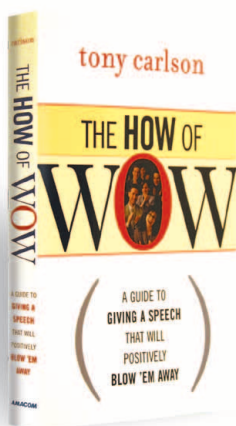


SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/
CAREER TECHNIQUES

By Tony Carlson

A Guide to Giving a Speech That Will Positively Blow 'Em Away

THE HOW OF WOW

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Someone once said, "Talk is cheap because supply exceeds demand." Every day in North America, 10,000 or more people stand in front of a crowd and deliver speeches. Twenty-five minutes later, 9,998 are forgotten by everyone except perhaps the speaker and his or her subordinates. Some observers figure the conference business in the United States alone is worth \$120 billion per year. That's a large cost for speeches being slept through by people bored with "bizspeak" and numbed by pointless PowerPoints.

Communications expert Tony Carlson knows what it takes to electrify audiences and make a lasting impact. In *The How of Wow*, he shares tips on getting attention, empathy and respect from audiences; developing a bigger and better stage presence; and making every speech a memorable and powerful experience for you and your audience alike. Giving speeches is a great way to get recognized and build your personal brand. Tony Carlson helps you gain and enhance your reputation as a public speaker without peer.

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What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ **How to get to know your audience.** Learn why audiences do not need to have points repeated to them three and four times in a speech. Discover how to engage your listeners with insight, wit and energy.

✓ **Why you should study the great speakers.** From preachers to politicians, find out why you should get to know the best speakers inside and out. Learn how they carry themselves, use their bodies and props, and hold crowds in rapt attention.

✓ **Why you must write with clarity and depth.** Simplicity is the best rule of thumb for a speech. Find out how to use vibrant, active verbs and avoid clichés.

✓ **How to deliver the goods.** Learn how to prepare for the moment, how to use your body to your advantage, and when it's best to say nothing at all.

✓ **How to get feedback.** Find out how to use your speaking opportunity to position yourself as an expert on your topic, building your brand so that you're the first person audience members will think of when they need that kind of expertise.

THE HOW OF WOW

by Tony Carlson

— THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

Why Should You Care?

Delivering memorable speeches is a powerful tool to build your personal brand. You can make a name for yourself by working on your presentation skills. Besides, if you have ambitions of climbing the leadership ladder at your company, you need a name people know and respect. In this sense, a speech invitation is an *opportunity*, not an obligation. You have a chance to show what you are made of, as an expert in your field and as a person.

Consider it this way — on a beige canvas, even a dash of color makes an impact and becomes memorable. When you have a few dozen or more individuals in a room listening to you — and no one else is talking but you — you can be memorable. When else do you get that kind of opportunity to gain and maintain the attention of so many people, including your colleagues, peers and even your bosses? You have the chance to cast yourself in a very different light: a radiant light that could change your career.

Demonstrable communications skills enhance your promotability because the same things that make a good speaker also make a very promotable individual, particularly in organizations with an emphasis on engineering or other technical disciplines. Communication is the glue that often holds such technology-heavy organizations together, and provides the fuel that drives innovation and growth.

Communication and Individual Responsibility

Peter Drucker describes management as both a social function and a liberal art. “Management is about human beings,” he wrote. “Every enterprise is composed of people with different skills and knowledge doing many different kinds of work. It must be built on communication and on individual responsibility.” Communication and individual responsibility are concepts that come together on the platform in the person of the speaker who demonstrates his or her personal commitment, expertise and leadership. Leadership, like public speaking, takes courage, articulation and a willingness to say the unpopular thing.

On the platform, mediocrity is never acceptable. Never settle for “good enough.” Respect audience mem-

Understand Your Audience

Consider the following about the members of your audience:

✓ **They learn and perceive differently.** The audience is not a mob. It is a collection of individuals who all learn in a different manner. Some people are stimulated by visuals; some focus on auditory cues. Some learn best only by doing. You must make the connection with all these types.

