

Ten Tips to make you a Better MC

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This document contains a small collection of valuable tips and techniques to help you become a better Master of Ceremony. It's just a small part of a vast collection of Resources and Advice.

One point of contact

This is a tip I picked up many years ago and it really is a great one that can potentially save you a lot of embarrassment and many tricky situations.

In most assignments where you are MC at an event, there are many people who feel that they can give you instructions. There is the CEO, the Committee and other prominent people at the event.

I always establish early on with my client, that I will only take instructions from ONE person.

If anyone else comes up to me and asks "can I have 5 minutes onstage" or "can you read out this notice" etc... I tell them they must clear it with my point of contact first.

This chain of command can and will save you from all sorts of tricky situations that have the possibility of making you look bad. For example "in jokes" that only a few people will laugh at, spoof birthday/engagement announcements etc.

Don't leave your MC Notes on the Lectern and expect they will stay there.

There's nothing worse than bounding back up to the lectern to introduce the next speaker or event and finding your sheet of notes is gone!

They can blow away, get gathered up by the previous speaker, tidied up by AV people, used to scribble down a note etc etc etc.

Either take them with you in a folio / clipboard or TAPE a copy of them to the Lectern.

Keep the AV People onside!

Keeping the Audio Visual people onside with you will certainly smooth your job and help get through the inevitable emergencies.

I technique I learnt from the great MC Ron Tacchi is this.

When you first meet the AV guys, make sure you write down their names.

Then as you progress through your setup and familiarisation of the room, write down anything that needs to be changed or adjusted.

Then, at the appropriate time, you can give them a list of everything you need done all at once, rather than interrupting them time after time.

You can also do this with hotel and the banquet staff, who deal with such things as tables, chairs, jugs of water etc.

Timing

One of your roles as the MC is to watch and control the timing. Here are some tips to help you do this.

Firstly, make sure you subtly remind any speaker how important it is to keep the event on track.

Secondly, make sure you double check with the speaker how long they have been allotted.

In most cases you are not the person who has negotiated with the speaker to be there, so you need to check that you are all aware of how long there is available.

Thirdly, make sure you discuss with the speaker how you are going to signal the time remaining to them and the fact that you would like them to acknowledge this signal.

Fourthly, how are you going to deal with the situation if things are running late?

Do they cut short to finish on the allotted finishing time or do they stick to their allocated time.

Most speakers should work with you here to get the event back on track.

Discussing these points early on can go a long way towards solving potential timing problems.

Introductions

A Biography is not an Introduction!

Once you start running events on a regular basis, you will learn the difference.

Good speakers and presenters will know the difference too. If they give you an introduction, it's a great sign that they know what they are doing. It's surprising though, how few actually do it! The introduction by the MC can often set up the speech, preparing the audience for the message.

If you have to write an introduction for a guest speaker, one very easy structure that I use is this.

Why this Speaker?

Why this Subject?

Why this Audience?

Why Now?

If you answer these 4 points in your introduction, it gives a nice flow to the introduction.

You establish the credibility of the Speaker, the importance of the subject, the link between the topic and the audience and finish with excitement.

Tips. If the Speaker insists on you reading out a long bio/introduction make sure of two things.

1/ Frame it by informing the audience that you have been asked to share the following information.

2/ Make the Speaker aware that their time starts from when you start the introduction.

A current trend these days is for speakers to often have their own Video introductions. These can be 4 or 5 minutes long. Make sure this time is included as part of their allocated time or you can get 5 minutes behind straight away.

People Moving

Another danger spot in running any event, is getting people back in the room on time.

The 20 minute coffee breaks that drifts on to 30 minutes etc.

Here's a few tips to keep things moving.

1/ Be punctual yourself. If you say you are starting at 1pm, start then. If people see that you are always 5 minutes late they start to factor this in to their behaviour.

2/ Have some fun prizes or awards that you give out to the first people back in the room.

3/ Have a piece of music that you always play loudly that signals times up.

4/ There are various PowerPoint Countdown timers that you can display on screen.

