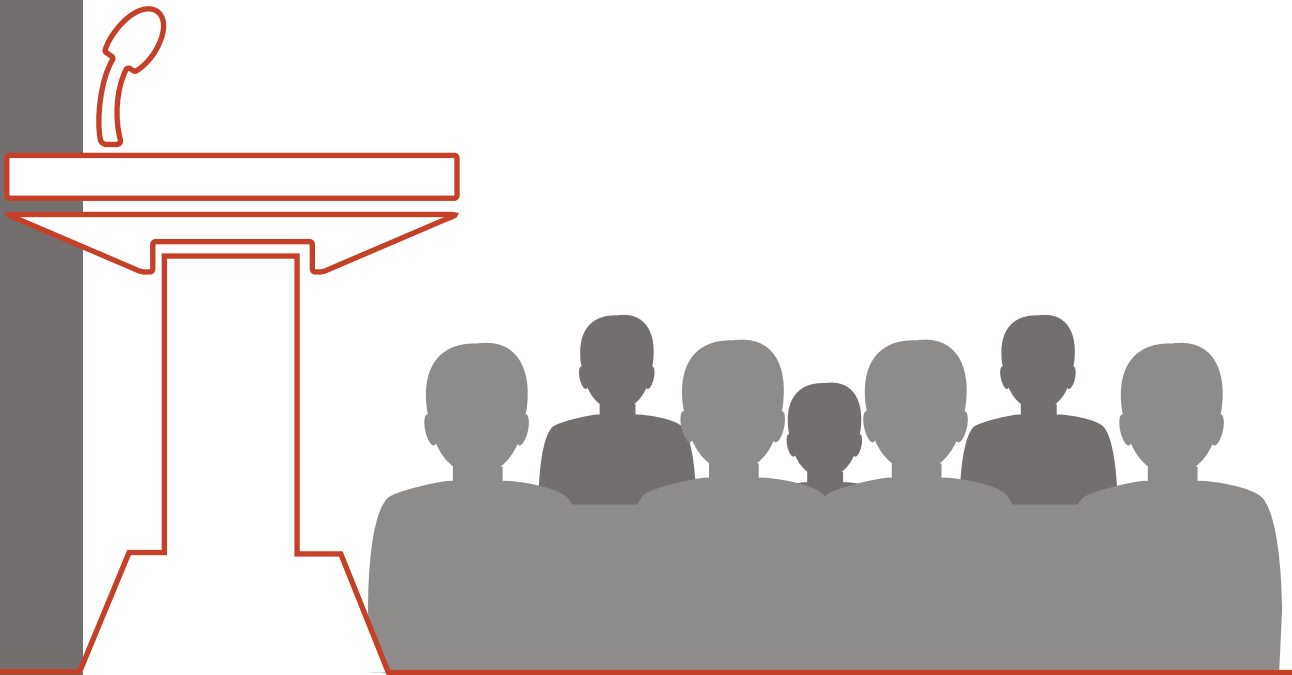


S P E A K E A S Y



TOP 5 STRATEGIES TO  
OVERCOME NERVOUSNESS TO  
**MAKE IMPROMPTU  
COMMUNICATION A SUCCESS**

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# TOP 5 STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME NERVOUSNESS TO MAKE IMPROMPTU COMMUNICATION A SUCCESS

Public speaking is an essential skill required in business communication to engage and connect with various audiences. Yet, over 5% of the world's population, or 370,000,000 people worldwide struggle daily with glossophobia, the fear of public speaking.<sup>1</sup> For most, being in front of a room and speaking to groups, especially impromptu speaking is a source of anxiety and self-doubt. In fact, surveys have found that over 74% of working adults suffer from some type of speech anxiety.<sup>2</sup> If you get sweating palms, have an increased heart rate, or get butterflies in your stomach when you're in front of an audience, then you are not alone. This fear is an equalizer and research has shown that it is not race or gender specific. When surveyed, approximately 44% of women and 38% of men agree that speech anxiety is a current workplace hinderance and may be preventing them from advancing their career.<sup>3</sup>



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# TOP 5 STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME NERVOUSNESS TO MAKE IMPROMPTU COMMUNICATION A SUCCESS



A fear of being in front of an audience and public speaking should not, and does not, have to prevent you from being

effective in your business communication. The good news is, commanding a crowd, like communication in general, is a skill that can be strengthened with practice and guidance. Business communication training programs such as Speakeasy's What You Say and How You Say It are effective ways to learn communication best practices and gain real-world practice to overcome glossophobia.

Glossophobia reaches far beyond just the individual speaker and can have impacts on an organization's overall productivity. With the globalization of business, you could be tasked at any time with having to present to a diverse audience, with or without prior notice and the ability to prepare. The ability to communicate effectively with any audience is one of the leading indicators of business success and acquiring a promotion. Not only is effective communication an essential skill to acquire for your professional (and personal) development, but it is also important for an organization's financial success.



