticipate
  - Practice

Feedback

◆ Please send any questions or comments on this presentation to SNIA: trackprodev@snia.org

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