

Speechwriter's Newsletter

The insider's guide to writing and delivering effective speeches

Sample

Inside:

Case Study

How to write a bang-up speech for a foreign audience

■ **Pfizer speechwriter Ken Askew was extraordinarily prepared to help his speaker address an audience of Japanese businesspeople. The speech appears on p. 4; the making of the speech is instructive, too.**

It would be easy to dismiss the speech delivered last fall by Pfizer Global Pharmaceuticals President Karen Katen to the Nikkei Global Management Forum as the product of a freak combination of ideal scenarios.

Pfizer, after all, has been doing business in Japan for 50 years, so the Japanese are familiar with the company and vice versa. Also: Though she'd never addressed such a prominent external forum in Japan, Katen has visited the country many times, and she's especially sensitive to the culture, according to her speechwriter, Ken Askew. And then there's Askew's background: the son of American missionaries, he spent much of his childhood in Japan and speaks Japanese. And as if this speech didn't have enough things going for it, Askew got to piggyback an earlier trip to Tokyo for advance work with the translators.

A best-case scenario, to be sure. But understanding the ideal can help speechwriters do a better job of dealing with the difficult reality of writing speeches for foreign audiences.

Writing with Japanese culture in mind

The first thing to know about Japanese culture is the Japanese expression, Askew says: "The nail that stands up gets hammered down."

Thus, writing a speech for a Japanese audience involves weeding out traces of American braggadocio—from the speech's theme all the way down even to the structure of its sentences. Whereas English sentences get the subject and the verb out of the way early "so you know

exactly where the sentence is going," Askew says, "Japanese sentences often "don't commit themselves until the last few words."

Not that Askew structured every sentence in the speech in a Japanese construction, but he kept it in mind as he wrote. More important, he was careful to include humble caveats—"tone shadings"—when saying good things about Pfizer. In a discussion of Pfizer's corporate culture, Askew was careful to say over and over the words, "we try." As in, "we try to create an inclusive environment," and "we try to recognize change as an ally." And just in case all those "we tries" weren't deferential enough, Askew adds a phrase at the end of the section: "Of course we're not perfect. These are ideals. But I believe they apply to leading a team, leading an organization or leading an entire industry."

The whole speech, Askew says, "Was not necessarily the same speech you'd deliver to an American audience." He describes it as "more textured, more deferential and more subtly forceful. We were trying to position the company as respectful, not brash—to set a mood, to convey a tone, to build a perception of thoughtfulness and sensitivity," Askew says.

Again—not the kind of hard-hitting, results-oriented strategy U.S. companies generally have for a speech. But appropriate to the Japanese audience? Askew thinks so.

Writing to show familiarity with the culture

With Askew's background and Pfizer's long history in Japan,

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making cultural references wasn't difficult. What was harder was knowing when to say when. Katen insisted that some stories and Japanese references be cut so she didn't appear to be trying too hard. "Her radar was really up" about the line between cultural acknowledgment and cultural pandering, Askew says with admiration.

Japanese culture is famously resistant to any kind of preaching, a fact that Askew learned by watching his parents and other missionaries work in Japan. Only those missionaries who took time to thoroughly understand Japanese culture made any inroads. The others were frustrated and flat-out rejected by Japanese society.

Writing for simultaneous translation

When Askew was a boy growing up in Japan, he remembers that there were only three TV channels—and on all those channels, only one show that wasn't either in Japanese or dubbed into Japanese: *I Love Lucy*.

Why wasn't *Lucy* translated? Askew later learned it was because Lucille Ball simply talked too fast for Japanese translation. It takes more words and more time to say the same thing in Japanese as in English.

On site in Japan before the speech, Askew worked with the translators to change words and adjust idioms. (A phrase like, "there was a method to his madness" would be changed to, "his thinking was good.")

But the big consideration for translation was pacing Katen's delivery. She normally speaks at about 130 words per minute, and she worked to slow down to about 90, to allow the translators to do the speech justice in Japanese.

The result? A real speech—not an on-the-fly idiomatic scramble

"There's a difference between translation and interpretation," Askew says, "and to be accurate, this speech underwent both. Not only was it converted to

another language, but it was converted culturally as well—phrase by phrase, thought by thought."

