

HOW TO PREPARE:

Checklist for Great Talks by Scott Berkun

1 BEFORE THE EVENT

- ☐ Ask yourself these questions:
 - Who is the audience? Why are they coming?
 - Can organizer provide demographics?
 - Can you look at last year's programs? Were there reviews of the event on blogs?
 - What are other speakers speaking about?
 - Will this be a keynote lecture (more scripted) or small (more interactive)?
- ☐ Create a list of questions audience will want answered in the talk
- ☐ Prioritize the list and sketch out stories / ideas / points
- ☐ Budget at least 10x time to prepare (1 hour talk will take roughly 10 hours of preparation)
- ☐ Develop ten minutes of rough draft material
- ☐ Practice the ten minutes. Do not procrastinate.
- ☐ Revise material when it doesn't work, then practice again from beginning. Repeat as necessary.
- ☐ Do a test run in front of people who will give honest feedback (Or videotape and watch)
- ☐ Practice with a clock with goal to end reliably with an extra 5 minutes
- ☐ Ask for emergency contact cell phone number, give organizer yours
- ☐ Get directions to the venue, including office-park insanity, and within building insanity
- ☐ If appropriate, post slides to web, include URL at end of talk

2 LEAVING FOR THE EVENT

- ☐ Get an hour of exercise that morning or night before
- ☐ Check laptop: do you have all cables? Is it working fine? Are slides on it? Battery charged?
- ☐ Bring backup slides on flash drive / Extra-backup online somewhere / Print back-up of slides
- ☐ Bring remote control: Check battery
- ☐ Shower, shave, prune, scrub, brush, deodorize
- ☐ Ensure you avoid all avoidable stress (get there early no matter what)

3 AT THE EVENT

- ☐ Register and let organizer know you've arrived
- ☐ Find your room and watch another speaker speak in it. Notice anything?
- ☐ If time allows, mingle and meet people who might be in your audience
- ☐ Return to room to catch (at least) tail end of last speaker before you – maximize time to set up.
- ☐ Get laptop hooked up to projector immediately. Most problems occur here.
- ☐ Find tech person, or call organizer. You'll need their help to get microphone set up or for tech issues.
- ☐ Test remote and fancy videos.
- ☐ Walk the stage and get comfortable. Ask someone to look at you and your slides to flag any issues.
- ☐ Make sure you have a glass of water or preferred beverage at the lectern.
- ☐ Sit in the back row and imagine yourself on stage. Check that the text on your slides is readable.
- ☐ Relax. You're prepared and all set. Nothing you do now will change anything. Enjoy the ride.
- ☐ If needed, distract yourself by going for a walk or other physical activity

4 AFTER THE EVENT

- ☐ If there is another scheduled speaker, get out of their way so they can get set up
- ☐ Make yourself visible so people can find you to ask questions about your talk
- ☐ Write questions from attendees on their business cards so you can answer in email later
- ☐ Post slides online or to Slideshare if appropriate
- ☐ Email people who gave you their cards, answering their questions
- ☐ Thank the organizer and ask for any feedback (positive/negative)
- ☐ If your talk was videotaped, ask for a copy so you can watch and improve.
- ☐ Have a beer

If this was useful, go buy the book:

CONFESSIONS OF A PUBLIC SPEAKER

at www.scottberkun.com