

Introducing a Speaker

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This is possibly the most common speaking assignment that can be assigned to us. *“Oh, by the way would you please introduce the new Marketing Manager; he would like to say a few words.”* Or you might be asked to MC the company workshop or invited to a conference to MC. Simple isn't it?

Actually while a good introduction can make it easy for the following speaker, a bad introduction can leave the audience confused and, more importantly, reluctant to listen.

So what is the best way to address this situation? We need some kind of routine which will ensure that we cover everything that a good introduction needs. These are:

Why This Speaker?

The audience needs to know who is giving the presentation. In addition they will want to know why they should listen to him or her. What experience do they have and what qualification do they possess that makes them a credible speaker on this topic?

Why this Subject?

Again, the person making the introduction needs to make it quite clear to the audience why this subject is important, and exactly what the topic is about .

The Relevance to The Audience

A speaker giving a 20 minutes presentation at a seminar is taking 20 minutes of their audience's time. There must be a reason for speaking, and that reason should be relevant to the audience. It may not be immediately apparent to the audience, which is why a good introduction clearly points it out to the audience.

So those are the three major issues that should be covered by any introduction. But there are one or two tips for success which will help you put together a professional introduction to make the speaker's task much easier.

What to do when Introducing a Speaker

1. Get the name right! This can be really difficult if the name is pronounced differently to the way it is spelled. If this is the case make sure that you write the name down phonetically – this will alert you to the difficulty and allow you to pronounce the speaker's name accurately.
2. Try to use the speaker's name once or twice within your introduction so the audience can catch it.

3. Speak clearly and do not rush. The speaker has spent time and trouble on their presentation and deserves an equally well prepared introduction.

3. Make sure that your introduction ends with the presentation's title – and then the speaker's name. This ensures that the last thing the audience hears from you is the name. Then lead the applause. A wise presenter will inform the speaker that he will close the introduction this way so the speaker is ready to move on cue.

4. Turn to the speaker and smile; wait until he reaches the speaking area and shake hands before returning to your seat.

5. It is possible that the speaker may refer to your introduction at the start of the speech so be alert and show your appreciation of his remarks with a smile and a nod in response.

And then there's what not to do!

1. Don't try to outshine the speaker.

2. Don't tell the audience the main focus of the speaker's presentation, or try to summarise the whole of the speech.

3. Don't rely on memory – you are sure to get the name wrong if you do.

4. Don't ad lib. Spontaneous comments can be disastrous – especially after a few drinks. In fact don't drink prior to a speaking assignment. The disaster potential outweighs the lack of fear factor.

5. Don't highlight any problems the speaker may have. *"We are delighted that Steve has almost recovered from his heart attack and is able to be with us tonight"*. Most audiences will now sit through the presentation waiting for Steve to collapse.

6. Don't build up the speaker to unachievable heights. *"Joe is one of the best in the business, he is probably the best speaker I have ever heard – and the funniest too!"* This type of introduction puts huge pressure on the speaker which he or she will not thank you for.

7. Avoid introduction clichés like the plague! – Lose these:-

a. ... who needs no introduction

b. Without further ado

c. We are honoured to have with us today

c. ... our speaker's 'better half' or even worse ' his good wife' - it begs the question where is his bad wife?

d. **Heeeer's**, and finally

e. None other than



To help with your introductions an Introduction Template is included.

TRISCHEL TEMPLATE FOR INTRODUCING A SPEAKER

Opening Remarks

.....

1. Why This Speaker?

NamePhonetic.....

Experience.....

.....

.....

Qualifications.....

2. Why This Subject?

What is the General Subject.....

.....

What is the specific Topic.....

.....

3. What is the relevance to us?

.....

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4. Ladies and Gentlemen, would you please welcome, with a presentation entitled:

.....

(Title)

.....

.....

*(Speaker's name – get **EXACT** pronunciation)*

Lead applause, turn to welcome the speaker, shake hands and sit when the speaker has acknowledged you.