

## EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING

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### ABSTRACT

Experts of Communication state that communication is the backbone of management. This indicates the strategic roles of communication. Management which is not supported by effective communication will fail to achieve its goals or targets. Effective communication and effective management is like the two sides of a coin. They cannot be separated. Effective public speaking as a part of effective communication give its significant contributions to effective communication process in a business organizations. This article discusses several tips of effective public speaking to develop communication skills which are extremely needed to develop business organizations.

**Key-words:** effective public speaking, communication skills, business organizations

### INTRODUCTION

It is told that most people in the United States of America are worried towards three things, namely public speaking, snake, and death. Public speaking sits on the first rank and death the last. Many Indonesians, on the other way round mostly, perhaps, say that death is the most frightening, and public speaking is the least. Snake, the same with those of Americans, sits on the second rank. It is not important actually to compare between Indonesians and Americans in terms of the rank position of public speaking that makes them worried or frightened. The intended message of this description is that public speaking is a factor which makes most people feel unconvinient. Many people feel that waiting for a public speaking in front of people is like waiting for a death execution in front of snipers. Therefore, many people like to avoid public speaking, if possible.

Unfortunately if you want to develop your professional career in your office, public speaking is something which you have to master to support your work or job. Without public speaking skill you will find many difficulties in running your managerial activities or programs in your office because public speaking as a part of communication skills is a backbone of management. It gives a big influence, for example, in the process of meeting, business presentation, press conference, and negotiation.

In your office public speaking is needed when you take a part in a meeting. In the meeting you have to speak to put forward your ideas, suggestions, opinions, agreement, disagreement, et cetera. It is also needed when you need to give business presentation to create cooperations with other organizations. During negotiation sessions with your business counterparts, for instance, the skill of public speaking takes a very important role. You may win the negotiation if you have a good mastery in public speaking. The art of inviting someone's attention when speaking, influencing them to believe in what you are saying, persuading them to listen to what you are expecting, and in the end making them cooperate with you on the basis of benefit and profit which meet your business targets are surely the reflection of your public speaking skills. On the contrary, you will lose your negotiation if you do not have the above-mentioned skills.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speaking is important because it is a part of communication. There are several reasons underlying why communication is important for professionals in whatever fields they work (Hooper and

Janis, 1982: 7-9). First, in social and business activities, whether for personal purposes or organizational purposes, oral communication is a skill which is extremely crucial to acquire. This is because, as a matter of fact, oral communication skill like public speaking can give significant contribution to the effectiveness of implementing managerial functions in business communication in an office. Employers and employees in a company have to be skillful in their oral communication to make them successful in their jobs.

For employers (managers and leaders) oral communication skill is needed when they

realize the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling as a part of managerial process. As the employers are responsible to achieve the vision, missions, and the goals of their companies, they must be able to manage their human capitals effectively by utilizing effective communication skills. An effective leadership goes hand in hand with effective communication practices.

On the basis of a research, the percentage of communication activity in human daily life can be described as Table 1 (Zuhdi, 2011: 68).

**Table 1**

| NO | ACTIVITY  | PERCENTAGE |
|----|-----------|------------|
| 1  | Listening | 50         |
| 2  | Speaking  | 35         |
| 3  | Reading   | 10         |
| 4  | Writing   | 5          |

Table 1, shows the high frequency of listening and speaking activities in daily communication, both formal and informal, personal and organizational. In business environment it may take in the forms of meetings, interviews, business presentations, negotiations, seminars, speeches, and many others. These facts, give more evidences of the importance of effective communication skills.

Second, communication’s key role in decision making. Because of the size and complexity of today’s management in a company and also the availability of modern office technologies, there is a tendency of centralizing decision making in the top management level. The trend coincides with the nature of business management system comprising interdependent functions, none of which can be manipulated without giving influences to others. It follows that successful communication depends on the quality, quantity, and distribution of valid and reliable messages to the points that decision making can be done effectively. Since an organization

is essentially a social environment, it is a must that communication in the organization proceeds harmoniously and efficiently.

Third, communication’s ‘workhorse’ status. Organizations have mundane works to do such producing, selling, marketing, cooperating, supervising and many others. These works need the use of many kinds of messages and good strategies of exposition and persuasion. Good communication prevents misunderstanding, saves time and money and also promotes the organization. Poor communication defeats those objectives.

Fourth, demands of the new media. The use of sophisticated and modern office communication such as computers has increased a great deal of revolutionary advancement in office works but it cannot relieve human communicators of performing such data-related functions as selecting, evaluating, deciding, informing, and persuading.

