

SpeakerNotes

be confident.
be heard.
be inspiring.



FROM **professionally speaking**™ EXECUTIVE SPEECH COACHING, COMMUNICATION & PRESENTATION SKILLS TRAINING



How to enjoy being set up. **The importance of a proper introduction.**

How often have you stood in the wings before a presentation and cringed as the person introducing you inadvertently mischaracterized the focus of your talk, distracted the audience with unexpected remarks, or recited your entire bio word for word?

If you're guilty of leaving this critical component of your presentation to chance, raise your hand. Rest assured, you are not alone. However, I can't help but wonder, with all the time and effort we put into our presentations, why we invest such little time and effort into planning and rehearsing our *introductions*.

Why is a good introduction so important?

It doesn't matter if you're presenting to two people, 200 or 2,000 — what is said about you just before you begin literally sets the stage for you and for your listeners. The person introducing you creates a win-win situation by settling the audience and connecting your message with their goals and interests.

Depending on your topic, the introducer can also help build anticipation for what you have to say or minimize any resistance you might encounter.

What's usually in an introduction?

The typical speaker introduction is a mini version of your biography. Does anyone really care about where you live, your hobbies, or your nickname? You'd be surprised how often these very examples are included in an intro.

How can you do better?

Prepare your own introduction whether you've been asked to or not, and provide it to your sponsor or introducer in enough time for feedback if necessary. Almost always, your introducer will be quite happy to use it just the way it is.

I've been training many of the speakers I work with to use the S.T.A.T. method for preparing their own introductions. S.T.A.T. is an acronym for four questions that, when answered and crafted into an introduction, will increase the audience's interest level and build anticipation for what you have to say:

Speaker — Why this speaker?

Topic — Why is this topic being discussed?

Audience — Why is this topic important to this audience?

Time — Why this subject at this time?

SpeakerNotes

be confident.
be heard.
be inspiring.



FROM **professionally speaking**SM EXECUTIVE SPEECH COACHING, COMMUNICATION & PRESENTATION SKILLS TRAINING

Since no one knows your topic better than you, the answers will come easily. Try this and you'll have your audience "eating out of the palm of your hand," as the saying goes!

Are the roles reversed?

If you're the introducer, you have the power to get a presentation off to the best possible start. Try these tips for success:

Lead the applause — Following the introduction, spontaneously and enthusiastically lead the applause as the speaker approaches the platform. The audience will follow your lead and quickly join in.

Greet the speaker — Don't make the speaker come up to an empty or "cold" podium. Remain on the platform, shake hands to greet the speaker, and exit quietly.

Practice — Take a few minutes to rehearse not only the introduction, but the mechanics behind turning the stage over to the speaker. A quick walk-through will make you and your presenter that much more confident taking the stage.

Stephanie M. Scotti, is the founder and principal of [professionally speaking](http://www.professionallyspeaking.net). With over 25 years dedicated to executive speech coaching and communications / presentation skills training, Stephanie has coached over 2,500 individuals in professional practices, Fortune 500 companies, the U.S. government, and international businesses. To learn more, visit <http://www.professionallyspeaking.net>. To subscribe to **SpeakerNotes**, a monthly e-newsletter with tips and techniques to improve your speaking skills, send an e-mail to smscottiprofessionallyspeaking.net.