

MY NOTES FROM THE EVALUATION BOOT CAMP

By Keith Lee

**Calgary Advanced Toastmasters
Evaluation Boot Camp
Thursday, January 15, 2004 – 7:00 p.m.**

Toastmaster: Marvin Henry (ATM-B)

Session 1: Role Play

Moderator: Gerda Timm (ATM-B)

Speaker: Carolyn Kaldy (DTM)

Evaluator1: Anthony Chim (DTM)

Evaluator2: Jack Hunter (CTM)

Evaluator3: Ray Mulvihill (DTM)

Session 2: Round Robin Panel

Moderator: Sue Mattie (ATM-B)

Panelist1: Nandini Venkatesan (ATM-S)

Panelist2: Colleen Ritchie (ATM-B)

Panelist3: Mavis Oberding (DTM)

Session 3: Pilot a Panel

Moderator: Mark Ward (DTM)

Speaker: Keith Miles

Evaluator1: Harvey Taphorn (ATM-S)

Evaluator2: Molly Strickland (DTM)

Evaluator3: David Benjatschek (ATM-B)

Key points from session one:

In this session, Carolyn Kaldy presented Speech #3 from the CTM manual (“Organize your speech”). Three evaluators then gave feedback on her speech.

Each evaluator demonstrated a different variety of evaluation. Anthony Chim demonstrated a “whitewash” evaluation (effusive but not critical). Jack Hunter provided a “cut-throat” evaluation (extremely critical, with no positive observations). Finally, Ray Mulvihill gave a more balanced deconstruction of what he observed Carolyn doing well and what aspects of her presentation could be improved in later projects.

Ray Mulvihill evaluation notes:

Prescription for improvement and challenge

I saw a very strong opening

Very clear image of “cellophane person”

What it means: impact

As you moved into the body:

3 points pro, 3 points con

effective: helps make point as you led into conclusion

look at yourself and assess situation

some of the things I saw:

1. Hat way over the eyes hid the face. Something to be aware of;
2. eyes are “window to soul” – creates rapport between people
3. eye contact is important
4. Use of notes: keep the notes far away; make your eyes go down as little as possible.
5. Some things cannot be hidden! Trying to hide the body language – deliberate lack of body gestures, but there was still subtle movements – very powerful
6. little head movements very meaningful
7. tilt to side of head – head moving up/down
8. no big flowery movements – almost subliminal, but noticed

Recommendations:

1. Remember that hats can hide or frame the face
2. Would like to hear change in cadence
 - a. Example: racetrack – tight corners – speed, pauses used to emphasize and add impact to message
3. Organization: take time to make each example concise enough to follow
4. some things can't be hidden: powerful speaker no matter how hard you try to suppress that talent

Review of the different evaluations

About the whitewash:

No benefit to speaker

Good things all over

Everything OK even if bad!

Initial uplift washes away with lack of analysis

Speaker feels doubt about value: “I wasn't that good!”

Diminishing meaning

About the cut-throat:

Didn't find anything good

Not constructive

Overkill, downer

Evaluator wouldn't even look at the speaker

Lacking in confidence

Pointing out things wrong but no points for improvement

Easier to understand criticisms if they were illustrated with examples of what was seen as being done “incorrectly”

About the balanced evaluation:

Evaluate to motivate

Nice to hear what you did right

Mountains in front of you

Focused on a particular aspect of the speech – for instance, the hat/eyes

Positives are believable credible and supported by examples

Balanced evaluation

There are lots of other speeches to help speaker grow and work on finer points

There is time to work on the other stuff

General suggestions:

If you prepare before – can help make the feedback more meaningful

Encourage them to do what they do well again – foundation – things to strengthen that foundation

(Ray's story of learning how to whistle: Who did that? Do it again!)

Not a matter of "right" vs "wrong" – evaluator is providing his opinion! Always talk from personal stance

Beneficial to speak with speaker beforehand

Review objectives of assignment: how are they planning to manage it?

What the "hidden" agenda is? Point out things to watch for

Challenges themed through our growth

Handout: 10 key behaviors of an effective evaluator

Part 2: Panel

Topic 1: General Guidelines for evaluators?

N: If you can find 2 really strong aspects of the speech – like organization, sincerity, passion, etc – and find one aspect that they can improve

M: Sandwich

C: Persona, relation with audience

Topic2: Negatives and criticism

N: Took a long time to get comfortable with evaluations; can be intimidating. A learning experience; get better by doing/practice. First one is always the hardest.

C: Evaluator should contact speaker ahead of time and talk about the speech

Topic3: How to evaluate a speech where they don't meet the objectives?

N: Always something really great about a speech – a place to start. If excited about their growth – good perspective. "To make speech even better, one thing you could do would be..." – guidelines for improving that area

Best to avoid problems in the oral evaluation and talk to them afterwards so that they are excited about meeting the objectives next time

M: Knowing in our hearts. Suggestion: chat later. Suggestions for next presentation & talk to evaluator before presentation

C: your role is to tell them if they have met the objectives or not! Their prerogative if they want to redo the speech

Topic4: Advanced Manual evaluations

N: Mona Cooley – great mentor. Changed the way she thought about evaluations.