# TOP 5 STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME NERVOUSNESS TO MAKE IMPROMPTU COMMUNICATION A SUCCESS

Studies have found that communication practices, in fact do affect the balance sheet. Companies known for their effective internal and external communication experience up to 30% higher revenues and profits.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, organizations with leaders who are highly effective communicators often generate 47% higher returns for shareholders and significantly higher returns on investment for the organization as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

30% 

higher revenues and profits<sup>4</sup>

47% 

higher returns for shareholders and significantly higher returns on investment for the organization as a whole<sup>5</sup>

Whether you are delivering a planned keynote speech, have to stand in front of an audience and deliver an impromptu presentation, or give a toast at a retirement function, there are key strategies you can use to overcome your nerves and speaking anxiety. Business communication consultants at Speakeasy recommend using these five strategies to deliver a winning talk to any audience.

## 1 TAKE A MOMENT TO BREATHE



This is your time to breathe for energetic relaxation and it is essential to relax your body before you begin to talk. This exercise can be done right before the talk, as it only takes 5-10 minutes. First, find a quiet place to sit and close your eyes. Make an active decision to consciously let go of any thoughts and worries you may have on your mind. Focus on your breathing and exhale deeply. As the air enters your lungs, feel your body relaxing. Slowly blow the air out releasing the tension in your body with each breath. Remember, you are not trying to force or control your breath, instead you are making the decision to let go and release. This is also a great exercise to practice on a regular basis to stay in tune with your breathing and body.

## 2 VISUALIZE YOURSELF



With your body relaxed, focus your mind on the task at hand. Visualize yourself walking on to the stage or into the meeting. Think about what you will say, consider the size of the audience, and how you will engage them during your talk. Pause and imagine interacting with the audience, using body language to draw them into your message. Envision feeling calm and confident during the talk, not letting nerves and anxiety take over. Think of yourself successfully delivering the speech, and the audience applauding you. For a moment, let yourself feel the joy of getting the results you want. Taking time to picture the desired outcome of your talk, before it happens, can help you calm yourself and give you the emotional boost you may need to overcome speaking anxiety.

## 3 CONTROL YOUR BODY



Think about your stance, where you will stand to see the entire audience, and how you can use your voice to emphasize portions of your message. This also includes considering how you stand, the placement of your shoulders, and how you will use your body language to convey your message, all important things to consider before you begin your talk. Holding your shoulders too far back or too far up creates extra tension in your body. This will force your weight further back on your heels, making you look physically rigid. When your body is tense, it makes it hard for you to project a sense of commitment, and will make your words seem forced. Find a mirror and examine your stance. Take the time, now, to correct your body and find a relaxed position that allows you to be both comfortable, and confident.

## 4 COLLECT YOUR THOUGHTS - EVEN JUST BRIEFLY



This can be done as you walk in front of the audience or minutes before you begin your talk. Taking notes and jotting down key topics or ideas that you want to cover can help you to gather your thoughts and reduce speaking anxiety. Depending on how much time you have before your talk, you can also create an outline or agenda to help guide you through your message. Having a structure and flow of what you will say and how you will say it is a great strategy to overcome awkward silences or losing your train of thought.

## 5 PRACTICE PAUSING IN YOUR TALK



The most effective business communicators have a special quality that enables them to bring impactful messages to any audience. It is the power of the pause. Understanding that what you say and how you say it is just as important as when you say it, is key for any communicator. Whether you are delivering a keynote speech, or giving an impromptu presentation for corporate executives, the pause can be a great skill for you to master to gain control of your body and project confidence. The business communication consultants at Speakeasy recommend using “the pause” in strategic portions of your talk. If time allows, practice pausing in your talk before you take the stage. Nervousness is a natural part of public speaking, however, taking control of your nerves is an essential skill to overcome glossophobia. Pausing may not be the most natural thing to do during a presentation. Therefore, you may need to practice slowing your words down and pausing between sentences or ideas, to ensure that your presentation cadence is slow enough for the audience to understand.

Practicing these strategies for both planned and impromptu talks is a great way to train your body to overcome speaking anxiety. When possible, record yourself, and play it back to find additional strategies to improve your delivery. Mastering public speaking, and all high-stakes communication, takes time and practice, but it is an essential tool to have in your business communication toolkit.

# CONCLUSION



Using these Speakeasy preparation strategies are the first step to overcoming speaking anxiety. Over time with more practice and guidance, you will be able to master your nervousness to become an effective communicator and presenter. To prevent anxiety from overtaking your next impromptu talk, remember to breathe, visualize the end goal, control your body, collect your thoughts, and practice pausing. Having a fear of standing in front of a room should not limit your professional success or prevent you from progressing in your career. The business communication consultants at Speakeasy are here to help you throughout your communication journey. Our expert faculty specialize in empowering speakers, of all levels, to tap into their communication potential. With dynamic business communication skills training programs such as What You Say and How You Say It, program participants receive real-world opportunities to put proven communication strategies into practice to overcome speaking anxiety. Enroll today in one of our business communication programs, before spaces fill up. We are ready and excited to help you break through your speaking fears to unlock the master communicator within.

To learn more about our dynamic communication classes visit our website at <http://www.speakeasyinc.com/>, or call one of our communication advisors at **1-888-375-1801**.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ethos3.com/2014/10/glossophobia-101-the-fear-of-public-speaking/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.statisticbrain.com/fear-of-public-speaking-statistics/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.creditdonkey.com/fear-of-public-speaking-statistics.html#facts>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.businessperform.com/workplace-communication/poor-communication-costs.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.holmesreport.com/latest/article/the-cost-of-poor-communications>