

Public Speaking Is Part of the Job

HOW do you rate as a public speaker? Can you stand on your feet and talk to a group of people easily and convincingly? Or are you scared to death at the thought of giving a talk before even a small group? It may comfort you to know that many experienced speakers get “butterflies” before beginning to talk. Almost every speaker has dreaded public speaking at first and has had to work at doing a good job.

You'll find that the ability to talk easily to a group of people plays an important part in the recognition and success of a person in business. In fact, being able to speak in public is so important that many companies urge promising employees to take courses in public speaking. But, to become proficient, you must take every opportunity to practice. You'll find it pays to accept opportunities to talk to small club and church groups so that when an important occasion arises you are ready to do a professional job. There is nothing so helpful as practice to overcome fear of talking to a group. Each time you give a talk, you will gain confidence.

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The business woman who can express her ideas clearly in terms others can understand will gain recognition as a leader. The ability to write well is important, but, often in the business world, speeches, articles, and books are written by ghost writers who take the ideas of the specialist and turn them out in readable form. In public speaking, you, the person, impress the audience not only by what you say, but how you say it.

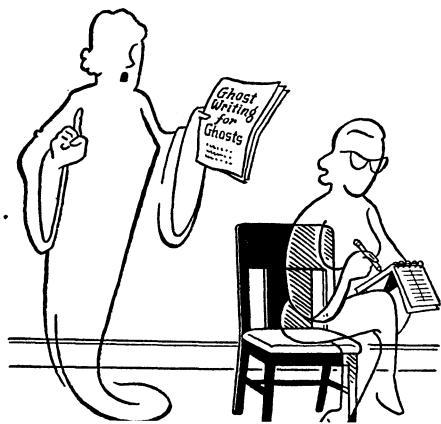
In public speaking, success depends on your ability to:

- Get the attention of the audience by your appearance, voice, and opening remarks.
- Gain the confidence of the group because you know what you want to say and say it.
- Create interest by keying your talk to the understanding and interest of the audience.
- Show your enthusiasm in actions and words.
- Hold attention by developing a main idea with illustrations and supplementary ideas.
- Build acceptance by your friendly attitude and your way of seeming to talk with each person.
- Crystallize your ideas into a clear unit which can be used in some way by each person in the group.
- Establish good public relations for your company.

Get Attention

Your appearance, your voice, and your opening remarks should get the attention of your audience.

Pay special heed to your appearance when you are to talk to any group of people. Dress becomingly and suitably for the occasion. When people have to sit and look at you, be sure that you present an interesting picture. Beware of distracting features such as a wobbling feather on a hat, large, dangling earrings, a low-cut neckline, or startling colors. Both men and women are affected by your appearance and judge your common sense by the way you dress for the platform. Most of us form snap judgment of a speaker during the first few minutes. If our opinion is negative, the speaker must be very good indeed to change that opinion.



Ghost writers turn out the information in readable form.

The length of your skirt, the hang of the hemline, the appropriateness of your shoes, the becomingness of your hat are judged. Yes, from tip to toe you are on review. *Look your best.* Then you can be at ease, forget yourself, and pay full attention to your message.

Your voice may invite confidence or antagonize an audience. First of all, *be sure* you can be heard. Nothing is more irritating than the small voice that reaches the first row only and leaves those farther back thoroughly bored because they can't hear. Equally bad is the booming voice that pierces the ear drums and vibrates through the room. This is apt to be the case when a microphone is used. Watch your audience and you can tell by their reactions whether you are pitching your voice right. Your voice and manner of presentation will create a definite feeling of friendly acceptance, indifference, or actual antagonism.

Your first sentence should give the audience a capsule presentation of what you intend to say, and your opening remarks should set the stage for your talk.

Your opening remarks are important. Here you should analyze the purpose of your talk and project the purpose in a condensed clear-cut statement. Learn these introductory remarks and do not deviate or ramble by injecting some spur-of-the-moment ideas. How many times have you been bored by a speaker who tried to tell a joke, or commented on the audience or on personal experiences, and so rambled on and on? Didn't you wonder if that speaker really had anything important to say?

What a feeling of confidence and anticipation is engendered when a speaker states easily and effectively the purpose or main theme of the discussion and then proceeds to develop that theme.

