



Business Tip #3 Public Speaking

Public speaking is not an easy thing for most people.

Sometimes I get asked if I'm shy or people are surprised to see that I'm not shy when I'm giving a presentation. The truth is, I was shy in the beginning. When I used to do a lot of sidewalk sales events, I even had a hard time talking with people one-on-one. But the more I talked to people and found out that most of them were very supportive and impressed with what I was doing, talking got easier.

I'd been selling my Pencil Bugs only a few months when I was asked to give my first presentation to a community organization. I was a little scared at first but when I accidentally made a joke right in the beginning and everyone smiled and laughed with me, it was easier from then on.

Since then, I've given presentations to other community groups, schools, and libraries. It's one of those things that the more you do it, the easier it gets and the better you are at it. For me, it's a little like acting. I get to be in the spotlight and have fun while telling people about my business. I still use note cards in case I forget something but I like to ad lib things now and then just to make it more fun.

I believe the most important thing to remember when public speaking is that the audience has come to see "you" and hear what "you" have to say. So they're usually pretty nice and receptive. I've been lucky so far that I haven't had a bad audience.

At the end of my presentation, I always save time for questions and sometimes I get a lot! It's pretty fun to hear some of the questions that little kids have. And depending on where I'm speaking and how big the crowd is, sometimes I get kids that want to tell me all of the ideas that they've had for a business, which I think is really cute. So I just try to encourage them and tell them to try it because you'll never know what you could have done if you don't try.

The other thing that I've learned but don't always like is that giving a speech is a lot easier and much less scary if you're prepared and really know what you're talking about. So even though you might not like practicing, it's a good thing to review your speech until you feel comfortable.

While you're giving your talk, if you do make a mistake, don't worry about it or get upset. Everyone makes mistakes and I've found the best way to get through them is to either just keep going and usually people don't even notice or if it's a really big mistake, try to make a joke about it right then and there. It's a lot easier.

So, no matter what age you are, try some of the things that I've mentioned. You'll probably see that public speaking gets easier the more you do it. I'm glad I was able to start out so young because I think the longer you wait sometimes, the harder things are and the longer it takes to not be afraid.