

Business Speech Preparation Checklist

Making a speech or giving a presentation in front of a group of customers and prospects can be a great opportunity. To make the most of these opportunities, thoughtful preparation is essential. This checklist can help with those preparations.

Audience

Item	Comments for speech preparation
How large will the audience be?	
Does the audience include current customers, prospects or both?	
Does the audience include decision makers, influencers, “gatekeepers” or others?	
What are the key areas of interest of the audience?	
How much does the audience know about your product?	
Does the audience want a high level presentation or specifics?	
Do you know anyone in the audience?	
Speak to someone in the audience before the presentation so you can reference the conversation.	

Content of your presentation

Item	Comments for speech preparation
Make sure your content is relevant for the audience.	
Make sure your content is	

geared to the appropriate level for the audience.	
Be sure your presentation has a beginning, middle and end.	
Try to include “industry trends” in your presentation.	
Use earlier conversations with the audience to heighten their interest.	
Engage the audience with a “show of hands” question.	
Consider quoting a recent relevant press article that relates to your product.	
Be sure your conclusion provides the audience a means of following up with you.	

Delivery

Item	Comments for speech preparation
Do not be afraid to use notes, especially bullet points for key items.	
Consider having introduction and closing written out to provide smoothness to presentation.	
Visit dais beforehand to get comfortable.	
Consider having a glass of water available.	
Try to avoid using a monotone voice.	
Test the microphone before the presentation.	
Consider using a clip-on microphone to allow for movement.	

Do not walk in front of speakers to avoid noise problems.	
Make eye contact with the audience.	
Get comfortable with any audio-visual aids you plan to use.	
Practice, practice, practice.	

Other issues

Item	Comments for speech preparation
Using a PowerPoint presentation can make the presentation more effective.	
Avoid heavy text visuals.	
Use color, graphics and white space in visuals.	
Consider distributing copies of visuals before your presentation.	
Any handouts should include contact information.	
If time permits, take questions and be prepared with answers.	
Be available after the presentation for further discussions with interested parties.	