

Expert advice and guidance from the
Communications Sector

SUCCESSFUL SPEECHES

MEET OUR EXPERT

Jonathan Steffen MA (Cantab.) MCIPR MPRCA
MIoD
Managing Director, Jonathan Steffen Limited



Based in Cambridge, Jonathan Steffen Limited specialises in corporate and marketing communications. The company's offering extends from strategic communication counsel through copywriting to publishing services.

Jonathan is a freelance writer, editor and communication strategist. A graduate of King's College, Cambridge, he is a widely published author and has worked in international corporate communications for over 25 years.

Jonathan is a member of the Society of Authors, the Royal Historical Society and the Association of Business Historians. His company offers a unique communications methodology - the Narrative Capital™ Framework - that helps organisations derive maximum communication value from their beliefs and history.

Get in touch at www.jonathansteffenlimited.com

Would you like to get involved with our Communications Sector? Do you have ideas for future events or expertise to share in a guide like this?

Please get in touch with Helen Bosett, Sector Co-ordinator at Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce on 01733 370809 or email h.bosett@cambsccci.co.uk

Cambridge Office
Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce
Enterprise House, Vision Park,
Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9ZR
Tel: 01223 237414
Fax: 01223 237405
email: enquiries@cambsccci.co.uk

Peterborough Office
Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce
6 The Forum, Minerva Business Park,
Lynch Wood, Peterborough, PE2 6FT
Tel: 01733 370809
Fax: 01733 237437
email: enquiries@cambsccci.co.uk

www.cambridgeshirechamber.co.uk
@CambsChamber



The why and how of delivering successful speeches

Giving a speech is a unique opportunity to convey your values, beliefs and style to a captive audience. It puts you in a highly privileged position: for a brief moment, you are the only person in control of what is said, and all eyes and ears are on you.

Some people relish such an opportunity. Others view it with dread. A little thought and preparation can help you connect with your audience from your first sentence and keep your listeners with you all the way, turning a challenge into a triumph.

Understanding your audience and your material is the key to all successful speech-making. By applying a few simple principles, you can ensure that your words are heard—and that they remain with your audience long after you have finished speaking.

“It’s all right to have butterflies in your stomach. Just get them to fly in formation.”

Rob Gilbert

Top tips for successful speeches

1 Know your objective

It is essential to have a clear sense of why you are delivering your speech and what you wish to achieve with it. If you are confused or unclear, your audience will sense this, and you will quickly lose their attention.

2 Know your audience

Think about your audience and what they need from your speech. Are they nervous and insecure or happy and expectant? Are they looking for fresh ideas or for confirmation that they are on the right track? If you can put yourself in their shoes, you will find the right words to say to them.

3 Know your format

Make sure you understand where you will be giving your speech, and under what circumstances. Is an informal address without notes appropriate, or will people be expecting a scripted talk backed up with facts and figures? If you understand the necessary format, you will be able to concentrate better on crafting the appropriate content.

4 Know your timing

Have you been asked to speak for five minutes or forty-five? Does the allotted time allow for questions from the audience? Budgeting your time carefully will help you develop the most fitting content and structure of your speech.

5 Know your context

Are you speaking on a topical subject that will be at the forefront of everyone’s minds? Or will you be presenting concepts that may be unfamiliar to your audience? And how much agreement with your viewpoint might you reasonably expect? Answering these questions in advance will help you establish a quick rapport with your listeners when you address them.

6 Know your content

No audience will expect you to know everything about everything, but every audience will expect you to know a lot about the subject on which you are speaking. Decide in advance what is special about your relationship with your material, and which aspects of it you intend to emphasise.

7 Know your stories

Everyone remembers a good story. Whether you are telling a joke, recounting a story from the newspapers or recalling an event from your own life, make sure that you can recount these narratives clearly and with confidence.

8 Know your facts

Every audience will expect you to back up your claims with evidence. What facts and figures can you use to ensure that your arguments are supported by examples that everyone can easily grasp?

9 Know your limits

If you are not a barnstormer, don’t try to be one! Very few people are born public speakers. But everyone can command the respect of an audience if they are true to their own style. Give people a chance to see who you are. They will be much more likely to listen to what you have to say.

10 Know your next move

What do you want people to do as a result of your speech? Request a meeting with you? Apply for a job in your company? Make a donation to your campaign? Give people the options for a follow-up before you finish speaking.

11 Know when to stop

Always leave your audience wanting more. It is the perfect motivation for them to seek to deepen their relationship with you.