Gain Confidence

You can gain the confidence of the audience if you know what you want to say and say it. Whether your talk is for five minutes or an hour, organize your presentation so that the audience recognizes you as an authority. Don't apologize, hesitate, or show diffidence in expressing your opinion. If you aren't qualified to speak, by all means don't accept the appointment.

Create Interest

Create interest in your subject by keying your remarks to the understanding and interests of your audience. This necessitates a pre-understanding of the type of group you are to address, their interests, and the purpose of the meeting. Think of the many times you have lost interest in a speaker who used illustrations that did not apply to the audience. You felt as if you were hearing a "canned" talk, and you were irritated, embarrassed, or bored by the whole thing.

Know your audience and talk *with* them not *at* them. Bring them into your talk so that each one feels your remarks are addressed to her. Remember the importance of *you* and minimize the use of *I*. Avoid technical words that have no meaning to a group, but do not resort to simplification that belittles the intelligence of the audience.

Show Enthusiasm

Show enthusiasm for your subject. Emerson expressed the importance of enthusiasm when he wrote, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." Let your facial expression, your voice, and your words show that you are enthusiastic. This enthusiasm is easier to express when you talk, instead of read, your remarks. For this very reason, you are more sure of holding the attention of the group and of spreading your enthusiasm, if you speak freely on your subject. You may use notes to outline your talk. In fact, your audience will feel more at ease if you refer to notes than if you hesitate and fumble. Scientific papers are usually read, but even these should be presented with natural enthusiasm.

Needless to say, supersalesmanship and high-pressure enthusiasm may amuse rather than impress an audience. Don't try to overact or oversell. The audience should feel that you are sincere in your enthusiasm.

Hold Attention

Hold the attention of your audience by a logical, well-planned development of your idea. The title of your talk was expanded

into a theme in your opening remarks. The main part of your talk should further expand this theme and give proof or reasons for your opinions. Do not try to develop too many unrelated ideas. Plan your talk as a unit, with every point related to the general theme so that you strengthen and enlarge the central idea. A variety of illustrations may appeal to different members of the group and, thus, make the connection between your idea and their own experiences or interests. In this way, the body of your talk clarifies your theme and passes on some thought that will be helpful to each one who hears you.

Build Acceptance

Build acceptance and understanding by your friendly attitude. Be sure you do not talk over the heads of the audience or talk down to them. Take your audience into your circle of friends and make them feel that you have their interest at heart.

Summarize

Summarize your presentation by drawing together the points of your talk. Then you will leave your audience with a clear-cut picture of your idea-theme which can be applied in some way to the interest and actions of each one in the group.

Public Relations

Throughout your entire talk remember that, as an employee, your number one job is to cause your audience to have an enhanced opinion of you and your company.

Whatever the occasion or the type of talk, you will need to consider how you can get the attention of your audience, gain their confidence, create interest, show your enthusiasm, hold their attention, build acceptance, crystallize your ideas, and establish good public relations.

Radio Talks

When you are invited to speak on a radio program, you assume the responsibility to put on a good performance—one that will



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be of interest to the type of audience that usually listens to that program.

Many business positions will give you an opportunity to participate as a guest speaker on some radio program. A radio talk reaches a large audience and influences a great many people, either favorably or unfavorably, toward your company. Isn't it worth your time to prepare for such an important occasion?

Your voice is your most important asset in putting across your message. An attractive voice will hold your listeners. Even an interesting message given in an unattractive voice is apt to lose the audience. These unseen people can turn the dial to another station without warning the speaker. Your audience doesn't have to listen. Your voice and your message must hold them.

Since your voice on the air expresses your personality, the quality and use of the voice become important in all radio talks. Wouldn't it be wise to do everything you can to develop a good speaking voice and to use all the techniques at your command?

Breathing Techniques

Breathing technique can make or break a radio voice. By learning correct breathing you can sustain your voice, use it emphatically, project it, control it, and give it flexibility and interesting variety.

Correct breathing is full-chested breathing from the diaphragm so that all available air space is utilized. This prevents "gasp" breathing and irregular pauses to take a breath.

Do you breathe correctly? Place your hand just above your abdomen, crosswise of your body, immediately below your ribs. Now breathe in and out. Your hand should move out and in with each inhalation and exhalation. If not, you have work to do to improve your breathing habits and to make your voice effective.

