



Public Speaking: 3 Reasons to Take the Floor

Skills and Professional Development



Public speaking, whether it's in front of a small meeting or a large audience, can be intimidating. To be a great public speaker, you need to engage with an audience, command their attention, and leave them with a lasting message. And before that, you need to overcome the typical public speaking “nerves” most people face.

However, public speaking has countless benefits. Most notably, speaking is a great way to enhance your career and [build a reputation](#). Below are three major ways public speaking can benefit your career.

1. Networking through public speaking

Public speaking is an excellent way to network with people who share your interests and goals. Although professional networking often takes place over social media or at formal networking events, making a direct connection with an audience as a speaker can be a more effective way to create lasting professional relationships.

You will get a more overwhelmingly positive response if you can maintain a good, conversational tone with your audience members. Make sure that you know your audience's interests and keep them in mind as you craft your speech. This will help you seek out audience members who you could benefit from networking with.

Public speaking can also help you stand out in the sea of online professional networking. Speeches are much more personal than resumes and CVs. If you've made a speech that particularly showcases your personality, ideas, or values, consider adding it to your LinkedIn profile or professional website.

2. Professional opportunities through public speaking

Public speaking can open the doors to many professional opportunities. A great place to begin public speaking is at educational institutions. Many student groups at universities are eager to host professionals who can share their career experiences.

Your company or organization may also be looking for employees to speak at recruiting events. Other professional opportunities include introducing company leaders at events or seminars. Once you have spoken at a few of these events, you can leverage your experience to speak at events where you are a more featured speaker.

Many professionals who dive into public speaking specialize in a particular field. For example, you can focus on speaking about finances or motivational speaking. Your specialization can also be inspired by your unique career path, such as a high-profile profession in [sports](#) or [politics](#). If you are looking to transition from one specialization to another, public speaking can be an excellent way to build a name for yourself in your new industry.

3. Raising your public profile through public speaking

Finally, public speaking can benefit your career by helping raise your public profile. When you speak at a lunch talk, conference, or other events, you are regarded as an expert on your speech's topic. Every speaking engagement provides you with a portable example of your expertise and skills. Public speaking events can also be more effective at raising your exposure than social media or online networking. Anyone can publish a tweet or share a new link — standing up in front of one's peers and speaking as an authority on a topic will make you truly stand out.

Of course, it is essential to have the knowledge in the relevant field when you make a speech. Always do your research when speechwriting and do not overextend yourself as an expert in areas where you are not one. It is also important to know that when you make a speech, there is no delete or edit button. This may be a terrifying concept, but with practice, your public speaking skills will improve. If you sense you may need more help, you can also seek out a speech coach or group.

Overall, public speaking is a valuable professional skill that can enhance your career. Overcoming your fears to address and connect with an audience can be a great self-esteem booster. It is also a great way to make new social and professional contacts. Finally, of course, public speaking can help you spread your ideas and make a real impact in your field or community. No matter your motivation, it's worth taking the chance to step up to the microphone.

[Olga V. Mack](#)



Fellow

CodeX

Olga V. Mack is a fellow at CodeX, The Stanford Center for Legal Informatics, and a Generative AI Editor at law.MIT. Mack shares her views in her columns on ACC Docket, Newsweek, Bloomberg, VentureBeat, Above the Law, and many other publications.

Mack is also an award-winning (such as the prestigious ACC 2018 Top 10 30-Somethings and ABA 2022 Women of Legal Tech) general counsel, operations professional, startup advisor, public speaker, adjunct professor, and entrepreneur. She co-founded SunLaw, an organization dedicated to preparing women in-house attorneys to become general counsels and legal leaders, and WISE to help female law firm partners become rainmakers.

She has authored numerous books, including *Get on Board: Earning Your Ticket to a Corporate Board Seat*, *Fundamentals of Smart Contract Security* and *Blockchain Value: Transforming Business Models, Society, and Communities*. She is working on her next books: *Visual IQ for Lawyers* (ABA 2024), *The Rise of Product Lawyers: An Analytical Framework to Systematically Advise Your Clients Throughout the Product Lifecycle* (Globe Law and Business 2024), and *Legal Operations in the Age of AI and Data* (Globe Law and Business 2024).