How to Speak With Confidence: Crash Course Business - Soft Skills #4

Crash Course: Business - Soft Skills
https://youtube.com/watch?v=sjdxUiAJ0UQ
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/sjdxUiAJ0UQ

You know that nightmare in all the TV shows, where you're standing in front of a podium, you look down, and you're not wearing any clothing? That split second of terror when the audience is laughing at you and you feel unprepared, helpless, alone, and so cold is excruciating. We're here to help you avoid that feeling in real life, whether you're on stage or in a one-on-one meeting with your boss. So take a deep breath, and get ready to improve your public speaking skills to make sure your ideas stick. I'm Evelyn from the Internets and this is Crash Crouse Business: Soft Skills.

[Intro]

We've all survived book reports and group projects in school, but public speaking isn't always standing in front of a slide deck. Depending on your job, you may need to sell and idea with a pitch or give a talk to a crowd, but you'll also need to contribute to meetings or just chat with you co-workers. And, if you're in your mid-twenties, you might even be giving a speech at a wedding soon. Every time I go on Facebook, I feel a little more single.

No matter how confident you think you are speaking in public, there are ways to improve and gain the trust of your audience. A big part of this is **how** you speak. Like, think about some of the most well-known speeches of all time. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" would have been way less effective if he had stared straight down at the podium.

If you're giving a presentation, this means you should avoid reading from the slides or straight off a page of notes; this keeps your tone casual, and makes sure that you avoid sounding like a robot. If you have slides, they should be visual-heavy. If your audience is reading a ton of information, you could have sent a memo instead.

Let's say you were trying to convince someone that *Lemonade* was one of the most visually compelling albums of all time and propelled Beyoncé to new heights as an artist (like anyone would really need convincing). You could tell people that her song "Formation" won a Grammy for Best Music Video, but it would be better to show a clip of Queen Bey in all her glory.

And, since you're confident in what you're saying and not reading off your notes, put those eyes to good use! Make eye contact with your audience. Just like on a first date, it shows you care, and it keeps you from fixating on that fake plant that's in the back of every office meeting room. If you're uncomfortable making direct eye contact, looking at people's foreheads can be a good way to fudge it.

Remember how we said content matters more than formatting in written communication? Well, when you're speaking, **what you say is just as important as how you say it**. So, always remember to aim for S.U.C.C.E.S. (two C's, two S's). It's a six-step framework that helps you deliver your points clearly and concisely.

First up, a **simple** 'S' or, the K.I.S.S. method; keep it simple, silly. Identify the one thing you want your audience to come away with, and stick to that core message. You might even craft a memorable sound byte that summarizes your main points. For example, if you were trying to convince someone to watch your favorite TV show, you might say that "*Stranger Things* is like *Stand by Me*, but with aliens" or "*Psych* is like *The Mentalist*, but with shenanigans!"

Next, us the **unexpected**. You know those YouTube videos where some screaming ghoul pops out of nowhere? Yeah, I'm not going to do that, and neither should you. But, do something memorable! Maybe crack a joke to make a mundane topic fun, like that one Southwest Airlines flight safety presentation. Or, highlight a knowledge gap; make the audience feel like they need to pay attention by creating a scenario where they have to know the answer. How will this product help me save 15 minutes during my morning routine? Why is 42 the meaning of life? But, be careful to avoid gimmicks or misleading people. We've all been frustrated by click-bait articles that aren't what they promised. Your audience will feel the same way.

Third, anchor your work with something **concrete**. Founders of the S.U.C.C.E.S. framework use an analogy called the Velcro Theory of Memory. The more hooks you have, the more an idea is going to stick in your brain. You want to explain your main point using examples your audience already knows or can understand, without confusing language. For example, JFK didn't say he wanted to "increase scientific funding for exploration of natural satellites in order to increase the reach of homo sapiens," he said he wanted to put a man on the Moon. And, if you're explaining tricky business concepts, like emotional influence, you might use pop culture references, like Harry Potter, to make analogies your audience will remember.

Fourth, to show you did your homework, keep it **credible**. Facts, figures, and experts will help people understand what you're trying to say. Your audience might want to hear from people with external credibility, like Ivy League professors or high-achieving professionals, like CEOs. You also need to think about internal credibility, or the appeal of your argument. You'll have low internal credibility if your message conflicts with the way your audience sees the world. So, if you're a broke college student surviving on ramen but trying to convince your friends to eat healthy, you could cite a nutritionist to explain why the peppers on that Domino's pizza do not count as vegetables.