Try this exercise. Lie down on your back on the floor. Breathe deeply. Now place a heavy book just below your ribs in the center



of your body. Make the book move up and down with each breath. Add another book and another to strengthen your diaphragm. Keep at the exercise every day until you have full use of all the air space in your chest. Every great singer and actor has mastered this deep breathing, along with the ability to control a maximum of air capacity and thus give the voice full range and volume.

When you have controlled breathing, you will be able to master these important phases of broadcasting: (1) controlled level of voice; (2) natural phrasing or the division of sentences into easily read and understood phrases; and (3) strong sentence ending.

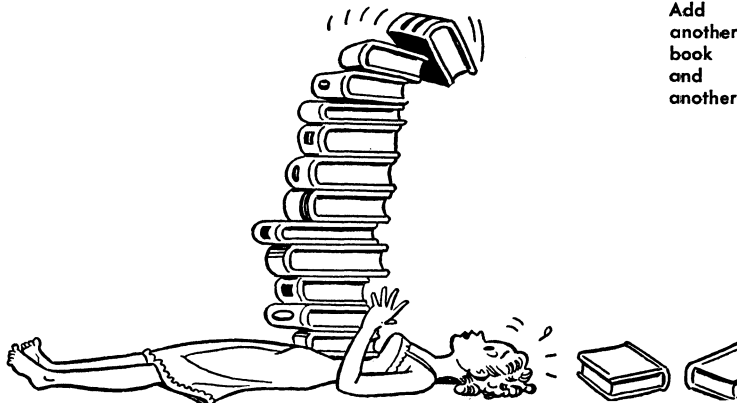
Controlled Level of Voice

Before the broadcast, the engineer will ask you to talk into the microphone so he can adjust his control to the level (strength and pitch) of your voice. Just before the broadcast relax your shoulders, chest, jaw, neck muscles, and abdomen. Then, take less than a full breath, smile, and you are on the air. With this technique, you will not explode your first word or crack or stutter into a beginning.

During the broadcast, breathe naturally. Keep your voice smiling! Talk to a person, not to a vast audience. Remember to keep the position in which your voice was tested. Don't lean closer or draw back, and don't weave from side to side. The engineer will do his best for you, but you must cooperate and keep your test position.

Natural Phrasing

Proper phrasing is dependent on breath control. Take a tip from the best radio announcers and go over your script several times in advance of the broadcast. Read aloud and notice where the natural pause comes. Punctuation should indicate a pause, but it is wise to mark the



script to show pauses and to underscore the words that need emphasis. Reread the script to see if these marks make your talk sound conversational rather than preachy. Be sure you have a complete thought in each phrase so that your sentences are not chopped into meaningless segments.

Sentence Ending

The sentence ending is important. If you have good breath control, you will not *run down* at the end of a sentence. Have you ever heard a speaker who dropped her voice so that you were never sure of her last words?

Remember that the *punch* of most sentences is contained in the last few words. Be sure to have enough breath to give the punch!

Tone Control

Tone control is important also in a pleasing radio voice. Be careful that your nervous tension before the mike does not cause you to pitch your voice so high that it sounds weak and immature. If you relax, you are more apt to keep your voice in a low, pleasing register. If possible, have a recording made of your voice so you can hear it and criticize it honestly. Would you like to listen to such a voice?

Enunciation

Careful enunciation and a normal rate of speech also are important in radio work. Slurred words and dropped endings such as "g" and "ing" are slovenly habits. An average rate of speaking is 150 words per minute but 175 may be natural for you.

Pronunciation

Correct pronunciation of words is essential. Some listeners are sure to have a dictionary and consult it if you mispronounce a word. A radio speaker is supposed to speak correctly.

The Smiling Voice

The conversational tone sounds friendly and is one of the most essential and effective of all speech techniques. Can you

read, and sound as if you are not reading? Can you make each listener think you are chatting with her? Practice the *smiling voice*. This means you should smile when you talk. Even when there is a radio audience, even when your knees are shaking, smile so that your voice reflects a warmer, more friendly you.

Don't be afraid to pause as you do in talking to a friend. When a question is asked you in an interview, don't jump in before the question is completed. Take your time.

Voice flexibility makes a more interesting voice. Monotones are dull. A good radio announcer covers a range of tones within a few words. Ask a friend to comment on your radio voice, or, when you listen to a recording of your voice, check your range of tone.