5/ People Movers.

Bring this up early at your briefing session.

If possible, have some designated people to act as "People Movers."

I always try and get word to a Conference Committee that their help is also absolutely essential for the smooth running of any event.

If these people are on the ball and on your side, they can be helping you get people in and out of the room as well as the designated people movers.

If they are not on the ball, they can often be the worst offenders, out there chatting to groups of people delaying your start times.

A pre-emptive strike is the best approach here.

Themes

This is an area where just a little time and thought can have a great impact.

What is the theme of the event?

What Words or Slogans are being used?

What is the colour theme?

Once you have asked these questions, often ideas will come to you that will add to the theme.

Consider the way you dress.

The colour of the Tie or Jacket. Would a hat add to the theme?

Consider your MC Notes. Do you use a Black Folio? Perhaps a Clipboard is more appropriate.

Is there a Prop you can have on the lectern – Oil Can, Pumpkin, Steering wheel?

A few minutes Brainstorming can pay off in big returns and shows the audience and your client that you have done your homework.

Scripts

There is a danger in being “Over Scripted.”

By this I mean an MC who is just up there reading everything out OR being up there and reciting a script they have memorised.

Both of these can come across as too rigid and the audience will have trouble “connecting” with you.

Now, I don't mean that you shouldn't be very well prepared about what you are going to say, who you are going to introduce etc.

Just try and be a little more relaxed and flexible and you will come across as a better MC.

MC's Resource Toolkit

I wish I'd started mine a lot earlier than I did, so if there is just one Tip you take on board from this little publication, it's this one.

Start keeping a book of IDEAS.

Use this to record - Jokes, Ice Breakers, Stories, Introductions, Quotations, Thank You's etc.

I suggest you carry around a small note book or index cards with you at all time.

When you read or hear anything that could be usable in the future, write it down.

This might be on TV, reading a magazine, on the radio etc.

Then once a week, gather all the fragments and record them in a Master Document.

I do this on my computer, in a Word Document. Then, every now and then I print it out and it becomes my new Resource Book. I bind this with a Comb Binder and leave it sitting on my desk.

If I'm preparing for a job or actually at a job, I can flick through the book and spot quotes, phrases and bits that may be useful. Often you don't know exactly what a speaker is going to be talking about and you can suddenly find an appropriate bit to add into the thankyou.

I also use the printed document to record what I've done, while at the job.

To Do lists, Quotes, exercises etc. This then gets updated on returning to the office. I also jot down things that I may have said spontaneously that worked well. This is very valuable if you get asked back to MC another event for the same group!

The Resources book then becomes a central point for all this valuable information and ensures that ideas don't get lost.

Your Role

The last concept that I think is important for all MC's to understand is this.

It's not about you. It's about the event.

Being the MC is not about showcasing your own talents, but about running the event smoothly.

The attendees should be remarking "what a great event" and not "what a great MC."

Often they will not even know how hard you worked in the preparation and planning, in the on the spot adjustments and tweaking to make things fabulous.

Often, you will even not get thanked or acknowledged for the contribution you made!

Once you understand this you have made an important step towards being a successful and dynamic Expert MC.

You will know yourself after any event how well you did!

If things didn't go as planned, you will know what you have to do to improve and prepare for next time.

If things did go well, you will be storing the information away to use again.

Your Bonus #1

At least once a month we send out our regular Expert MC Newsletter via email.

New Resources, Reviews, Ideas & Articles from the world of professional MC's.

Once you've read the first few and if you don't want to receive any more, just click the unsubscribe button contained in each mailing.

We hate spam as much as you, your email address will be erased from the system.

Your Bonus #2

Your personal invitation to join our private LinkedIn Networking group!

Join over 1200 other professional MC's in our private group.

We share ideas, resources and even job possibilities.

Follow this link and apply to join the group.

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Expert-MC-2817435/about>

Depending on my busy schedule, it may take a week before you are granted access but as you have shown interest already by downloading this report, we know you are serious about becoming a better MC and you will get access.