✓ **Their memories are built on meaning and context.** The meanings on which memories are based are a function of our ability to recognize or create patterns. This right-brain activity, the creation of meaning and memorability, is close to the emotional core of an individual's being. The stronger the memory, the easier it is for us to make the right connections with our audiences.

✓ **They respond when you share your humanity.** This is the one thing that you have that connects you with every single person in every single audience. Take your shared experience as a living, breathing, functioning person in the 21st century and drive it into your audience's brains. Follow it up with as much rational, logical or technical discussion as you want, as long as you start and end in the right brain, with meaning, you will be remembered.

bers enough to deliver real value — ideas they can learn from, imaginative scenarios that stimulate new avenues of exploration, and fresh opportunities for more

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The author: Tony Carlson has 30 years of experience as a communications executive, award-winning journalist, educator and corporate writer. He is currently editor of corporate communications for Bell Canada.

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Why Should You Care?

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informed dialogue. You can and must connect with the audience in ways that others cannot, or do not. It's not difficult — you simply must want to do it.

Tried ... but Not Necessarily True

Why does every speechifying, how-to book insist on the old, tried-and-true model of speechmaking as the preferred blueprint? You know the steps:

1. Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em.
2. Tell 'em what you came to tell 'em.
3. Tell 'em what you just told 'em.
4. Bask in the applause.

Do we really think audience members are so stupid that they need to hear stuff three times? This conventional speech structure is tired. We've outgrown the old model because of the skills we've had to learn in an information-rich world: We process more information in a 24-hour period than the average person 500 years ago would come across in a lifetime. We must look for another way to be memorable.

The first response most people have to the prospect of giving a speech is to focus on the input — what they are going to say. This might seem logical on the surface, but dig a little deeper. By focusing first on what you're going to say, you effectively ignore what you want to get out of it.

Begin by Considering the End

Consider that any communication requires at least three elements — the data to be communicated, the person sending out the information and the person receiving the information. The common approach looks only at the first two elements, with a focus on the point of view of the sender (the person speaking) and the material being pitched. Whether anyone is there to catch it is practically beside the point.

Wouldn't it make more sense to begin at the end and work back? Begin with what you want the audience to believe or do at the end of the speech, then figure out how to get there. Only when you know what you want the audience to do after the speech can you build a speech that the audience will remember, that will build your brand.

The Golden Goals of Speechmaking

In any speech, there are two outcomes you need:

1. The audience remembers *you* in a positive way.
2. The audience remembers your *headline* in a positive way.

If you accomplish these golden goals, you will have extracted real value from the opportunity.

These might seem like modest ambitions, but consider

the reality in which you are speaking — as one of several speakers put up in front of often less-than-attentive audience members, most of whom will be back at their desks, fully engaged in their lives after you conclude your talk. If you can be remembered in spite of *that* competition, you'll have done well.

In addition, never underestimate the ability of the modern human being to have information flow virtually uninterrupted in one ear and out the other without touching so much as one cell of gray matter.

You are the water; your audience is the horse. Audience members have been led to you, and you must make them drink. You have to connect with them to be memorable for them. ■

Before You Write a Word

It's a necessity: If you want to be a great speaker, you must study great speakers. And some of the most effective speakers can be found on Sunday morning religious television. Set aside the theology and any negative feelings you might have about such figures as Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart or other "televangelists." Look at the results — million-dollar ministries that employ thousands and run on multimillion-dollar budgets. Those results come from one thing — the ability of those people to speak and to enlist the support of their audience. That is powerful speaking.

