

## **CHAPTER 1**

### The Seven Aspects of Speaking

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**D**elivering a presentation is one of the greatest fears of many people. It does not matter if you are a business professional, a student, a member of the cloth, a teacher, or a politician—preparing and delivering a presentation can be a painful process. Being asked to deliver a presentation brings back bad memories from our early school years when we had to deliver our first oral book report. Many of us were told to pick a book, read it, and prepare an oral book report without being given any guidance. We had no structure or idea how to prepare for this life-changing event.

That event was one of the most frightening events in many people's lives, and many of you probably still remember the sweaty palms, the nervousness, and the butterflies in your stomach. That fear, more commonly known as speaking anxiety, can stay with you an entire lifetime, unless you are taught how to overcome these fears. *Painless Presentations: The Proven Stress-Free Way to Successful Public Speaking* provides the tools and techniques to help you learn how to reduce your speaking anxiety and deliver a more stress-free presentation.

To be a successful speaker, one needs to learn and understand many aspects of a presentation. This chapter will discuss these seven aspects. An effective speaker learns to deal with all these aspects at the same time. The seven aspects are as follows:

- Aspect 1—The Speaker
- Aspect 2—The Message
- Aspect 3—The Audience
- Aspect 4—The Channel
- Aspect 5—The Feedback

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

Aspect 6—The Noise

Aspect 7—The Setting

The following pages discuss these important aspects and how they relate to making an effective presentation.

### ASPECT 1—THE SPEAKER

One of the key components of the act of public speaking is the speaker, the source of the message. Several factors should be addressed about any speaker. As a speaker, you need to understand what your motivation is in giving your presentation. Is your motivation to inform people? Is your motivation to convince people? Is your motivation unclear to you?

#### Your Motivation

Before you develop and deliver your presentation, you need to understand what motivates you. At least two factors affect your motivation:

- Are you motivated by *direct* personal rewards (e.g., money) or *indirect* rewards (e.g., feeling good about helping others)?
- Are you motivated by *immediate* rewards (e.g., money today) or *delayed* rewards (e.g., establishing a broader client base by professional exposure)?

The most important motivation of all is to teach, help, and inspire your audience. You will not become a great speaker unless you are motivated.

#### Your Credibility

Your ideas are accepted only to the degree that you are perceived as being credible. Your credibility rests on your trustworthiness,

## ASPECT 2—THE MESSAGE

your competence, and your goodwill. You need to be well organized to be considered credible.

It is a known fact that a speaker who is attractive and dynamic will be perceived as more credible than a speaker who is undistinguished and dull.

The most fundamental attitude you can project is a true caring for your audience. Your audience needs to believe you really care about them.

### Your Delivery

Your delivery, the *way* your message is presented, should complement your presentation or speech's objective. It is often said, "It's not *what* you said, but *how* you said it." A poorly delivered presentation can be the result of many factors. Unfortunately, many presenters do not practice their delivery prior to the actual presentation. If you practice delivering your presentation at least once, you will be doing more than 80 percent of most presenters today.

When you practice your delivery, you should always record yourself so that you can later watch it. There is no excuse for anyone not having the ability to record his or her presentation. Video cameras today are very small, easy to use, and inexpensive. In addition to digital movie cameras, there are also video recording options available on Flip cameras, smartphones, and digital cameras. It is in your best interest to use these tools to help you improve your presentations.

## ASPECT 2—THE MESSAGE

The message is found in *everything you say or do*—in other words, in all that is communicated, both verbally and nonverbally. The

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

verbal component of your presentation can be analyzed in terms of three basic elements:

1. The content of your message
2. Your speaking style
3. The structure of your presentation

Let's take a look at each of these elements.

### The Content of Your Message

The content is what you say about your topic. The content is the meat of your speech or presentation. When developing the content for your presentation, you need to research the topic very thoroughly. Collect as much information as you can during your preparation. Gather more material than you think you may need.

Your next step is to decide how much to say about every point of information. It is critical that your presentation not only have content but also provide value. You need to consider your audience's needs, time factors, and other variable as you prepare and present the content of your presentation.

All great speakers have a great topic, one they have lived. They are what buyers call real people. A speech or presentation based on research only is never a great one. A speech or presentation based on actual experience is always more effective. Great speakers learn to use stories to help their audiences experience what they experienced.

Before you begin to develop your presentation, you need to decide what message you want to convey to your audience. Most presentations fail because the message is unclear. Your intended message may not agree with the message your audience received.

## ASPECT 2—THE MESSAGE

When this occurs, then your presentation can fail. You need to decide what message you want to deliver, determine what you want your audience to do as a result of hearing this message, and then build your presentation around this message. This is a crucial step in the process that many presenters do not do effectively. Once you align your presentation with your message, your presentations will be easier to develop and deliver.

### Your Speaking Style

The manner in which you present the content of your presentation is your speaking style. Speaking styles can range from the very formal to the very informal. Your presentation style should fall somewhere in between these extremes and in every case should be determined by what is appropriate to you, your audience, and the setting. Every speaker has his or her own style, and you should develop your own personal style. Many beginning speakers try to emulate other speakers. I do not recommend this. Learn to develop your own personal speaking style.

Regardless of your experience with presentations, the real key to delivering an effective presentation is to approach them using a conversational style. Unfortunately many people approach presentations as a performance. When you are in performance mode, you typically are focusing on what your audience is thinking and not on what you are saying. The good news is you already have years of experience having a conversation with people. You do this every single day. Think about it.

When you run into someone you know, whether it is at your favorite restaurant, the grocery store, or a meeting where you are not the speaker, you typically just strike up a conversation. After you greet each other, you conversationally talk about work,

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

your family, and how things are going. While having this conversation, you are not thinking about what you are doing with your hands, what words you are saying, or even how you are speaking. You just have a conversation. It is this same conversational style you want to use when you give a presentation.

Many of my clients and participants in my seminars and workshops often ask me, “What is the difference between a formal presentation and one that is not?” Some people think that as soon as you stand up in front of a group of people, the presentation is formal. The key to being a more effective presenter and making it less painful to you is to learn to simply have a conversation with your audience. This will allow you to connect with them more effectively. Use your own natural conversational style, and you will find that your presentations will be not only easier for you to deliver but more enjoyable as well.

### The Structure of Your Presentation

The structure of your presentation is its organization. There are many variations with how you can organize your presentation, but in every case, your presentation’s structure should include three major components:

- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion

The first part of every presentation is the introduction. The introduction is where you tell or introduce what you will be talking about during your presentation. The introduction provides an outline of your presentation. You typically spend only about 10 to 15 percent of your presentation time with the introduction.

### ASPECT 3—THE AUDIENCE

The middle part of your presentation is the body. The body is where you discuss your key points or main ideas. The body is where the “meat” of your presentation and key message are discussed. This part of the presentation is where you will spend the majority of your time, typically about 70 to 80 percent of the time.

The last part of your presentation is the conclusion. The conclusion is where you conclude your presentation by summarizing the key points you made during the body of your presentation. You typically spend only about 10 to 15 percent of your presentation time with the conclusion.

When your presentation is poorly organized, the impact of your message is greatly reduced and your audience is less likely to accept you or your ideas. Chapter 3 will discuss the structure of a presentation in greater detail and what should be included in each section.

### ASPECT 3—THE AUDIENCE

A key part of any presentation is the audience. A great presentation delivered to the wrong audience is just as ineffective as delivering the wrong presentation to the right audience. Both will fail terribly. As a presenter you must include some detailed analysis about the audience you will be speaking to as part of your preparation.

