Communication Skills

Making Speeches and Oral Presentations

The material of your presentation should be concise, to the point, and tell an interesting story. In addition to the obvious—content and visual aids—the following are just as important as the audience will be subconsciously taking them in:

\*\*Your voice—HOW you say it is as important as WHAT you say

\*\*Body language—your body movements express what your attitudes and thoughts REALLY are

\*\*Appearance—first impressions influence the audience’s attitudes to you. Dress appropriately

for the occasion. Avoid any distracting clothing, jewelry, hair styles, etc.

PRACTICE IS ESSENTIAL, both to improve your skills generally and also to make the best of each individual presentation you make.

NEVER read from a script or prompt sheet—chances are you will not locate what you want to say amongst all the other text. You should KNOW most of what you want to say.

Prepare NOTE CARDS which have key words and phrases on them. NUMBER the cards in case you drop them. Mark on your cards the visual aids that go with them.

REHEARSE your presentation—to yourself and in front of others.

Tips:

--Always greet the audience and tell them who you are

--Keep to the time allowed

--Stick to your presentation; don’t digress

--NO gum

--NO dead words or sounds (um, ah, like, so then, yeah, etc.)

--Always thank the audience and ask for questions at the end

Delivery Tips:

--Speak clearly

--Don’t rush or talk deliberately slowly; be natural

--Avoid jokes

--Avoid too much hand waving

--Look at the audience as much as possible, but don’t fix on one individual

--Don’t have your back to the audience (when pointing to displays)

--Don’t stand in positions that obscure your displays

--Avoid moving too much or pacing

Visual Aids:

--Visuals should be relevant to and incorporated into your speech

--Keep visuals simple, easy to read/see, and error free

--Be very familiar with your displays

--Few words should be used; never read off of your aids

Other:

--Be a good audience member!

--Enjoy yourself!