

# Delivery

## 1 The Audience

The most important thing in any speech is what the audience gets out of it. If a speech does not make an impact on the audience, the speech may as well never have been given. The speaker is speaking for the audience. So in the end, what matters is what the audience hears you say.

What the audience hears obviously depends on what you say. However the audience gets much more out of your speech than just your words. The impact you make on the audience depends on what you say by saying it, what you say by not saying it, and what you say by how you say it. The book *Silent Messages* by Albert Mehrabian has suggested that the effect that a speaker leaves on an audience is 7% what is actually said, 55% what is not said, and 38% of the effect is attributed to how it is said.

So remember, your audience hears

- What you say by what you say
- What you say by what you don't say
- What you say by how you say it

Delivery, then, is what the audience gets out of the speech by what you don't explicitly say and also by how you say what you say. The audience will never

remember the specific words. What is much more important is the feeling that you made some sense.

## 2 What you don't say

What can you say without actually saying it? We can split what you don't say into the areas of *read* and *poise*.

### 2.1 Read

When we say read, we mean how you read the audience and how the audience reads you. How you read the audience can dictate the approach that you want to take during the speech. The primary means for reading the audience is by eye contact. Are they bored, are you going too fast, or do they seem interested? A successful speaker will get feedback from the audience during the speech. We also put under this category nervousness since it can significantly impact how the audience reads you. If the audience feels that you are extremely nervous, like if you are fidgeting, pacing around, or stuttering a lot, then it will detract from the main point of your speech. The audience will focus on your weakest point.

### 2.2 Poise

The second in which a speaker can communicate to the audience without saying anything is poise. Tell the audience you're confident. Stand up straight, stand with your legs about shoulder width apart, and let your arms hang by your sides. What do you do with your hands during the speech? You can make gestures, but be very careful about how you make them. If you're going to make a gesture, make it! Don't make a half-gesture. And don't do it too much. The audience probably doesn't want to see a mime.

## 3 How you say it

What can you say by controlling how you say it? Under here, we also have two broad categories: *speed* and *noise*.

### 3.1 Speed

Speed is simply whether you are talking slow or fast. There is no right speed to talk. In fact, you will almost certainly want to vary the speed that you talk in a speech. It is the task of the speaker to determine what speed would achieve the effect on the audience that they want.

### 3.2 Noise

Noise, refers to the tone and voice of your speech, and how you produce the stream of words that becomes your speech. You can control the loudness or softness. Just like speed, there is no right loudness for all occasions. There is a time to speak loud and a time to speak soft. The challenge is for the speaker to determine the right combination of fast and slow and loud and soft. Another important thing to add are pauses. Pausing can definitely improve the effectiveness of a speech.

## 4 Effective Delivery

So remember the four keys to effective delivery are:

- **Read** your audience to see how they like the speech.
- Control the **speed** of your speech to maximize its impact.
- Maintain a good **poise** to show confidence.
- Use your voice to make the **noise** that will have maximum effect.