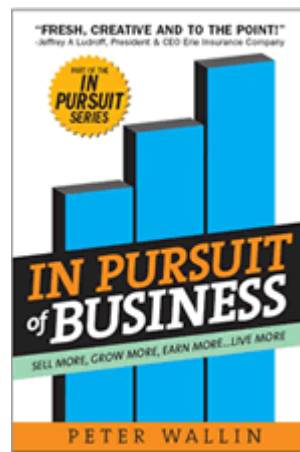




# Public Speaking 101

Peter Wallin

*In Pursuit of Business*



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## □ **Public Speaking 101**

To really step forward in your relationship- building mission, you need to have confidence with public speaking. In the book *In Pursuit of Business* I discussed techniques to meet people and ask interesting questions. Now, it's time to focus on what *you* have to say. You will gain instant credibility when you have the ability to talk about your business and your experiences. From professional speeches to one-on-one conversations, it's critical to be able to express yourself with confidence.

As I found myself becoming more and more involved with my community—I wanted to increase my exposure and get people to know who I am. So I decided to become a speaker. Not just a person who gives speeches, but one who inspires and motivates. The best way to become comfortable is to practice. Volunteer to give speeches or small group presentations. There's always a Rotary Club or a commerce group looking for someone to speak at one of their meetings. This is a great place to brush off the nervousness and get into speaking shape.

*You already have within your own mind the tools to fashion your own destiny, you just need to find it and use it.*

Approximately 95 percent of all people fear speaking in front of an audience. Some say they would rather have a heart attack than be faced with this stage fright. Yes, it's difficult and stressful, but by learning some simple tips and practicing as often as possible, you can overcome this fear and actually come to enjoy it. When I was growing up I was afraid to speak in class and often felt the chills of nervousness whenever I was called upon. It wasn't until a few years after college when I began my working career that I began to understand how valuable it is to be able to speak and state my case. I have since spent the last two decades of my life participating in skill building courses such as Dale Carnegie and Toastmasters, and now I even teach public speaking classes. Believe it or not, I actually look forward to my next speaking engagement.

It's very easy to say “No, I can't make that office presentation” while thinking “I'm too busy” or “I am not prepared.” The challenge is to eliminate these thoughts and begin to change your state of mind regarding public speaking.

If you have a fear of speaking, I encourage you to change the way you feel. Decide right now to take action to transform into a person with confidence. Begin by volunteering to give a talk. There's always a civic club or social group that is looking for someone to speak. No more procrastination. It's time to step up and deliver!

## □ How to Prepare for a Speaking Engagement

As you begin to think about making public presentations remember these two important concepts:

- 1) Schedule your talk long in advance to give you adequate time to prepare.
- 2) Think about leverage. Make plans to give your talk at least six different times to six different groups. By mastering your talk you will be able to give the same talk and become an expert in your topic.

### 1. What To do Long Before Your Speech

- Don't accept an invitation to talk on a topic you don't want to speak about—or don't have knowledge of. You need to know your subject matter and be comfortable with it.
- Complete a questionnaire with the person who invited you to speak. What is the *Single-Overriding Communication Objective (SOCO)* trying to be accomplished with your speech? It's important to know well in advance if you are being asked to inform, instruct, motivate or entertain. (See a sample pre-speech questionnaire by going to *PeterWallin.com*.)
- Make sure the person who will be introducing you has an updated and appropriate biography of yourself so he or she can properly provide your qualifications.
- Begin a first draft of your talk. You want to provide good information but not overkill. You should want your audience begging for more when you are finished. That's the sign of a good presentation.
- Keep in mind how long you have to present your material.
- Allow adequate time for practice and revision.

### 2. What To Do Shortly Before You Speak

- Get some rest! Make sure you sleep well in the nights prior to your talk. You want to look relaxed, refreshed and even energized.
- Review your talk, but don't memorize it. Keep it in outline form and make it current (add recent newsworthy comments). Don't make major changes, just fine tune at this point.
- Dress for success. Your clothing and your appearance are an exhibit of your strength. Wear medium colors, not too dark or too light and avoid busy patterns that can be distracting to your audience.
- Scope out the room. Will you be able to see the audience? Will they be able to see you? Will everyone be able to see the flipcharts and PowerPoint presentations?
- Greet as many people as possible before your talk to gain comfort and understanding of the audience. I regularly address a marketing group for an insurance company. If the engagement is out of town, arrive a day early to

meet the participants and find out what they want to gain from hearing your presentation. Take note and, if it's not included in your talk, address these items in the Q & A session that follows.

