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LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

# Five Ways To Capture Attention When Speaking To Groups

Henry DeVries Contributor 

*Attracting high-paying clients by marketing with a book and a speech.*

“When I listen to many business speakers, what I hear is the old *Lone Ranger* tune: ‘Data dump, data dump, data dump dump dump!’” says presentation expert [Milo Shapiro](#).

For classical music fans, that ear worm tune from the *Lone Ranger* radio and TV shows is “The William Tell Overture” by Gioachino Rossini, and you will never be able to hear it again without thinking “data dump.”

Shapiro points out that the problem is not that the data isn't important. Nor is the problem that the speaker either didn't make the effort or doesn't know *how* to make the material interesting for their listeners. The problem is a lack of preparation for presentations that will market your company, cause or career.

In my opinion the best marketing tool to attract high-paying clients is to write a book, which Shapiro has done: [Public Speaking: Get A's, Not Zzzzzz's!](#) The best business development strategy is to speak about the book, and that is where Shapiro says many business speakers fall down.

Since 2004, [Shapiro](#) has helped thousands (from C-Suite to managers to sales reps) to become more prepared, polished and powerful wherever they speak through one-on-one coaching (live and remote), class trainings, conference speeches, webinars and blogging.

Shapiro offers five tips to holding attention when you're speaking to groups:

**Resist the urge to summarize up front.** “Agendas are great for getting people *to* a meeting but, once there, laying out what you'll talk about is tedious,” says Shapiro. “Instead, use your opening time to intrigue them about something you'll cover.”

**Use more examples.** “Our brains can only handle so much consecutive data, but examples bring your data points to life,” says Shapiro. “We'll understand them better and our minds will be more ready for your next point.”

**Practice aloud!** “This might sound obvious, but less than half of my coaching clients do this before we start working together,” says Shapiro. “Hearing yourself say scripted material helps you see if lines are awkward, too

long when aloud, contain stumbly phrases, and more. In addition, hearing yourself go through bulleted points will show you if you're truly ready to speak on them or if it was clearer in your head than your mouth. This helps avoid tangents, backpedaling, and forgetting details."

**Be playful.** "Apple employees would have listened to Steve Jobs even if he'd been deadly dull," says Shapiro. "But he knew better. By being incredibly playful with his messages instead, the whole world tuned in to hear his speeches and no one ever said, "Why doesn't he act more ordinary and professional?" At heart, our audiences are big kids who want to play, no matter how mature they try to act. If you had the choice between a speech *or* a show that covered the same material, which would *you* want to see? Be a bit of a show-off for them."

**Resist the urge to summarize at the end, too.** Maybe a sentence or two to summarize, but no more. "Trust that they got your points and use this time for a call to action or a story that will really hit your message home," says Shapiro.

Bottom line: A presentation is too valuable an opportunity to waste. "Knowing English and your topic doesn't necessarily make you ready to speak," says Shapiro. "But speaking *is* a skill you can learn that will serve you for the rest of your life."

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Henry DeVries, M.B.A., cofounder and CEO of Indie Books International, speaks to thousands of business people each year on how to persuade with a story. In his writing and speaking he shares, in humorous ways, pragmatic strategies that can double sales results and achieve marketing returns of 400% to 2,000%.