

Speaking from a Script
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Some executives tell me they are too busy to write their own speeches. As a result, many end up delivering a speech as if they were reading it. Their delivery lacks passion, power and punch.

While speaking from someone else's script is not ideal, sometimes it is a necessity. When you have to give a speech you didn't write, keep these five tips in mind.

ONE: Sound like yourself. In order to be credible, the speech must sound like your own. Does it include words that you use everyday? Does it avoid those you do not? Are the sentences about the length of those you use in normal conversation? Read the speech out loud to a friend or colleague. Ask if it sounds like you.

TWO: Find your passion. Nothing adds more power to a speech than passion. If you believe in what you are saying, let your audience know. If you do not, don't say it. Use phrases like "I believe" and "I know." Ramp up your voice and body language to emphasize key points.

THREE: Get personal. Look for ways to personalize the ideas you are presenting. Insert personal stories especially at the beginning of your speech. Also, personalize your wording. For example instead of saying, "A recent study showed..." say "Today, I read a recent study that showed..." Ensure the script is written for the ear and not the eye.

FOUR: Prepare your manuscript. Underline key messages, insert pauses and silences, and mark changes in thought. Also consider:

- Printing your speech in the largest type necessary to read it without reading glasses.
- Using a serif typeface such as Times New Roman.
- Using upper and lower case instead of caps.
- Placing all copy on the upper 2/3 of the page.
- Bringing in right and left margins to isolate copy in the middle of the page.
- Double spacing between lines and sextuple spacing between paragraphs.
- Sliding each page face up to the left instead of turning pages.
- Numbering pages.
- Ending each page with a complete sentence.

FIVE: Establish eye contact with your audience. Look down, scoop up a sentence, reestablish eye contact with the audience, and deliver the phrase. Pause a beat and repeat. Remember to deliver one thought per person even if you are speaking to a large group. Slide a finger down the text so that you can lift your head and connect with the audience without losing

your place. Finally, memorize your opening and closing so that you can deliver both with energy, conviction and strong eye contact.

Working off of someone else's speech doesn't have to be flat. Add some fizzles by using these five tips and you'll deliver a manuscripted speech with punch, passion and power.

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