All of these qualities of voice and habits of speech are important in getting and holding the attention of your radio audience. You, your personality, your rating as an authority are judged by how you sound when you are on the air.

Radio Script

If you write your own script, write it as though you were talking, that is, *conversationally*. Read it aloud to see if there are awkward sentences or words that make you stumble. Change these so you can read smoothly. Watch for sounds that you find difficult to say. Does "s" whistle? Do you stumble over "statistics," "specifically," or other words?

Avoid long, rambling sentences. Make your sentences short and clear and use connective words to avoid choppy sentences. Use strong verbs that denote action and omit superfluous adjectives.

Read your script aloud to see if it sounds the way you talk. Is it conversational?

Time your script so that you can give the complete idea in the allotted time. You can play safe by having additional copy to use if time permits.

Keep your method of presentation light rather than heavy. Be careful of jokes unless you can make them sound natural and really funny.

Plan for the Script

As to a plan for the script, follow the established rules for all talks:

Know what you want to say and to whom you are talking.

Give a brief statement of the purpose of your talk. Then enlarge on and illustrate your points.

Build up one idea rather than attempt to introduce several unrelated ideas.

Finally, summarize so that the audience grasps the main features of your idea.

The Format for the Script

Use 8½ x 11-inch plain paper, typewrite the script, and double-space. Soft paper is less crackly than stiff paper. Leave a wide left-hand margin for the name of the person giving each separate speech. Staple the corners together, but tear them off just before the broadcast. Then you can drop a page on the floor as you read it. Number the pages and check the sequence before you begin.

The Prepared Script

If someone writes a script for you, provide an outline of what you want to say. Be sure to read the script. Change the phrases to sound like you and delete words that are hard for you to say. Then check the content because you must assume the responsibility for the talk you give over the air.

Ad Lib

Ad lib programs require experience and skill to be effective and interesting. You should take time to make an outline or notes so that you give a logical talk. If you are asked to take part in an interview, have questions prepared for the person who is to do the interviewing. Go over these questions with her so that you both understand the plan of the



Number the pages and check the sequence before you begin.

program. If there is a subject which you do not wish to discuss, as price, regulatory laws, etc., tell the interviewer. Then you won't have to avoid a question when you are on the air.

When the interview begins, answer personal questions briefly so that there will be time to give your particular message. Watch the clock and plan the length of your answers to cover your subject. Avoid any statement that will embarrass the interviewer or antagonize the listening audience.

Radio Etiquette

When you are invited to be on a radio program, be sure you know the name of the station, the address, the name of the announcer or person who conducts this program, the time and the type of program.

Acknowledge the appointment by letter or telephone. If you are traveling, telephone the station to let the program director know you are in the city, and to verify the time and the address.

Arrive about 30 minutes before the program or at the time designated by the announcer.

Take two copies of your script if you are to read it, or have two copies of your interview outline and a set of leading questions or well-planned notes.

Discuss with the announcer your part of the program, policies concerning the use of trade names, the time of your part on the program, and other details. Know what you can and cannot do. Can you offer booklets? Should requests be sent to you or the station? Know the rules and abide by them.

The announcer or engineer will tell you whether you are to stand or sit for the interview. Most likely, he will check your voice to know what volume is necessary for the particular microphones. Then you will wait quietly until your turn to come to the microphone.

Watch for the sign, "On the Air."

Do not rustle papers or make unnecessary noise. If, during your talk, you must cough, turn your head and cover your mouth. Say "Pardon me," and go on.

If you choke up, turn your head, take a deep breath, and be careful to prevent an exploding word.

If you fluff a word, don't be alarmed. Even the best speakers fluff at times. Either ignore it or say, "that is to say . . ." or "I meant to say. . . ." Be at ease and don't let a fumbled word upset you.

Watch for the signals of the announcer or program director. A circular motion of the hand means *speed up*. A stretching motion with both hands means *slow down*. A cutting motion across the throat with one hand means *cut* or *stop*. A circle formed by the thumb and first finger means *okay*.

Watch for the signal that you are off the air before you speak or comment on the show. Don't take a chance on having your unplanned remarks go out over the air.

Thank the announcer and program director and leave the room so that another show may go on. A radio station is a busy place. If you wish to have a recording made of your broadcast, ask the station about this service and the charge. The cost is not large but you should pay for this service.

