

# DR. LOIS FRANKEL

*Get and keep the job you want.*

If you ever get the jitters about speaking in front of groups, you're not alone. Preparation and practice lead to the perception of being polished and professional. Whether your presentation is to sell an idea, a product, or to inform, here are a few specific tips from John Gregory, our media coach, for how to make it memorable:

- 1) **Write your summary first.** This advice is exactly the opposite of what most people do when writing speeches. The advantages of composing a short summary first are (1) your mind is fresh, (2) you tend to stay focused on your topic, and (3) many of us struggle to think of what we should say first.
- 2) **Speech writing continues when you walk into the room where you'll be speaking and meeting people before delivering the speech.** Good fodder can come from informal moments of pre-program chatting. Add that material to the opening section of your speech (and perhaps even later). For example, "As you know, my piece of the agenda is about a new product designed to maximize use of and minimize the amount of time spent in the office. In fact, I was speaking with Mary a few minutes ago and she tells me since our downsizing 6 months ago, overtime in her group has increased by 18%. We need a more cost-effective way to get more done with fewer people."
- 3) **Limit the body of your presentation to 3 main points.** Listeners find it difficult to remember long lists. Three seems to be the magic number for retention. In the beginning, cue your listeners by saying something like, "I'd like to bring up 3 key points today," then list those points before beginning your explanation.
- 4) **Audiences remember visual pictures longer than spoken messages.** If you paint visual pictures, listeners will make the connection to the key points those sparklers illustrate. For example, if you're trying to convince a team of colleagues to purchase a new time-saving product from an outside vendor, try something like, "Picture yourself looking at your watch at about 4:30 on a Tuesday afternoon and starting to clean up your desk and prepare for your next day's activities. Then, by 5:10, you're in your car leaving the parking lot. At 6:00 you walk into your house and spend quality time with your family. You might even get in 45 minutes at the gym before or after dinner. This is just a dream to most of us around here who are working longer hours and spending less and less time with their families. I'd like to suggest we consider a product that can help make it a reality."
- 5) **All summaries should include a call to action.** It can be as simple as asking people to call you or take home a brochure, or as direct as asking for the sale. Remember, you don't have to have a product to sell – your ideas and expertise are equally valuable to colleagues or clients.
- 6) **Join Toastmasters International.** We recommend this frequently to our clients as a cost-effective way to gain increased comfort and confidence speaking before groups. They have chapters in most major cities around the world. The address of their website is [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org).

Best regards,

Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D.