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[7 Memorable Ways To Open A Speech Or Presentation](http://www.ypo.org/2015/04/7-memorable-ways-to-open-a-speech-or-presentation/)

***By Matt Eventoff***

After hours of preparation, the moment to deliver your speech has arrived. You’re standing before the podium, all eyes on you, with confidence that no one could take away. Then you begin…

*“Hello, everyone. Thank you for having me. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am going to be speaking to you today about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. To begin, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is important because…”*

Suddenly people begin shifting in their seats, checking their phones, reading the program, talking to one another and doing anything but paying attention to you.

Your opening often determines how long the audience will “tune in” to your presentation.   If you bore your audience right from the start, there is little chance that your message will effectively get across.

How do you effectively open a speech or presentation to prevent this from happening? Here are seven effective methods to open a speech or presentation:

1. **Quote**  
   Opening with a relevant quote can help set the tone for the rest of your speech. For example, one that I often use to open a presentation dealing with public speaking:  
   *“It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.” – Mark Twain*
2. **“What If” Scenario**Immediately drawing your audience into your speech works wonders. Asking a “what if” question invites the audience to follow your thought process.  
   *“What if we were all blunt? How different would our everyday lives be? What would happen if we said what was on our minds, all day every day?”*
3. **“Imagine” Scenario**A similar method, but more relevant for sensational examples.  It puts your audience members directly into the presentation by allowing each member to visualize an extraordinary scenario.  
   *“Imagine jumping out of a skydiving plane and discovering your parachute doesn’t work. What memories would flash before you? Now imagine the parachute opened. How differently would you act when you landed?”*
4. **Question**  
   Ask a rhetorical or literal question. When someone is posed with a question, whether an answer is called for or not, that person intuitively answers.  
   *“Who wouldn’t want to live on an exotic island?”*
5. **Statistic**Use a surprising, powerful, personalized statistic that will resonate with the audience to get your message across right away. It has the potential to trigger the audiences’ emotional appeal.  
   *“Look to your left. Now look to your right.  One of your seatmates will  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”*  
   *“In this room, over 90 percent of us are going to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”*
6. **Powerful Statement/Phrase**A statement or phrase can catch the audience’s attention by keeping them guessing as to what you’re about to say next. Implementing the silence technique afterwards also adds to the effect.  
   *“We can not win.  We can’t win…”*  
   *(Pause)*  
   *“… That’s what every newspaper in the country is saying.”*