

A Template for Effective Evaluation

as presented by Kevin L. Carlson, CTM, CL © 1999

An effective evaluation, just like an effective speech, should contain an opening, a body, and a conclusion. It should not be severely critical nor superficial; it should be constructive. The evaluator should take into consideration the objectives of the speech project and the speaker's immediate and ultimate goals. Also, the evaluator should take into consideration that the focus is the mechanics, not the content, of the speech.

In the opening, very briefly, give your overall reaction to the speech. Try to make this a positive statement. It is not necessary to reiterate all the points made in the speech; everyone was listening, so mirroring the content of the speech is simply redundant. Let me repeat that -- parroting back the speech is superfluous.

In the body,

- point out the things that you feel the speaker did well
- discuss how you think the speaker did in meeting the manual speech objectives
- mention any additional items to which the speaker asked you to pay attention
- most importantly, offer suggestions for improvement in a positive manner

Only an insensitive clod would present his or her opinion as if it were fact. Or rather, I feel that you may wish to express yourself in a manner that is less confrontational and more consensus building. For example:

Instead of: Try:

Your opening was weak. I was confused by your opening.

You failed to make eye contact. It appeared to me that you avoided eye contact.

You still have to work on your nervousness. I see that you less nervous than when you gave your Ice Breaker and am sure you can make even greater improvements.

You should use more vocal variety. It appears to me that you could really grab the audiences attention by varying the pace and the volume of your speaking voice.

Your gestures are perfect for radio. I discovered that when I let go of the lectern, my hands and arms helped my words flow more smoothly; you may want to try that.

In the conclusion, summarize your reaction to the speech by pointing out the speaker's

accomplishments. End this two to three minute evaluation on a positive note.

No role at a Toastmasters meeting is more important nor has a greater impact on your fellow Toastmasters than the evaluator. We can all improve when evaluations are neither a whitewash nor a scathing criticism.