

The Role of the Ice Breaker in Public Speakin

A leadership Presentation on behalf of SofemaOnline (www.sofemaonline.com)

SofemaOnline (SOL) looks at the role of icebreakers in Public Speaking.

What is an Ice Breaker?

Ice breakers serve a multiple purpose by helping to relax the participants as well as building an open relationship and fostering a team relationship.

Ice breakers which appear spontaneous travel better and can be more effective than those which appear to mechanical in delivery. Always be non-judgmental with your communication to the delegates

Benefits of Ice Breakers include:

- Involving and relaxing people
- Establishing effective communication
- Promote trust within the group

Ice Breaking Examples:

Story Telling

Who doesn't want to hear a quick, short story? It could be personal, from your experience or one you heard or read somewhere so long as it's interesting enough to share, providing it is not too long it does not have to be directly related to your discussion.

Sharing a story is revealing and can quickly develop a connection between the speaker and the delegates.

The more you engage with the audience the stronger the connection try this one

You're driving down the road in your car on a wild and stormy night. The weather is like a hurricane, with heavy rains, high winds, and lightning flashing constantly.

While driving, you come across a partially-covered bus stop, and you can see three people waiting for a bus:

1. An old woman who looks as if she is about to die.
2. An old friend who once saved your life.
3. The perfect partner you have been dreaming about (your "soulmate").

.....and the winner is

“I would give the car keys to my old friend, and let him take the old woman to the hospital. Then I would stay behind and wait for the bus with the partner of my dreams.”

Ask a Question

Asking a question can help to:

- If you could only choose one vacation destination where would you pick and why?
- If you could meet any living person for a chat over a shared dinner, who would you pick and why?
- If you could meet any historical figure, who would you choose and why?

Caution – Do not ask a negative question – which could have downsides and bring distance not closure

Questions which require the delegate to raise-their hands can promote engagement but can also lead to disappointment! ...So make sure that you ask questions that are meaningful and sure to make lots of people raise their hands.

Sharing a Current News Item

Most people like to hear a news fact or some interesting trivia, again it is a perfect way to connect with your audience. Stay clear of Politics and Religion don't be sexist and try to inject a little humour. If you can establish a rapport with at least some member of the audience you are moving in the right direction.

If you can start your presentation with a subject connected news item you will raise the interest level in general.

In addition if you can achieve a level of engagement from the group you are successfully engaging your audience and also stimulating group involvement.

Telling a Joke

Works best when it is self depreciating means at your own risk and expense. Do not offend and stay away from anything which could see you on thin ice. – remember the whole point is to act as an icebreaker.

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