

# *How great of a speaker are you?*

*By Stephanie Bickel*

Evaluate your speaking skills. You can always improve. Those people who appear naturally gifted at communicating have worked on their skills. They force themselves to accept speaking opportunities and to ruthlessly evaluate their abilities, continually seeking improvement.

If you are not finding opportunities to speak up easily, volunteer to speak or join a Toastmaster's group to practice your skills. Afterward, write a self review. We have our clients send us a short summary of what worked and what did not after a presentation or important meeting. Speakers are the most critical of themselves during the first 24 hours following an event.

Here are some of the questions we ask.

## **Audience Analysis** - Was your audience engaged?

1. How would you rate your connection with the audience 1-10 (1= poor and 10 = excellent)?
2. Did they ask questions related to what you had just mentioned or were they ahead/behind you?
3. Did they interrupt you? During which parts?
4. Did your audience ask you to repeat yourself or to speak louder?
5. Did they smile and laugh occasionally?
6. How/when did the audience surprise you?
7. Did anyone leave the room?

## **Content Analysis** – Did you get your message across?

1. How would you rate the organization of your presentation 1-10?
2. What did you forget to cover?
3. What do you need to add for next time?
4. Were there content areas where you were less knowledgeable? Did you like the way you handled this?

*Crisp, Confident, Credible*

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**Delivery Analysis – How did you look and sound?**

1. How would you rate your speaking volume 1-10 (1= poor and 10 = excellent)?
2. How would you rate the fluidity of your presentation 1-10?
3. When did you stumble?
4. Do you remember the faces in the room? (for small groups)
5. Did you use the names of audience members during the meeting/presentation?
6. Would you want more or less audience interaction next time?
7. Did you tell stories, provide examples, and occasionally get off topic to get personal with your audience?
8. When did you feel the most confident?
9. When did you feel the least confident?

**Summary**

1. Did you receive any feedback that you would apply to your next meeting/presentation?
2. Overall, how would you rate your presentation/meeting 1-10?
3. Overall, what did you learn from this audience?
4. How was this presentation a success?

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Stephanie is the Founder and Director of Speak by Design, an executive coaching firm based out of Chicago. Speak by Design provides private and group trainings for people seeking to become crisp, confident, and credible communicators. Services include executive coaching, presentation skills, vocal image, accent reduction, and other custom training programs. Visit them at [www.speakbydesign.com](http://www.speakbydesign.com).