By taking advance care that Katen's understated, deferential, sensitive text was "interpreted" as well as translated, Askew dodged several common bullets he has observed while attending simultaneous-translation speeches. Too often, visiting speakers "read from bullet points, or talk colloquially from slides, so translators have to translate on the fly, listening to the speaker in one ear while talking," Askew says. "The audience hears stutter-starts and long pauses during a reactionary translation that may not convey the real meaning."

In stark contrast, Katen's listeners—thanks in part to Askew's deep and careful preparation, well-briefed translators, and mostly Katen's own hard work and attention to detail—"heard a speech," he says.

Product Review

New Web site offers fast, cheap communication measurement

A couple of months ago an *SN* cover story on measuring the value of a speech boiled down to an inevitable conclusion: If the speaker liked it, it's a good speech.

For speechwriters or communication managers who want to go a step—or a number of steps—further than that immediate analysis, a new tool offers a way to do fast, cheap, sophisticated analysis of a speech, or any other communication effort.

Veteran speechwriter David Henry has created Calibratedcomm.com, a new Web site launched in February that allows speechwriters to type in all the basic data about a speech and

within a few hours, get a 15-page report full of charts and graphs and a number of calculations on the fiscal success of the speech. All for less than \$1,000.

Henry says the idea was born out of frustration during his long tenures in employee communications at Coca-Cola and as a speechwriter at Home Depot: "Sitting in task force meetings" where big communication plans are made, but then, "nothing happens, and hopes are dashed."

The tool he created to prevent dashed hopes is specifically designed for one purpose, as its name would suggest: to help communicators "calibrate" the various elements of a communication program: source, message, medium, delivery, timing.

After running a hypothetical speech through the program, *SN* concluded the following about Calibratedcomm.com: It takes a while to figure out what exactly this measurement tool is actually getting at. The idea of "calibrating" all these disparate but related elements of communication is hard to get one's mind around.

But the exercise of putting all this data in, and analyzing the results did help us understand more about the strengths and weaknesses of our hypo-

thetical speech from a strategic communication perspective. Too, it seemed to us that the more we used this program, the better a grasp we'd have on it.

The other good news is that the man behind the Measurement Robot, David Henry, is willing to help and warm to deal with. He says the Web site does not require his participation to generate the reports, but he intends to review every project that comes through Calibrated.com, just so he can "add some value" to the process.

Henry agrees that the more one uses Calibrated.com, the more value one gets out of it; which is why his pricing structure gives a break to communicators who buy a package of 10 reports, rather than paying for just one.

Used regularly, Henry says his site "will not replace the thinking or the judgment of a communicator. It will not make your decisions for you, but it will help you make the right decisions."

Reach David Henry through the Web site: www.calibratedcomm.com.

Are CEOs better to write for than politicians?

■ Not necessarily.

But it's important to find someone who has something to say—and understands the audience.

At the recent Speechwriter's Conference, freelancer Liz Mitchell expressed her preference for writing for corporate executives who have a lot to say but don't know how to say it, as opposed to politicians, who have nothing to say, but know how to say it beautifully.

Mitchell's remark pissed off one attendee mightily. "I work for a politician," she told me with an angry, shaking voice. "Your speakers should be more aware of their audience."

Well, sure, Ms. Totally Oversensitive Speechwriter, I suppose they should.

But Mitchell's comment stuck in my craw, too. The more I thought about it, the more I wondered: *Do* corporate people have more to say than politicians, and *are* they more rewarding to work for?

A recent primary for the Illinois Senate race sure suggested otherwise. A Democratic candidate named Blair Hull, who made a fortune as a securities trader and then dropped about \$30 million into his bid for the Senate, came up woefully short in his bid—this, despite leading in the polls by a huge margin just weeks before the March vote.

What went wrong? Hull was a businessman and not a politician, that's what went wrong—a businessman in the worst sense of that word.