Professional speakers, such as myself, always take the time to gather as much information as possible about the audience we will be speaking to before we start customizing our material. It is not unusual for me to make several phone calls and even have an in-person meeting with the meeting planner or the actual client who has hired me to discuss the expected outcomes and desire of the meeting. As a professional speaker, you would always analyze your audience and determine their specific needs and objectives.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

This will allow you to prepare and give the most effective, meaningful, and memorable presentation to your audience.

The analysis you perform should include considerations related to:

- Age
- Sex
- Marital status
- Race
- Geographic location
- Group memberships
- Education
- Career

For example, if you are preparing a presentation on “future careers,” knowing your audience’s average age is vital. All audiences you speak to want to know:

1. You will not waste their time.
2. You know who they are.
3. You are well organized.
4. You know your subject.
5. You will be clear about your most important point.
6. You will be clear when you are finished.

Your speech preparation should include what I like to refer to as the nine Ps:

**P**rior **P**roper **P**reparation **P**revents **P**oor **P**erformance of the **P**erson **P**utting on the **P**resentation.

### ASPECT 3—THE AUDIENCE

Nothing will relax you more than knowing you are properly prepared. The more you know about your speaking environment and your audience, the more relaxed you will be when delivering your presentation.

There are two parts of performing an audience analysis: the pre-program survey and the customized program survey. Both address the areas described here, which spell out the acronym *AUDIENCE*. You need to develop specific questions that fit into each of these eight categories and ask your audience what they want. Ask them what they want and then give it to them.

- *Analysis*: Who is your audience? How many people will be in your audience?
- *Understanding*: What is their knowledge of your topic or subject on which you plan to speak?
- *Demographics*: Where is your audience from? What is their age? What is their sex? What is their background?
- *Interest*: Why is your audience there? Why are they attending? Were they told to be at this event, or are they there on their own accord?
- *Environment*: Where will you be standing during your presentation? Will everyone be able to see you during your presentation? Will they be able to hear you?
- *Needs*: What are the needs of your audience? Why are they here to listen to this presentation topic? What are your needs as a presenter?
- *Customize*: Do some homework to customize your presentation. What information do you need to address in your presentation to meet your audience's needs?
- *Expectations*: What are your expectations of this presentation? What is the expectation of your audience?

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

On the next few pages, I will offer you some suggestions of the types of pre-program questions you could ask about your audience. You can provide these survey questions to them by mail, by fax, over the phone, or via a web survey. I currently use SurveyMonkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) for my customized pre-program surveys. This tool allows me to easily collect the information I need in advance, and it is presented to me in several formats. This is a very cool tool that allows me to gather as much information as I want about my audience.

Following is an example pre-program survey I send out to learn additional information about my audience. Feel free to use these questions or make up a survey of your own based on your specific needs. I recommend that you send this survey out well in advance of your speaking date. Also be prepared to follow up and gently remind people to complete the surveys. Give them a drop-dead date of when you need the completed surveys.

### What You Need to Know (Pre-Program Survey)

1. What are your organization's major needs, problems, and concerns at this moment?
2. How much do your members know about the subject of my presentation?
3. What is their level of knowledge about the topic? Do they have some knowledge, have very little knowledge, or consider themselves as an expert on the topic?
4. What is their level of education?
5. How large will the audience be?
6. What is the ratio of men to women who will be attending?
7. What are the occupations of this audience?

### ASPECT 3—THE AUDIENCE

8. What is the main purpose of this meeting? Is there a theme for the meeting?
9. Are there any sensitive political issues I need to be aware of?
10. Are there any sensitive religious issues I need to be aware of?
11. Will there be any other speakers on the program before me or after me?
12. Will there be eating and drinking before my presentation?
13. Have you had presenters in the past speak on this topic or a similar topic?
14. If so, what has been the audience's reaction to this topic?
15. What type of information or supportive information may I need?

The answers to these questions will help you better understand your audience and their expectations. The more you can find out about your audience, the better you will be able to address their needs.

#### A Customized Program Survey

You can always provide a more in-depth pre-program survey customized to your speaking event. Once you and the client have agreed on the topic you will speak on, ask your contact at the client if he or she would provide you answers to your customized survey. Some of the customized program survey questions are similar to the pre-program survey questions and that's by design.

1. What is the theme of your meeting?
2. What are the top three challenges or problems faced by the members of your group?

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

3. What are the characteristics of your typical member?
  - a. Age
  - b. Sex
  - c. Personal income
  - d. Educational background
  - e. Occupation
4. Will there be any special guests?
5. How many people will be in attendance?
6. How will they be notified about the meeting?
7. What is their overall opinion regarding this subject?
8. What three factors should I know about your group before I speak to them?
9. Why is your group attending this meeting?
10. What speakers have you booked recently, and what topics did they discuss?
11. What programs/speakers have been the most enthusiastically received?
12. List three names and positions of people in your organization who are well known and well liked?
13. What are the three most significant events during the past year?
14. Please share any “local color” you can think of relating to the location at which my presentation will be held.
15. Specifically, what are you trying to accomplish at this meeting?
16. What are your specific objectives for my part of the meeting?
17. Are there any issues/topics you think I should discuss during my program?

### ASPECT 3—THE AUDIENCE

18. Are there any issues/topics you think I should avoid during the program?
19. Do you have any suggestions to help me make this presentation the best your audience had ever heard?

Remember, the information you gather from the pre-program survey will help you customize and tailor your presentation to the specific audience. The actual questions you ask as part of your program preparation should be specific to the program you are providing and the specific group to whom you will be speaking. The more information you can gather about your audience, the better it will be for you and the easier it will be to tailor your program.

As part of my preparation, I like to do some research on the client who has hired me to speak. This may include reading reports on the company website, press releases, or even an article I found in a newspaper. I sometimes will even contact other professional speakers who have spoken to the group to gain additional insight from another professional speaker's viewpoint. You can never gather too much information as part of your preparation.

I also always try to arrive early to the venue. This may be during the evening before my presentation, or it may be a few hours before I speak. This gives me the opportunity to speak to the actual people who will be in the audience. This allows me to gather some names and some “on the spot” expectations for my presentation. When I can, I will incorporate the conversations I had in my presentation and mention the names of the people I spoke with. This allows me to gain a better connection with the audience.

When I am facilitating a seminar or workshop, I am always the first one to arrive because I need to set up the room and the equipment. (I will talk about the room setting when I get to Aspect 7—The Setting.) I greet the attendees as they enter the

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

room. By doing this, I am able to establish an immediate rapport and connection with the participants in my seminars and workshops. Greeting them also demonstrates that I am accessible and approachable.

### The Size of the Audience

One factor that can greatly influence your presentation is the size of the audience. You need to take the audience size into consideration as part of your preparation. Delivering the same presentation to an audience of 100 people is a lot different than delivering the same presentation to a group of more than 6,000. I have personally spoken to groups as large as 14,000. For large groups, I am generally on a large stage with two large screens, one on either side of me, while a large spotlight shines directly in my eyes, not allowing me to see much of the audience. Knowing the size of the venue and the number of people I will be speaking to greatly influences how I prepare for this presentation.