Swaggart's Swagger

Jimmy Swaggart swaggers back and forth across the stage, using every trick in his actor's repertoire — the floppy Bible, the glasses that he dons and removes as the situation demands, his flowing hair, his body language and even his sweat. They all say "commitment" and "passion." Not everyone has it in him- or herself to deliver a speech like Swaggart, but his approach to the podium shows us things we can and should learn, such as the following:

- **The body is a powerful prop.**
- **Movement can add drama, breaking down the wall between the audience and the speaker.**
- **Tone, inflection and pauses add color and emphasis.**

Some of the great speakers of our time have borrowed from evangelists. Bill Clinton's speeches were full of the ebb and flow of the great preachers of his Southern heritage. Martin Luther King Jr., too, never ventured far from his roots: His "I Have a Dream" speech has the cadence, repetition and rhythm that punctuate so many fundamentalist worship services.

Always have your ear out for what other speakers are doing. Make note of the best and what they do well; make note of the worst and what they do poorly. Adapt

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Before You Write a Word

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what's best for you and ignore the rest.

Keep a 'Good Stuff' File

Be a pack rat for interesting facts and thought starters. Collect trivia, newspaper clippings, Internet articles, magazine features — all of it grist for the mill even if only to act as a catalyst for an innovative theme. And do yourself a favor: Do the research yourself. Another person can read the exact same thing as you and not notice the same useful or oddball details you notice. Everyone simply has different filters. If you want that offbeat fact, that little anecdote that raises your talk out of the mundane, you have to keep alert all the time for these snippets. Like a magpie, collect shiny bits, because you just never know.

Find the Hook

There's an energy that crackles through the room when you approach the podium to speak — a moment of expectation, of anticipation, perhaps of drama. It's a great moment, and not one you want to waste with conventional pleasantries. The audience is most open to a speaker in this moment, so the speaker must hook the audience with an indelible first impression.

Even before you write a word of your speech, spend time figuring out your hook. Your nervousness and the audience's anticipation are both human emotions. Therefore, the beginning of your presentation is the perfect moment to respond with a hook that sets itself right in the emotional center of the audience members' brains.

The Story Hook

The classic model of a speech has been likened to a set of bookends — strong and broad at the start and finish, with a bunch of stuff in the middle. In other words, the speech has a strong start, a middle that proves the start, and a strong finish that reiterates the start.

Speeches should, however, follow a more classic, story-centered arc, building in interest and involvement from the opening to the climax. The tension in a story rises as complications arise, and the connection between the watcher and the watched strengthens until a resolution is achieved. The momentum builds: It doesn't stop to review what the audience already knows, nor does it head back to where the story began. Instead, it moves ever forward, toward a new, higher plain.

Indeed, from our earliest stirrings as cognitive beings — creatures who can react not only to physical stimuli, but also to abstract ideas — we learn the lessons of life and we absorb the values of our culture through stories. Does it not follow, then, that modeling a speech after

Professor Slams 'Chartjunk'

Edward Tufte is professor emeritus of political science, computer science and statistics, and graphic design at Yale University. His assessment of the rise of what he terms "chartjunk" is withering.

"It induced stupidity," he writes, "turned everyone into bores, wasted time, and degraded the quality and credibility of communication." Being in thrall to slideware, he claims, "routinely disrupts, dominates and trivializes content. Thus, PowerPoint presentations too often resemble a school play — very loud, very slow and very simple."

Presentations, he notes, should and will stand or fall based on the "quality, relevance and integrity" of their content. "If your numbers are boring," he adds, "then you've got the wrong numbers. If your words or images are not on point, making them dance in color won't make them relevant. Audience boredom is usually a content failure, not a decoration failure."

the structure of a story might just be an effective way to connect with an audience?

The Metaphorical Hook

Being memorable from the first moment you open your mouth means plugging into the imaginative power of your audience. An image, not a picture, is worth 10,000 words. The theaters of our minds are often much richer, and certainly much more personal, than the theaters of the local multiplex. A good speaker can use that common experience to create powerful, personalized images in the minds of an audience — images that are sufficiently compelling in themselves to make the speech memorable.