• **Emotionally retarded.** The first thing that went wrong for Hull was that the press (at the prodding, no doubt, of Hull's opponents) pried into Hull's messy divorce, eventually forcing the records open. The records themselves were ugly enough, revealing that Hull called his wife the c-word and once hit her on the shin. Hull's response was even uglier—he took out an ad in the paper, explaining at length that the restraining order his ex-wife took out on him was just a ploy on her part to get more money out of him. You can imagine how that looked. Why couldn't Hull imagine it? Because businessmen generally don't have great imaginations.

• **Insensitive.** Another Hull tactic that any politician would have known better than to pull: He got a bunch of mutual friends of his and his ex-wife's to talk at a press conference about how she had screwed Hull during the divorce. How, then, do you think the public reacted to his ex-wife's inevitable public statement of hurt?

Essentially, she said, I expected lots of nasty stuff to come out about our divorce, but I didn't expect to hear that nasty stuff from my ex-lover and friend, Blair Hull. Knock-out.

• **Incapable of introspection.**

And finally, a more subtle but perhaps more telling mistake on Hull's part. When it was discovered that the hot new politician hadn't registered to vote until 1995 and had voted infrequently since then, *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Mark Brown asked him to explain his apparently sudden political awareness. "I clearly was busy," Hull said. "I clearly was struggling to build a business, but there's no excuse for not voting."

Brown responded in his column: "I really wasn't looking for excuses, but I thought there might be reasons: something to explain the personal transformation that would take a nonvoter and make him a potential national leader, something to dispel my notion that this is just another rich guy who sold his company and got bored and now wants a new mountain to climb."

But of course, that's exactly what Hull was. And it showed. And he lost his lead, and he lost the Democratic primary race, to Barack Obama, a life-long politician.

Worse for corporate speechwriters, though, they still have to work for guys like Hull, guys who believe they're simply too "busy" to participate in society, who believe it's enough to spend one's days and nights thinking about making money, who believe business is separate from society—and, ultimately, above it. And who just don't know any better.

To do successful and rewarding work, a speechwriter must find that rare person—whether politician or businessperson—who has something interesting to say, and who has at least a remote understanding of the audience to which he or she would like to say it.

David Murray is editor of *Speechwriter's Newsletter*.

Case Study: How to carry a corporate message abroad

■ In a speech that was simultaneously translated in Japanese, Karen Katen, president of Pfizer Global Pharmaceuticals addressed the “Tectonics of Globalism” at the Nikkei Global Management Forum in Tokyo on Oct. 20, 2003. For background on the making of this speech, see the cover story.

Thank you, Nakamura-san, for that kind introduction—and good afternoon, everyone!

On behalf of Pfizer, I appreciate the complimentary description of our stature and accomplishments, especially coming from such a distinguished source as our host, Nikkei.

Nikkei has built a reputation for speaking with clarity, insight and authority, so Nakamura-san, I want to say to you: Your kind words have special meaning.

And to all you distinguished guests here today, let me say I stand in your capitol city with admiration. I can try to express it with one word: *Subarashii!*

No other great city has so deeply transformed itself in such a short time. Looking out over the towering skylines of Shinjuku, Roppongi, Marunouchi, Shinagawa and more, it's hard to imagine that when most of us were children, their landmark structures would not have been possible—or even legal.

Because as the Hokkaido earthquake last month reminds us, we stand here on shifting rock. And for years, the strategy of city planners was to build low to the ground for protection.

In fact, when Pfizer first came to this city a half-century ago, except for Tokyo Tower the city was one vast, low-lying warren that stretched out forever, with no distinguishing heights.

But innovation has changed that. Today's graceful skyscrapers soar safely into the Tokyo sky because their strength comes from resiliency—not rigidity.

In significant ways, that describes the ideal modern corporation, too: Resilient, not resistant, to the shockwaves of change.

Unfortunately, resistance is natural but resilience takes work. That's why the average lifespan of a company making the *Fortune* 50 list is 40 short years.

So the question confronts us: How do leaders overcome the natural tendency to build inflexible structures?

It's not easy. It takes vision. It takes planning. It takes a very long view. And maybe hardest of all, it takes pushing for change when everything seems just fine.

Nikkei asked me to join you and share a few thoughts on leading commerce through change. And a good starting point is embracing the fact that business today stands on shifting rock. When everything changes, the spirit that wins is the spirit of restless invention.

