

WHAT NOT TO DO: SPEECH DELIVERY

Sure, looking at what to do is helpful, but sometimes looking at what not to do can be of even greater help. So, what shouldn't you do while delivering a speech?

In general, while giving a speech:

- Don't give your speech with only a few practice runs. Practice it enough to be sure that you meet the time expectations and feel comfortable.
- Don't sound monotone. Vary how you use your voice.
- Don't be afraid to pause. It won't hurt anybody and is a useful technique.
- Don't turn your back to the audience. If you have notes on a computer, set the computer in a place that allows you to continue facing the audience.
- Don't stare at your PowerPoint slides; your audience will also stare at the slides and will forget you.
- Don't put exactly what you're saying on a PowerPoint. If you're already saying it, what purpose would that have?
- Don't use visuals unless the point cannot be communicated in words alone, in that case, you should use the visual.
- Don't apologize if you mess up. It communicates insecurity.
- Don't put your hands in your pockets and don't cross your arms. These motions create barriers between you and the audience. As a speaker, you want to eliminate these barriers to better connect with the audience.
- Don't read from your notes or slides.
- Don't use pointless hand motions.
- Don't pace around the stage excessively or pointlessly.
- Don't lean on the podium.
- Avoid filler words like "umm," "eh," and "like."
- Don't speak at an awkward pace. Speak at a conversational pace. If you speak too fast, it will be harder to remember what you practiced and your audience will find it difficult to follow the speech. If you speak too slow, you will not project authority or confidence. Speaking too fast or too slow will also affect whether or not you hit the time requirements for the speech.