Senior Public Speaking

There are several free articles on the Toastmasters International website that your members can download and they can be found at

http://www.toastmasters.org/MainMenuCategories/FreeResources/NeedHelpGiving aSpeech.aspx

Our tips would be around two themes - writing the speech and speech delivery.

Writing the speech:

Be clear first of all about the speech objectives - is to inform, persuade, entertain or inspire? Think about what you might want the audience to do as a result of your speech.

Try to use short sentences and pauses rather than long sentences joined together with "ands." Use vivid, descriptive words to help the audience visualise what you are saying and rhetorical devices (similes, metaphors and alliteration) to make the speech more memorable. And avoid the use of jargon. Structure your speech with a powerful opening and close and 3 to 5 points main points to support your theme. Research your topic well, practice and learn it off by heart. A good way to remember speech structure is "tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them."

Speech delivery:

The main things to consider with speech delivery are vocal variety - volume, pitch and rate - and body language - gestures, stance, movement, facial expressions and eye contact. Try to converse with and engage the audience, vary your voice according to the content, come out into the audience if possible and look at each part of the audience so as they feel you are speaking directly to them. Ensure that gestures are big and congruent with your words. Use pauses to provide impact at key points in the speech and where appropriate consider the use of visual aids. Remember that the first few seconds are important, smile, look confident and look directly at your audience, speak with enthusiasm and sincerity. And the last impression lingers longest - close with a powerful conclusion - a call to action, a quotation or a rhetorical question.

John Cox

Treasurer of East Midlands Speakers Club