

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



43 Easy Tips For Delivering Your Presentation

There I was, not yet 20, and I had to deliver a 30-minute talk on my product — and I had never made a presentation like that before. What would I do? I'm Jerry Roberts, that story and some tips for your next presentation, next on The Extra Point.

I had just signed up to sell a new line of environmentally beneficial home cleaning products. Think Amway- or Melaleuca-type items.

To promote the line I was advised to speak to civic groups. If I did, lots of people would want to buy and I'd be on my way. Uhh...but I'd never given a talk on anything. What would I say?

I opened the phone book and looked under organizations and called around to see if they were looking for speakers. The second one I called wanted someone for the next week and I agreed. They gave me 30 minutes.

Tip number one. Know your topic. I had studied the literature on the products. I knew them. This was going to be great.

Tip number two. Know your audience. I didn't know anything about the organization. I didn't even know I was supposed to ask. The program coordinator was young and cheerful, so I figured that's how the group was. Wrong. The average age of the members was about 75 and since my presentation preceded their lunch, I would soon learn that they weren't so cheerful.

Tip number three. Make an outline and if you know your material, you'll be able to naturally flow with it.

The outline has three parts as well. First, if I'd have known better I would have told a story, explaining the environmental problems and how we were contributing to it. Second, I would offer a solution to remedy those problems, namely our products. Finally, I'd have extended a call to action for the listener...how they could get involved to create the happier ending.

Well, since I didn't know any of that I had typed the whole 30 minutes out, word for word, with key points underlined. It didn't make for the best eye contact with the audience and about halfway through as I was forcefully making my point about how we all could do our share to clean up the environment, I looked up to notice the entire front row was asleep. At least I hoped they were asleep.

A couple of minutes later a kindly gentleman saw fit to interrupt my oratorical excursion by asking, "When do we eat?"

It was more or less downhill from there. I didn't sell any products that day but there was an upside. I decided to enroll in a public speaking course during my next year in school, and that sort of set me on a course that led me to what I do now.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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