

Great openings that grab attention

Like evaluation - just my opinion and tips that I've gleaned and am happy to share

Blancmange - I used for networking

Notes : On web

What is the purpose of your opening?

Your opening has to fulfil a number of objectives if it is going to be successful.

I think these are :

- To hook the audience into your speech which can be done several ways
 - Give feeling of suspense of what's to come, maybe by adding drama.
 - Create a compelling interest
 - To intrigue the audience
 - To get them thinking
- To sow the seeds of the theme of your talk.
- To connect with them mentally and emotionally

If we look at them TI Better Speakers series they offer four functions of an opening to which I would offer the following thoughts:

- Get attention - yes but it's far more than that
- Introduce the topic - yes in training structures like Tell 'Em, Tell 'Em, Tell 'Em but in a normal talk, tag it on after you've achieved the three objectives above.
- Establish Rapport - yes in the sense of connecting emotionally but you should only be friendly and smiling when it's appropriate to the speech.
- 5-10% of speech - that's the bit I agree with.

So what form can they take?

- Story - They're powerful and get the audience involved. Just make it personal
- A question - can be combined with a quote
 - Give them time to answer
 - Questions can engage emotions/memories by saying "can you remember" rather than "have you ever"
- Past or Future as a comparison. Again evoke people's memories or engage their dreams. Can you remember, or imagine a future.
- A fact or statistic with high impact .Make it real by involving the audience business people going bust
- Analogy/Metaphor great see article
- Saying or quotation - Make sure its relevant
- Reference occasion - perhaps look up history talk about thing

Is humour appropriate in an opening ? Absolutely but not a joke

How to deliver

- Think of using metaphors - see Anne Miller's article in The Toastmaster Dec 2005's .
- Use something the audience can relate to and use it to explain something complex.
- Use props in the opening
 - They add impact (particularly for the visuals)
 - They're memorable

Write your opening last

- I recommend you start with the end of your talk.
 - Where do you want the audience to end up
- Work out where the audience are likely to be now.
- Work out the steps to take them to the end
- Now you can see what opening will get you off to a flying start.

Things we don't want to hear

- I'm going to talk to you tonight.
- I'm sorry I haven't had much time to prepare.
- Ladies and Gentlemen - unless is a formal dinner.
- The weather report
- Your career history.
 - They don't care who you are.