Alumni Exchange
Learn to Master Impromptu Speaking

Melinda Mitrovic, Founder Epic Communicators, UIC Alumna ‘83
Greg Cieply, Distinguished Toastmaster, Division Area Director
“It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.”
– Mark Twain
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
“Fear doesn't exist anywhere except in the mind.”
– Dale Carnegie
Q & A
Epic Communicators

Speaking Off-the-Cuff Interactive Workshop – November 4
Group and One-on-One Coaching - Request
Epic Communicators’ Podcast – All Things Public Speaking

Contact:
melindamitrovic@gmail.com