Television

A television appearance is similar to a talk before a group of people, in that you get and hold the attention of your audience by your appearance, your voice, and your message. You can use notes but these must be disguised so that your reference to them is not obvious. You should give the impression of chatting with each viewer in an informal, friendly fashion. It is true that some

formal speeches are telecast, but it takes an important person with an impressive message to hold the attention of an audience.

Different cameras require different techniques. Some directors insist on rehearsals to time the interview, to get the position for all action and the sequence of this action. Some



Watch for the signals of the announcer or program director.

directors insist on make-up and give definite directions for the type of costume you should wear. Since the audience sees you, you must be relaxed, natural, and friendly. Charts must be large and easy to read. Booklets and other illustrative material must be placed so that the viewers can see them easily.

Timing is more important than in radio work because the cameraman must be able to follow your actions and emphasize certain points with close-up shots.

Your voice must be controlled as in radio broadcasting. Your message should be clear, concise, and keyed to the audience that usually follows the program.

Be gracious and enthusiastic and give the impression that you are a friendly person who has a message to tell and tells it.

Consumer Meetings

Whenever you accept an invitation to give a talk to a group of people, you assume the responsibility to give a message that will, in some way, help each person in the audience. Competition is very great. In radio, television, the theatre, lectures, books, and magazines so many experts speak or write on so many subjects.

Have you something to offer that is new, interesting, useful? In many positions, you have an opportunity to learn about some activity or work that needs telling. If you have a message, you may wish to tell it because this will help to sell a product or because you can give help as a civic service.

Let's see some of the background work that must go into each talk and some of the platform work that is essential for an effective talk.

Basic Background Information

Who is in the group? Is it worthwhile to give the talk to this group? Are their interests such that your message will have meaning? Sometimes a program chairman asks a speaker, in desperation, without thought of profit to the group or to the speaker.

When is the meeting? Will this talk interfere with more important work? Will it take one of your few leisure evenings?

Where is the meeting? Are the facilities adequate to give your

program? Will transportation time and cost make this meeting too expensive?

How long are you to talk? Is this to be a 15-minute talk as one of several speakers or as a fill-in between luncheon and a social hour? Sometimes groups do not consider the value of a speaker's time. They do not mean to be careless, yet they do not always accord to a free speaker the courteous treatment given to a paid speaker. This is ironical, but too often true.

What have you to say? Is your message important? Can you adapt a former talk to this group or must you work up new material?

The *who, when, where, what, why, and how* must be weighed in the light of your work and your company's policies before you decide whether or not an invitation should be accepted.

Thorough Preparation

If you are to give a talk, start early to prepare for it and make a serious effort to give a star performance.

The theme or purpose of the talk is the first consideration. Then, thinking of the type of audience, decide what approach will be best.

After the theme and the approach, next consider the method of dramatization. Will you use illustrative materials, charts, or exhibits? Without some dramatization it is difficult to make a lecture or talk interesting enough to hold the attention of a group.

If you use illustrative materials, are these large enough to be seen, easily handled without awkward motions on your part, and interest-provoking? We live in a dramatic era. People want entertainment along with their education. You will be expected to give your message with a flare and a bit of sugar coating or you may lose your audience.

The plan for the talk should include a strong descriptive introduction, the main presentation with illustrations, then a summary or conclusion.

Learn the introduction, so you don't ramble. Outline the main portion, so you develop the theme logically. Then memorize the conclusion, so that your talk finishes on a strong note and the audience feels the impact of a completed message.

Is your voice good for public speaking? All the suggestions given for radio talks apply to all public speaking. Your voice should have volume to carry, tone qualities to please, and character or range to hold the attention of the audience. If a microphone is to be used, be sure you know how to make the most of this amplifying system. A roar or blur will spoil the best of talks.

If you need notes, ask for a podium. Make arrangements for a good display of your props and personally check your display material.

Give the chairman a written statement to use in introducing you. Include your name, business affiliation, experience, and, of course, the title of your talk.

Platform Technique

If you must sit on the platform, consider how you appear to the group. Don't cross your legs. Do keep your skirt properly arranged. Try to relax, but don't forget you are on review.