## ASPECT 4—THE CHANNEL

When you communicate during a presentation, you use several communication channels to convey your message. When you talk directly to an audience, you will employ many different types of communication channels, such as:

- A.** Nonverbal
  - 1. Gestures
  - 2. Facial expressions
  - 3. Body movement
  - 4. Posture

## ASPECT 4—THE CHANNEL

### B. Pictorial

1. Diagrams
2. Charts
3. Graphs
4. Pictures
5. Objects

### C. Aural

1. Tones of voice
2. Variations in pitch and volume
3. Other vocal variety

Let's look at each of these in more depth. Most of our communication occurs on the nonverbal level. Nonverbal communication is that communication you use other than the words you are speaking. Most of your nonverbal communication is provided through the use of gestures, facial expressions, body movement, and posture. When your verbal and nonverbal messages do not agree, you can send a mixed or even confusing message to your audience. We have all experienced this. You have heard the expression, "Actions speak louder than words." Or maybe someone has said to you, "It's not what you said, but how you said it." As a presenter, you need be sure your verbal and nonverbal messages are in alignment with each other; otherwise, you can send a mixed message.

Our body movement is the largest single gesture or nonverbal message we can use. If you do not use your body movement effectively, you can confuse your audience, preventing them from understanding what you are saying. I will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 6 on nonverbal messages.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

Our second major communication channel is pictorial. This refers to the types of visual aids you use during your presentations. They can include diagrams, charts, graphs, pictures or photographs, or physical objects. Just as with nonverbal communication, you need to be sure the pictorial communication tools you use during your presentation align with your verbal message. For example, if the photograph you are showing is not about what you are talking about, the audience will get confused. You want your visual aid to enhance your presentation and further support or clarify your message.

The last communication channel is aural, that is, your voice. How your voice sounds, the variations in your pitch and volume, can have a huge effect on the meaning of your words. The tone of your voice is what can persuade someone or get you in trouble. Has your significant other ever said to you, “It’s not what you said, but how you said it”? Or maybe, “I don’t like the tone of your voice”? When you get emotional during your presentation, this will be reflected in the tone of your voice.

Most messages are sent via light waves and sound waves and are received by the eyes and ears. The more sensory channels a speaker can use at the same time, the more effective the presentation will be. At the same time, if the various channels used are not in alignment, you will confuse or even upset your audience.

### ASPECT 5—THE FEEDBACK

This next aspect deals with the subject of feedback. By *feedback*, I mean the process through which you receive information about how your message is being received by the listeners in your audience, and in turn, responding to those cues.

The feedback process is not complete until you have responded to your listener. This feedback process also includes the audience’s

## ASPECT 5—THE FEEDBACK

reaction to your response. As a presenter, you need to be alert and responsive to the reactions of your audience throughout your entire presentation. Watch for nonverbal clues from your audience and be prepared to respond to their reactions. You can also ask questions of the audience during your presentation to get them more engaged. Ask them what their understanding is of a point you have just made.

It is your responsibility to provide the information your audience needs to hear. Many times, I am hired by a client to speak to the staff and provide a specific message they may not want to hear. Recently I was hired to address an entire national sales force of a company during one of my sales presentation skills programs. During this 90-minute presentation, I discussed many issues on how to increase their sales and improve their relationships with their clients. As part of my preparation for this presentation, I had several meetings, phone calls, and e-mails with the owner of the business, who hired me to speak to this staff. We talked about problems he was aware of with his staff's sales presentations and a number of other issues. Before my arrival, I knew, by name, which people were the top salespeople as well as which ones were not meeting expectations. I also learned what specific problems and challenges they faced. I also learned about past presenters the company had brought in and how the staff treated and reacted to those speakers. Knowing a lot about this audience allowed me to develop a customized, issue-focused presentation that addressed the problems they were experiencing, including providing solutions to these problems. I learned as much information as I could about the company and the sales forces so that I was prepared to address any questions that may have come up.

I was able to interact with the audience by addressing people by their first name, further allowing me to establish a better rapport with the audience. I was able to also use their industry's

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

jargon and language as well as include specifics about their company. Many of the salespeople came up to me after the presentation and said how they appreciated how much I truly understood their business and their challenges. I knew then that I hit a home run.

### ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

There are two types of noise you need to deal with as a presenter: external noise and internal noise. Both types of noise can greatly affect your presentation. Let's look at each.

#### External Noise

External noise for presenters includes those sounds from the external environment that can distract them during their presentation. External noise includes sounds, temperature (either cold or hot), announcements over an intercom, people talking or laughing, audience movement, poor seating arrangement, poor lighting, or even an obstructed view. Let me share some real-life examples I have personally had to deal with my speaking career.

#### *Temperature*

As a professional speaker, I have had to present in a room as cold as 50 degrees. I was conducting a two-day seminar in Dayton, Ohio, for a client in late October. The two-day seminar was being held in the client's conference room, which was part of their rented office space. I asked why it was so cold in the building and why the heat was not on. The client told me that the owner of the office building did not turn on the heat to the building until November 1. This was a situation that made both me and the participants in my program physically uncomfortable. The cold temperature made it very difficult for anyone to concentrate.

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

On another occasion, I was providing four days of training at a hotel in Dubai, UAE. The air-conditioning in the building was not working properly, and the room we were in for all four days was about 85 degrees. With outside temperatures well over 100 degrees, we did not have many options. This too was very uncomfortable for both me and my audience.

### *Too Many External Distractions*

A number of years ago, I was delivering a short 90-minute program in San Francisco at the Moscone Center. The Moscone Center is the largest convention center and exhibition complex in San Francisco, California. This convention had more than 20,000 attendees, and I was one of more than 100 speakers presenting during the week of this convention. This had to be the worst speaking setup I ever had to deal with as a speaker. I was speaking from a large stage in the center of the complex. The microphone provided for me worked very well; however, so did the other two microphones that were being used by two other speakers also speaking at the same time within this same complex. My audience included more than 500 people who were seated at tables in a large open area. There were no walls, and I had to compete with the background noise from the convention activities as well as the other two speakers. My audience had to sit at a bank of tables much like you sit at in a college classroom. On these tables were also banks of computers. You can imagine the challenge I had to keep the attention of my audience. I had no ability to make any changes in this setup. When I was invited back to speak to this same group at the same convention center the following year, I politely declined.

As a presenter, you never know what variety of external noise you may have to deal with. Your goal is to eliminate or at least

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

reduce the amount of external distraction that you can, within the limitations of your control.

### *Obstructed View*

I was hired to provide a workshop for another client in the basement of a church. This was a very large church hall that was frequently used for special events. The seats were arranged in auditorium-style seating (I will talk more about seating when I talk about the setting). The seating was set up for about 200 people. Like many church basements, square columns were spaced 10 feet apart in several directions. More than a dozen of these square poles were scattered among the 200 seats. Fortunately, I had checked this room out beforehand, so I was aware of the room setup. I knew I needed to make some adjustments during my presentation. Specifically, I had to make a point to conscientiously move during my entire presentation in order to establish eye contact with the members of my audience. I also had to move to allow the audience to see me. Because I had checked out the room beforehand and was able to make adjustments in my delivery, I was able to deal with these square columns.

### *Talking to an Audience Who Does Not Speak Your Language*

My business has allowed me to establish a client base in more than 178 countries, and I often find myself speaking to audiences whose first language is not English. I speak only English. I provide several multiday programs each year to clients in the Middle East. The programs I provide are marketed and delivered in both English and Arabic. Since I speak only English, I have an interpreter who translates what I say and repeats what I say in Arabic for those who do not understand English. Pulling

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

off the logistics and planning to allow my presentation to be delivered in both English and Arabic was no easy task.

The interpreters I used in all the programs I have provided have all been women. These interpreters had to spend time learning not only my program but my speaking style. I also had to learn to adjust the delivery of my presentation in more bite-size sound bites to allow my interpreter to repeat what I said, but in Arabic. The slides I used for my presentation were also in English and Arabic. I provide several programs each year and typically have participants from more than 22 Arabic countries for this three-day program. You can imagine the extent of external distractions that can occur during a program such as this.



