Oral Communication

Audience

The first and most important step in preparing an oral presentation is understanding who will be in the audience. By knowing your audience, you can tailor your content to their needs. Unless you engage the audience quickly, you will lose their attention. The first 30 seconds of your presentation are crucial to establishing credibility as a speaker and making a good impression. Here are some important questions you need to ask yourself about your audience:

- Who will be in the audience?
- What will the audience already know about the subject?
- Will the audience understand the terms that I am using, or do I need to define them?
- Will they be interested in it? Why should they be?
- What will they expect from the presentation?
- How much background information should I present so that they will understand the current situation?
- Has anyone else talked to them about this subject, and if so, what did they say? Can I build on what has gone before?
- Will they be receptive or hostile towards the subject? How will I deal with this?
- Will they know anything about me? What will they need to know?
- Should my presentation be formal or informal?

Organization

The next step of the process is creating an organizational structure for your information. Most oral presentations are similar to thesis papers in the fact that there needs to be some kind of organization to the information presented. First, express your topic in a single, clear statement, much like you would in a thesis statement. From there, find a way to create structure in your information using some kind of order e.g. chronological, sequential, cause-effect, pyramid, etc. Finally, use transitions to move between ideas. Here are some questions to ask yourself during this stage:

- Is my introduction short and attention getting?
- Does my introduction present the topic thoroughly?
- Does it introduce my organizational structure?
- Is the body of my presentation consistent with my organizational structure?
- Does it present relevant evidence?
- Does the body flow logically?
- Does my conclusion summarize my main points?
- Does it draw all of my arguments and evidence together?
- Does the conclusion point forward or suggest work still to be done?

Handout inspired by:

Http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/gihe/griffith_graduate/toolkit/oral/hand03.htm
Http://teaching.teams.arizona.edu/docs/oralcommunication.pdf

Thing to avoid:

- Reading directly off of a paper or power point slides—become familiar with your information so that you do not have to frequently refer back to your notes.
- Memorizing an entire speech—you are likely to forget exact wording, and a memorized speech can sound stiff. Instead focus on your introduction, bullet points, specific quotes, and your conclusion.
- Impromptu speaking—practice your speech beforehand!!
- Bad habits like crossing your arms, playing with your hair, or fiddling with your hands.
- Speaking too quickly—slow down, slow down! It may seem like you are speaking slowly, but you need to give the audience time to understand what you have said.
- Staring at the ceiling or the floor—make eye contact with each member of your audience to make them feel welcome, and continue this throughout the presentation.
- Ask questions without giving your audience time to understand and answer. Do not move on until you have listened to what your audience has to say.
- Frown. Try to keep a positive demeanor so that your audience feels welcome and engaged.
Body Language

As a speaker, body language is a very important part of your presentation. The messages you send through your body language affect how your audience perceives you, and can affect your credibility as a speaker.

Am I speaking slowly enough for the audience to understand what I am saying?

Practice

This story can fit 100-150 words.
The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is growing.

Some newsletters include a column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new employees or top customers or vendors.

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 75-125 words.
Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you’re trying to convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.