The Location Hook

Where you are is not only something you have in common with the audience: It can also be the source of an "Aha!" moment. There is nothing more immediate to audience members than their physical surroundings, from the size and shape of the room, to the view out the window, to the comfort of the chairs in which they're sitting. Location is tangible. Location is in your face. It can be an exceptionally compelling hook for a speech, because you can be confident that it is a shared human experience for everyone in the room.

Everyone likes to hear his or her hometown praised by visitors, and with a little bit of research, it's easy to come up with a nifty little fact that lets the locals know you've done more than localize a canned talk. You must, however, make it connect with your theme — that's the trick. If you don't, it will seem like the mandatory opening joke that has nothing to do with the reason you or

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For additional information on trivia for your "good stuff" file, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Before You Write a Word

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anyone else in the room is there.

The Time Hook

Our culture and values are shaped by history — not the dry history of textbooks, but the living history of the people in our lives. It's like six degrees of separation with another dimension: time. It's fun to connect people to others who live at the same time through broad, overlapping circles of acquaintance. Add in a timeline, however, and there's a whole new level of connection.

Often, a great way to make the all-important connection with an audience is to bring to bear some historical context — an anniversary, for example. If an anniversary of some neat event falls on the day you're making your speech, it's a legitimate way to make a quick and lasting connection, as long as it has some relevance to your theme.

The Provocation Hook

Most speeches are boring. Agree? Disagree? It doesn't really matter — that statement got your attention.

Sometimes you need an in-your-face approach to catch your audience's collective ear, and a provocative statement might do the trick.

In most cases, the provocative statement will leave part of the audience thinking, "Right on!" and another part of the audience thinking, "Who does this person think he is?" Anyone left over will just be asking him- or herself how you're going to get yourself out of the corner into which you've painted yourself. Any way you slice it, though, you have the audience hooked with a little bit of drama right from the time the curtain goes up.

Keep the Focus on You

In many organizations, no one gets up to speak without a laptop full of slides, reducing business plans and strategies to bullet points on deep blue backgrounds. Something must be on the screen behind the speaker, in part because it's so easy to do. Indeed, PowerPoint and other similar software are terrific products. They also happen to be the wrong products, most of the time, if your objective is to create a lasting impression.

There are numerous problems with using slides — some technical, some more fundamental. For instance, there is a limit to how much information a slide can actually carry. A single slide cannot usefully contain a large amount of material. If you cut your information down to what can easily be visible from the back of the room (typically 40 words, maximum), you end up with a tremendous number of slides, each of which displays a very narrow band of information.

The Arguments for Slides

There are, however, a number of arguments in favor of slides, but each can be debunked with ease:

- *Slides help the audience keep track of where you are in the presentation.* The audience is not dumb. If your spoken text is sufficiently logical and interesting, the audience will be able to follow you without visual bookmarks. This is particularly true when you insert an updated agenda slide every time you switch to a new topic area. All you're doing is helping audience members gauge how much longer they have to count their teeth with their tongues until you're finished.

- *Slides help me keep track of where I am in the presentation.* This is the crutch argument, often heard from inexperienced speakers. If you need slides to keep you on track, you probably don't know enough about your topic to be up in front of a crowd.

- *Slides provide visual flair — they look cool.* Yes, you can make some attractive visual aids, but you shouldn't invest too much in that visual appeal. Regardless of how pretty your pictures are, they will not be a substitute for substance or ideas.

- *Slides are good because a picture is worth 1,000 (or 10,000) words.* Many people do respond most readily to visual images, but the stock photos that grace most slides look like they came from a Sears catalog, and the graphs and pie charts are often sterile depictions of even more sterile numbers. They are not totally useless, nor are they something on which you want to hang your entire connection with the audience. ■

As You Write

Now, it's time to get down to it and actually write something. How do you put all your prepared points and supporting material into a 20-minute capsule you can deliver with conviction to an audience that will remember you and your message?

