

Guidelines for a Great Introduction

1. THE INTRODUCTION IS IMPORTANT.

The introduction sets the tone of the meeting and establishes the credibility of your speaker. The importance of this is often overlooked. An introduction must establish three things: 1) who the speaker is, 2) why the audience should listen to this speaker, and 3) how this presentation will benefit them.

2. THE INTRODUCER IS IMPORTANT.

“The medium is the message.” The person who makes the introduction sets the first impression of the meeting. **Select this person carefully.** They will have to settle the audience down, gain control, and start the meeting.

3. SELECT A GOOD PRESENTER.

Select someone that is comfortable in front of an audience and who has had speaking experience. This task shouldn't be a 'perk' to someone. They should have an advance copy of the introduction to practice with so they won't have to read it.

People who have heard the speaker before can add personal touches and experiences to make the introduction 'live'. They're able to say such things as; “I first heard your speaker in _____ and I can tell you you're in for a real treat...”

4. ELEMENTS OF A GOOD INTRODUCTION:

- a. **Quiet the group down:** Do this by saying, “We'd like you all to take your seats at this time so we may begin the meeting.” Stand looking at the group and wait. The best way to get a group quiet is just begin making your opening announcements. Another method is to say, “Everyone please say shhhhhhhhh.” Wait for a moment, say “thank you,” and begin.
- b. **Housekeeping announcements:** Make these first, such as break times, rest rooms, parking, or other messages.
- c. **Thank you's:** Thank anyone who has helped organize, promote, or administer this event.
- d. **Warm up the audience:** A good presenter can get an audience to 'wake up' and be ready for the speaker. Sometimes a simple “Good morning” or “How are you all feeling today?” can be enough. An audience always welcomes humorous opening remarks. Listen as attendees arrive for opportunities.
- e. **Introduce the speaker:** This is the final step—nothing else should be said after introducing the speaker. After saying, “...and now let's give a warm welcome to...”, wait on stage until the speaker approaches you, shake hands and let them have the stage.

5. DON'T...

Don't make fun of the speaker or the introduction as a way of creating humor. It will backfire on you.