

Top Ten Tips To Overcome Stress when Public Speaking

Public speaking is a common source of stress in the modern workplace. Whether you work alone or with large numbers of people, the chances are high that you will need to speak in public at some point no matter how much you might wish to avoid the experience.

If your career goals include taking a leadership role in your organization, you will almost certainly need to speak regularly to groups, large and small, on your road to achieving them. Here are ten common causes of public speaking anxiety and some tips for avoiding them.

- 1.** *Believing that public speaking is inherently stressful.* Public speaking need not be stressful at all. If you correctly understand the causes of public speaking stress and take care to address them, with practice speaking in public will become an invigorating and satisfying experience for you.
- 2.** *Thinking you need to be perfect in order to succeed.* Perfection is a goal that few, if any, professional public speakers attain. Your audience will not expect perfection and neither should you.
- 3.** *Trying to cover too much material.* Don't try to accomplish too much in the time you are given. Instead, be realistic with your speech objectives given the time you are allotted.
- 4.** *Having the wrong objectives.* Public speaking is about having an effect on your audience - to educate, motivate or persuade them. This is where your focus and purpose should be. Concentrate on what will benefit your audience, not yourself.
- 5.** *Trying to please everyone.* People are diverse. It is likely that each individual member of will respond differently to your presentation. It is unrealistic to expect to please all of them and you should not try to.
- 6.** *Trying to emulate other speakers.* You've likely attended more than a few events where you've listened to professional speakers or trainers give a presentation. Don't make the mistake of trying to copy their style. Instead, simply be you.

This will allow you concentrate your full attention on your material and your audience.

- 7.** *Failing to be personally revealing and humble.* Telling personal stories to illustrate your points can have a profound impact on your audience and their receptiveness to your message. However, few things will alienate an audience more quickly than arrogance. Instead, be humble when speaking about yourself and your achievements and experiences.
- 8.** *Expecting the worst.* Believe that you will succeed and you are already more than half way there. The negative outcomes you might imagine will rarely, if ever, occur and even if they do you can use them to your advantage. Humour is a great tool for turning a minor disaster into a memorable teaching moment.
- 9.** *Being over-prepared.* The adage that you can never be too prepared isn't always true. Take time to develop and foster confidence in your self and your ability to succeed.
- 10.** *Thinking your audience will be as critical of you and your performance as you are of yourself.* Your audience will want you to succeed and will give you every opportunity to do so. Mistakes and hitches, which may appear glaring to you, are likely to pass unnoticed by the majority of your listeners.

If you get up in front of a group and find the experience stressful, don't let that stop you. Instead, find out what you did wrong or what you didn't remember. Then go back out and speak again until you get it right. It may take more time, but the rewards will be well worth your effort.