When you begin to talk, *smile*. Put the audience at ease by your attitude of confidence and assurance. Acknowledge the introduction briefly, "Thank you, Mrs. Elk." Begin your memorized introduction, and give your whole attention to what you have to say and to the reaction of the group to your message. If you see the proverbial doubter, direct some of your most effective efforts toward her. If you get a smile or nod, you can relax. You have succeeded.

Don't be upset by an interruption or hitch in the use of your props. Laugh at yourself, and your audience will accept you as one of them. People are sometimes critical of the too-efficient expert, but are friendly toward the person who doesn't pretend to know all the answers. A bit of humility, a sense of humor, a spirit of camaraderie, these win your audience when aloofness, superiority, and hauteur might build a wall between you and them.

For the climax, give your strong conclusion just as you learned it. Don't add extra ideas or let your talk trail off into anticlimactic or weak words.

Be prepared to talk to some of the audience after the program.

Be patient, courteous, and gracious. These aftermath chats can be trying, but it's part of the show.

Do write a note to the program chairman. Write your report to your supervisor. Then take time to analyze your presentation. Jot down your opinion of the meeting and what you would do differently next time. Next time? Yes, when you are in business, public speaking may become an important part of your work, particularly if you are a good speaker.

Professional and Scientific Meetings

Talks at professional and scientific meetings may be more formal than those given to the general public. Frequently, scientific papers are read. If slides or charts are used, these should be large enough to be seen and the data should be selected to give one idea or point. If you ever address a scientific or professional meeting, make your paper or talk interesting and direct. See that your presentation is well organized and well illustrated.

For added consideration, avoid a large stack of notes which discourages the audience; try to memorize the opening and close, even if you read the main section; show your enthusiasm for the subject by facial expression and voice; and limit your talk to the time allotted to you.

Sales Meeting

Sales meetings, small and large, play an important part in many business organizations. Selling ideas, products, or promotions may require the combined skills of many people and the ingenuity and showmanship of a theatrical production.

If you can, attend several sales meetings in your company and in other organizations to see the devices used to dramatize, impress, and sell.

Women have great creative ability. If you are asked to participate in a sales meeting, use your woman's initiative and originality to prepare and present your part of the program. Your effectiveness will depend on your knowledge of your subject, your enthusiasm for your work, and your ability to create a feeling of confidence and enthusiasm in your audience. Never try to fool

a salesman! Know what you have to say. Speak from experience and make your message helpful.

The Purpose

Understand the purpose or objective of the sales meeting and your part in it. Is the purpose to introduce a new product, to explain a promotion plan, to inspire confidence, or to stimulate greater sales effort? There may be a major objective with several minor objectives.

Preparation

Get complete information about the audience, who they are, how many there will be, and their positions in the company.

Get a clear picture of the entire program and the names of the other speakers.

Understand your allotment of time and your position on the program.

What is the physical setup of the meeting place? Is there a stage, work space, etc.?

What is your specific assignment and what points are you to develop?

Plan of Action

Decide on the specific point you wish to emphasize. Outline your message.

Decide on the technique to dramatize your presentation. Find out how the other speakers will dramatize their points so you will not duplicate these methods. A good sales meeting should contain a variety of kinds of showmanship, such as charts, playlets, slides, puppet shows, contests, professional actors, famous people, and demonstrations. It should include original stunts that attract attention, make a lasting impression, and stimulate action.

Adapt your presentation to the spirit and tempo of the meeting. Overdone dramatics at the wrong time are as bad as lifeless, weak presentations.

Make a time schedule and a definite plan.

Rehearse, practice, and rehearse some more so that you use no notes. You must be a real authority. Sometimes the whole

program must be rehearsed so that the show is coordinated and timed to the minute.

Check your props and be sure everything works as it should and that nothing can go wrong at the last minute.

Your appearance, your voice, and your attitude can win or lose your audience of salesmen. Adopt a friendly, cooperative, but professional, approach. Do not brag or take undue credit. Your success depends on your womanliness and your ability to gain the respect of the audience. Never resort to off-color stories, crude statements, or any lessening of your standards. Modern salesmanship is based on highly-developed techniques, not on burlesque or slapstick. Your ability to speak well and to put across your point will be a major test.

Your reward will be the satisfaction of a job well done. In fact, the successful participation in a sales meeting may be one of the most stimulating and satisfactory experiences of your work in business.

Check your props . . .