Fifth, make it **emotional**. Make people care. There's a reason that those commercials with Sarah McLachlan are so effective. To make your message memorable, use something that pulls on the heartstrings and makes people think about their own identities. Are you a kind person who wants to help a dog in need? Or, deep down, do you love cats enough to adopt another?

Finally, make your speech legen-wait for it-dary by telling a great **story**. Stories act like motivators. Think about how inspired you might feel after watching a movie about a ragtag team of underdogs trying to make the playoffs. And, a well-crafted story can also show people how to act by providing a template or example. So, for instance, if you were soliciting funding for the Li'l Sebastian scholarship, you could tell the story of a Pawnee student who overcame all odds thanks to the generous donations of community benefactors.

Now, S.U.C.C.E.S. relies heavily on understanding who your audience is, so you can adjust what you're saying to meet their needs. Just like with writing, it's helpful to conduct an audience analysis before you speak. Understanding who they are will help you build trust and emotional influence. And, it's also important that you listen to what your audience has to say. Active listening can help you seem more competent in any conversation.

Focus on the person or people you're talking to, whether they're making a statement or asking a question. Try to really understand them before mentally preparing your response. Wait for them to finish their thought, no matter how strongly you feel about a thing. Interruptions can also be a subtle form of discrimination, so it's best to make sure you're not accidentally mansplaining or anything. And, don't be afraid of short pauses or silence— it can give you time to think.

To make sure you've understood someone, you can try circle speak and paraphrase them to double-check. So, if your friend was debating with you about the best Shondaland show, you might say, "So, you're saying you can't get enough of the non-stop plot twists

in *How to Get Away with Murder*?" And they'll either say "exactly!" Or correct you, and say, "no, you missed my point. I watched that show religiously until it was way too much drama. My twitter fingers couldn't keep up!"

So, now that we've covered basically everything there is to know about speaking publicly, what would it look like? Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Let's say you were a representative from Harvard Law School, and you were giving a presentation to a room of third-year undergraduate women who are starting to think about what's next after graduation. Your job is to use your stellar speaking skills to persuade them to consider careers in law. To be effective, you don't have to use all six parts of S.U.C.C.E.S., but using three or four will still help your words resonate.

Since you're working with a diverse group of undergrads who may know very little about law, you would start with your thesis sentence: law is a fulfilling career, and an incredible way to change people's lives. To show that there's space in the job market, you could share some salary and job-growth projections.

To make your points more relatable, you could talk about issues affecting women's rights. You could reference cases that have personally impacted women's lives, like U.S. v. Virginia, which eliminated Virginia Military Institute's male-only admissions policy. Then, you could share the inspirational story of Sonya Sotomayor, who grew up in a housing project in the Bronx and is now a Supreme Court Justice.

Finally, you'd open it up for questions, or even debate. Because you did an audience analysis, you're ready for questions about the LSAT, the amount of school required to become a lawyer, the cost of education, or even work-life balance. And, you've practiced active listening, which will help you answer any tough questions thrown your way. You'll be calm and concise, even if you're mentally scrambling for an answer. But, you know your stuff! So, you can confidently tell them that a secondary degree is long, but rewarding, there's financial aid, and women can successfully balance whatever they want.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

All these tips are a lot to digest, and the best way to make sure you're prepared for public speaking is practice. Practice will help you become more comfortable in low-stakes situations before that important meeting or thesis defense. You can even check yourself before you wreck yourself. And by that, I mean record yourself practicing.

Now, I get it. Unless you're a YouTuber, or a screen actor, or something, you probably don't like seeing yourself on camera. And, to be honest, it's still a little weird for me, too. But, it can help you catch things you may be doing wrong and help you practice what you're already doing right.

With a recording, it's really easy to watch how you're speaking. Maybe you didn't realize that you're pacing back and forth a lot, staying glued to one spot, or gesticulating so much that it's almost interpretive dance. You can also watch for rambling. I get it, nerves are real. But, shaking them off and keeping an even pace will make sure people understand you.

And, since what you say is as important as how you say it, practicing frequently or with different people will help you make sure that none of your main points are confusing.

With that, we're done talking about talking. So, if nothing else, remember these key takeaways: Number one, practice will help you foster good habits, from how you speak to how you stand. Number two, aim for S.U.C.C.E.S. to make your speech more impactful. Number three, use active listening to understand your audience's questions and ideas, so you can answer competently.

That wraps up our fundamentals. Next time, we'll talk about how to apply your new business knowledge to navigate the job search. If you're fresh out of college and on the hunt for that dream job, or just looking for something new, you're in luck!

[Outro]

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