

# 4 Tips for Being a Compelling Speaker

**No matter the audience, you must be a strong speaker to rise in your career**

- Prepare, practice and polish.
  - You MUST prepare what you are going to say, practice (again and again) and the "polish", continue to make it better. You have heard the expression "it doesn't matter what you say, it is all in how you say it". It DOES matter what you say AND how you say it. Storytelling is a HUGE component here- you have to think about how best to present your case to the audience so that they hear you, understand you, and hopefully, buy what you are selling! The prep in and of itself is an exercise.
  - Then comes the practice. Going through the presentation over and over again until it feels about as perfect as it is going to get.
  - This is the "polish" part. Small optimizations can make a huge impact, and you can only get to those if you practice and edit and practice and edit.
- Show up with presence.
  - This is where your personal brand comes into play.
  - Get up there and stand confidently in who you are, which means doing the prep to ensure you do show up that way. What will you wear? What will your make-up look like? When are you at your most confident and why? Speaking is naturally an uncomfortable thing for even those that love it so put your best foot forward by showing up authentically you.
  - When you are practicing, you also have to think about how you want people to perceive you, because their perceptions are reality, right? Spend some time envisioning the "stage" beforehand and playing out how you want to look like. If you get nervous you can still show up the way you want.
  - This is really specifically where the "how you say it" comes in. If you are not confident in what you have to say, no one else will be. Take a DEEP breath, tell yourself you got this, and if you have prepared you will do it!
  - Don't wear all black, think about the pictures. Have enough words on the slides or in the slide notes to keep you on track. People tend to try to over-simplify their slides which only works if you are a professional key-noter. Don't have anything in your hands if you can avoid it. Don't use a podium if you can help it.
- Engage actively with the audience.
  - Make eye contact. No matter the size of the group. This is the relatability piece, but it is also about engagement. When you make eye contact with people, you appear confident. And you make connections.
  - You are also looking for affirmations that people are following along. We do a lot of "are you following me?" "I just said a lot there so I am going to take a moment- are we all tracking?"
  - If you crack a joke, do you get laughs and smiles?  
Are people furiously taking notes or pictures of your slides because they just cannot get enough? You want to keep the temperature on what is going on in the audience to ensure you are having the impact you want to.
  - BE CAREFUL not to get too distracted by this so that you stay on track. But the cadence can be defined by the reactions in the audience, so use them to your advantage.
  - Don't rush. Let it breathe. Pretend like you are having a conversation.
- Don't leave the conversation on the "stage".
  - No matter the size of the group, you miss tremendous opportunity if there is no "What's next". What does this look like?
    - handouts or homework assignments that continue people's thinking
    - future events/engagements or next steps
    - asking for feedback in the moment (if applicable) on what people want next
    - send surveys
    - social media posting and engagement
    - where and how to best contact you
    - CTA to sign-up for your "thing"
  - You just spent a whole lot of time prepping for and delivering whatever story/content/deliverable and you deserve credit for that! You WANT people to want you and that means continuing to engage with you. Maybe you don't want to make speaking a regular thing for yourself in the way we do at FRP, but again, you have to be good at this sort of thing and the more comfortable you get with it, the better. One of the best ways is to create an audience that knows you, which builds your confidence and makes speaking easier on you.

