



Michigan Townships Association Speaker Guidelines

The Michigan Townships Association has prepared the following ideas and guidelines to assist you in presenting to our members. They are based on observations made by our members on evaluation forms after workshops.

Before your presentation:

- ✓ Review the agenda agreed upon by you and the MTA staff member coordinating your workshop. If you see areas that you cannot speak with authority on, please notify the MTA staff member immediately.
- ✓ Discuss with the MTA staff member when you would like to schedule breaks in your presentation. Determine the appropriate length for your breaks.
- ✓ Visual aids are vital to the success of a presentation, especially during a full-day workshop. You should utilize a PowerPoint presentation, or copy your outline and examples onto transparencies and use an overhead projector. Flip charts are also available.
- ✓ When preparing handouts, be mindful of the size of your type. The handout will have limited value if our members have to strain their eyes to make out the print. If your PowerPoint presentation will serve as a handout, please limit each page to four slides to leave room for note-taking.
- ✓ Make sure you're practiced enough to speak without reading directly from an outline. You should supplement what the attendees are seeing in front of them, not reading it to them.
- ✓ Just before the start of your presentation, it is general practice to have an MTA staff member or volunteer member make a few announcements and then introduce you. We make every effort to start workshops on time.
- ✓ For the majority of MTA programs, a lavalier (clip-on) microphone is available. Speakers are asked to use a microphone unless the size of the room or number of attendees does not warrant it. Many of our members will not acknowledge that they cannot hear at a workshop, however, they indicate this on their evaluation form.

During your presentation:

- ✓ During your presentation, please repeat every question asked before answering it so that you can give the audience a context for your response. This is one of the top complaints on speaker evaluations from our members.
- ✓ While it's important to allow time for questions during the workshop, be mindful of your time, and don't let a few members of the audience drive your content with their questions or personal stories unless this information enhances your presentation and the messages you're trying to convey.
- ✓ Take note of appropriate times for you to ask the audience questions. The make-up and experiences of the group may alter your presentation slightly, thereby encouraging a more interactive workshop.
- ✓ In large groups, you may find that audience members engage in side conversations during your presentation. As the speaker, be conscious of your responsibility to control the group. Side conversations make it difficult for audience members to hear and focus on your presentation.
- ✓ Adhere to the scheduled breaks. Oftentimes refreshments are scheduled around these breaks, and changing the schedule at the last minute will disrupt the flow of the workshop. Don't let the break run too long; it's helpful to let audience members know when they should return to the classroom.

After your presentation:

- ✓ Plan a "closing" to your presentation. Don't rush to add in additional material as the clock ticks down.
- ✓ Advise audience members that you will be available for questions at the conclusion of the workshop.
- ✓ Remind the audience to turn in their completed evaluation forms to the MTA registration desk. A summary of the evaluations will be sent to you a couple weeks after your workshop.