

Speech Openings

Note from Cynthia: Speakers need to “hook” an audience in the first 30-to-60 seconds of a speech. I like to offer an audience something interesting or unexpected. For example, I often research the town or country where the speech will take place so I can relate it to the topic being addressed or to the speaker’s company or business.

Here are **five examples** of “speech openings” I had fun developing for speeches by IBM senior executives.

From a speech by an IBM Vice President at cdXpo, Las Vegas

Good morning. The selection of this city as the site for the first ever cdXpo is appropriate because both Las Vegas and the IT industry are case studies in innovation, change and renewal. Both owe their success to dreamers, pragmatists and entrepreneurs. And both appreciate what a little glitz, glamour and show biz can do for a business.

First a community of Spanish explorers and then a Mormon missionary settlement, Las Vegas gave us the men who laid track for the Union Pacific and poured concrete for the Hoover Dam. They traveled the Santa Fe Trail, charged up San Juan Hill and created a gaming and entertainment capital from the dust of the desert.

The computer industry boasts its own pioneers and explorers – we call them engineers, mathematicians and inventors.

Las Vegas had Billy the Kid, Doc Holliday and Bugsy Siegel. The computer industry had Herman Hollerith, Tom Watson and Bill Gates.

Las Vegas had the Rat Pack and the voices of Sammy, Frank and Dino. The computer industry had the Homebrew Computer Club and the voices of Wozniak, Jobs and Gordon French.

Las Vegas and the IT industry started small, grew fast and never stopped striving for the “next big thing.” In Las Vegas, it was mega-resorts like the MGM Grand and Bellagio. In the computer industry, it was the Internet and massively multiple-user online gaming.

Both Las Vegas and the IT industry continue to grow and prosper.

Today, we’ll talk about an area of explosive growth – the anytime, anyplace, on any device, on-demand world...and the key role of digital media in that world.

Let’s begin...

From a speech by an IBM Vice President at a Women's Entrepreneurship Forum in Istanbul

Good morning. The last time I was in Istanbul, I had an experience many people have – I bargained with a vendor over the price of an Oriental rug. I like to think I got a good deal; I suspect the seller feels the same way.

It was the most basic of commercial transactions: I was competing with other buyers for the rug; the seller was competing with other rug-sellers for my business.

This centuries-old practice is repeated every day on the Web. Buyers and sellers find each other and conduct business with the same efficiencies as Istanbul's rug market.

From a lone computer in her kitchen, a woman whose business is floor coverings can sell her rugs and carpeting to consumers, contractors and architects anywhere in the world. She would be just another e-business engaged in digital trade.

She might be part of a Web portal, an "extra-net," or a password-protected Web site where businesses offer their products and services to online buyers.

Like many other small- and medium-sized businesses, she might also sell her rugs on eBay and other on-line auction sites where she creates an ad with digitized product pictures and arranges electronic payment.

She can purchase "key words" such as "Oriental rugs" on Google or Yahoo. Each time someone searches those words, the ad for her rug business pops up at the top of the screen. Each time a buyer clicks on her ad, she pays Google or Yahoo a few cents or dollars.

Never before have there been so many opportunities for entrepreneurs to use e-business and digital trade to sell their products and services in an anytime/anyplace world.

This is today. Let's look now at the "Next Generation Internet," the network of tomorrow...

From remarks by an IBM Vice President to the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers

Buenos noches, senores, senoras y señoritas. I'm delighted to be with you on this happy occasion as the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers recognizes and rewards outstanding Hispanic scholars.

I'm also happy because I get to speak on my favorite topic: the Hispanic technology opportunity and how networking can help take you where you want to go.

These are exciting times for Latinos in America. A recent *USA Weekend Magazine* (hold up cover) asks: “Who will be the first Hispanic President?”

The article suggests the most dynamic voice in America today speaks both Spanish and English, celebrates Cinco de Mayo and the Fourth of July, has gone from crossing borders to entering boardrooms, and that one of you – one of you – may well occupy the White House in our lifetimes.

To coin a phrase, we’ve come a long way, baby. But to fully realize the promise and power of the moment, there are challenges to meet as well as milestones to celebrate.

Let’s take a look...

From an IBM Vice President’s speech to the National Association of Broadcasters, Las Vegas

I love Las Vegas. It’s a place of big ideas...bold ambitions...and non-stop action...just like my workday at IBM.

I’m delighted to be here to talk with you today. Your business is poetry and prose and song and dance and heart. The media your companies produce makes us laugh and cry and think and feel.

Right now, a lot is happening in your industries, isn’t it? One of them begins with an “F” and that stands for FCC. I’m not going there. The other begins with a “D” and that stands for Digital. We’re all going there.

An MTV/Viacom study revealed their average consumers live a 30-hour day. They surf the Net, text and Twitter, view DVDs, play MP3s, download movies and watch TV.

They do it all simultaneously enough to add up to 30 hours of daily, a la carte consumption. Interestingly, the study included not just teens, but almost 5,000 Americans between four and 70.

Other studies suggest that by next year, 50 percent of Web content will be downloadable digital media. Ninety-two percent of online users will communicate via digital media by then, too.

Today, Mickey Mouse has made the jump to digital animation. MSN has brought live Major League Baseball to the desktop. And color-film pioneer Technicolor has embraced a digital cinema environment because the film industry stands to save \$5 billion annually by going digital.

In this environment, it seems to me, you have two choices. You can either walk down the aisle with your digital bride right now...or have a shotgun wedding later on. But let’s not kid ourselves, the baby’s on the way. What better place to take the digital plunge than Las Vegas, wedding capital of the world?

What will the union of digital content and business operations across the enterprise produce? Lots of babies called “improved efficiency,” “new business opportunity,” and “increased revenue.”

Let's take a look...

From a talk on “Aging in the 21st Century Workforce” by an IBM Vice President

Good morning. I'm delighted to be here to “nudge” you out of your comfort zone and shed some light on the “changing faces of aging,” as your conference title suggests.

I am one of those faces. I'm 64 years old. I've worked at IBM for 37 years. I may retire in about two years.

When I do, I won't be playing bingo at my local senior center. I plan to travel, perhaps consult, volunteer or mentor, take photography classes and continue to ride my 10-speed every chance I get.

In fact, a new magazine called *GeezerJock* (hold it up) has just hit the stands. It's dedicated to the growing number of older athletes participating in competitive sports. I may subscribe.

In short, I'm like millions of individuals across the country. We're older, active Americans who are retiring old notions of what it means to age in this country.

We're a growing army of people using our later years to rethink and revitalize our lives. We're trying new careers, launching new businesses, returning to school or pursuing paths that build on the interests, skills and wisdom we've acquired through the years.

This new generation of retirees will be the healthiest, most affluent, longest-lived and best educated in history. The average American reaching 65 today can expect to live another 18 years. The chances that he or she will reach the age of 90 have nearly doubled since 1965 – up from 14 to 25 percent. By 2050, those odds will be 40 percent.

Some of us may live even longer. In 2005, more than 48,000 persons in the U.S. were 100 years or older. The United Nations projects that number to soar to 3.2 million worldwide by 2050.

That same year, older people are projected to outnumber children for the first time in history.

Thirty years ago, retirees may have been looking for a rest. Today's group, by necessity or choice, is looking for the next challenge.

Let's take a look...