Keep one word in mind: simplicity. This does not mean writing for simpletons or dumbing down your speech in any way. Simplicity is clarity of thought and expression. Directness. Candor. It means using whatever means are at your disposal to simplify sometimes complex ideas, to give the ethereal some tangible heft.

Big Words Vs. Smaller Words

The days of high-flown oratory are gone. It is better to stick to plain words, simply spoken. These will make a lasting impression. Why is it so difficult to do, though? Quite simply, most people write in a style that is different from how they talk. We talk normally, using everyday English, but when we write, we tend to gussy

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As You Write

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up our language for fear of being seen as somehow not advanced or sophisticated enough to do the job.

Trouble is, sometimes the big word isn't the right word. When people try to get fancy in their choice of words, they invariably make it tougher for whoever is on the receiving end to determine exactly what is being communicated. Why camouflage ambiguity in big words? Why hide meaning when you can spell it out instead?

Don't Use the Passive Voice

Nothing kills the momentum of the written or spoken word faster than the passive voice. It hides accountability and is the domain of the nameless, faceless and brandless bureaucrat. By using the passive voice, people avoid taking responsibility for actions or feelings, ceding their authority in the process.

For example, which would you say to your teenager:

- “It is felt that one shouldn't stay out past one's curfew,” or,
- “I want you home by midnight, or else.”

You are the one in charge, so you would most likely say the latter. You're setting the limits, not some nebulous committee; thus, you must make that fact abundantly clear. Why would you do any differently in a speech?

Avoid Clichés

People who pepper their remarks with clichés, consciously or not, frequently demonstrate nothing more than their grasp of the obvious and their lack of creative, original thought. If the language you use is filled with trite phrases, people may just assume your ideas are similarly unoriginal, noncreative or unmemorable.

Jettison Jargon

The use of jargon (acronyms, shortened versions of words, and the like) is often a judgment call. A properly used piece of jargon can cut through much verbiage, enabling you to get to your point quickly and directly, as long as everyone in the audience knows what that jargon means. For example, everyone knows NATO is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — it's a common piece of jargon. Telecom industry insiders know their DSL from their DTH, but bankers do not.

The risk of using jargon is a risk of alienating an entire swath of your audience. While its use can establish a higher level of intimacy with members of the audience who recognize and know a particular term, it can also put a considerable amount of distance between you and those who are not in the know.

Use Quotations Judiciously

Some people have said things so well that it seems pointless to try to say them better. Why not just copy them (with proper attribution, of course)? How often have you heard speakers go to the well? “As Richard Nixon once said ...” or, “In the words of Arnold Schwarzenegger, before he was governor ...” It's a commonly used trick in the speaker's arsenal.

And that is its detriment — its commonality, its quality of being utterly forgettable. Another drawback is credibility: If you don't know who you're quoting or what the person stood for, how useful is the citation?

Using quotations also signifies a kind of ceding of your field and your audience's attention to someone else. Quoting someone famous doesn't show that that person would agree with you: It shows that you agree with that person. It does nothing for your brand, except perhaps to demonstrate your ability to research and/or memorize the words of others.

In Defense of Quotations

That is not to say quotations are not useful. They do serve as fine thought starters, pointing your mind in directions it may not have been headed. Sometimes quotations are a very serviceable solution. If you feel you must use them, try to do so in an unconventional, unforgettable way. Work to surprise your audience, not bore them.

Practice Makes Perfect

Your connection with the audience — your key to being memorable — likely rests on your performance, not the logical force of your content on paper. The only way to hone that performance is to practice performing. Here are some suggestions:

- **Practice aloud.** Know your material so well that, on the day of the performance, you can forget about everything but performing. Know the script backward and forward, with no surprises lurking in the middle of a paragraph. Make sure the speech fits the time you have been allotted. Practicing aloud turns the written word into the spoken word. Stand up when you practice, ideally at a lectern with your delivery copy in front of you (even more ideally, with a trusted adviser watching and listening).