The examples just described are only a few examples I had to personally deal with during my professional speaking career. As a speaker, you too will have to deal with external distractions. How you deal with these distractions can be and will be a challenge to you as a presenter.

### *Internal Noise*

As a presenter you may encounter internal noise in two forms: personal internal noise and audience internal noise. If you are confused or unclear about what you want to express, it is because you do not know or have misanalyzed the audience, resulting in internal voices of doubt and panic. You also need to account for the internal noise directly experienced by the audience. Such internal noise may result from one of many stressors, such as fatigue, job insecurity, rapid changes in the

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

workplace, and family concerns. The role of both you and the audience is to communicate simultaneously with each other. It is this transactional nature of speech that makes feedback, and attempts to decrease or eliminate noise, so vitally important.

The most effective ways you can combat noise are:

- Use more than one channel of communication at the same time (verbal and nonverbal).
- Use repetition and restatement.

You can further help combat noise by making an extra effort to use several channels of communication at the same time. It is important to include both verbal and nonverbal means of communication. You can also lessen the effects of noise by giving listeners more than one chance to hear the message, thus the need for repetition and restatement.

### *Speaking Anxiety*

The one internal source of noise or distraction important enough to be treated by itself is stage fright or speaking anxiety. Steve Allen, a television personality, musician, and past host of the *Steve Allen Show* and the *Tonight Show* for many years, said, “Stage fright does not begin when you get up on stage; stage fright begins the moment that you are asked to get up on stage.”

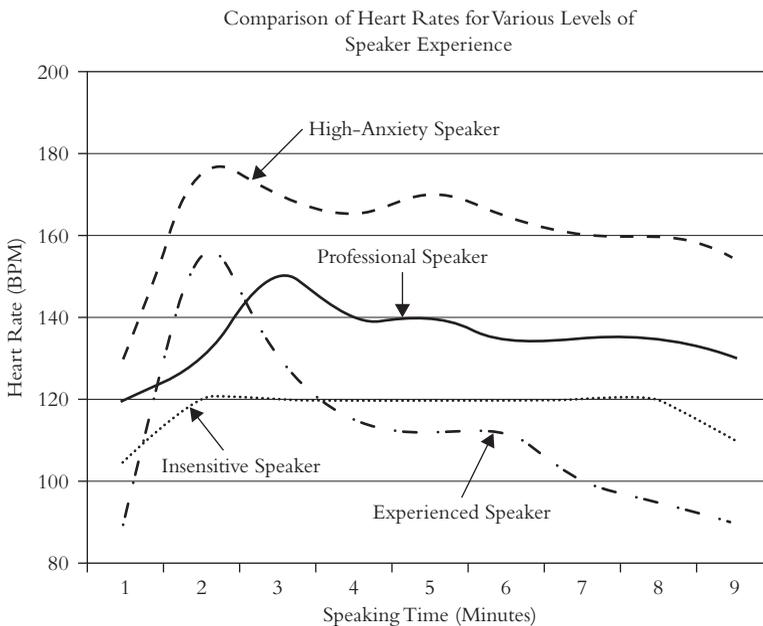
Inexperienced presenters, and to some degree even experienced presenters, feel stress in anticipation of speaking in public. Presenters with high anxiety may report symptoms such as butterflies in their stomach, increased heart rate, trembling legs, and cold clammy hands, among many other symptoms. You decide how you label these feelings. Are they stage fright or speech anxiety? Or are they speech excitement? What you

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

choose to call them has a noticeable effect on whether you control them or they control you.

There have been several informal studies done over the years, including survey studies I have done with a variety of speaker types over the past 20 years reviewing the anxiety levels associated with the degree of speaking experience. My data were collected from surveying more than 17,000 speakers, ranging from college students to executives and the results are summarized in Figure 1.1.

Referring to Figure 1.1 let me explain to you what the collected survey data show. This figure represents a plot of speaker anxiety levels over time for four speaker types.



**Figure 1.1 Comparison of high-anxiety speakers, experienced speakers, insensitive speakers, and professional speakers.**

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

- High-anxiety speaker
- Experienced speaker
- Insensitive speaker
- Professional speaker

The level of speaking anxiety was measured by the speaker's heart rate over the course of about eight minutes' speaking time. On the  $y$ -axis I have plotted the average heart rates, measured in beats per minute (BPM). Along the  $x$ -axis I have plotted speaking time measured in minutes. Keep in mind that a typical normal heart rate is around 70 BPM.

Let's first examine the plot for the high-anxiety speaker. The high-anxiety speaker's heart rate starts off at around 130 BPM and quickly rises to about 175 BPM. Many famous actors and actresses have high anxiety when speaking in front of a group. I have read stories that Johnny Carson, the host of the *Tonight Show*, had a heart rate so high in the beginning of his show that during his opening monologue, he had to wear a heart monitor so that they could monitor how high his heart rate got. As you follow the plot for the high-anxiety speaker, you notice that the heart rate does not reduce that much, even after eight minutes of speaking.

Next let's look at the experienced speaker. This is a speaker who has a lot of speaking experience but who cannot optimally control his or her anxiety throughout the presentation. Note that this speaker's heart rate starts off lower, at around 90 BPM, and then rises, but only to about 155 BPM. The profile soon fades off back to the 90 BPM toward the end of the eight minutes' speaking time.

Next we look at the insensitive speaker. This is the speaker who really can care less during the presentation. This speaker gets up, delivers the presentation, and quickly sits down. He or

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

she is very flat and boring in facial expressions and not very exciting to listen to. This behavior is reflected in the plot on the graph. The plot remains flat during the entire presentation, showing no real response or emotional reaction to the audience.

Finally we look at the professional speaker. The professional speaker is one who understands how to use this nervous energy to his or her advantage. These speakers allow their heart rates to be elevated to about 120 BPM (a good aerobic range) before they begin speaking. Some speakers go for a brisk walk, some exercise, and others just let the heart rate slowly increase. Their heart rates do also increase, but not as quickly and only to a level around 150 BPM. Over the remaining time, they maintain an elevated heart rate (or excitement) around 130 BPM. This is the type speaker who continues to show enthusiasm and passion throughout the presentation but also does not let it get out of control. You have to make a conscious effort to keep your heart rate elevated, and this is usually done through personal excitement and passion while speaking.

In all cases, there was an elevation in the heart rate within the first few minutes of speaking; however, how that level changed over time varied greatly. As a presenter, you do want to have some anxiety before you speak; however, you do not want an anxiety level so high that your heart races too fast and you find yourself out of breath. Just knowing that this peak does occur and learning what you need to do to get through it will be key.

This elevated heart rate is the same increase in heart rate we experience when falling in love with someone for the first time; however, you probably associate this feeling as a “good” feeling and work your way through it. Whether your heart rate increases due to speaking anxiety or being in love, the physiological feelings that your body experiences are the same.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

Some of the other classic symptoms associated with this speaking anxiety are:

- Accelerated or increased heart rate
- Trembling or shaky hands
- Sweaty palms
- Difficulty in breathing
- Tingling or numbness in our hand and fingers
- Nausea or stomach sickness
- Chest pains
- Shaky voice
- Dry mouth or cotton mouth
- Dizziness
- Feeling of choking
- Hot or cold flashes

Most people with speaking anxiety experience one or more of these symptoms. These feelings often originate when the speaker is approaching public speaking or giving a presentation as if it is a performance, sometime referred to as performance anxiety. When you put yourself in “performance mode,” you imagine everyone is looking at you differently and analyzing and scrutinizing every move you make and every word you say. When in this performance mode, you start to think too much about what you are saying and how you are saying it, while at the same time worrying about what the audience is thinking. You are thinking about everything except what you should be thinking about—your message.

