



ORGANIZING SPEECHES

By Milo Shapiro, www.improventures.com

There's a common three-part speech structure that says:

"(1) Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em;

(2) tell what you gotta tell 'em;

(3) tell 'em what you told 'em."

On the surface, this *is* an adequate way to put a program together, but does it sound exciting at all? I'd bet not!

This antiquated formula can make any professional look dull, and even intentionally causes us to repeat ourselves! If our speaker-led programs are dry, we start to feel the resistance, watch attendance drop, and see the doodling start.

I call the structure that I recommend instead to my coaching clients **Milo's Four Steps to Successful Speech Structure**. It is fun to create, interesting to hear, and still feels organized.

- 1) **Capture**. Open with a story that you will relate to the material to come. It should be inherently interesting, whether or not it is immediately obvious why it connects to the topic of the day.
- 2) **Transition**. Provide a few sentences that make it clear what the connection is between your story and your main topic. If your "capture story" ends with a lesson learned (either positively or by making it clear what went wrong), you may find it easier to write your transition.
- 3) **Body**. This is the meat of your presentation. Now that you've gotten them interested and shown what you'll be talking about, present what they've come to learn.
- 4) **Capper**. It's my belief that if you've done the "Body" well, there's no reason to "tell 'em what you've told 'em." Instead, leave them with a final thought or story that ties nicely to what you've said, inspiring them or supporting your material.

Then end on a simple "thank you" to show that you valued their time.

Some clients have been concerned that their serious, in-house programs can't fit this structure – like giving a sales report to co-workers. Inevitably, I show clients that it can work; the first two steps are just greatly shortened and the body is a greater percentage of the time.

This structure works well to help you frame the overall presentation; sometimes just knowing which section you are working on can get you "unstuck" from feeling that you don't know where to begin.

Milo is the as "The Improv Guy" and the CEO (Chief Energy Officer) of ImproVentures. He is the author of "Public Speaking: Get A's Not Zzzzz's"

See more about coaching keynotes and training about public speaking at www.publicdynamics.com