Throughout our 154 years at Pfizer, we've made a point to borrow that spirit from the science side of our business and apply it to our structures and

strategies, too. We do this because of what you might call a “Ring of Fire” that shifts business assumptions underfoot every day.

What do I mean? Well, deep beneath Tokyo are tectonics of drifting geological plates that collide along faults that stretch in a horseshoe from Tasmania to Peru. They produced the Nagano Alps and the California Sierras. In Japan, you call the arc the “Pacific Rim Volcano Belt.” Western geologists call it the “Ring of Fire” because of the volcanoes and earthquakes it causes.

There's a Ring of Fire with shifting tectonics underlying modern business, too. It's called globalization—cultures and markets are drifting closer together. We share the common language of digital code, and are drawn toward each other through mass technologies that speak it: Information. Communication. Transportation. Production.

But when cultures drift together and collide because of the global market, the shockwaves can be disruptive to business. Radically different local procedures and markets can't be forced into a convenient world template. ...

But regardless what the particular shockwaves of change might be in a culture, we all have choices in how to deal with it. For corporations, one popular strategy is to disaggregate—get smaller, get more nimble—and find partners for scale.

This is the best strategy for some. Small size can help. But it can hurt, too.

The pharmaceutical industry, for instance, demands intense capital investment. In fact, it's the most research-intensive major industry in the world. Medicinal discovery costs a lot—the industry spends well over 3 trillion yen on R&D every year. What comes of all that research? Well, one in roughly 15,000 product ideas actually makes it to market. And the one that survives costs roughly 90 billion yen to develop before it reaches patients—on a journey that averages 14 years.

This has not been a business for the small or impatient.

In fact, patience is a strategic resource—and takes deep financial resources to deploy. And the daunting cost of creating new medicines means we need global scale for efficiency and productivity—certainly scale is one reason we acquired Pharmacia this year.

But size can be a double-edged sword when you address a global market. Yes, the old business model for so-called “big pharma”—large and fully integrated—has offered a stream of new therapies for generations. But even successful models have to adapt.

And yes, Pfizer's model has been successful. But even a company our size embraces strategic alliances—careful partnering decisions that help us spread R&D costs and speed products to local markets.

Changing to thrive in a global market reminds me of an unusual decision a few years ago by a large and powerful American football star named Herschel Walker. He chose to spend his training time by dancing with a ballet company. This was amazing to a lot of sports fans—it was like trying to imagine the great sumo wrestler Konishiki in a tutu.

But his thinking was good. He said, "I have to use a completely different set of muscles when I dance." He believed the flexibility he learned from ballet made him a better football player.

Well, the pharmaceutical industry is learning a different dance, too—and it requires a new set of muscles, developed through footwork with others instead of simple brute strength. ...

First is to redefine leadership. In some ways, new leadership traits represent anti-establishment virtues. This can make them seem unnatural to institutionalize. Still, it's important to try, and at Pfizer, we express them as a half-dozen behaviors we try very hard to encourage.

To start, we focus on performance. This means results count. Leadership is action, not position, and we like to get things done.

Next, we try to create an inclusive environment—to solicit diverse opinions, backgrounds and perspectives.

Then, we try to engage in open debate. We believe the electricity generated by various opinions is more valuable than the insulation of sameness.

We then try to recognize change as an ally, and do our best to manage it—by resisting the strong human drive to find comfort in the status quo.

Next, we strive to develop people—first by looking for individual talent more than standardized functional skills, and then cross-training that talent over geographic and functional borders.

And finally, we try to align across the company, which means we deploy problem-solving teams through a flexible matrix, not a traditional command-and-control bureaucracy.

Of course we're not perfect. These are ideals. But I believe they apply to leading a team, leading an organization or leading an entire industry.

The second principle is to design transformational change before it redesigns you. ...

The third principle is to find lessons in failure. ...

The fourth principle is to prepare for unintended consequences. I was amused to find out which major world highway has the lowest average actual speed—the Autobahn in Europe, famous because it has no speed limit. It has the slowest average speed because its huge, multilane accidents stop traffic for hours.

There are two lessons here. One is that regulation should speed the journey. And two is to beware the unintended consequences of policy decisions.