When you find yourself in this state of performance mode, mentally stop and go back to your message. Try to focus on

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

just having a conversation. Think about it: when you run into a friend in the store and kick up a conversation, do you think to yourself or say to yourself, “I wonder what he is thinking about me. Do I sound okay?” No you don’t; you just have a conversation. As a professional speaker, I travel all over the world and I always get asked the same question: “What is the one piece of advice you can tell me to help me with my speaking anxiety?” I always respond with the same answer: “Just learn to have a conversation.” We all know how to do that. We all have conversations every single day. Notice how you converse with people and bring that same conversational style to the stage when you are delivering a presentation. Deliver that presentation using your natural conversational style, and you will find your anxiety will greatly reduce. Notice I said reduce, not go away.

As I explained earlier when I described the different types of speakers, you want that slightly increased heart rate. When you start to use conversational-style speaking, you also naturally use gestures more effectively without even thinking about what you are doing with your hands. Try this: the next time you are out and about, find a couple or even a group of people talking and you will notice that they are using natural gestures. They are using their hands, nodding their heads, even moving their bodies. They are not giving a presentation, but just having a conversation—but, a conversation with energy, passion, and excitement. During your next presentation, just try having a conversation with the audience. You will be amazed how much better you will feel.

Following are some additional things you can do to prepare yourself for your next presentation. Many of these deal with some of the aspects I have already talked about.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

1. *Know the room.* Arrive at the event location early to become familiar with the space where you will be speaking. Is it on a stage, on the floor at the same level as the audience, or behind a lectern (which I personally never use and encourage you not to use)? Walk around the room, stand at the lectern, get up on stage, look out at the empty chairs, and test your microphone. Get a “feeling” for the environment you will be speaking in. *Note:* Be sure you are doing this in the actual room you will be speaking in, which is something you should confirm beforehand. If you will be speaking on a podium (a raised platform), check out the podium to make sure it is secure and stable. Notice where the ends of the podium are. I often put some tape on the edges of the podium if it is not already taped. This provides me with a visual of where the podium ends. If you are a woman and wearing high heels, check to make sure there are no gaps large enough in the podium floor that can catch the heel of your shoe and cause you to trip or, worse, fall. Have these gaps taped if necessary. Walk up and down the stairs to get a feel of how high the steps are. Sometimes they are higher than your average steps, which could throw you off when you walk up on stage. Do not wait to be introduced to test these stairs.
2. *Know your audience.* If possible, arrive early and personally greet some members of the audience as they arrive and chat with them. If the event you are speaking at has a social hour the evening before, attend and introduce yourself; get to know some of the people by first name. You may even be able to use some of the information obtained from these conversations during your presentation. When you are on

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

stage presenting and having a conversation with the audience, mention some of these people by name. This will help you better connect with members in the audience.

3. *Know your material.* If you are not familiar with or are uncomfortable with your material, your nervousness will escalate. You need to rehearse your presentation several times to be comfortable with your material. You will find when you rehearse that the wording you used in your notes does not work well when spoken and that you need to say things differently. In every one of my presentation skills workshops I require each of the participants to do a rehearsal (dry run) while standing and talking in the location where they will be delivering their final presentations (they will do this several times during my workshops). In every case, when I ask each person if he or she would make any changes in the presentation after this first dry run, the answer is always yes. The speakers find that what came out their mouths was not what was going on in their heads. This is why I strongly encourage you to always use conversational language in your presentations. This includes using conversational language in your visual aids. If you decide to write out (for planning purposes) in general terms what you want to say, write it down using conversational language and phrasing. Many of us do not write like we speak and do not speak like we write. The more we learn to write like we speak, the easier the speaking process becomes. This reminds me of a time when I was having a beer in the lounge of the hotel where I was scheduled to do the opening keynote the next day. I noticed a gentleman sitting at a table frantically typing away on his laptop

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

computer. I looked over his shoulder and noticed he was preparing some PowerPoint slides. I walked over to him and introduced myself and asked him what he was doing. He said he was scheduled to give a presentation tomorrow but had not had a chance to prepare his slides for the presentation. I asked him why he waited until the last minute to do this, and he said, and I quote, “I do not like giving presentations. I suck at it, and I find it is better to wait until the last minute.” I could not believe what I heard, so I asked him why he thought it was better to wait until the last minute. He replied, “I don’t know why, but I am always so nervous when I have to present and put it off until last minute.” How many of you have done exactly what this guy did?

4. *Relax.* You can ease any tension and anxiety you have by doing some exercises just before your presentation. Sit comfortably back in a chair with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for four to five seconds, and slowly exhale. Repeat this several times. Find a quiet spot where you can walk around and loosen up your leg muscles. Shake your hands and get your blood circulating more in your hands and feet. Do some type of physical warm-up routine to reestablish your blood flow in your hands, feet and your head.

Let me digress a little here and explain to you why this is important. Earlier I talked about the symptoms of speaking anxiety. I need to explain to you exactly what is going on physiologically in your body. Let’s start with the accelerated heart rate. What is the function of your heart? The function of your heart is to pump blood to all parts of your body. What is the function of your blood? The

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

function of your blood is to carry oxygen to the various parts of your body. When your heart beats fast, it is pumping blood much quicker into and out of the heart because it needs more oxygen. Your body has a finite amount of blood, and when your heart beats much faster than normal, the blood it needs is drawn into your heart away from the extremities of your body. This includes your hands, feet, and even your head. As this occurs, your hands and feet may start to “tingle.” When you notice this “tingling,” you say to yourself, “Oh my God, I must be getting nervous.” And what happens . . . your heart beats faster and before long your body spirals out of control. As you begin to notice and feel more symptoms and your knees begin to shake, and as the other parts of your body begin to react, you find yourself out of control. You then say to yourself, “See, I knew I would get nervous.”

To get this under control you need to use some techniques, which I will be discussing very soon in the next section.

5. *Visualize yourself speaking.* Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern as the audience is applauding. Imagine yourself speaking. Listen to yourself projecting your voice in a clear and assured manner. When you visualize yourself being successful, you will be successful. Unfortunately, many people visualize themselves failing, making a fool of themselves. It is often said, “If you think you will succeed you will. If you think you will fail, you will.” You decide which belief you prefer. Visualization is a very, very powerful tool used by many successful speakers, athletes, and actors. Start visualizing yourself being successful.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

6. *Realize that people want you to succeed.* All audiences want presenters to be interesting, stimulating, and entertaining. They *want* you to succeed. When was the last time you went to hear a presenter and you said to yourself, “Boy I hope this presenter is the worst presenter I ever heard”? Then why do we think our audiences are going to want us to be bad presenters. They don’t! Too many nervous presenters are their own worst enemy. They imagine that the audience will not like them, creating all kinds of reasons why. WRONG! Your audience wants you to succeed.
7. *Don’t apologize.* Most of the time your nervousness does not show at all. Many of the participants in my workshops are amazed when they watch their videos of them speaking that they do not look nervous, even though they remember being nervous. Seeing themselves and knowing how they felt is very powerful. Powerful in the sense that they now know that they do not look as nervous as they thought they did. Knowing that their nervousness did not show helps them accept these naturally nervous feelings. *Never* apologize for feeling nervous. If you don’t apologize, the audience may never know you were dying on the inside. During my workshops, we watch everyone’s videos together as a group and we do group feedback along with professional feedback. When a participant watches his or her video, I often hear that person say, “I looked and felt so nervous.” When another participant in the class says, “You didn’t look nervous at all!” and everyone agrees, this is further validation to this speaker that his or her assumption that he or she looks nervous is not valid.

