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Your Fast Track to Executive Communication

Listen to the audio file "The essentials to a benchmark humourous contest speech" at <http://www.warwickjohnfahy.com/warwicktm.html>



Essentials to a benchmark humourous contest speech

I. Quick Tips

- It's still a speech (opening, body, close, theme / message, flow)
- Not all one-liners (jokes)
- Observe good taste (taboos)

II. What is Humour?

A. Advice from Mr Bean

Rowan Atkinson (Mr Bean) explains in the documentary "Funny Business" that an object or a person can become funny in three different ways. They are:

- By behaving in an unusual way
- By being in an unusual place

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- By being the wrong size

B. Observations on life around us through a different lens

Ask yourself: How creative can you be? It's up to you!!

III. Audience Response Wins

- The speaker who gets the most audience response (laughter) often wins
- What is your audience interested in? What frustrates them?
- Topics include love, family, friends, career, traveling, relationships, applying for visas
- Physical humour (slapstick) can work with some audiences
- Your pain is often funny to other people (best not mention their pain)
- Choose simple, every-day topics that can be the source of pain, stress and frustration eg being late for dinner, ordering a beer in a foreign language, when it rains, dealing with couriers, ordering online
- Different context. Different audience. Different frustrations

Ask yourself: Can my audience relate to my topic?

IV. Content is “Reality Exaggerated”

- Start from personal experiences that frustrate you and the audience
- Make yourself the main character (“I....My...”)
- Deliver the speech like a conversation
- Read the Humorous Speech Manual (Advanced)
- Use humorous devices (triads, twists, exaggeration, self deprecating)
- Triad or the Rule of 3 (I came, I saw, I conquered)
- Twist (Make the third example unexpected)

Example: Applying for a visa is getting harder. I need to bring my passport, an application form, my parents. (twist and triad)

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Example: Darren La Croix stand up : Toastmasters audiences are great. They are punctual, attentive and sober. (twist and triad)

Example: I am from England. The English are not the most romantic people in the world. (self deprecating)

- Key that all top comedians use: 3Ts
- Test. Tinker. Test.
- Talk to people around you. Tell your humorous anecdotes “as if” they were true and observe where people laugh, smile or where they don't.

Ask yourself: Am I using humourous devices?

V. Flow with a theme

- Have a theme or message
- Echo a theme through your stories
- Connect / Thread your stories together
- Your speech should be like a casual journey, a ramble in the park, a conversation with a good friend.
- Tell it like one story even if you need to make connections between anecdotes.
- Transitions are important (think through how you can link one anecdote with the next in a natural and smooth way)

Example: As I was walking out of the visa office I met an English guy. He told me his secretary had typed the wrong passport number and spelt his name wrong. Have you ever worked with people and thought, “How did you get this job?” (transition : link one anecdote to the next anecdote)

- Set up your story briefly (I was sitting in the airport)

Example: I was flying from Gansu province last week. (Set up) - Connect to travel, person sitting next to me, observation.

Example: I was given something to clean my hands and it was called a “Wet Turban” . Yes the instructions were that I should wrap it around my head. Just who translates this stuff. I was walking down the road the other day...

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(set up and connect to next anecdote) OR "I'm going to India next week and I want to check how many people are wearing wet turbans"

- Finish with a message (30 -45 seconds)
- Vocal variety is essential (play the part)
- Keep props simple
- Use the full 7 minutes 30 seconds. If you have a script, calculate your time with a word count (my winning speech was about 900 words). Allow time for laughter in your speech timing

Ask yourself: Is there a 'journey' through the speech?

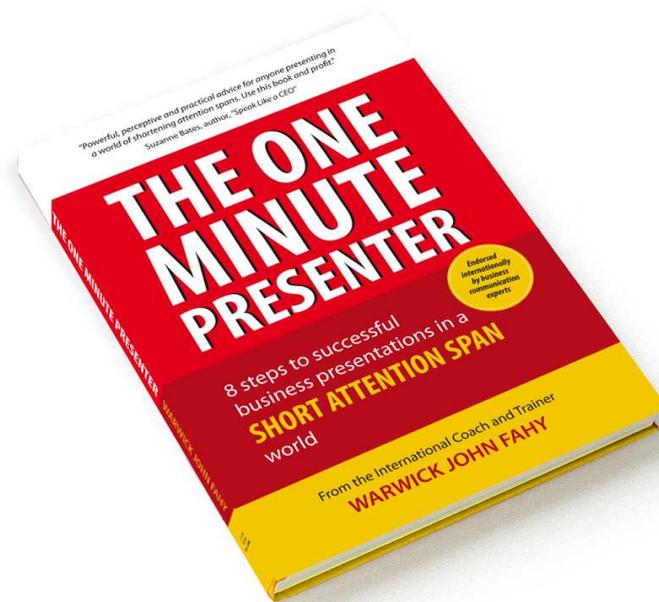
Bonus Tip:

Rehearse so you know your script (in your sleep). If you want to win, rehearse 5, 10, 15 ... times. Move from content to focusing on your acting skills. Ensure your message is in sync with your gestures, movement and vocal variety. Use a video camera to help you see what you look like.

*Good luck! Let the speaking champion inside you, come out!
These tips are offered in the spirit of sharing, so please forward them to your Toastmaster friends and feel free to post on your web sites, blog and social media. Appreciate if you can keep the audio and text files in their original format and offer a link back to my web site at www.warwickjohnfahy.com. Happy Toastmastering! ~ Warwick John Fahy, 15 August 2009*

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Warwick is the author of *The One Minute Presenter : 8 steps to successful business presentations in a short attention span world*.

The book gives business managers a roadmap on the necessary skills needed to connect with a modern, tech-savvy audience.

You can learn more about the book, read *The One Minute Presenter* blog and sign up to Warwick's quick tips at www.oneminutepresenter.com

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Warwick John Fahy

Warwick is a business facilitator known for helping teams grow and facilitating business results with multinational companies going through organizational development and change.

Since moving to Asia from London in 1994, Warwick has supported leaders and managers as a qualified and experienced consultant with a proven track record for bringing executives and teams to their full potential. He demonstrates deep cultural intelligence, while collaborating with teams across China, Asia, India and the Middle East. Warwick trains and coaches in the key soft skills of communication and leadership needed to build effective and productive leaders. As an insightful coach, Warwick's unique ability is to precisely assess development gaps and to provide a step-by-step, practical and supportive program that boosts skills in a systematic way.

Community and business leader

Warwick is currently an elected At Large Committee member of the British Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai. He is general manager of TEAMSWORK China, who help retain and develop talent for multinationals through consulting, training and executive coaching services across Asia Pacific and the Middle East. TEAMSWORK China is an accredited Social Enterprise and invest 10% of revenue back into the education of the community, particularly orphans and girls in under-developed regions.

Public Speaking Pioneer

Warwick is author of *The One Minute Presenter*: a guide to successful business presentations. Warwick has been a catalyst to the expansion and development of Toastmasters in China. Under his leadership as Chairman, the organization doubled in size across China. Warwick continues to positively influence and mentor young and aspiring Toastmasters talent to become leaders themselves. Warwick is the first and only person from China to be invited into the International Hall of Fame in August 2007.

Professional Speaker

He is founding President of the Professional Speakers Association of China and runs a mentoring program for aspiring professional speakers. He is a Certified Professional Facilitator (CPF) - granted after demonstrating evidence of competency in five core facilitation competency areas. Warwick also promotes lifestyle design as a healthy living vegetarian, competing in triathlons around Asia.

www.warwickjohnfahy.com