The pharmaceutical industry is heavily regulated, and that serves a purpose, of course. We're dealing with life-and-death issues, and there's no room for mistakes or misconduct.

But as the great move toward market liberalization transforms customer expectations of other industries—like air travel, financial services and telecommunications—pharmaceuticals can be caught in the middle, because price gets the most attention.

Proper pricing of course considers supply and demand. That's why partial deregulation doesn't work—ask the state of California what a deregulated demand side and a regulated supply side have done to the energy market.

We feel that dilemma. On one hand we deal with customers who want the familiar high level of innovation, safety and performance from a steady stream of new miracle medicines they've grown to expect.

But those same customers can make conflicting demands. They not only want the best available medicines, but they want them at the lowest prices. And who can blame them?

But in the long run, those demands can have consequences. The poet Issa wrote, "Smoking out mosquitoes. Soon the fireflies are gone, too."

It would be a sad day indeed if the fireflies of new medical wonders were nowhere to be seen because of artificial manipulation of market laws.

That's why the *fifth and final principle* of riding the ring is so important. It is to *educate the public through direct communication.*

One great tectonic shift in our world is the power of mass communication. But is it really communication? That word implies two-way dialogue, and almost all mass media flows only one way.

On the Internet in particular, unchallenged misinformation circles the globe with more efficiency than truth. So responding becomes a central management concern...

That's why we have a duty to stakeholders to communicate quickly and deliberately—to counter the hostile voices raised unfairly against global businesses.

In pharmaceuticals, an especially agitated outcry concerns the cost of prescription medicines.

While we believe that pricing structures should be a local matter, pharmaceuticals are a global business. Local markets that want to share in its benefits must come to grips with that fact, and the larger worldview it suggests. ...

And our value to people lies in this simple idea: *Making sure that people have affordable access to medicines they need when they need them.*

That's a complex equation that involves not just medical care, but also insurance, public policy and governments' views. When it works well, we call it integrated health care, and one characteristic we've noticed about it is this: Regardless of local market peculiarities, the best long-term interests of public health are always served if policy helps stimulate innovation—not suppress it.

We believe the debate that shapes such a policy should include a broad chorus of voices.

It's important to listen and talk to all the various stakeholders affected by decisions on healthcare.

This lesson applies not just to healthcare but to all sorts of business. Commerce exists with public permission, so management needs to learn to listen more closely and to speak more clearly.

* * *

I began my remarks by describing the ring of fire that makes the earth shake beneath us.

What exactly is the force it exerts? It's pressure.

Well, the pressure that makes mountains and rivers also makes diamonds. ...

We feel pressure from the new tectonics—just like you do. Our pressures include the duty to push forward with newer and better medicines—and just as important, the pressure to make sure they don't exist in a vacuum, but instead within reach and the means of those who need them.

But we'll take the pressure. We'll take it gladly, and apply it to progress ... because we're in the business of producing jewels for life, and putting them in everyone's reach.

Reading Writing Effective Speeches like having drink with author

■ Conversational, anecdotal book covers not only how to write speeches, but also how to think and feel about writing speeches.

Sometimes, knowing the author of a book ruins the reading for you; the personal familiarity makes the book seem somehow, something less.

In the case of the newly released revised and updated *Writing Effective Speeches* (\$16.95, Reed Business Press) we suspect our long friendship with Henry Ehrlich made the book a special pleasure to read.