## ASPECT 6—THE NOISE

Now knowing that the nervousness is not as observable as originally thought—since this was validated by the class—the speaker’s nervousness further reduces.

8. *Concentrate on your message and not the medium.* Your nervous feelings will quickly dissipate if you divert your attention away from your anxieties and instead concentrate on your message and having a conversation with your audience. Focus on Aspect 2: The Message.
9. *Turn nervousness into positive energy.* The same nervous energy that causes your speaking anxiety can be used as an asset to you as a presenter. Harness this energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
10. *Gain experience.* Experience builds confidence, which is the key to successful public speaking. Most speakers find that their anxiety will decrease more and more after each presentation they give. To avoid the “me-versus-them trap,” think about your audience instead of yourself. Focus on having a conversation with your audience, and you will begin to see them as friendly and will become less nervous.

Remember four things in particular:

1. Identify your listeners. Know who they are before you speak.
2. Speak with passion about your subject; speak from the heart.
3. Communicate your excitement. Focus on wanting to tell your audience about your subject.
4. Remember who the expert is. *You* were the one who was asked to speak.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

Following are some physical techniques you can use during your next presentation.

### **Physical Techniques to Help Reduce Speaking Anxiety**

1. Don't fight nervousness directly. Accept it and ease your way through it.
2. Take a brisk walk before your presentation. This will help loosen up your entire body and get your blood circulating. It will also guarantee steadier knees.
3. Do not sit with your legs crossed, because one leg could cramp up or fall asleep.
4. While sitting, let your arms dangle comfortably at your sides.
5. While sitting, twist your wrists so your fingers shake loosely and gently.
6. Foster a feeling of security by pretending you're wearing an overcoat. Try to imagine you can feel its comforting weight on your shoulders.
7. To relax facial muscles, wriggle your jaw back and forth three or four times.
8. Do some deep breathing exercises for about two to five minutes. This will help release endorphins, which are among the brain chemicals known as neurotransmitters. They function to transmit electrical signals within the nervous system.
9. Say to yourself, "Let's go!"

Don't be self-conscious about having a warm-up routine. Athletes have a warm-up routine and speaking and giving a presentation is a physical activity. You can model your warm-up

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

routing after this one provided or personalize your own to meet your needs and situation.

### **Mental Techniques to Help Reduce Speaking Anxiety**

1. Prepare and rehearse. If you rehearse your presentation just once, you are doing more than 80 percent of presenters.
2. Think beyond the presentation to your goals and communicating your message.
3. Act your part.
4. Be enthusiastic.
5. Psyche yourself with positive, confident thoughts.
6. Use visualization to foster positive feelings.
7. Use isometric exercises to physically warm up.
8. Yawn.
9. Scrunch your toes. You need these to keep your proper balance.
10. Make purposeful movements during your presentation.
11. Project confidence and generosity and have fun.

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

The setting is the place or location where you deliver your presentation and may be one that enhances or interferes with the effectiveness of your presentation. Whenever you can, you need to determine what the facilities are like *before* you deliver your presentation. Knowing as much about your presentation setting can make or break your success of your presentation. The more you know in advance of your presentation, the better you can properly plan your delivery and make any adjustments with your presentation.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

Whenever possible, take the time to actually visit the location and the specific room where you will be speaking in advance. Find out from the meeting planner, meeting organizer, hotel staff, or person coordinating the meeting what the room layout will be. Not knowing this information can actually increase a presenter's speaking anxiety. Even little details such as getting the proper addresses and directions to where the meeting will be held are very important. When I am in a new city or location, I will even take a test drive from the hotel I am staying at to the location of the program, if it is not being held in the same hotel I am staying in. This allows me to get a better idea how long it will take to drive to this location. Keep in mind, if you do this on a Sunday and your program is that Monday, the actual drive time may be a lot longer due to Monday morning rush hour. You must take this into consideration.

Many professional speakers, including myself, provide a preferred meeting room layout for our presentations. When I am coordinating where I will be speaking, I always obtain as much detail about the physical setup of the room as possible. I typically fax over the preferred room arrangement, including seating in advance. Following are some additional items I usually discuss with the meeting planner or hotel staff:

1. Room location and room size and layout
2. Chair and table arrangements
3. Door locations
4. Stage or podium setup
5. Window locations
6. Lighting
7. Signage for my program
8. Hotel background music

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

9. Control of the room temperature
10. Other functions taking place during my program
11. Food arrangements
12. Arrangements for audiovisual equipment
13. Microphones

I will discuss each of these on the following pages.

### Room Location and Room Size and Layout

How the room is arranged can make a huge difference in the success of your presentation. If your meeting is held in a company's conference room, you may not have much ability to adjust the seating arrangements. If you are delivering a presentation in a large auditorium with fixed seating, you also do not have much ability to make changes.

In most cases, though, you will be delivering your presentation in a hotel conference room or convention room. Here, you do have some options about how you want the room to be set up and arranged for your presentation. However, if you are one of several speakers, this may not be the case, as the association or meeting planner has already determined what the best set up will be for the meeting. When you do have the opportunity to set the room up for your presentation, you will have several options available to you.

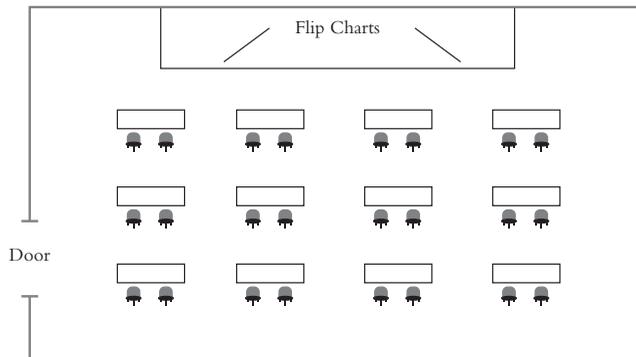
On the following several pages, I have provided some illustrations for various room setups (see Figures 1.2 through 1.9). On the following few pages I have illustrated the four most common room arrangements I personally use. I have provided poor and better arrangements for each of the following types.

1. Classroom style
2. U-shaped style

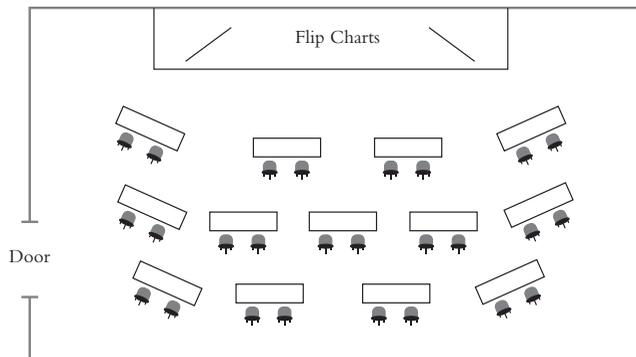
## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