Fifth, Rising costs. Business communication can be done by electronic and printed media. Making an advertisement for

television channels and newspapers, for instance, can be very expensive. Nowadays, commercial product promotions need a huge budget. Therefore, business communication has to be made cheaper by make it more effective.

Sixth, competitive and social pressures. As we know, to win a business, we need to compete smartly with our business competitors. Smart business needs smart communication. The success in marketing, selling, negotiating, persuading, influencing, cooperating and so forth is inevitably determined by an effective communication.

Seventh, competitive and social pressures. At the time that business meets its public such as its customers, potential buyers, and the community at large, it is a great urgency to have a good mastery of communication skills including public speaking. In selling and marketing public communication skills take a significant role in succeeding to get more profits or less.

### **Tips For Effective Public Speaking**

Public Speaking as a part of oral communication skills takes a very important role to support managers or leaders in an organization to do relevant works in their leadership. Leaders or managers should have ability to give an interesting and effective speech in front of their employees and other people when necessary; to give a business presentation in front of their business partners, prospective cutomers, government beureaucrats, and so forth. Also make a press conference in front of journalists, whether for electronic or printed media. Because of the importance of public speaking, some tips of a good and effective public speaking is worth discussing. For those who have not learnt specifically about public speaking and have no experience of practising it, some following tips may give benefits to read.

Gerald Green, DTM(2000: 11-44) puts forward some tips of an effective public speaking as follows:

1. Be yourself. It is extremely not recommended that when giving a public speaking you imitate someone's public speaking style. You should do your public speaking differently from others. You maintain your own public speakingstyle. Soekarno and John F Kennedy have different style when speaking. Also with Mario Teguh and Bob Sadino. You have to develop your own personal brand if you want to be a professional public speaker. Be different, be the best, and be the first. By this way, you will be recognized and outstanding!
2. Understand your audience. Speak for them not for you, yourself! So, discuss topics of their interests not yours. Before you write your materials for your public speaking, you should investigate or make a small research about their age, socio-economic, educational, religion, and cultural background. This will give you benefits to make them listen to you.
3. Make yourself as the message. It means that what you are talking to public is the reflection of your true personality. In this case, you will be appreciated as a credible speaker. What you are talking is not a lie. You are talking the truth. You become the representation of the delivered message. For example, a preacher or *ustadz* who is giving a speech about honesty and justice in *Jum'at* prayer but the audiences in the mosque know that in his daily life his character and behaviour are opposed to the message he is delivering, of course they will not believe in the message. They hear you speaking but they are not listening to you because they know you are telling lies.
4. Do not feel uncomfortable of being nervous. It is natural and happens to everyone who will speak in front of people. Thus, do not concentrate on being nervous. It is suggested that you concentrate on the materials of your public speaking. Be focus on how you

- can make your audience involved in your public speaking. Make it more interactive and use your non verbal language effectively. You can inhale and exhale gently to lessen your nervousness, sit comfortably, and pray to stimulate your self confidence.
5. Overcome your shyness. Many feel shy because of their body size, hair style, beauty, and so on. It is surely ridiculous! You are on stage to speak not to take part in a fashion show or singing competition. Therefore, it is irrational to be shy because of those things. Once again, you are on the stage to speak. Your audience wait for your speech!
  6. Do not feel uncomfortable because of your voice. People are not waiting for a singer. At the moment, they are waiting for an effective speaker. There is no rule that a public speaker must have golden voice. What is important you have to speak fluently, clearly, and attractively. You should speak with good intonation, articulation, and acceptable speed.
  7. Do not feel uncomfortable because of your accent and dialect. Even your accent and dialect can become your personal brand. Speak naturally. Do not manipulate your accent and dialect excessively.
  8. Use simple language in your public speaking. It is not suggested to use too many technical terms to make your public speaking look scientific and complicated. Make difficult topics easy to understand for your audience by utilizing simple language.
  9. Do not feel uncomfortable because of your education. Although you never go to a university and get a diploma, it does not mean that your audience who have higher education than you, know better about the topics you are talking about. Basically, there is no one who really smart or brilliant. You should believe that you are the right person to speak about the topic of which you have made a perfect preparation.
  10. Do not be too sensitive towards the audience's responses or feedbacks. Positive and negative responses or feedbacks are the inputs which should be wisely managed to improve the effectiveness of your public speaking. Do not be too happy when you get positive feedbacks verbally or non verbally. On the contrary, do not be too sad and worried when you get negative feedbacks. The value of the feedbacks for your public speaking improvement will depend on how you behave properly after receiving those feedbacks. In this way, you will always get benefits of the feedbacks.
  11. Be enthusiastic when giving public speaking. Your enthusiasm will make your audience motivated to listen to you. Your enthusiasm is contagious.
  12. Speak sincerely and honestly. This will create conducive atmosphere. Your sincerity and honesty will be reflected in your tone, eye contact, facial expression, and your gesture. Generally, it happens beyond your awareness but your audience really feel and appreciate it.
  13. You have to feel worried if you have no adequate knowledge of the subject matter or topic of your public speaking. Therefore, it is obligatory for you to read and listen as much information as possible for your public speaking preparation. Make sure that you are the best person to stand up in front of your audience to speak about the topic.
  14. Practice, practice, and practice. It is the only way that you have to follow to be successful in your public speaking. No other alternatives. You never become a good swimmer if you only learn the theories of swimming. To become a good swimmer you have to plunge yourself into the water. In the same way, you will never become a professional or an effective public speaker if you only learn public speaking theories and never practising those theories on the stage.

