



# Corsini's Point of the Week™

August 31, 2009 — Part 1 of 3



## Presenting ... You (In the Very Best Light)

In May of this year, we started two continuing education groups called **"Corsini's Rainmakers & Leaders Club."** These groups meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month before work and during lunch. During each session, either I give a business- or sales-related talk or we have an outside guest business speaker. **Also at each meeting, we use the Toastmasters International communications model;** Toastmasters gives members the opportunity to **enhance their communication and leadership skills.** Among other things, they learn **how to more effectively facilitate meetings, how to deliver winning presentations, and how to position themselves to be effective communicators.** Our gatherings also give participants the opportunity to brainstorm with other executives, salespeople and professionals in the Birmingham area. If you'd like to learn more about these groups, go to [www.corsini.com](http://www.corsini.com). Additionally, [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) will point you toward a Toastmasters club in your area.

Today's Point will give you some idea about what kinds of topics our groups address. Let's start with some common ground.

Studies have shown that fear of public speaking ranks right up there with fear of death. I'm not at all surprised. **However, we all—at some point or another—are called upon to give some type of impromptu or prepared presentation.** Usually this happens at work. But you might end up having to say a prayer at your civic club, announce an event at a religious gathering or simply introduce yourself to a crowd. Really, who knows what speaking opportunity might come your way next? **Be prepared!** Too often, too many people are simply not ready—let alone equipped—to make a good impression in a public forum.

So, over the next several weeks **we'll offer some tips for perfecting presentations—no matter who your audience is or what your subject covers.** We'll address things you can do before, during and after a presentation to get your audience's attention and keep them focused. And we'll show you how you can use the experience to create even more impressive presentations.

This week, let's **start before you start.**

There are certain things you can do *ahead of time* to make your next presentation go smoothly. **A good, effective presentation doesn't just happen** (each venue and gathering is different; and presentations tend to be fluid, changeable situations). A successful presentation requires thought and planning and (perhaps most of all) anticipation of possible

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"The more  
you prepare,  
the luckier  
you appear."*

— Terry Josephson

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problems. Approach your next presentation with these tips in mind:

- **Advance notice.** Prepare (or ask for) an **agenda** in advance, and gain approval with everyone (especially the client or the people who engaged you) before giving the presentation. **And know exactly how much time you'll have available.** Time the presentation so you can stay within that timeframe. Also, establish the client's goals—and your goals—for the presentation. Write down the “take-aways” from your presentation. What do you want the audience to take away from your talk? Speak to those things.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Rehearse every part of your presentation from set-up to the Q & A session. **Think about (or better yet, write out a list of) possible questions, and address each one.** Research your answers, and know what you'll say ahead of time. **Practice your presentation in front of a mirror, and read your script out loud.** Better yet, **practice in front of a friend or colleague** who can give you constructive feedback. Pay attention to your voice — your most valuable tool as a presenter. Don't be too loud, and mind the tone, pitch and pace of your talk.
- **Write it right.** If you have the luxury of being able to prepare ahead of time, **make sure your note cards are in order and are easy to read. Take time to highlight key phrases.** Be sure to number your cards. You might want to put different topics on different colored (but still numbered!) note cards.
- **Mix master.** Enhance your presentations with clever uses of newspaper clippings, cartoons, music, appropriate quotes or relevant experiences. **Use your imagination.**
- **Don't talk to strangers.** Establish a rapport with the audience before the presentation begins by **greeting people individually** as they enter the room. You'll connect before you even start!
- **Listen up.** Use the casual greeting time before the presentation to chat with people, keeping your ears open for information that might bolster your presentation. **Use that information to personalize and customize your presentation** by recalling a conversation between you and one of the audience members about something pertinent to the audience you're addressing.

Of course, these tips are more applicable to formal presentations. But **even the most casual public speaking opportunity will go more smoothly if you keep these ideas in mind and apply them as needed—even if you do so at the very last minute.** Next week, we'll look at what you can do *during* your presentation to engage, inform and entertain your audience.

To receive it, please email [admin@corsini.com](mailto:admin@corsini.com) to be removed from our mailing list. We apologize for any inconvenience.

## CORSINI'S POINT

Take a good, deep, relaxing breath. A good presentation begins long before you see your audience. Prepare an agenda, and use it as your guide. Make sure you stay within the specified time limit. Practice every part of your presentation—from the set-up to the Q & A. Use note cards; using cards is a tool, not a crutch. Get friendly with your audience; greet as many people as possible before you start. During the greeting,

listen for tidbits of information that can personalize the presentation. And make your presentation interesting by mixing media. Use your imagination, not just the latest technology.

## Enroll now in Corsini's Rainmakers & Leaders Club

This twice-monthly program, based on the Toastmasters International model, features guest business speakers and timely topics. Sessions are 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month.

The investment is only \$99 per month for two sessions. As always, **we offer a 100% money-back guarantee.**

For more info, contact Marc Corsini at [marc@corsini.com](mailto:marc@corsini.com) or call him at (205) 879-0432.