



## ***Build Your Business***

An eNewsletter for  
CEOs looking to  
grow their companies.

High-value, "how-to" articles on customer-attraction, sales development, leadership, and best-practices in HR, IT, product development, communication, financial operations, engineering and M&A/value creation.

# ***How to give a really bad speech***

Are you committing any of these 10 cardinal sins  
when it comes to speaking publicly?

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**DASH Consulting, Inc.**  
Strategic Media and Presentation Training

# *How to give a really bad speech*

A few months back, while listening to yet another CEO bore the pants of yet another audience, I scribbled down 10 tips, a sort of "best practices" if you really want to stink up the joint

- 1. Do not have a point.** This is critical. Your speech should be so obtuse that no rational human being will have any idea exactly what you're talking about - or why they should care. If you do nothing else in what George W. Bush might call "speechifying", do NOT have anything close to a clear message or takeaway for your audience.
- 2. Go on too long.** The key to a truly awful speech is that it runs over by at least 15 minutes. You see all those people checking their watches or sneaking out early because they have to eat lunch or go to the bathroom? Solid gold. Congratulations. You've risen to the top of the "speeches that suck" list - and it's a pretty long list.
- 3. Avoid eye contact** at all costs. Your audience is looking at you, shouldn't that be enough for them? Stare at your notes, or the ceiling or the back of the room. You could imagine them naked if you think that'll help ease your discomfort - but to really suck you've got to stare at the floor as much as possible. Also, sweating profusely helps - think Richard Nixon at a press conference during Watergate.
- 4. Bad posture** demonstrates to the audience that you'd rather be anywhere else on the planet than standing before them. If you slouch, fiddle with your pen and touch your face repeatedly it will showcase your ineptness to everyone in the room. A bonus tip: cross your hands at your crotch - the infamous "fig leaf" position - as this will indicate poor posture combined with a clear lack of confidence.
- 5. Do not take a breath** - ever. Power through your content as if you're in a speed talking race. Do not pause for emphasis; do not pause at all; do not give the audience any indication of what's the most important part of your speech. What helps here is filling spaces between thoughts with as many non words as possible - there are lots to choose from, including, "um," "er," "so," "you know and "ah." Use each one multiple times and audience members will start to count them instead of listening to you.

**6. Dress as though you slept in your clothes.** The idea here is to distract from what you're saying to such a degree that no one in the room will remember a word you said because they'll be busy wondering if you know your fly is open, or that your shirt is hanging out or your blouse has come unbuttoned. Nothing is more effective than a visual distraction when it comes to absolutely fudging a message (for women, showing cleavage works wonders in this department).

**7. Use as many PowerPoint slides as possible.** If you have a 30-minute speech try to cram in at least 75 slides - so they fly by in rapid succession before the audience ever has a chance to digest what's on them. Also, put a lot of bullet points on those slides so that each one contains roughly the same amount of text as the front page of today's newspaper.

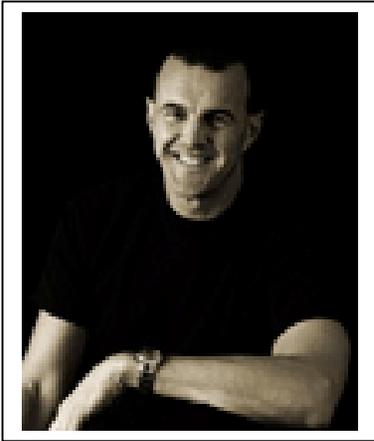
**8. Hide behind a podium** if at all possible. A good rule of thumb is never let the audience know you have legs. Always put a physical barrier between you and your audience. It gives you something to hold onto and prevents any true emotional connection. Also, try not to move anything but your lips, and those only so much. For tips here study almost any politician or corporate executive.

**9. Never practice.** Rehearsing is for losers. You're a smart person, right? You know this content and you've been in this industry for years. You have better things to do, and besides, think of the adrenaline rush you'll get when you're up there winging it. If you work for a publicly traded company don't worry about saying something inappropriate, that's why you have an Investor Relations staff.

