



How not to get a 'D' for your Delivery!

by Mohamed Isa

They have a saying in the real estate industry: Location, location, location! In speaking, it is: Delivery, delivery, delivery! No matter how good your content is, your delivery will be the deciding factor on whether your speech is a success or a failure. So, let us discuss how not to get a 'D' for your Delivery in your upcoming speech!

One of the common mistakes speakers make is moving on the stage like tennis players. They confuse moving around with being dynamic. Instead of just moving for the sake of moving, think and plan your movements so that you use them to illustrate your points more effectively. For example, if you are telling an audience a story, you could use the stage as a timeline indicating the different segments or scenes of the storyline or the placement of characters on the different areas of the stage. By doing this, you could use call backs and gestures to refer the characters and scenes. One caveat is worthy of noting. Do not over plan your movements or else you will appear like a robot!

Another mistake is to step on the thoughts or laughs of the audience. One of the way of engage the audience is to

ask questions so that you trigger their thinking process about the points you are sharing with them. When you ask a question, pause briefly to provide the audience with an opportunity to think and reflect. They would appreciate this because you are giving them a chance to think on how to apply the concepts you sharing with them back in their businesses. Similarly, when you pull the trigger on a punchline and the audience laughs, pause and let them laugh. Do not step on their laughs. Let them have fun! They will love you for that. I use this strategy constantly and one time I got a 14 seconds laugh and I have it on video!

Now, let us talk about a mistake that not a single audience will tolerate and appreciate which is to sync your lips to your PowerPoint slides. It is the unforgivable act of reading your slides to the audience. All the audience will be wondering: "Why didn't he or she just send the slides in advance; we all can read!" If you have encountered this situation before, it means you have not prepared well and you are abusing the slides to overcompensate for your lack of confidence and preparation. Use the slides as a visual aid not a teleprompter to help you deliver your speech. They are there to help the audience to grasp

the speech and tap into their visual senses and nothing else.

The fourth common mistake is putting your audience to sleep. Yes, this could happen if you speak in monologue at the same rate and volume your entire speech. Think about it, how do you put an infant to sleep? Simple, you sing a lullaby. You sing with the same low volume and rhythm until the infant falls asleep. Do this in the bedroom not in the auditorium! When you speak to an audience, vary your tone, pitch and rate to keep the audience engaged and interested throughout your speech. One of the best ways to have this come naturally to you is to include more stories in your speeches so that you give your characters a voice and show their emotions when they say their respective lines in the conversations.

Finally, this is a mistake that I have observed many times by many speakers especially the novice ones. They imitate the speaking style of other speakers who they admire. They copy them in everything! I am sure you heard and read this phrase countless times: "Be yourself. Everyone else is taken." There is nothing wrong with emulating the best of the best. However, instead of copying them, reach out to them. Ask them questions: How did you develop such a massive and impressive vocabulary? How do you develop such a vocal variety when you speak? And then, develop your own speaking style and personality and remember this: Be inspired by many but be a copy of none!

Remember, you are not like most speakers who commit deadly mistakes when it comes to their speech delivery. Now, you know better! Here is my promise to you: Avoid the common mistakes and apply the delivery techniques I shared with you and your audience is bound to give you an 'A' for your delivery! All the best. @



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