

# Lecture 5

## Gathering Materials

## Gathering Information & Materials

- The most important part of making a presentation is actually getting started.
- First step is to *collect* and *read* as much *information* as possible about your subject.
- Next step involves *selecting the information* and *deciding how much of it* you will present.
- You need to know how long your talk will be.

- Next step is *deciding on the format*.
- It is at this point that you need to decide how and in what sequence you will present the material you have chosen.
- Other matters to consider are:
  - 1. What visuals will I use?
  - 2. Where will I stand when I speak?
  - 3. How can I present the material clearly and in an interesting fashion?

# Quality Speech Material

- If we construct our speeches with care and properly prepare and practice, our speech material will always be good.
- Practice makes perfect.

# Speech Preparation as a Process

- You need to both gather facts and arrange your thoughts. It is not enough to simply collect ideas.
- You must also nurture them and reflect on how to present them in a unique, organized manner.

- Let your purpose drive your speech.
- As you prepare each presentation, you should develop a simple and orderly outline.
- You will need to decide the sequence you will follow from these organizational patterns:
  - Sequential
  - Categorical
  - Problem and solution
  - Contrast and comparison

- In developing the sequence of your presentation, mind-mapping or webbing techniques can be very useful.
- The use of personal stories always works best for audiences.
- Most professional speakers always use personal stories and quite often it is a personal story that becomes their "signature" story.

- To be successful it is extremely important to start gathering information as soon as possible.
- The sooner you begin the more time you will have to practice your speech.
- As with most speakers, it usually takes more time to prepare a short version of a speech than a longer one.

# Information is Inspiration

- Effective information gathering is the most basic perspective-widening tool an effective leader requires.
- Effective leaders gather two main types of information:
  - Background Data, and
  - Task-Related Data

- Leaders gather background data to build their view of the world in which they operate.
- This information is made up of the countless facts, trends and opinions that they encounter and the observations they make on a daily basis.

- The higher the quality of background data they gather and the more effectively they prioritise it.
- Task-related information is gathered for a specific purpose.
- By contrast with the steady, slow gathering of background data.

# Gathering Background Information

- There are a number of things you can do to build background information:
  - Read a newspaper or news website respected for the quality and accuracy of its journalism;
  - Talk to your customers and get a deep understanding of what they want and don't want from you, and what they're getting or not getting from you and your competitors;

- Read industry magazines and newsletters for both your own and your customers’ industries;
- Talk to experts in the fields in which you operate and knowledgeable people within your organisation;
- Read brochures and talk to product teams to make sure you understand your organization’s products and services, their strengths and weaknesses, and what your customers like or dislike about them;
- Have a good understanding of company or business unit strategy;
- Take the time to “tune in” to what’s going on in your organisation.

# Gathering Task-Related Information

- Information-gathering actions are clearly identified steps in the projects you undertake.
- There are three key factors here:
  - 1. Understanding how much research you should do;
  - 2. Making sure you ask the right questions; and
  - 3. Gathering the information you need.

- Other information you may need to gather yourself, for example in interviewing clients or conducting market research surveys.
- In other cases (for example, in taking legal advice) it makes sense to pay a qualified expert to answer your questions.
- A lot of information is relatively freely available, within your organization or in good business, academic or institutional libraries.

- At the end of all this research, make sure you take a step back and look at the answers you've gained through the filter of common sense.
- Ask yourself if any information seems to be missing, or if anything you've uncovered jars with your instincts and experience.

- Finally, while information gathering is an essential skill for an effective leader, bear in mind that the information is not an end in itself.
- It is useful because it serves as an input towards generating ideas and building vision.