



Points to Consider for Quality Evaluations

Resource Guide – 2

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~ Do: ~

- **Always be evaluating!**
- Complete at least two manual speeches and/or listen carefully to evaluations at several meetings before you act as an assigned evaluator
- Be an example for your speaker
- Contact the speaker in advance to find out what they are doing and what they are trying to achieve, and read the speaker's project assignment. In other words, be prepared for your evaluation.
- Use the manual as your assignment guideline to how closely the speaker conforms to the task. Manuals change over time and your memory may be rusty.
- Know your speaker (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, tastes, style)
- Adjust your evaluation style to the level and sensitivity of the speaker. In other words, be gentle with “newbies”; be tougher on the old and the bold.
- Be alert during speeches, mentally and physically
- Concentrate and listen hard
- Be candid without being brutal
- Be sincere (regarding strong points)
- Be tactful
- Be empathetic
- Be realistic
- Be inviting
- Be modest—realize you are not the supreme authority on speaking. If there is obvious room for disagreement, preface your evaluation or specific remark with a suitable proviso.
- Be positive and constructive. Ask yourself: “if I were to hear this again in five minutes then what I have suggested will, in my opinion, make it better—achieving both the objective/s of the manual and the point of your speech.”
- Be complimentary wherever possible
- Remember, you are there for the **speaker's** benefit and the audience's.
- Alternate between praise and criticism
- Highlight/quote from the speech
- Experiment with a variety of evaluation methods
- Use humour in good taste
- Make concrete suggestions
- Be as complete as time permits
- State your points in an orderly form
- Have a few ‘meaty’ points
- Be specific—quote examples
- Make comments of value regarding significant elements
- Be concise
- Summarise the high and low points of the speech
- Speak plainly and forcefully necessary
- Conclude with a meaningful, positive comment
- Fill in the written evaluation in the speaker's manual.
- Augment your formal evaluation during the meeting with private comments after the meeting.
- Prepare a written evaluation for **every** speaker you hear

“Helping others helps ourselves grow and succeed!”

~ Don't: ~

- Attempt evaluation without knowing its purpose and process, pitfalls possibilities
- Commit faults in your evaluation in which you correct in the speech/speaker.
- Conduct an evaluation 'cold', although sometimes you'll have to. In which case, try to work out what the speaker's point is and work from there (i.e., what worked, what didn't, and how to do it better).
- Simply read your evaluation as a 'yes/no' from the manual
- Be biased against the speaker even if you may oppose their topic or treatment of it
- Frighten or intimidate an inexperienced speaker
- Slouch, mentally **or** physically
- Overlook the physical aspects of the speaker's delivery
- Be rude
- Give false praise (it backfires!). The worst speech has good points, and the best speech has growth points.
- Be a wimp. In other words, don't be afraid of being truthful. You can do this graciously and without pain or harm.
- Relax high standards
- Downgrade your authority/position as an evaluator with a legitimate viewpoint
- "Whitewash" by saying things like: "everything was absolutely wonderful" or "you're the best that ever lived!" Give the speaker meaningful feedback that he or she can actually grow with.
- Phrase comments in the negative
- Comment on deficiencies beyond the speaker's ability at this point. You can point them in the right direction.
- Mentally turn off if you are not an assigned evaluator
- Use the evaluation platform as a showcase for your own speaking skills, wit and wisdom
- Use "**but,**" after praise when you talk about growth points
- Re-hash the speech
- Limit your evaluations to the 'Tell and Sell' method
- Embarrass or humiliate the speaker
- Tear down without rebuilding
- Overly dwell on one point, or speak too long
- Make your evaluation a list of random, unconnected points
- "Snow" or overwhelm the speaker with too many points
- Be vague or general
- Nitpick on minor details, unless there were no major points
- Overshadow the speaker
- Neglect to summarise for maximum impact
- Deflate the speaker and discourage her or him from trying if again
- Weaken your evaluation with a trite closing comment
- Neglect immediate, permanent, written feedback
- Stop with your formal two to three-minute oral evaluation
- Lie
- Neglect the opportunity to practice evaluation skills and provide valuable feedback at those times when you are not an assigned primary evaluator

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