

Use of Microphone

A microphone is a piece of equipment designed to amplify your voice, it is not a substitute to replace the way you express yourself when you speak. The microphone will not make your voice more interesting, YOU still have to do the work needed to make sure you are an engaging speaker. If anything, the microphone is a little bit like a magnifying glass and will just make bad vocal expression louder and more obvious. It is imperative to learn good techniques for the use of a microphone.

Whenever you use a microphone, you will still need to engage the audience and establish your identity and build audience rapport. So, using your full resonant voice is still of huge importance if you are to succeed in a situation where you find you will use a microphone.

Even though you're using a microphone, your audience will still be listening for emotion in your voice and all the small subtleties contained within your voice.

Here are a few tips to help you use a microphone successfully:

Sound check: Arrive at the venue early enough to try the microphone, ask the technician to help you, explain you have never used one before and you are a little nervous and you would like to see how it feels to use the microphone. People love to help and support if you ask in the right way.

Ask someone to go to the back of the room and a couple of different areas of the room to check if you can be heard clearly. This will ensure the level is loud enough so that you can be heard all around the room.

Find out how the microphone works. Make sure you know where the on/off switch is and that it is in the on position when you start to use the microphone. Be sure to switch it to the off position once you have finished. Don't be afraid to ask if everyone can hear you. If there is a sound technician this should not be a problem as they are there to ensure you can be heard.

Lapel microphone (sometimes called a lavalier microphone). This is best placed centre of the body clipped to the lapel or edge of a jacket. It needs to be clipped on, firmly in place. It needs to sit centre of the body below the chin about 8 to 10 inches down from the chin with head upright. If you are using slides and your slides are on your left have the microphone placed slightly to the left of centre so that when you turn towards your slides the microphone will pick up your voice. The same applies to slides being on your right hand side, just place the microphone slightly to the right of centre on the body.

Make sure this microphone is not placed too high up because you may have a problem in being heard clearly.

Make sure your hair does not hang over the microphone or jewellery does not brush against it as the microphone will pick up this sound every time you move. Even a tiny rustle will be amplified for the audience to hear.

Standing microphone - this type of microphone may stand in front of or on the lectern. Your voice should carry across the microphone. Make sure this microphone is not placed too high in height covering your face. Don't lean into the microphone as this closes your chest and constricts your breathing and alters the sound of your voice.

Don't be afraid to alter the height of a microphone to suit you. The microphone should be about 8 – 10 inches away from your mouth to avoid distortion.

A hand held microphone - is useful because unlike one on a lectern you can move around, however it restricts your gestures as you have only one hand free. Keep the ball of the microphone below your mouth and pointed towards your mouth. The air from your mouth should travel over the microphone and not directly into it.

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