**10. Never, ever tell a story.** People enjoy and remember stories; stories are how we communicate across generations and cultures. Stories stick to the minds of audience members like glue. So avoid them at all costs. Fill your speech with lots of jargon and acronyms that are almost unintelligible to anyone but, well, you. Pack your speech with statistics, vague assertions, generalities of all kinds and platitudes. But never stories. Stories are like Kryptonite for bad speakers - to be avoided at all costs.

***Bonus tip:** the icing on the cake of bad speaking: thank everyone you know as you start speaking. In addition to boring the pants off any audience, this tip has the added benefit of offending anyone you omit from your list. And if you can throw in a few tasteless jokes as well, you stand an excellent chance of giving a really bad speech.*

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### **Author's Biography**

Dave Yewman is a communications expert who coaches senior executives on how to present more effectively. Over the past decade he's advised executives at numerous companies including, Adidas, CBS, Clif Bar, HP, Microsoft and T-Mobile on how to master non verbal communications when speaking. He is the author of "On Getting to the Point" and a former senior public relations agency executive. Yewman was the general manager of Weber Shandwick's Portland office as it grew from three to 25 people.



### **What does your company do? And why would anyone care?**

Those are two simple questions to which companies often have long, complicated, jargon-filled, boring answers. And that's a shame because every company has a good story that can be used to attract different audiences such as investors, prospects, customers, partners, reporters and even employees.

In a nutshell, DASH Consulting uses video to help companies get to the point by coaching executives on how to develop a clear, concise, compelling narrative about what their company does. It's simple. But often neglected. As one client put it, "Videotape is ugly. But it works."

Does it ever. Here's how we do it:

#### **Media Training**

We've worked with companies and their PR firms to deliver positive media training sessions for more than a decade. Our sessions include follow-up refresher courses and a private, individual, digital CD-ROM of you on camera. The CD is sent to you twenty-four hours after the session and also includes personalized coaching tips and examples.

#### **Presentation Training**

There are a few simple steps that can help you become a good public speaker by fixing any verbal, vocal or visual tics that negatively impact your presentation style.

#### **Elevator Speech**

We help companies develop clear, concise explanations that meet the "So What? Who Cares?" test. We interview company executives and in many cases use videotape to capture the right language – language that's the most critical component in effectively selling your product, service or company.



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*Additional insights and value from leading authorities in their areas. Articles in the January, 2011 publication:*

**How to Attract Significantly More Customers**

**Mark Paul**

Do you have all the customers you need? Are you open to new ideas and ways of looking at customer-attraction? If so, you will want to read this article.

**Don't Be Blindsided By Financial Risks**

**Patrick Wheeler**

What keeps you up at night? Have you been surprised by financial hiccups? This article shares six steps and a case study to help you mitigate financial risks - to help you grow your business.

**Create High-Performance Teams**

**Tom Cox**

Some CEOs don't need coaching because they are perfect. For the rest, this article discusses reasons why to embrace coaching, how you've already done it, and how to do it even better.

**How to measure the business value of technology - Scorecarding**

**Manoj Garg**

Do you know if you are truly getting value from your IT investments? Is it difficult to articulate IT's value in your organization? Learn how you can use the IT Value Calculator to figure out how well IT is performing.

**How to give a Really Bad Speech**

**Dave Yewman**

If your speech doesn't have an unmistakable point; If you never practice out loud; If you never tell stories; you're boring your audiences to death. If you recognize you &/or your team in this article it's time to take action.

**Sales Strategy-the Most Critical Element of Corporate Strategic Planning**

**Bill Etheredge**

Are revenues tracking to your annual plan? Are you constantly looking for that elusive "world class" sales executive? This article shares how you can boost sales by integrating sales with your strategic planning.

**The Urgent Role of HR in M&As**

**Iris Sasaki**

Fully 70% of M&As fail to create shareholder value. It is crucial to look at all the possibilities that lead to success.

**Paralysis by Analysis: How Development Schedules Slip**

**Mike Miles**

Several factors contribute to schedule problems. Recognizing when it's happening, and acting to minimize the effect are explored in this article.

**Finding the Street Value of a Privately Held Company**

**Brent Freeman**

Maximizing your company's value requires knowing how the market values closely held companies. This article deals with a straightforward method that CEOs and owners can use to find the "Street Value" of their company.

**Balancing process against Creative Freedom**

**Gary Chin**

This article discusses one of the biggest challenges companies have in developing new products and/or running projects in a matrixed environment.

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