

THE HUMPHREY GROUP /

LEAD
EVERY
TIME
YOU
SPEAK

**THE LEADERSHIP
COMMUNICATION MODEL**

STEP 1: ADOPT A LEADER'S MINDSET

The first step in speaking as a leader—and the first component of The Humphrey Group's Leadership Model—is to adopt the Leader's Mindset. This means thinking like a leader every time you communicate. This is a critical step because the act of speaking as a leader is not a technical process. It is an approach by which you become connected to something in yourself that you believe the audience needs to hear and act upon. This is transformational leadership: sharing inner beliefs so that others can be transformed.

I. THINKING LIKE A LEADER BEGINS WITH VISION

- Ensure your vision is an elevated reality that you want others to believe in.
- Define the vision as a possibility that others can embrace or aspire to.
- Create a vision statement that you can easily share in any interaction.

II. THINKING LIKE A LEADER INVOLVES CONVICTION

- Have conviction about your vision and the possibilities it represents.
- Be inspirational, your convictions must be genuine.
- Clarify what your convictions are. What do you believe about the work that you do?
- Identify and take opportunities to share these beliefs with the audiences who need to hear them.

III. THINKING LIKE A LEADER INVOLVES MOVING FROM INFORMATION TO INSPIRATION

- Know that leadership is not based on transferring information; it is based on transforming people.
- Recognize that facts do not move people to act, but ideas do.
- Go beyond sharing data to share what you believe about that data.
- Lead with your idea first, and let the information support it.

IV. THINKING LIKE A LEADER REQUIRES COURAGE

- Be prepared to meet resistance.
- Act with courage by delivering strong messages with conviction, even in the face of opposition.

V. THINKING LIKE A LEADER MUST BE SOMETHING YOU DO EVERY DAY

- Remember: formal town halls and keynote speeches are obvious leadership opportunities—but they are few and far between for most leaders.
- Seize and create informal opportunities to inspire your audiences.
- Find a style that feels authentic and that you can embody every day.
- Build trust by being consistent.

VI. THINKING LIKE A LEADER IS AUDIENCE-CENTERED

- Create audience-centered communication with humility and empathy.
- Ask yourself “Why should my audience listen to me?”
- Engage your audience by showing them what's in it for them.
- Create messages that share what you believe while addressing a belief your audience holds.

STEP 2: CREATE A LEADER'S SCRIPT

Your script helps you achieve clarity of thought before you communicate, and it helps you convey that clarity of thought to your audience. By organizing your thinking in advance, you will ensure you deliver a clear message that is well-supported by facts and that inspires your audience to act. The cheat sheet below summarizes the purpose of each part of The Leader's Script and provides examples of how to use each piece effectively.

THE GRABBER

The grabber creates a connection with your audience that prepares them to hear your message. Because your grabber provides context for the message, it is usually developed once you know what your message will be. There are three kinds of grabber to choose from; you may choose one or combine them.

They are: The **personal grabber**
The **factual grabber**
The **literary grabber**

THE SUBJECT

This is your topic. It is a fact—no one can disagree with the subject. If you can complete these statements, you have your subject:

- I'm here to talk to you about...
- My topic is...
- Let's discuss...

THE MESSAGE

The message is a single sentence that states **your belief** about the subject. It is always **positive**, in line with the **organizational outlook**, and **supported by fact**, but it is not a statement of fact—it is an argument. The message begins:

- I believe...
- The one thing I want you to take away is...
- I'm convinced that...

A message must be **audience-centered**—ask yourself: what's in it for my audience?

STRUCTURAL STATEMENT

This sentence tells your audience how you will prove your message, without going into detail. It tells your audience how the information that follows will be organized. For example:

- Let me tell you the five reasons I believe this.
- Here are four ways we're going to cut costs.
- First I'll tell you why we need to improve our sales process, and then I'll show you how we're going to do it.

STRUCTURE

There are five patterns of organization you can choose from to prove your message. Here's a look at each pattern and the situations in which you should use it:

Use the **reasons** model...

- To prove **why** your message is true.
- When you are trying to convince your audience of the validity of an idea.

Use the **ways** model...

- To show **how** you will, or did, achieve your message.
- To list steps that should be taken, or have been taken.

Use the **situation/response** model...

- When you have a problem and a solution.
- When you need to first convince your audience **why** to do something, and then tell them **how** to do it.

Use the **present/future** model...

- To compare/contrast two situations.
- To present a project update or make future projections (contrasting past/present or present/future).

Use the **chronological** model...

- To show that a series of events over time prove the message.

RESTATED MESSAGE

Simply restate your message at the end of your talk.

CALL TO ACTION

This is a **concrete, time-sensitive, and assignable** next step that you either ask your audience to take, or direct towards yourself.