- **Check for tongue twisters.** The tongue is trainable. With exercise, your tongue can get things right virtually all the time. And exercise means rehearsal. Test out where your words flow together. Find out where the tongue twisters are and change them.

- **Vary pace, pitch and force.** *Pace* is the speed at which you speak. *Pitch* is the note on the musical scale

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For additional information on Lee Iacocca's short, powerful speech, go to: <http://mq.summary.com>

For additional information on language bugaboos, go to: <http://mq.summary.com>

As You Write

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you use, such as raising your pitch at the end of a question. *Force* is the loudness of your speech, from the intimate stage whisper of confidants to the hellfire-and-brimstone shout of an emotionally committed speaker. To fully engage your audience, vary all three components. To get that variance down correctly, you must rehearse.

● **Practice ad-libs.** One way to change the pace and reinvigorate audience members is to step away from the text of your speech and actually talk to them. Ad-libbing can strengthen your connection with the audience, but it is a skill that must be learned to be most effective. Consider planning your ad-libs carefully, to make sure you stay coherent and on-topic when you do turn from your prepared speech. ■

For additional information on how what can go wrong might just go wrong, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Stand and Deliver

The time has come for you to give your speech — time to deliver. Now, it's all about confidence: confidence that all the planning and thought that went into your content was on track; confidence that your run-throughs have made you thoroughly familiar with your material. Now, it's between you and the audience, and it's up to you to make that all-important connection.

'Advancing the Room'

Everything you've done in preparation for your speech has been to ensure that you are well within your comfort zone in terms of content, the audience, your timing and everything else. To ensure that you'll be comfortable, be sure to go to the venue before the event and check things out. It's called "advancing the room." Be thorough about it. When you rise to speak, you should feel as if you're in the meeting room where you have sessions with your team, or, better still, in your living room. You must feel comfortable, so you can forget your surroundings.

There are many, many details to check. Among them are the following:

- Where do you sit before being called up to speak?
- How many steps are there to the stage (in the dark, it's hard to tell)?
- Where is the water?
- Is the microphone too high? Is it too low? How does it adjust? If you prefer to walk around, can you get a lapel microphone?

For additional information on a speech delivery checklist, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

The Benefits of Silence

A well-timed pause in your speech can do a number of things. It can put a bold underline on a point you've just made, or it can set the table for a blockbuster idea. A pause engages the audience, even if it's not at a dramatic moment. It can signal a break for those whose attention has wandered and an opportunity for them to jump back in. For those who are still "with you," it provides a breather, a moment for reflection on what you've said, and a chance to internalize or to carry on their own inner dialogue with what you're saying.

A pause can also serve a very practical purpose for you — to give you time to catch your breath, to get over rising nerves, or even to take a drink. Of course, you must be as inconspicuous as possible when doing this, but even the briefest of silences can help refresh you quickly and effectively.

- Does the lectern light work? Where is the backup bulb?
- What is the layout of the stage? Is there room to walk around?

Walk-Through Steps

Here are some additional things you should do when advancing the room:

1. Be sure that any spotlights the lighting crew plans to use won't blind you from seeing your text or interfere with your eye-to-eye connection with the audience.

2. Check the sound system so you can hear what you sound like over the speakers.

3. If you insist on using slides, run through them a couple of times, checking for proper order and the pace of change from slide to slide. Also, find out what method is being used to change the slides (laptop, hand-held changer or backstage technician).

4. If you're using a teleprompter, run through it with the operator so you can coordinate your efforts.

5. Find out what kinds of cameras might be used. If your organizers have hired a still photographer, prepare yourself for flashbulbs and motion during your speech.

All this checking takes time, but it is crucial to make sure you're able to set aside any thoughts of logistics and focus on making the connection with your audience.

