



BECOMING A GREAT EMCEE

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Becoming a Great Emcee

Being an Emcee is not as hard as you might think. In my opinion, it can be the easiest public speaking you will ever do. There's no talk to prepare or give, you don't have to memorize anything, and you're never up in front of people for more than 2-3 minutes at a time.

Preparation, Preparation, Preparation

The absolute key to being a great emcee is preparation! You are the glue that holds the meeting together and ties each event to the others. Therefore, the more you are familiar with each event, the better you will be able to transition from one event to another.

Notes

Your job is to keep things moving along. If anyone should know what's next, it's you! Feel free to ask as many questions of the meeting organizer as you need to fully understand how things should go. Study the Schedule/Minute-by-Minute as thoroughly as you can. Make notes right on the schedule to remind yourself of transition cues or other info.

Comedy

Most people believe that being a good emcee means being funny. This is not true. Being funny is not a requirement to being a good emcee. However, humor can be a powerful tool. It relaxes the audience and keeps them interested. If you're not naturally funny, don't be afraid to rely on the humor of others to make up for it. The internet is full of top 10 lists, jokes, and funny stories and news items. Take some time and identify a few of these sites. Then check them every once in a while and update your humor repertoire. Note: if a joke seems questionable as to appropriate content, please check with the meeting organizer for a final OK. The meeting organizer has the final say on content.

Introductions

Research all of the people/programs you will introduce. Find out anything you can so that your introduction is not canned but sounds more like you know the person well. If you are introducing a speaker who is in full view of the audience, it is best not to look at the speaker during the introduction. When the speaker cannot hide out of sight during the introduction, he or she is just standing or sitting there, like a dork. To look at them during the introduction is to take attention away from the emcee (the current stage personality) and make the audience all turn and look at the person who is trying to mentally get ready for the stage. S/he now has to decide whether to acknowledge the emcee or the audience, whether to smile, look interested, look like s/he's mentally busy. In other words, the emcee has just put them on the stage before they are ready to go on.

Other Tips

Use humor and interesting comments as segues from one person/program to the next.

Comment on what just happened. Nothing is worse than for something to happen on stage or in the audience and the emcee goes right on with the next introduction as if he/she missed the point. If possible, try to find something humorous or meaningful about the previous person/event when coming back on stage to do the next transition/introduction.

Keep it short. If the emcee takes too much time, it takes the focus away from the event. That doesn't mean that the emcee can't be funny and meaningful but it should always support the main event.