



# THE EXECUTIVE SPEECHWRITER

## PLANNING

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU



We'll discuss your role, your interests, your speaking style and text preference – full speech on paper or teleprompter, or bullet points on cue cards – plus the approvals process, avoiding a committee!

### GAINING THE KEY DETAILS



The date, time slot and venue, plus the subject and type of speech. We'll discuss the audience – numbers, demographics, what they'll expect and what they know about you and your organisation. Audience research is a crucial component of speech planning.

### KNOWING YOUR AIMS



Are you primarily seeking to inform, educate, entertain, motivate, persuade, or change perceptions? How do you want to come across? What do you want the audience to remember, and say afterwards? What's the lasting impression you would like to leave?

### GATHERING INFO & IDEAS



What's the territory you aim to cover? What information and research needs to be gathered? We'll discuss the main points you want to get across, collecting all your ideas and later whittling them down to no more than five key messages.

## WRITING

### CONSTRUCTING THE SPEECH



#### INTRODUCTION

This will include a 'grabber' – something that immediately grabs and holds the audience's attention. It could be a recent relevant experience, a quote or line from a song, or an insight you have about those who'll be in front of you. It could be something that intrigues, an enigmatic question you come back to later. It also includes a line stating the speech's theme and key messages.

#### BODY

All your key messages are contained within a storytelling structure. There's the right mix of factoids, anecdotes, statistics and data points, personal insights and learnings, plus a joke or humorous story. It uses rhetorical devices such as deliberate pausing, repetition, and the 'power of three'. The language is conversational, using contractions and short sentences. It all sounds authentic.

#### CONCLUSION

This pulls everything together, leaving the audience with the points you want them to remember and actions you want them to take. A 'final thought' acts as a bookend to the opening grabber.

### PRODUCING AN OUTLINE



This is an abbreviated first draft of the speech, showing how your messages will be contained within the structure, written on one or two pages. It will include a few paragraphs from the speech to give you an idea of the writing style. It also references and sources all the information and research that has been gathered for you.

### AGREEING THE FINAL VERSION



A first draft is followed by your comments leading to a second draft. That's generally the final version, bar a few final tweaks.

## DELIVERY

### PRACTISING THE SPEECH



Some speakers have a fluent speaking style, they rarely hesitate or stumble over a word. Most of us need to practise to ensure a polished performance. Don't just read your speech, say it out loud. Learn key chunks so you can look the audience in the eye. Practise the deliberate pauses, the words and sentences you need to emphasise, and the timing. Use your hands to express your ideas. Record yourself on video: what does your body language say?

### ON THE DAY



If you're offered the chance to rehearse, take it! Run through the speech itself but also rehearse getting up on stage and ask how you'll be introduced or cued. Also ask about timekeeping, and who will be giving you signals. Insist on there being a glass of water to hand. As you're introduced, breathe deeply. As you walk up, act calmly and smile at the audience. This is your chance to shine!