

How to Make Your Rotary Presentation a Hit *Or how to make the most of your 30 minutes*

Each Tuesday the Rotary Club of Milwaukee brings together nearly 200 of Milwaukee's business, professional and community leaders at the War Memorial Center for lunch to listen and learn about the key issues affecting our community--the largest weekly gathering in the metro Milwaukee area. Our guest speakers address the most current and important issues with impact on the local, national and global level. The Rotary Club of Milwaukee is open to Rotarians, their guests and members of the media.

Thank you for agreeing to speak to the Rotary Club of Milwaukee. Presenters at Rotary have about thirty minutes. We recommend that you plan to speak for no more than 20 minutes, leaving 10 minutes for Q &A. Our members place great value on the Q & A –and you will find that it is a great way to connect you and your message to the audience. We have tried to answer some questions frequently asked by our speakers.

Should I use PowerPoint? Or run a video?

Many speakers effectively use PowerPoint to enhance their speech. We have found it best to use less than 20 slides. (Speakers who use more slides often rush through at least some of them, which can detract from the message.) Never use a slide that cannot be easily read. Photographs are often effective. Short DVDs (three minutes or less) can also nicely augment a presentation. Please let us know if we can share your PowerPoint with our members after you speak.

What is the protocol for using PowerPoint, video or any other audio visual format?

Please send your presentation to the Rotary office 24 hours in advance. (info@milwaukeeerotary.com). We will load your presentation onto our laptop, test it and have it ready to go when you arrive. If you have a video or audio file imbedded in your PowerPoint, it is especially important that we test it in advance. Testing is also critical if you plan to use a DVD.

Our speakers typically keep the laptop at the podium and advance the slides themselves. If you would like to discuss an alternate arrangement, please call the office.

The presentation I usually do on this subject is about 40 minutes long? What is the best way to proceed?

Strange as it may seem, some speakers come with 30 or more slides created for a longer presentation, and then just talk fast and flip quickly past slides that are of lesser importance. This does not work well. It is often hard to fully grasp the meaning behind 40 minutes of information delivered in half the time. Also, it creates a “rushed” feeling which impedes a general sense of satisfaction with the presentation.

We recommend that you consciously create a twenty minute presentation and delete the slides and talking points that you cannot include. Although it hard to pare down, your audience will greatly appreciate the care you take to create a thoughtful and meaningful presentation. PowerPoint makes it easy to delete slides; the hard part is cutting back what you want to say.

I often make a presentation together with a colleague. May both of us present?

Quite frankly, we have yet to see a co-presentation delivered effectively in twenty minutes. There have been co-presentations so packed with information that we wished we had scheduled the speakers individually over two weeks. In others, one speaker clearly outshines the other which diminishes the overall presentation. Our policy requires that any dual presentations must be approved in advance by the Rotary Program Committee.

Does the press attend your meetings?

Members of the press often attend our meetings, although the Q & A session is only open to Rotarians and guests. (Each speaker will decide whether or not to speak directly with the press after the meeting.) We audio-record all of our presentation which may be re-broadcast on public radio (WUWM.89.7FM) Some of the presentations are recorded for broadcast on public access television. If your presentation will be video taped, we will notify you in advance and request your permission.

Some final thoughts:

Please come to inform, not to solicit. Solicitation for donations and votes is prohibited. Please do not urge Rotarians to contact their legislators regarding your issue. The purpose of the presentation is to provide information so that each Rotarian can make a personal decision about the causes or candidates he or she wishes to support.

- We have made a commitment to our members to end each program by 1:15. The president will close the meeting at that time.
- Prepare your presentation so that you are both entertaining and informative. Decide and focus on the key message you want to leave with the Rotarians. (When all is said and done, what do you hope the audience will learn from your talk?)
- During the Q & A, please repeat the question so that everyone can hear.
- If you use PowerPoint, we may ask you if we can upload your presentation on to our website after the meeting.
- Please don't be upset if an occasional member rises to leave during your speech. Although we discourage this practice, some of our members are on very tight schedules and must, from time to time, leave early to attend another meeting.
- You are welcome to bring several guests with you. Please provide their names to Liz in advance of the meeting. (lizk@milwaukeeerotary.com)

To learn more about the club, including directions to the meeting, visit our website at www.milwaukeeerotary.com. The address of the meeting is:

War Memorial, third floor (Memorial Hall)
750 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(Parking is available on the north side of the building.)

For more information, contact:

Mary McCormick, Executive Director
414.276.4425
marym@milwaukeeerotary.com