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## 10 Ways to Overcome Stage Fright and Become a Dynamite Speaker

1. **Project confidence – You’re the expert**
2. **Arrive early and familiarize yourself with the space**
3. **Take deep, slow breaths**
4. **Practice relaxation techniques**
5. **Elevate your heart rate beforehand to burn off energy and release endorphins**
6. **Find friendly focal points in the room**
7. **Debrief on the experience afterwards and internalize feedback**
8. **Visualize success and utilize positive self-talk**
9. **Accept that it’s okay to be nervous – Even the best speakers are**
10. **Hire an orals coach to launch your speaking skills to the next level**

## Keys to Setting Off Showstopping Orals Presentations

- ▶ Planning your work...working your plan: structure your flow, use voice variability to connect with listeners, and gesticulate
- ▶ Understanding and establishing a connection with the audience is essential to meeting their needs and achieving intended outcomes
- ▶ Incorporating visual aids and storytelling can ignite audience engagement, emphasize key points, and enhance comprehension
- ▶ Practicing extensively and receiving feedback from knowledgeable sources will help to refine delivery, presence, and confidence
- ▶ Regularly participating in various speaking opportunities provides a great way to gain low-stakes, real world presenting experience
- ▶ Ending with a memorable finale and leaving your audience with a call to action can help drive desired audience outcomes

### Light the Fuse: Igniting Engaging Presentations

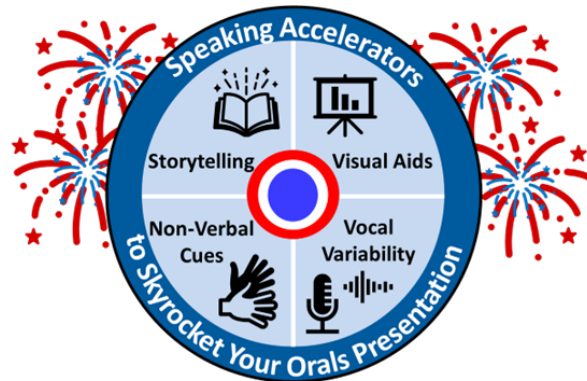
Being an effective speaker is a critical skill which, for many people, has dulled with the pandemic, video teleconferencing, and/or the “Zoom” generation. Think of those recent times when you were listening to a presentation and hoping for fireworks but ended up with a disappointing dud of a display. Those failed presentations are a huge waste of time, money, and resources and are often due to a speaker’s unengaging delivery, lack of understanding the audience, insufficient practice and/or confusing messaging. The key to becoming a captivating speaker is establishing an immediate connection with the audience. Forging meaningful bonds and prioritizing audience connection increases information retention and creates impactful presentations that both resonate with the audience and lead to well-scored oral presentations. Further, creating a strong outline for the presentation, aligned to audience desires, will help ensure clear idea flow and straightforward delivery.

### Developing Your Speaker’s “Spark” Through Practice

To put on a showstopping performance, it is vital for the speaker to practice, practice, practice! Presentations should be practiced until you are natural and able to deliver without error. You never want to be the speaker reading verbatim off the slides, a guaranteed way to lose your audience. Self-evaluation is a simple, effective way to ignite your full potential. As uncomfortable as most of us find it, recording and listening to yourself will make you more cognizant of how you sound, allowing you to identify and correct bad habits. In addition, seek feedback regularly, as it is an important component for improvement. Look for resources such as colleagues, friends, and family who can provide constructive criticism and valuable insights. For targeted and/or professional support, it can be very advantageous to work with an orals coach who is experienced in the industry/space in which you will be presenting and who can provide personalized coaching to address specific strengths and weaknesses within your presentation.

### Unlocking Your Star Speaking Potential

As seasoned orals coaches, we recommend seeking out any and every opportunity available to improve your speaking skills. Whether it be on a large stage or giving a toast at a local 4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ, there are numerous opportunities, modalities, and places to practice public speaking. Local events, gatherings at places of worship, toastmasters, and meet-up events offer low-stakes opportunities to increase confidence and refine skills. Participating in improv, stand-up, and theater can provide fun ways to get over jitters, learn to think on your feet, and improve speech delivery. If you are looking for more structured opportunities to practice and receive valuable feedback, seek out virtual events, speech clubs and speech competitions. To gain professional practice within your organization, speaking up during meetings or leading work lunch-and-learns can enable speakers to showcase their expertise, reinforce speaking skills, and gain confidence in front of a friendly crowd.



Incorporating Speaking Accelerators into orals presentations will amplify the delivery of the material, provide deeper clarification for listeners, and help the speaker seem more relatable/natural when presenting.

### Show Your Inner Firecracker: Presentation Delivery

Like a 4th of July fireworks show, you must start off your speech with a bang, making a strong first impression and gaining audience buy-in. Once established, build off that initial impact and hold your audience’s attention by incorporating a mix of visual aids (graphs, charts, images, etc.) to visually intrigue the audience, augment spoken content, and provide deeper understanding. In addition, weaving in compelling stories will captivate listeners and make the information more relatable and memorable. Further, speakers should use vocal variability and master delivery techniques such as adjusting pitch, tone, pace, and strategically placing pauses to effectively convey enthusiasm, seriousness, humor, and to emphasize important points. Presentations should conclude with a showstopping finale, which solidifies the message, provides tangible takeaways, and leaves the audience wanting more. Following these best practices will help speakers gain confidence, be more effective, and can elevate the ability to win work.