STEP 3: USE THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP

Language is a powerful leadership tool. It can convey a sense of conviction and passion to listeners. It can make complex concepts simple and bring ideas to life. Too often, though, it is used to impress rather than to inspire, or as a substitute for clear thinking. We can easily forget to be audience-centered when choosing our words, and in doing so fall into the jargon trap. The spectrum below plots six types of jargon according to the level of damage it can do:



It's crucial that leaders recognize the importance of language—both what to do and what not to do. So what kind of language should you use? When you want to inspire with your words, keep in mind that the language of leadership is:

POSITIVE AUDIENCE-CENTRIC VISIONARY JARGON-FREE AUTHENTIC
PASSIONATE DIRECT CONCISE PROFESSIONAL RHETORICAL

What does the language of leadership look like in practice? Here's how you can get started.

DO:

Use strong, confident verbs

- "I believe," "I know we can."
- "I'm convinced that," "I'm confident we will."

Be positive

- Say what actions can be taken rather than what isn't known or can't be done.

Use the active voice

- "We are taking action" rather than "action is being taken."

Be conversational

- Simple words ("use" rather than "utilize").
- Short sentences.
- Personal pronouns (I, you, we).

Be concise and precise

- Use "shorthand" and "shared-identity" jargon such as acronyms and technical terms sparingly.
- Don't use three words where one will do.
- Be as specific and direct as possible.

Use figures of speech

- Use antithesis to create contrast ("It was the best of times, it was the worst of times").
- Use metaphors to create comparison and change the way people think.
- Use rhetorical questions to engage others.

DON'T:

Use weak verbs and/or verb forms:

- "I think," "I feel," "I wonder if," "I thought we could."
- "We might be able to," "The way we saw it."

Be negative

- "I'm not sure, but," "I could be wrong..."

Apologize unnecessarily

- Avoid "I'm sorry" when you misspeak or wish to interject.

Be overly casual

- "You guys," "you know," "like," "I mean."

Use qualifiers

- "Probably," "maybe," "perhaps," "sort of."

Minimize yourself

- "Just," "a little bit," "only," "really quickly."

Rely on filler words

- "Um," "uh," "so," "etcetera," "and "what not."

Fall into the jargon trap

- Avoid "assumption" jargon, such as overly technical or specialized language.
- Don't use "inflation," "lack of clarity" or "obfuscation" jargon.

STEP 4: ACHIEVE A LEADER'S PRESENCE

Presence is a quality that we ascribe to people who can connect with us and hold our attention. When they speak to us they are literally present. This ability to be “in the moment” and to draw the audience in is essential for leaders—but how can you achieve it? Presence begins with clarity of thought. The most engaging speakers have a clear message prepared, and a genuine conviction behind it. This conviction helps them exude an authentic presence that is about connecting to inspire rather than to entertain. Presence is a practice in two important ways: first, it can be learned and mastered; and second, it must be projected in all situations.

The qualities that a dynamic presence creates in the speaker might seem abstract, but the skills required to project those qualities are concrete.

USE CONFIDENT BODY LANGUAGE

- Stand or sit tall—stature gives you presence.
- Face your audience. This is key for connection.
- Be open. Keep your arms and hands open, not closed or folded.
- Take up the right amount of space—neither too much nor too little.
- Keep your body and your arms open to the audience.
- Use purposeful gestures—connect your movements to your words.
- Avoid gesturing from the wrist or the elbow—use the whole arm.

MAKE YOUR EYE CONTACT CONFIDENT AND CONVERSATIONAL

- Establish a connection by making eye contact before you begin speaking.
- Hold your audience by maintaining eye contact for the duration of each idea.
- Build rapport with the whole room when presenting. Focus your eye contact on one person at a time. The rest of the audience will feel included, even if you aren't speaking to them directly.
- “Land” each idea with someone—don't drop down to your notes before you are finished.
- When presenting with slides, remember to look at your audience, not the slide.

USE THE RIGHT PACE

- Slow down. Don't try to speak at the speed of your thoughts.
- Control your rate of delivery of ideas. Deliver the most important or complicated ideas more slowly than easy to grasp ones.
- Pause! Ensure the audience can digest each idea you share.
- Control your rate of delivery of words. Articulate words clearly to control your pace and ensure your audience can understand you.

KEEP YOUR EXPRESSION NATURAL

- Be conversational. Use short, easy to grasp sentences and a natural, personal tone. Ask yourself, “Would I sound like this if I were just having a good conversation?”
- Be passionate—use your tone to show your audience how they should feel about what you're saying. Energize your delivery with conviction, emphasizing key words and ideas.
- Be confident. Avoid “upspeak”—raising your voice at the end of a thought—as it undercuts you. Ensure your voice reflects the confidence you have in your message.