3. Theater or lecture style
4. Dinner style

### *Classroom Style*



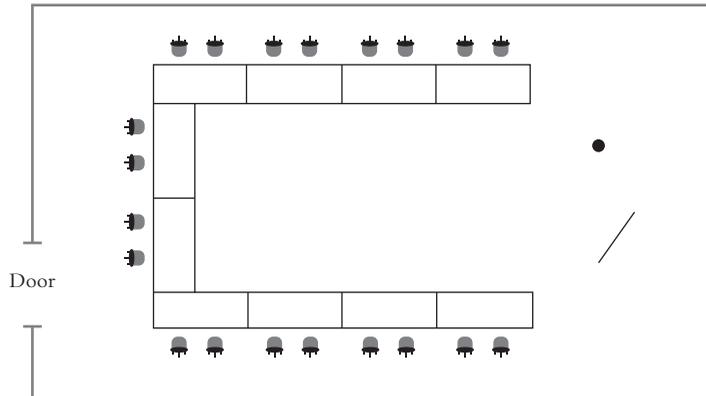
**Figure 1.2 Poor Classroom Arrangement: The seating and tables do not allow the participants to make easy eye contact with you or each other.**



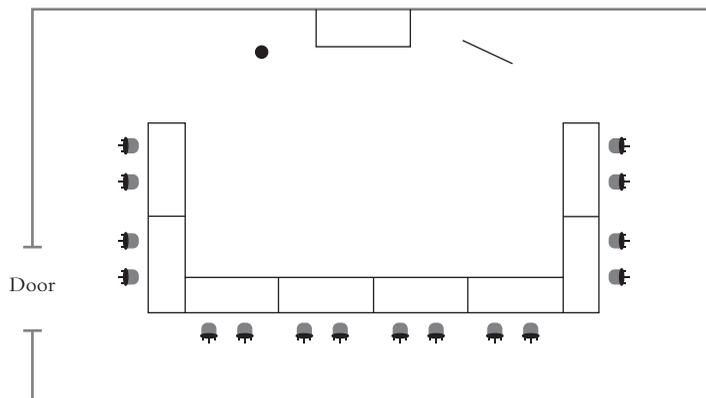
**Figure 1.3 Better Classroom Arrangement: The seating and table are arranged in such a manner and allows the audience to see one another which will encourage better interaction between you and the audience.**

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

### *U-Shaped Style*



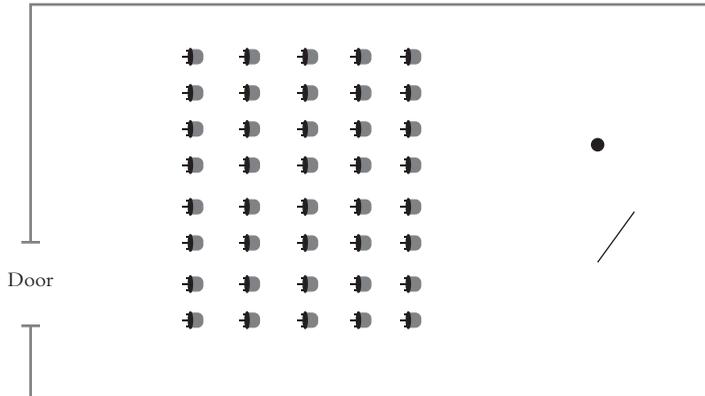
**Figure 1.4 Poor U-Shaped Arrangement:** This arrangement does not allow the presenter (indicated by the black dot) to be close enough to their audience.



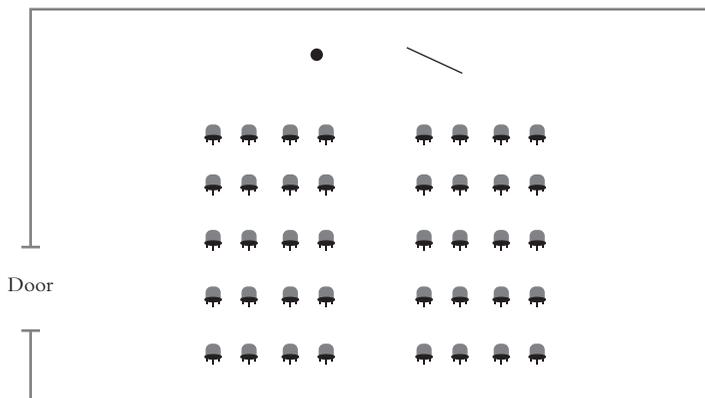
**Figure 1.5 Better U-Shaped Arrangement:** This arrangement allows the presenter (indicated by the black dot) to be closer to the audience and provides for a more relaxed atmosphere.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

### *Theater or Lecture Style*



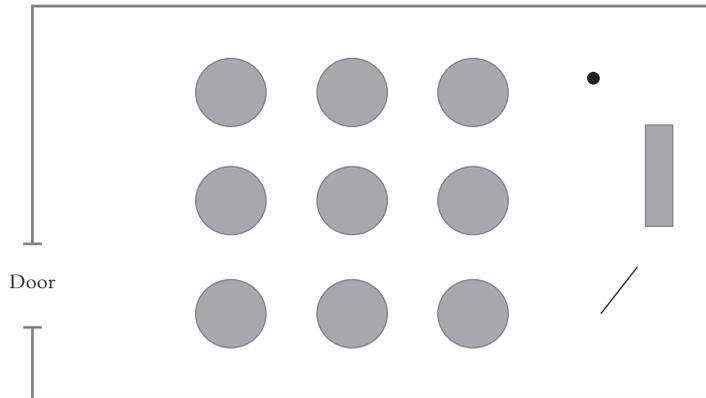
**Figure 1.6 Poor Theater Arrangement:**  
This arrangement has the participants crammed together  
and farther away from the presenter.



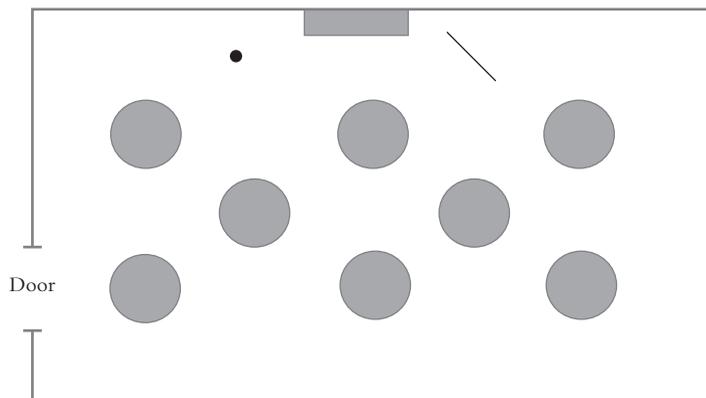
**Figure 1.7 Better Theater Arrangement:** This arrange-  
ment places the speaker closer to the audience and  
provides more space between the seating, including  
an aisle up the center to allow easier access.

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

### *Dinner Style*



**Figure 1.8 Poor Dinner Arrangement: Round tables are set up in perfect rows and will obstruct the audience's view of the presenter.**



**Figure 1.9 Better Dinner Arrangement: Round tables are staggered and prevent the participant's view from being blocked. This allows a better view of the speaker and the head table.**

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

### Table and Chair Arrangements

You should arrange the chairs in advance, creating the fewest number of rows as possible. Do not set up more tables and chairs than you will need. Most people tend to avoid sitting in the front rows and like to sit toward the back of the room, thus leaving the front rows empty. By eliminating any extra tables and chairs, this will ensure that the front rows will also be filled.

Some presenters will even put out fewer chairs than you will need and leave some extra chairs stacked in the back of the room. They believe this helps create the impression of a “full” seminar or workshop. I personally do not like this approach. If I was a participant in the audience, I don’t feel it is my responsibility to set up chairs and the person arranging the room should know how many seats will be needed. If you find the room already set up when you arrive and you know there are too many chairs, you can tape the back few rows of chairs with “reserved” sign on them to force people entering to sit toward the front of the room. As the chairs fill up, have someone remove the signs and tape. Bringing out more chairs creates too much of a distraction.

