

The logo features a central dark blue circle with the letters 'UIC' in light blue. This circle is surrounded by a yellow ring, which is further enclosed by a red ring. Four thick lines radiate from the center: a yellow line pointing up and to the right, a red line pointing up and to the left, a yellow line pointing down, and a red line pointing down and to the right. The background is a solid light blue.

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Learn to Master Impromptu Speaking

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*“It usually takes me more than three weeks
to prepare a good impromptu speech.”*
– Mark Twain

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1. Slow down time

- Take a deep breath
- Take a sip of water
- Scratch your chin
- Hit the pause button and take a moment to consciously reason, consider, and decide before responding



2. Repeat the question you heard

- Repeating it before you answer it is a way to make sure everyone knows what you're talking about
- Reframe a negative question without having to start from a defensive position



3. Start off with a Quote

- Anticipate situations where you may be called upon to speak
- Have a bank of at least three quotes
- Consider quotes from Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Shakespeare, Mark Twain and even Yogi Berra

“The mind is a wonderful thing. It starts working the minute you are born and never stops until you get up to speak.” – Roscoe Drummond

4. Tell your personal story or anecdote

Have a small library of these that you can pull out anytime the need arises



5. Don't answer it, at least not right away

- Talk about something contrary to what was asked. In the last few sentences, briefly answer the question.
- Defer to something else, then come back to it.

6. Sing a few lines from a song

- Hum it
- Ask audience to sing together
- Rap in Hamilton style



7. Recite a few lines of a poem

- It must be relevant to your message
- Pause before and pause after the lines, to give people time to absorb it
- Give credit. If the author is unknown, you can say, “Someone once said . . .”

8. Start off with a joke

It’s useful to have a few of these available

9. Have the audience participate

- Single out an individual
- Request a show of hands
- Ask the listeners to repeat, stand or close their eyes

10. Use a prop

- Any item will do
- Props can speak louder than words



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“Fear doesn't exist anywhere except in the mind.”
– Dale Carnegie

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Q & A

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Epic Communicators

[Speaking Off-the-Cuff Interactive Workshop – November 4
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