

Public speaking and presentation skills

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ABSTRACT: *A public speaking skill is any quality that helps candidates maintain a positive presence, engage with their audience and communicate clearly to convey their ideas. These skills allow public speakers to transform a standard presentation into an engaging and exciting event for their guests. These skills are essential in the workplace, as candidates may host public speaking events such as presentations, conferences, trade shows or special events. While public speaking is a skill, it comprises multiple communication skills that allow public speakers to connect with an audience. These skills calm the speaker, reduce boredom in the audience and ensure that they absorb the message of the speech.*

Keywords: *Public speaking, presentation skills, speech delivery, body language, confidence in speaking, speech structure.*

Introduction

Public speaking is the act of delivering a speech or presentation to an audience with the purpose of informing, persuading, entertaining, or inspiring. It involves effective communication skills, confidence, and the ability to engage an audience through clear messaging, body language, and vocal delivery. Strong public speaking skills are valuable in both personal and professional settings, as they help individuals convey ideas, lead discussions, and effectively.

Presentation skills refer to the abilities required to effectively deliver information, ideas, or arguments to an audience in a clear, engaging, and persuasive manner. Strong presentation skills involve a mix of planning,

communication, and performance techniques that help make a presentation memorable and impactful.

Content Organization – Structuring the presentation logically with a compelling introduction, main points, and a strong conclusion.

Clarity of Message – Focusing on a clear and concise message that is easy for the audience to understand and remember.

Visual Aids – Using slides, charts, images, or videos to enhance understanding and retention.

Speech delivery is the method by which a speaker conveys their message to an audience, combining verbal and nonverbal techniques to make the speech effective and memorable. The quality of delivery can significantly impact how the audience receives and interprets the message, making it a critical component of public speaking.

Types of Speech Delivery

Manuscript Delivery: Reading the speech word-for-word from a written script. This is commonly used when precise language is essential, such as in formal or political speeches. However, it can sometimes feel less engaging if not delivered with expression.

Memorized Delivery: Committing the speech to memory and delivering it without notes. This approach allows for eye contact and connection with the audience but can be risky if parts of the speech are forgotten or if it feels rehearsed rather than natural.

Impromptu Delivery: Speaking without preparation, often in a spontaneous or casual setting. This form requires quick thinking and adaptability and can show authenticity, but it can lack structure if the speaker is unprepared.

Extemporaneous Delivery: Speaking from a prepared outline rather than a full script, allowing for flexibility and natural interaction with the audience. This is often considered the most effective form, as it combines the benefits of preparation with the freedom to engage dynamically.

Body language refers to the nonverbal signals that people use to communicate, often unconsciously, through their physical behavior, posture,

facial expressions, gestures, and eye movements. It is a powerful form of communication that can reinforce or contradict what is being said verbally and can convey emotions, attitudes, and intentions without words. In settings like public speaking, personal interactions, or professional environments, understanding body language can enhance the clarity and impact of communication.

Key Components of Body Language

Facial Expressions: The face is highly expressive and can reveal emotions such as happiness, anger, surprise, or sadness. Smiling, frowning, raising eyebrows, and other facial cues often communicate feelings instantly.

Eye Contact: Maintaining or avoiding eye contact can convey confidence, sincerity, interest, or discomfort. Good eye contact often indicates openness and engagement, while lack of eye contact may suggest discomfort or disinterest.

Gestures: Movements of the hands, arms, or fingers can emphasize points, show enthusiasm, or indicate openness. For example, open palms may suggest honesty, while crossed arms can indicate defensiveness.

Posture: The way someone stands or sits can reveal confidence, openness, or defensiveness. An upright, relaxed posture can convey confidence and attentiveness, while slouching or leaning

Confidence in speaking refers to the self-assurance a person displays while communicating with an audience, whether in public speaking, presentations, or everyday conversations. It plays a critical role in how effectively a message is delivered and received. Confident speakers are often perceived as more credible and persuasive, making their communication more impactful.

Key Factors Contributing to Confidence in Speaking

Preparation: Thorough preparation helps speakers feel more confident about their content. Knowing the material well reduces anxiety and allows the speaker to focus on delivery rather than worrying about what to say next.

Practice: Regular practice, whether through rehearsing in front of a mirror, recording oneself, or presenting to friends or family, helps build familiarity with the material and enhances confidence in delivery.

Positive Mindset: Adopting a positive attitude towards speaking can boost confidence. Visualizing success, focusing on the message rather than the audience's judgment, and affirming one's abilities can help combat negative thoughts.

Body Language: Confident body language, such as maintaining good posture, making eye contact, and using purposeful gestures, can reinforce self-assurance. It not only affects how the speaker feels but also how the audience perceives them.

Vocal Control: Speaking clearly, at a moderate pace, and varying tone and volume can enhance confidence. Practicing vocal exercises can help improve clarity and reduce nervousness.

Conclusion

Public speaking and presentation skills are vital in today's communication-driven world. These skills enhance career opportunities, influence, and personal growth. By understanding the importance of effective communication, practicing regularly, and implementing strategies for improvement, individuals can become confident and engaging speakers. As public speaking is an art that can be learned, the journey toward mastering it is both rewarding and empowering.

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