

Public Speaking 101

Time: 5 minutes

Want to start speaking at events, but not sure where to start? Then this is the workshop for you! Our community needs new speakers, and we want to help you become one of them.

This hands-on, 45-minute collaborative workshop will help you work through a series of exercises:

- Owning your expertise
- Brainstorming ideas
- Drafting a proposal

Ground Rules

The first three of these are from the [Hacker School User's Manual Social Rules](#).

- **No feigning surprise:** Don't act surprised when people say they don't know something (e.g. "What?! I can't believe you don't know what *the stack* is!").
- **No well-actually's:** A well-actually happens when someone says something that's almost - but not entirely - correct, and you say, "well, actually..." and then give a minor correction. Almost all well-actually's in our experience are about grandstanding, not truth-seeking.
- **No backseat-driving:** If you overhear people working through a problem, you shouldn't intermittently lob advice across the room.
- **Be constructive & helpful:** Be nice and give useful feedback. Constructive feedback describes what occurred (without personal attacks), the impact, and offers suggestion for improvement.

Exercise 1: Are you an expert?

Time: 10 minutes

We'll practice owning our expertise.

expert – (*noun*) a person who has a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge of or skill in a particular area.

We are all experts of our own experience. Sharing our path, passion, and knowledge inspires others. We don't need to know everything about a topic to have something valuable to say!

Solo (2 minutes)

Spend a minute or two thinking of **professionally** related expertise that you possess. You'll be introducing yourself to a small group as an expert with 2 - 3 sentences that describe your expertise.

If you're stuck, consider the following:

- Technologies you know
- Soft skills
- Professional accomplishments
- Area(s) of focus
- Non-profit work
- Special skills

Group (8 minutes)

1. Split into groups of 8.
2. Introduce yourself as an expert to the group.

Hello, my name is _____. I am an expert [in|of] _____. *Provide*

2-3 sentences that give supporting evidence or additional detail.

3. If you have additional time after introductions, discuss the following:
 - a. How did it feel to call yourself an expert?
 - b. What was effective in introductions you heard? Ineffective?
 - c. Did you use your last name? If not, why?

Exercise 2: Brainstorming

Time: 15 minutes

Solo (5 minutes)

Work through the following questions by yourself. Think about technical or design topics that interest you. You could focus on things you know very well or things you want to learn. You can share lessons learned from working on a specific project or the industry observations.

Things you work on a lot (e.g. what you do at work, subject you study):

Topics you are excited about:

Things you work on sometimes (e.g. side project, open source work):

Topics you wish more people talked about:

Other

Group (10 minutes)

Discuss your ideas with a group of 4. Ask questions and encourage each other to dig deeper. Add new ideas as they come to you.

Pick one topic for the next exercise.

Exercise 3: Preparing an Abstract

Time: 15 minutes

Solo (10 minutes)

First you'll need a title. Just like books and movies, you want a punchy title that will catch the eye (but make sure that it's professionally appropriate).

The abstract doesn't need to describe everything in deep detail that you're planning to cover. Think of it as a movie synopsis. It should be short and to the point, summarizing only high-level ideas in your talk. Try to answer the following questions.

What is the talk about?

What will people get out of it?

Why is it important?

Who is the target audience?

Abstract:

Group (5 minutes)

Swap abstracts with someone from your group. Review each other's abstract and give constructive feedback. Ask questions for clarification.

What's Next?

Homework

1. Join the #public-speaking slack channel.
2. Write a short bio. The expertise from the first exercise is a great start.
3. Find 2 industry-related conferences.
 - a. Add the dates for the conference and CFP (call for papers) submission dates to your calendar.
 - b. Email organizers if the dates are not specified on their website.
4. Submit your abstract to the CFP.
5. If accepted, write the talk!

Tips

- **Abstract == MVP:** You only need the abstract up front. No need to write a whole talk if there's no place to give it.
- It's often helpful to start speaking at local events to build up confidence. This also helps you work on presentation skills and slides.
- Practice is the only way you're going to get better. It is hard at first, but does get easier.
- You don't need to write a new talk every single time you speak. You can speak at several conferences using the same talk.
- Rejection is normal and doesn't necessarily reflect on the quality of your talk. There are many factors including too few seats for interesting talks, types of talks submitted (e.g. 30 Android talks), and choosing talks to fit a particular theme. Try other venues.

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[Write/Speak/Code](#) inspired the Own Your Expertise exercise.

Resources

IRL Practice

- Barcamp!
- [Toastmasters](#)
- Meet ups
- Story slams
- Improv

Slides

- Keynote (Mac only)
- PowerPoint
- Google Drive Presentation
- [Prezi.com](#)
- [Reveal.js](#)

Images

- [The Noun Project](#)
- [Flickr](#)
- [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Inspiration

- [Technically Speaking Newsletter](#)
- [I Support Speakers and So Can You \(workshop\)](#)
- [Presentation Skills Considered Harmful](#)
- [We Are All Awesome](#)
- [So Why Should I Speak Publicly?](#)
- [How to Give a Killer Tech Talk](#)
- [Conference Submissions and Presentations \(video\)](#)