### **3 What To Do Immediately Before You Speak**

- Check your appearance and make sure your clothing is in order. Relax by stretching your arms, legs and back. It may also be wise to take a sip of water and make some facial gestures to stretch your jaw.
- Walk to the lectern with style and purpose. Get off to a great start! Grab the audience's attention right away, create rapport, and tell them what's coming and the benefits of listening. Keep your opening short and provocative.
- Remember that the trick is "SOCO," know and hit your Single Overriding Communications Objective. Your preparation and attitude will be apparent almost instantly.
- The secret to overcoming fear is proper research, preparation and rehearsal. If you've done your homework, the nerves immediately cease and the presentation begins to flow.

#### **□ What If You Bomb?**

It's natural to think that you did poorly. In truth, we actually give a speech three times – once before the actual talk, the actual talk itself, and the one we wish we would have given. This is natural.

Your body movement, verbal and nonverbal communication is what you will be remembered for. The audience will only remember a small portion of what you actually said. What they will remember and take with them is your physical presence, your expression, your attitude and your style. If you concentrate on that, you can't help but succeed.

Abe Lincoln once said: *"I don't like to hear a cut and dried sermon. When I hear a person preach, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees."* You don't need to jump up and around, but you do need to gain their attention and keep them interested. And always remember to smile, it takes away the jitters.

What I've learned is that the audience truly wants to see you succeed. They want to hear a good speech, see a good speaker in action and feel good about their time being well spent. No one has time to waste listening to a poor speaker; I'd rather have them compliment me afterward for a job well done! It creates a win-win and memorable event.

Each year I am asked to teach a summer class to a group of selected youth leaders. These are hand-chosen high school students who come for intensive training to prepare them for college, a career and all the life challenges that lie ahead. I ask each student to stand up and give two-minute impromptu speech. Yes, they are nervous, especially because they have been given no time to prepare. The project works because the following parameters are given:

- 1) I tell them to give a talk about a specific topic—something you’ve earned the right to talk about (My first car accident, when my grandmother died, my family spent Christmas delivering food and gifts to the poor.)
- 2) I challenge them to talk about something they feel deeply about--using emotion, humor will help hook the audience and gain their undivided attention.
- 3) I suggest they create an eagerness to relate—no one else can tell this story as good. The speaker wants the audience to hear the story and perhaps take action because of the described experience (i.e. “Be sure to drive with both hands on the steering wheel,” “Hug your grandmother the next time you see her,” or “Volunteer and help others, you’ll feel wonderful about your good deed.”)

### Speaking tips:

- You don’t have to be perfect. Speaking is communication, not performance.
- Most signs of tension don’t show.
- Listeners want you to do well.
- Relax and take 3 deep breaths.
- Speak slowly and deliberately.
- Scan from side to side to look at the entire audience.
- Use humor, but don’t tell jokes.
- Be sincere, not pretentious.
- Be yourself, do not intimidate others.

### □ Be Energetic and Upbeat

- People will only remember 7 percent of what you actually say in your speech
- They will remember 25 percent of what they write down
- They will remember 65 percent of the way you move around and how you express yourself.

It’s plain and simple. The more you believe in your topic and the more gestures and animation you use, the more convincing you will become. The most dynamic speakers use strong voice tones and clear communication skills.

The bottom line is to have fun. Speaking can be a very rewarding experience, both for the audience and for you. By taking charge of your destiny you can build a large bridge between you and your competition by creating a visible image—you in front of an audience!

A captive audience is what all business owners desire. Public speaking is an absolute must. Make a decision today to volunteer to give a speech within the next 60 days. Go for it!

## □ About Peter Wallin

Peter Wallin has over 20 years' experience in sales and management and has worked with hundreds of small businesses using his unique style of marketing and relationship building.

Wallin has participated in numerous self-development projects, including Dale Carnegie Graduate Assistant, Anthony Robbins Mastery University and Toastmasters International. He gives numerous speeches and workshops on marketing, customer service and In Pursuit of Business.

In addition, he has released his first training audio, "In Pursuit of Speaking."

Among numerous community and industry awards he has earned the F.W. Hirt Quality Agent Award from Erie Insurance, a Fortune 500 company. As an ambassador to small businesses throughout the country, Wallin shares success secrets for unlimited sales and growth.

Prior to starting his own business, Wallin worked for 11 years with Nationwide Insurance, both as an agent and a sales manager. He worked closely with almost 100 agency businesses during his tenure, teaching and discovering marketing, employee development and other techniques vital to operating and growing a profitable business.

His business is headquartered in Elmira, New York.