

# SPEAK

Four ways to improve your public speaking skills

# UP

**I**t's a fact that most people fear public speaking more than they do death. However, for Monique Rissen-Harrisberg, founder and CEO of The Voice Clinic, that isn't the case. Over the last three decades, The Voice Clinic has changed the lives of individuals, such as CEOs, politicians and television presenters, by teaching them skills to boost charisma. Here are a few key tips to transform fear into confidence when giving speeches:

## 1. LEARN TO SPEAK CLEARLY

If you mumble, people assume you are not confident or even inconsiderate. If you speak too softly, you will appear hesitant and unsure of yourself. 'The quality of our voice counts for 38% of our communication message,' Rissen-Harrisberg says. 'We're assessed according to the tone, pace, pitch and clarity of our speech. One needs to speak with a deep, resonant and clear voice that projects strength, warmth and clarity.'

## 2. IMPROVING YOUR ACCENT

We tend to speak the way our friends and family do, since those are the people

who have the most influence over us when we are young. But in today's world, it's essential that we're understood and that whatever language we're using should be true to its rhythms and flow. 'When someone speaks English, they need to be familiar with the formation of all consonant and vowel sounds in order to understand how a word should be articulated,' Rissen-Harrisberg says. 'The flow of speech and neutral vowel is also essential to effective pronunciation in English.'

## 3. UPGRADING YOUR PRESENTATION SKILLS

Whether it's the structure and content or the delivery and style, it wouldn't hurt to improve our presentation skills. What's the best way to avoid death by PowerPoint? 'People really need to pay particular attention to the introduction and conclusion of the presentation, and the way they dress,' says Rissen-Harrisberg. 'People also need to learn various tools of the trade, like 'hooks',

opening statements, participation strategies and a few more tricks to keep an audience interested in what you have to say.'

## 4. TACKLING THE FEAR

When a speaker stands up to address an audience, this is accompanied by the feeling of butterflies in your stomach, an increased heart rate, breathlessness, sweating and a sense of things being out of control. Rissen-Harrisberg says, 'An adrenal reaction produces a fight or flight response. One needs to turn 'flight' (wanting to remove yourself from the situation) into 'fight' (making the most of the opportunity). People need to turn fear into enthusiasm and energy by focusing their attention on these skills and techniques, instead of bowing down to anxiety and nervousness.' **Man**

## WIN!

Get access to The Voice Clinic's Express Workshop

Email [info@voiceclinic.co.za](mailto:info@voiceclinic.co.za) with 'Man Magazine' in the subject and explain (in 50 words) why public speaking will enhance your career. Competition closes on 31 May 2016. For a free voice assessment, go to [thevoiceclinic.co.za](http://thevoiceclinic.co.za).