Be Yourself, Only Better

Many presentation coaches tell clients that they "just have to be themselves" when giving a speech. They mean well — it's good advice to stay within your comfort zone. One problem with that approach, though, is that it can fool people into thinking they don't have to do anything differently, whether they're engaged in water cooler

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Stand and Deliver

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chat or addressing a convention center crowd. The same tricks you use to make boardroom presentations will not translate well in a large room.

This is not to say you need to find a whole new “you” when you hit the platform. You must be *you*. Only be a *better* you. Speechmaker is only one of the many roles you have: one part subject matter expert, one part erudite, witty star. You have your words, but you also have yourself as an actor and your body as a prop. And you get to design that prop, defining the character you will portray.

Body Language

There are a number of critical things to remember when considering the importance of body language in your speech. These include:

- Regardless of what you do with your body during the speech — walk around, stand still, etc. — make the action big enough to be seen from anywhere in the room.
- Make sure your body language is authentic. If, for example, you never talk with your hands in normal conversation, don’t try it in a speech.
- Gauge whether it’s appropriate to keep your hands in your pockets. Some say it’s impolite; others say it’s a good way to disarm and charm an audience. ■

After the Talking Is Done

What you do after your speech is one of the most important aspects of creating a memorable impression and enhancing your personal brand. There are two key ways you can benefit from some thorough follow-up — to keep improving as a speaker and to spread the word of your personal brand beyond the audience in the room the day you spoke.

Use Feedback to Get Better

If you want to find out how your performance went, just ask. Start with yourself. Do you think you stumbled? At which points in the speech did you feel you were losing the audience? At what point did your performance match what you envisioned in your rehearsal?

Secondly, find other trusted viewpoints. Ask your colleagues who attended the session with you, with the caveat that the honesty of their opinions (and the usefulness of those opinions) will depend on the relationship you have with them and the power differential between them and you. You can also ask them for suggestions for improvement.

Then, of course, there’s the audience. One gauge of your success is how many people approached you after the speech to ask questions, make comments or exchange

cards. You can get at least anecdotal evidence of how well you did by the nature of their questions and comments. You might also have the opportunity for formal audience evaluations. Often, these are put together by the event organizers who will, after crunching the numbers, give you the results of what the surveyed audience members thought of your appearance. What you’re looking for here is an unfiltered critique from the most important people involved in the speech — the members of your audience.

Spread the Word

Much of the mileage you’ll get from your speech is word-of-mouth — from your own mouth to the listeners in the room, and from their mouths to their own circles of influence once they leave the venue. A memorable talk can elevate public discourse and connect you with important thought leadership. If you’re great, your name and point of view will be on everyone’s lips. You must, however, be able to keep the momentum going yourself.

That begins with inviting the messengers. These include:

- *The media.* Members of the media are paid to carry messages, and their reach is extraordinary, for good or bad.
- *Influential colleagues or friends.* Invite or entice them to come — even pay their way, if necessary. This accomplishes a couple of things. First, it ensures you have at least a smattering of allies in the room. It also enlists those people as messengers to spread the word of your brilliance to anyone in their circle of acquaintance they feel is appropriate.

Get It Out in Writing

Through these messengers, you can also distribute copies of the text of your speech so that the paper appears on the desks of influential people, complete with the endorsement of a mutual acquaintance. No more cold calls for your words!

While you’re considering sharing the text, think seriously about repackaging the content to provide more shelf life. The simplest way is to hand it to your Web gurus and have them post it in an easy-to-read print format on your organization’s Web site. With a little more effort, you can trim your speech down to the length of an op-ed piece and send it to editors.

The Expert Is You

You can also become an expert commentator for the electronic media. Ever wonder how news networks so quickly find those retired generals and security experts to appear on camera as soon as there’s a breaking story? Those people are in a pool of experts, and they got there by making their expertise known to the producers. By delivering a speech on a specific topic, you can position yourself as an expert on that topic, increasing your profile and building your brand. ■