



Psych.E.In. MOOC 1

Unit 7

2.2 a Recommendations for oral communication

Each circumstance offers unique challenges and opportunities to match your verbal and nonverbal communication to your message and audience.

Matching messages to audiences will help to ensure communication success.

Eyes, tone of voice, expression, volume, and gestures reflect attitudes, emotions, states of mind, and related messages.

Three common elements to successful oral presentations are:

1. The message matches the audience.
2. The content and delivery match the purpose.
3. The delivery is clear and engaging.

Tips for Media Interviews

Before the interview

- Track all media inquiries and note the reporter's name, organization, date, and purpose.
- If possible, review the scope of the interview with the reporter before the interview so that you can anticipate what might be asked.
- Provide background information that helps the reporter understand the issues.
- Identify the points that you want to communicate during the interview and make sure these facts come to mind easily.
- Identify a message that you can incorporate into your first and last remark. For example, if the reporter opens the interview by saying, "Thanks for talking with us today," you may

respond, “I’m proud to speak on behalf of the community’s unified response effort,” or “Thank you for this opportunity to promote flood insurance.”

- Dress appropriately.

During the Interview

- Listen to the entire question before answering.
- Avoid speculation.
- Beware of false assumptions and erroneous conclusions.
- Avoid hypothetical questions.
- Be alert to multiple questions and address them individually.

- Be confident and concentrate on delivering your message.
- Keep your answers simple and direct.
- Speak in “sound bites” (i.e., concise, memorable, short statements).
- Never repeat inaccurate or damaging information spoken within a reporter’s question. Instead, restate the information in a positive manner in your answer.
- Do not refer to the reporter by name, as the reporter may not be included when the interview is aired.
- Treat all questions seriously.
- NEVER speak “off the record.”
- While answering questions, be attuned to opportunities to promote *your* message.
- If you are being recorded or taped and botch an answer, simply begin the answer again. If taped, the exchange will most likely be edited.
- Be aware of your appearance:
 - Avoid nervous gestures; do not overuse hand gestures.
 - Display good posture.
 - Maintain eye contact.
 - Ensure that your glasses (if you wear them) are not slipping downward.

- Remove dark glasses.
- Avoid wearing stripes, “busy” patterns, and red.
- If seated, ensure that your jacket does not ride up behind your neck by sitting on the coattails.
- Leave all equipment concerns to the reporter or sound technician.

After the Interview

- Obtain and provide any information you promised to supply.
- Provide written background information, and be available to the reporter for follow-up questions.
- If the story is publicized with inaccuracies, call the reporter and politely point out the errors.

Source: FEMA (2005), Effective communication, Independent Study.

Tips to Reduce Fear of Public Speaking

Before the interview

- Preview the venue, if possible.
- Do your research and know the facts.
- Consider the emotional issues of your message.
- Anticipate the questions you may be asked and prepare answers.

Practice

- Present the speech aloud, to yourself, until it is completely familiar.
- Read the speech in front of a mirror and ensure that your body language aids your message.
- Seize all opportunities to speak aloud so that you become more comfortable (e.g., ask questions in meetings, join Toastmasters or another public-speaking group, speak to small friendly groups, present slides to your family, or teach a course).

Acceptance and Relaxation

- Accept your nervousness as normal.
- Accept that you may misspeak during your presentation and plan to correct yourself immediately and smoothly.
- Use relaxation techniques, such as:
 - Stretching.
 - Muscle tensing and relaxing.
 - Deep breathing.
 - Body alignment.
 - Consciously choosing to let go of tension.
 - Visualizing an effective presentation.

Source: FEMA (2005), Effective communication, Independent Study.