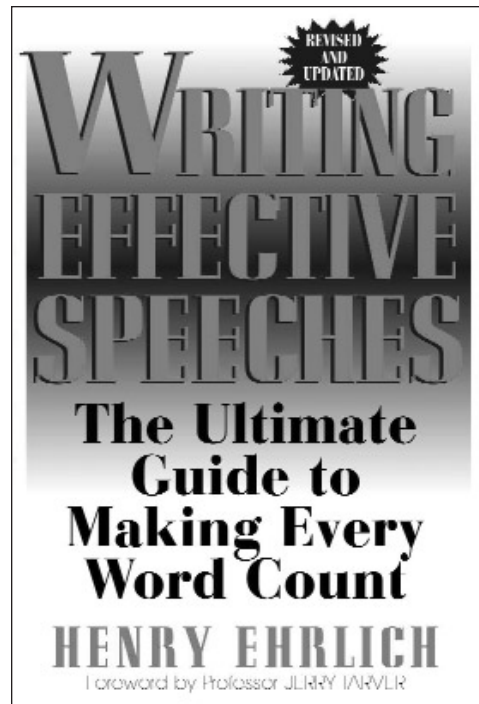
The thing about Ehrlich is that in the many years we've known him—coincidentally, since about the time *Writing Effective Speeches* was originally published, in 1992—he has never made any attempt to hide his morality, his anger, even his insecurities. To read his revised book, we were happy to find that the longtime speechwriter hasn't been chastened one bit over the years.

Why would a book on speechwriting contain such emotions? Because his life in speechwriting—his life in modern America—makes Ehrlich emotional. As it does most of us.

This book is peppered with candid speechwriting war stories, some of which end in victory—"I had the last laugh," Ehrlich writes at the end of one anecdote about an approval process. Others end in defeat; as Ehrlich concludes one section, "Be prepared for the committee. It's undignified, but it's also a fact of life. Lie back and think of the paycheck."

After all these years as a corporate speechwriter and a freelancer, Ehrlich knows how to deal emotionally and intellectually with the maddening, often irrational mess that is the speechwriting job: "Remember that the final product frequently bears little resemblance to your first draft. People who don't know any better think that the writer has done his work well only if a speech survives largely from first draft to delivery. The need for substantial revision may lower the speaker's esteem for the writer, and vice versa. But writing a speech is a collaboration. Don't forget the terror of the blank page. You are doing your work if you spare your speaker that discomfiting experience and give him ideas that catalyze what he really thinks about the subject. He may come back from a weekend at his country house with a product that bears no resemblance to what you gave him—or indeed, no resemblance to what you thought he asked for—but you have done your job."

As you'll see from some of the excerpts on the next page, *Writing Effective Speeches* is full of passages like this—insights that could come only from years of writing speeches for



many different clients, and from never denying the honest pain of it all.

Not that the thrust of the book is the author's psychic ruminations. To the contrary, this is an instructional book, built with many nuts and bolts: How to use quotations, images, metaphors, statistics, humor. How to structure a speech, deal with PowerPoint, coach your speaker. How to handle special kinds of speeches, like ceremonial talks and employee pep rallies.

But Ehrlich's writing style is the same as his conversational style: He doesn't bother to separate his intellect and his emotional life from his work. And so even Ehrlich's most practical chapters are fun to read. The sample speech excerpts, and quotes and anecdotes he offers are all worth reading. But it's his observations that make this book special.

For example, in a section on interviewing speakers, Ehrlich writes, "Don't expect your speakers to volunteer much about their own insights and experience in your research interviews, especially when you are writing about a somewhat arcane topic. People keep their lives compartmentalized and they might not associate anything about the speech with anything personal."

So true.

But Henry Ehrlich is not one of those people, and as a result, his book—like the pints of Guinness we shared with him at the last Speechwriter's Conference—is both delicious, and good for you.

Avoiding speech clichés

... Clichés can't be fresh, but they can be used in fresh ways.

A bad speechwriter will use a line like "As Calvin Coolidge said, 'The business of America is business.' That's as true today as it was some 80 years ago.

A good writer will say, "Calvin Coolidge once said that the business of America is business. That was a long time ago. Today, the business of America is downsizing, outsourcing, globalizing and cooking the books long enough to cash out your stock options at an obscene profit.

A bad writer will say, "As Shakespeare wrote, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be.' Time has borne out the wisdom of those words."

A good writer will say, "When Polonius counseled Laertes, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be,' those were the only alternatives. Had Shakespeare been writing today, he might have said neither an issuer nor an investor nor a structured finance specialist be."

What the speechwriter does

Like a lot of the speeches they compose, speechwriters usually sound wiser than they are. In this book, the ideas contained in the illustrations are unimportant in themselves, so don't hold them up to deep scrutiny. ... If they have the ring of truth, that's enough. That's the game. That's what you're getting paid for.

