

# Giving a speech?

For some, giving a speech is just part of the job. These people are constantly doing sales pitches or addressing the board. For others, giving a speech is an opportunity to establish their credentials or gain more visibility. In any case, not everyone is a good speaker, and some people have really annoying habits when giving a speech.

I was at a two-day conference last week and I heard A LOT of speeches. Some were good, some were fine and some were just plain annoying. Here is a list of actual behaviors observed last week. If you are giving a speech, please keep your audience in mind and try to avoid any of these!

**Talking too loudly:** do not yell into a microphone please!

**Talking too softly:** yeah, the microphone amplifies your voice, but won't help if you are whispering. Besides, to me talking softly means that you are unsure of yourself.

**Sounding unsure:** mostly this happens when you end each and every sentence with a question mark, so your speech sound like this: Hi? Today I am going to be talking about widgets? Widgets are the fastest growing segment in the market?

**Sounding too sure:** also known as sounding arrogant or dismissive.

**Self promoting:** say you are asked to talk about literature in the eighteenth century, but all you talk about is the book you just wrote, inspired by the 18th century.

**Being off-topic:** you were given a topic, try to address it. No one came to hear your views on extra-terrestrials if the topic was the planetary system.

**Hogging the spotlight:** if you are speaking on a panel, that means the other people get to speak to. If you are told you

have five minutes, we should not still be hearing from you fifteen minutes later.

**Not answering questions:** this applies to speeches that have an audience Q&A component. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is OK to say that you don't know. It is not OK to go off on a tangent or ignore the content of the question and add more time to your speech.

Do you have any pet peeves about speeches? Any advice? Please share in the comments.

