

How to present an effective Spotlight Speech.

1. “Eat the mic,” as they say in the theater. Hold the microphone close to your mouth and speak right into it. At chest level it doesn’t pick up your voice much. (Joe Lemire, Elyk Innovations)
2. Plan the 5-minute spotlight presentation. Do not improvise. An introduction, three main points about your product or service, and a closing are all you can fit into five minutes. Even if you are from New Jersey and talk fast, your audience may not be able to listen fast. (John Bryan, Improv! Corporate Workshops)
3. Adopt their perspective, not yours. How can your product or service help council members do more business, reduce costs, solve problems, have a more effective organization, etc.? They don’t care about your nice business. They care about their needs. (John)
4. Get the timing exact. You will get a 4-minute warning. Don’t say, “Oh, look, I’m almost out of time.” That’s not professional. You will be told to stop at 5 minutes sharp. You irritate the audience when you run on and steal time from the next presenter or delay the end of the meeting. (John)
5. Make it personal. YOU are a resource to help council members. Share information about yourself and your associates that will make them feel comfortable doing business with you. They need to trust you. (Michele McManamon, Sandler Sales Institute North Florida)
6. If you plan to use props, such as handouts or electronic aids, make sure they are concise, support your presentation points and are ready to go. If you distribute handouts in advance, people will read them while you talk. You can’t afford to waste precious time to repair a computer projector. (Michele)
7. What’s your call to action? What are you asking the audience to do? How specifically can council members engage your resources to do more business, solve problems, develop themselves as professionals, etc.? Tell them clearly who to call and what you want them to do. (Michele)
8. Make it interactive. Pose a question & let them answer it. Describe a problem and let them choose from a list of solutions. Make them think. (Craig McColskey, CNL Bank)
9. Use a story containing a client problem and a solution you provided. People love stories. They can illustrate what you do far better than five minutes of abstract bullet points. (Craig)
10. Make sure that you practice this speech at home before you perform it in front of a crowd. This will help you on time and on clarity. Often when I rehearse I realize that I need to make my points in a different order or leave some out all together. Try to get the rehearsed time to run about 15 to 30 seconds longer than the required time. Most people speak faster in a group setting than in a practice setting. (John Robinson, EverBank Home Mortgage Co.)
11. While practicing use a mirror. This will show you any facial expressions or nervous movements to eliminate. Nothing distracts more than watching a speaker play with a pen or scratch an itch the whole time. This is out of nervousness and the more you practice the better this will get. If you will use a microphone, rehearse holding something comparable. I use a remote control. (John Robinson)

12. Telling jokes can be a great way to gain immediate attention. Practice on your family members and co-workers. You will find out quick if it is really funny. No one likes to bomb in front of a group, especially if you are not expecting it. (John Robinson)