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Introduction Guidelines

Basic tips for giving a good speaker introduction

The introduction is important

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

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.

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...”

Elements of a good introduction

Quiet the group down by saying, “We'd like you all to take your seats at this time so we may begin the meeting.” Stand, look at the group and wait. The best way to get a group quiet is to say, “If you can hear me, say shhhhhhhhhhh.” Wait for a moment, say “Thank you,” and begin.

Housekeeping first. Make these announcements first, such as break times, rest rooms, parking, continuing education requirements or other messages.

Thank you's: Thank anyone who has helped organize, promote, or administer this event.

Warm 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. Humorous opening remarks are always welcomed by an audience. Listen as attendees arrive for opportunities.

Introduce the speaker. Nothing else should follow the introduction. Begin by asking how many have heard our speaker. Then say; “For those of you who haven't, let me tell you about him/her...”

Close and wait. After saying, “...and now let's give a warm welcome to...”, wait on stage until the speaker approaches you, shake hands and leave the stage.

Don't make fun of the speaker

Don't use the introduction as a way of creating humor. It will backfire on you by creating audience discomfort and an embarrassing moment for all.