How to (and how not to) emphasize your points

If you're working hard, say you're working hard. Don't say you're working "intensely." If you have finished a project ahead of schedule, say you've beaten the deadline, don't say it's a "rapid achievement."

You don't add to anyone's appreciation of your performance by sounding as though you're proud of it. Let the recitation of ideas and facts convince them of your authority. Adjectives, adverbs and modifying phrases can't do it. Give them benchmarks.

"I hit 54 home runs in 1920, an extraordinary accomplishment." This means little to an audience that only knows about contemporary, steroid-based baseball, where players hit 60 or 70 homers routinely. ... Say instead, "I hit 29 homers in 1919, a new record, and then broke it the following year with 54. Before that, only one other batter had ever hit as many as 21."

A basic speech structure

Break your speech down as follows:

One minute of "throat clearing."

This is a way of getting your speaker accustomed to being up in front of his audience, acknowledging the occasion, the audience, the agenda, the time of day and otherwise dealing with the speaker's butterflies.

Two minutes of "joke." Make 'em laugh, if you can, with a joke, an anecdote or quotation to rope them in, and launch your theme.

Fourteen minutes to make the meat of your argument with maybe three-to-four minutes on each of four key points.

Two-to-three minutes to sum up.

On speaker coaches' exercises

I must confess that I blanch at the thought of actually doing one of these warmups, which is probably one reason why I write speeches but very rarely give them.

I will say two things in favor of such regimes, however:

1. Having watched three births that used the Lamaze method, I believe all the puffing and blowing doesn't make childbirth any less painful for the mother. But it does give her something to think about while waiting for the pain to end. Such exercises probably have a similar effect on speakers who follow them.

2. If you're not embarrassed to do these things while you're waiting to go on, you probably won't be embarrassed delivering your speech, either, which will make it a better speech.

On the importance of written text

Some speech coaches suggest that all speakers abandon the written text, and use, instead, visual cues and pictures to help them through a presentation. They feel that the ingenuousness and spontaneity of such a performance more than compensates for the stilted perfection of a script-bound writer. But much to the relief of all of us pro speechwriters, plenty of speakers need us. And furthermore, as one PR maven pointed out, "If one picture is worth a thousand words, draw me the Gettysburg Address."

Speechwriting News You Can Use

Speechwriter and international spy?

That's exactly what Susan P. Lindauer is accused of being. A 40-year-old speechwriter to several Democratic members of the U.S. Congress and Sen. Carol Mosely Braun (D-Ill.), Lindauer stands accused of trying to spy for Iraq.

The FBI charges that she accepted \$10,000 "for working for Iraqi intelligence from 1999 to 2002, including payments for meals and trips to the Iraqi Mission to the United Nations in New York and a trip to Baghdad, as a guest of the intelligence agency, from Feb. 23 until March 7, 2002," according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

She faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

Beyond that, the story at press time amounted to former colleagues and neighbors commenting on her character. One D.C.-area neighbor told *The New York Times* that Lindauer was amiable but awkward: "She seemed too timid to do something like this."

SN will follow the story.

Once again this year, a journalist pointed out how strange it is that actors don't hire speechwriters for their Oscar acceptance speeches at the Academy Awards. This year, it was the *Chicago Tribune's* Alison Neumer who wrote: "Obvious, yes, but it always puzzles me. Between the personal trainers, dietitians, stylists, language

coaches and acting teachers, a starlet can't afford a speechwriter?"

As former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan advised in another *Trib* story before the 1997 Oscars, "Thank the five-to-seven most important people, who played the biggest role in getting you there, but don't thank more than five to seven. When you thank more, that is not graciousness, but boorishness."

Sadly, we saw a lot of the latter again this year.

Speechwriter Ted Drury is dead at 77.

After a long stint in journalism, he wrote speeches for S. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) and later at the National Science Foundation.

Speechwriter David Miller is dead at 39, of cancer.

He headed the government affairs arm of the firm he founded, AfricaGlobal, serving as both speechwriter and lobbyist.

Who can relate? "I used to joke that, when it was time to write a State of the Union address, they would give me a round keyboard so everyone at the table could type." —former Clinton speechwriter Michael Waldman.

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