Mentors – talk, observer. Go to contests! See the best

C: ATM manuals: some unique and difficult to evaluate. Try to find someone who has done the manual before and get feedback. Listen to speeches outside your club. Read criteria/objectives; speak to speaker before the speech

Topic5: Problem: Avoiding criticizing the person instead of the project. How to avoid making the evaluation too personal?

Give evaluation from the heart and with kindness.

How would you like to be treated if you gave the presentation?

Hone in on the delivery, not the person.

C: Look at the person who gave the evaluation. “Expected better eye contact” – generated negative feeling. They are also learning how to deal with the job.

If too personal, discuss this with them. Part of the learning curve.

Topic6: Is there a nice way to tell the speaker that they didn't meet the objectives?

C: make suggestion that they try it again?

M: has never told anyone that they needed to do it again – it's their own problem.

Evaluator doesn't have the right to tell them what to do. Suggestions for improvements are not demands. Great to 'do over'

Topic7: What about evaluators who don't evaluate the goals and objectives of the speech?

Key: know what you are evaluating! Have the info in front of you.

N: hard work to give a speech; responsibility of booth speaker and evaluator to grow

S: from speaker's perspective, good to send the evaluator the objectives beforehand!

Old system was “pass/fail”... “I will do your speech next week and you will evaluate me”

Helping one another – no obligation – missed opportunities

Sue's handout:

Speech evaluation forms from CATS

On back there is a breakdown of things to look for

General Evaluator Table

Effective Evaluation Kit

Session #3: Panel of experts

How to evaluate an advanced speaker? Advanced speakers are important because it gives something to aspire to and to give good evaluations so we can become better

Keith Miles presented speech #5 from Humorous Speeches manual

Objective: present a humorous story that has a point, theme; exaggeration encouraged.

Title: "All of me"

Gist: Mr. Miles picked as a model for a Calvin Klein underwear promotion. Props included an actual thong, which Mr. Miles put on during the speech.

Evaluators:

Harvey Taphorn:

Making fun of Newfie accent

Could have done this: knock on doors, not tables

Focusing on content/structure:

Suggestion: warm up your introducer; something for him to warm up the audience for the speech

Objectives: exaggeration

Example: "perfect hair" – yeah right; gel in hair; blowing in the breeze

Not much content in a thong but there was a lot of content in the speech

Molly Strickland:

Why can't I do that?

Gets right into the character – you can see it in his face

I love the opening – sets the scene, sets the stage

Energy, enthusiasm, sparkles, bounces off you on the stage

(thinking about the audience response)

Body language. Good points:

CK coming in to suggest he could be the model

The strut demonstrated: should have leaned farther back b/c "they know what they're showing off"

Final point: closing strong, serious, pathos

Never cute: mother to child: "you're so... young"

Serious – setting the stage

Humor

Got to be yourself? But why?

Some words very wonderful; dropped voice when serious; raised eyebrows; talking to the audience with the face;

Eyes actually twinkled

Areas for improvement:

Body language good, but... how long to pause for laughter?

Gestures large, open

She enjoyed the strong ending, we can all be ourselves

Setting the scene, making the character

David Benjatschuk:

Congratulations
Comedy over the top
Great b/c under the top and wearing the briefs
Good material
Great writing, stories, one liners
Painting pictures in mind
Role in story: most ordinary man
Defying expectations
Toying with the audience
I look at the speaker: "A curious man"; a programmer – blend of science and art
Point for improvement:
Room set you up
When the thong was the point of focus
Good projection, gestures high
Thong brought in at a height
But when thong put on, you could not see the prop if you were in the back!
Should have gotten on elevated platform so full audience could get "glimpse of the greatness"
Set up the room so you get some height
Curiosity
Looking for reactions
Look at the space and take more control in future speeches

Other comments:

Ending a bit of a downer – should have ended on a stronger joke?
Rebuttal: conveying a story, not necessarily a punchline. However, did recognize that it is good to leave on a high note.

Observation:

Harvey: they were given specific things to focus on. Harvey did structure/form
Molly: did body language
David: emotional based; no walls; don't go with preconceived notions; base reaction; can you empathize? Put yourself in the shoes of the speaker

Observation:

A problem
Evaluating the opinions instead of the presentation?
How to keep away from that?

Hard to do
Hard to evaluate if they get really emotional (i.e. crying)

Like a news announcer
Listen to what they are saying
Try not to think too much on that topic

If motive is to persuade/motivate – what was reaction?

“This is how I reacted based on what my viewpoint is” → need to let them know where you are coming from, but have perspective... experience

General evaluator should be able to evaluate the evaluators

Observation: preaching to converted? Should promote event more thoroughly?

Session based on a Toastmasters magazine article: “Evaluation Boot Camp”
Sue Mattie’s High-Performance Leadership project

(notes prepared Jan 15, 2004)