

The Articulate Attorney: Public Speaking for Lawyers

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This book is a valuable tool for anyone who wants to improve their public speaking skills.

Because public speaking can be such a big part of their jobs, it may be easy to assume that attorneys come out of law school as accomplished orators. But Brian K. Johnson and Marsha Hunter understand that many lawyers need help in developing their speaking and persuasion skills. In *The Articulate Attorney: Public Speaking for Lawyers*, they offer insightful and practical techniques and methods to help attorneys become polished speakers. Their teachings will also be beneficial to speakers in any other profession or those who want to improve their skills.

Johnson and Hunter, communication consultants for the legal profession, explain that even lawyers who are not trial or litigation attorneys, such as corporate or transactional lawyers, must make the effort to become powerful speakers. "Good public speaking is not based on pretending, acting, or faking it; you must look, sound, and feel authentic to appear confident, comfortable and credible." Whether in a courtroom or a boardroom, a lawyer's ability to speak with authority and persuasion is a highly valuable asset.

Johnson and Hunter organize their material into three main sections: body, brain, and voice. In discussing the aspects of the body related to speaking, they cover such topics as the importance and proper use of gestures, lower body control, posture, and breathing techniques for maximum volume and projection.

In the section on the brain, Johnson and Hunter explore the effects of adrenaline and how to channel it effectively. They not only relate how the speaker's mind functions during a speech, but they keenly explain how the listener's mind processes the information being spoken. The third section covers the voice and thoroughly describes such subjects as the anatomical structure that affects how sound is produced, eliminating thinking noises, varying the pace, and speaking in phrases instead of whole sentences.

In addition to all the valuable information on public speaking, Johnson and Hunter provide a helpful section that actually lays out how to effectively practice using the material. The two appendixes give bullet-pointed recaps of all the material as well as a checklist for self-critiquing a video presentation.

The Articulate Attorney's main strength is that Johnson and Hunter are able to convey their vast experience and knowledge of public speaking in a conversational manner without the complex legalese that may be expected in a book aimed at lawyers. The information is well structured and easily understood, and includes enough illustrations to allow for visualization of the points being made. Johnson and Hunter have provided a valuable resource for speakers at any experience level who want to improve their skills and effectiveness.

JEFF FRIEND (July 23, 2015)

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