If you are providing a workshop, provide tables; be mindful not to have too many seats at each of the tables. Each participant will need enough room to comfortably write and lay out materials. Most hotel seminar tables will seat three people, but I personally have only two people at each table. Forcing three or even four people to sit at one table will result in someone banging his or her knees against the table legs. You want your audience to be comfortable. Provide your participants with comfortable chairs, especially if they will be with you for a few days. They will appreciate it. Allow plenty of room between the tables and chairs to allow people to easily get up and move around. There is nothing worse than being crammed into a

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

small room. This is especially true if you are also providing refreshments during your program. The important thing is to make it as comfortable for your audience as you can.

### Door Locations

When you can, try to arrange the room in such a manner that the tables and chairs face away from the entrance and exit doors. This will allow people to quietly slip in and out without interrupting you.

Should you decide to provide refreshments during your program, I recommend that you set these up in the back of the room, where most breaks will take place. People can easily grab their refreshments as they come and go from the room. If you provide seminars, you can also sell some of your products if you have a table set up in the back of the room for this purpose. This will allow people to look at your materials while on breaks. I even go so far as to tape the door latches on the door to eliminate the noise made by opening and closing the door. I am sure many of you have attended a conference and the door you just opened or closed made a loud noise as the door latch clicked.

### Window Locations

Whenever you can, try to have the room arranged such that any windows are at the back of the room. This needs to be coordinated well in advance. I have been in a situation where I was speaking to a large group of salespeople and directly in back of me was a large set of picture windows overlooking the gorgeous golf course behind me. If curtains are available, have them drawn closed to remove this external distraction. If you are early in the planning phases of organizing a room for your presentation, visit the room and check out the layout. If you do not

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

like the room layout, ask if another room is available or if you can swap rooms with someone else.

### **Lighting**

Proper lighting is very important to the success of your presentation. People need to be able to easily see you. Check out the room's lighting the evening before your meeting or presentation. Locate where all the lighting controls are for the room. Spend some time learning what switch turns the lights on and which switch turns them off. Some hotel rooms even have special switches that easily creates a select lighting combination. Check them all out and determine which one will work best for your setup. I sometimes even label the light switches so that any last-minute changes can easily be made.

Never let yourself, as the presenter, be in complete darkness. Check out the wall sconces and make sure there are none directly behind you. A few years back, I was attending a large convention and I was sitting in the same room I was scheduled to speak in the next day. While I sat there, listening to the presenter, I noticed some strategically located lights on the wall behind the presenter. These wall lights were very bright and were a distraction to me. I made a mental note of this and prior to my presentation the next day, I arrived early and loosened the bulbs in these wall sconces so they were not lit when I spoke.

As the speaker, you are the one responsible for the setting. The preceding are just a few examples of what I do to control and minimize any external distractions during my presentation.

### **Hotel Background Music**

Many hotel or conference centers routinely have light background music playing. This music is often also playing in the

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

conference rooms. You should check to see if you can turn this music off yourself or if you need someone to do this for you. In most cases, it involves a simple switch that needs to be turned off; however, this switch may be in another room.

Several times a year, I travel to the Middle East, mostly to Dubai, UAE, where I provide four to five days of training. I always arrive a day or so earlier to allow my internal clock to adjust to the new time zone and to also check on the room setup for my program. Some of the conference rooms I have used in a few of the Dubai hotels have their lighting and sound controls for the room in a master closet in the hall. Some of the controls in one room I was speaking in were in the same room but the remainder were located in the conference room office. I needed to learn where all the controls were in order to completely control the room lighting and sound.

### Room Temperature Controls

It is important that the room you are presenting in be comfortable for your audience. Find out from the hotel or convention hall how to control the room temperature. Many hotel rooms and convention centers have thermostats that are locked behind a Plexiglas cover. Ask if the cover can be unlocked and removed during your program. If the hotel is unwilling to do this, as some are, get the name and phone number of hotel personnel or manager who can make adjustments. Sometimes when I arrive early to a room, the temperature of the room is just perfect. I show up early the next day and the room is now either freezing or is like a sauna. The key is to arrive early enough so that you, as the presenter, can make the adjustments in the room temperature.

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

### Other Function at the Same Location

Delivering a presentation is difficult enough. Take the time to find out if there are any other functions going on during your program in the next room. Sometimes you are in one large room divided only by a folding partition; in such cases, the sound from each side of that partition will be heard by the people sitting on the other side. If you find out that there may be a large function, such as a wedding or some other noisy conference, see if you can move the location of your program. I have been able to do this several times over my career. Many times, the hotel will be able to work with you.

### Meeting or Presentation Delivered On-Site at a Company

I provide several of my workshops and seminars on-site at a client's corporate location. You may need to arrive early to allow time to sign in at security, have someone escort you to the room, and help you set up for your meeting or presentation. You will want to verify, well ahead of time, where you will be meeting someone, whether you get into the building earlier to set up, and who will agree to meet you there early and help you set up. I do a lot of training and workshops for the Army, and they have several additional security and access requirements just to get on base. What additional requirements will you need to be able to get on-site at your client's facility? All of this has to deal with the setting, and it is your responsibility, as the presenter, to know what is required of you. If you do not know this well in advance, you may be delayed at security and late for your presentation, or worse, you may not be allowed on site. That can be very embarrassing.

## ASPECT 7—THE SETTING

### **Food and Refreshment Arrangements and Breaks**

If you are planning to have food served as part of your function, make sure your attendees know this in advance. You may want to allow some time in your schedule for people to mingle and greet one another before your program starts. You need to build this time into your day's schedule. You also want to factor in what you will be providing during your breaks.

It is a good idea to have some coffee, tea, juice, pastry, and fresh fruit in the morning. Many people “need” their coffee fix first thing in the morning and will have a headache by mid-morning if you do not make it available. Soda, water, and juices are a good idea to have in the afternoon, along with some light snack.

If you are not providing lunch as part of your meeting, ask the hotel if they will be; if not, you may need to arrange for someone to bring food in. You can also coordinate with the hotel to have a section within the hotel's restaurant reserved for your group. If you are having food brought in, you need to coordinate the time and what will be required to get the food brought to you and set up. Did you have a table in the room for this purpose? If you decide people are on their own and will need to go out for lunch, be sure to allow enough time for them to travel, eat, and return. I will usually arrange to have the hotel provide a list of local restaurants and their menus so that people can review their options just prior to lunch.

### **Audio Visual Requirements**

It is always a good idea to make sure that all your audiovisual requirements have been arranged. Do not assume that just because you asked or even sent the hotel or client your setup requirements that everything will be there set up as you

## THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF SPEAKING

requested. As many years as I have been speaking professionally, this is one area that never seems to change. What you ask for, regardless of how far in advance you ask for it, may not always be there. This is why it is so critical for you to arrive early and verify you have everything you need.

I often bring my own equipment, including some backup supplies. This way, I know I have all the equipment I need, I know it works, and I do not have to find someone to get me that LCD projector I asked for two months ago. Get to your speaking venue early so that you can set up and make any last-minute changes if something is not right. If the hotel forgets something, it is now your problem to resolve.



At the start of this chapter, I said that in order to be a successful speaker, you need to learn and understand all seven of the aspects I just talked about. You need to deal with all these aspects at the same time. The seven aspects again are:

- Aspect 1—The Speaker
- Aspect 2—The Message
- Aspect 3—The Audience
- Aspect 4—The Channel
- Aspect 5—The Feedback
- Aspect 6—The Noise
- Aspect 7—The Setting