15. Enjoy your public speaking. If you do it, then you can speak in a relaxed way and you feel comfortable. This is important because many feel forced to speak and cannot deliver the message attractively. No humour. No smile. No laugh. Consequently, there will be less interaction with audience and less mental involvement. It makes your public speaking boring.

### Six Principles Of Public Speaking

There are some principles of public speaking which can help everyone to be successful in his/her public speaking (Riyanto, 1998: 3-7) Here are those principles:

1. Giving motivation. It is quite important when starting a public speaking speakers give motivation to their audience to follow the public speaking by:
  - a. informing the importance of the discussed topic.
  - b. making use of the audience as the example when giving illustration or description about the topic.
  - c. delivering provocative questions to stimulate curiosity.
2. Giving attention. This can be done theoretically as follows:
  - a. Telling funny stories, tragic stories, daily stories or experience.
  - b. Speaking with different tones. Sometimes with higher tones, and sometimes with lower tones depending on the message.
  - c. Making spontaneous actions like knocking a table when the situation is going to be not conducive because of the noise made by the audience and you stop speaking when they disturb your public speaking with unexpected attitude.
  - d. Speaking interesting and expected topics.
3. Utilizing instructional aids. Public speaking such as in business presentation, negotiation,

meeting and so on can be facilitated with the use of instructional aids. The use of:

- a. overhead projectors
- b. screens
- c. slides
- d. videos
- e. flip charts
- f. films
- g. et cetera

may give significant contribution to the effectiveness of public speaking.

4. Giving understanding. This is possible if in a public speaking a speaker uses the following techniques:
  - a. Using simple words, phrases, sentences, and terms.
  - b. Using simple illustration or description.
  - c. Using nemo-technique like CRM for Customer Relationship Management, TQM for Total Quality Management, R & D for Research and Development.
5. Giving repetition. This is done by repeating delivered information to help your audience understand it better. To avoid boring repetition you can do it in some varied ways. Do not always repeat the same words. Instead of doing in that way, you can repeat the substance or gist of your message several times.
6. Telling the audience about the benefits of listening to your public speaking at the beginning. Make sure that the chosen topic of your public speaking is of their need. Before writing your public speaking preparation you should investigate their educational background, age, cultural background, socio-economic background, religion, gender and so forth. It will help you to prepare the most appropriate strategy for you public speaking.

To understand better about your audience some steps and procedures at Table 2, are recommended by Curtis, Floyd, and Winsor (2000: 263):

**Table 2**

| NO | STEPS                                | PROCEDURES  |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1  | Considering individuals              | Analyzing audience individually and roles in organization.  |
| 2  | Considering groups                   | Understanding group characteristics and understanding individuals' behaviour in groups.   |
| 3  | Considering communication atmosphere | Analyzing the environment of the place where the audience work.   |
| 4  | Analyzing audience                   | a. Observing<br>b. Delivering questions<br>c. Conducting surveys about the audience<br>d. Taking into account basic needs of the audience |
| 5  | Making decisions                     | Determining decision making styles:<br>a. Optimum<br>b. Collective<br>c. Authoritative  |

**CONCLUSION**

Effective public speaking is quite important for business purposes. Business activities like meeting, negotiation, business presentation, and several others can be successfully done if public speaking skills are well acquired. Some above-mentioned recommended tips, techniques or strategies of public speaking surely can facilitate business people to be more effective in their public speaking.

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