



# Evaluation Masterclass

Notes from the session

By

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## **Creating excellent Evaluations by Bob Ferguson**

### **Introduction**

We all need feedback. It doesn't matter where we are in the organisation or our public speaking presentation training, we need effective feedback.

So, learning to provide effective feedback is one of the most powerful skills you can learn. It will help you help the other members of Toastmasters grow and develop, and boost their career potential.

You'll help the organisation get the best value from the staff you've helped train. Evaluation skills can be used for more than speaking skills. You can use these techniques to help staff develop with any work-based skills so they're more effective in the workplace.

Perhaps best of all you can't help others without benefitting yourself. By learning what to say and how to deliver effective evaluations you'll find your own skills growing too.

This session will focus on the tools and techniques that will help you deliver effective evaluations every time.

We'll split the session into three areas:

1. Building your skills to deliver effective evaluations.
2. How to use those skills to enter competitions.
3. How to use evaluation skills effectively.

### **Part 1 – Building Your Evaluation Skills**

This session is not solely focused on winning evaluation competitions. To my mind we should aim to develop as exceptional evaluators and competitions are the way we measure our growth. Winning evaluation competition should be a by-product of being an excellent evaluator in the club.

But evaluation is also powerful outside of Toastmasters. If you're ever asked to give your opinion on a project or somebody's work, you'll find that all the same rules we use in Toastmasters for evaluation will prove valuable tools in giving constructive feedback to co-workers.

#### **What's the key?**

For me the key is about three things: tips, tips, tips.

I think we're probably all used to giving tips as a part of our recommendations. It's natural to highlight something a speaker can improve, and then give them a tip by which they can improve it.

What's far less recognised is that commendations are an excellent place for you to be able to give tips to the rest of the audience. It stops your evaluation being solely focused on the speaker and makes it genuinely a speech for the whole audience. You can easily commend somebody with something like "the start to Lesley's speech was a fantastic, startling statement. That's a great way for you to open any speech in the future". You've clearly commended the speaker, but you've also offered their excellent technique as an example and the basis of a tip for the rest of the audience.

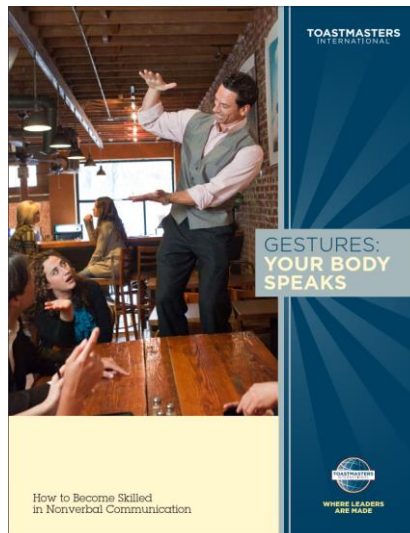
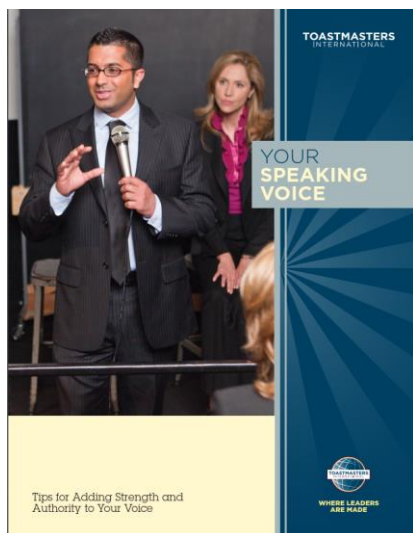
For me the key to growing into an exceptional evaluator is to develop your own tip sheet. To get you started mine is attached and you're welcome to use what you want from it. Whilst you're free to use mine, I suggest that you develop your own tip sheet because it's the building of this sheet that reinforces your knowledge of what makes a good speech and what needs improvement.

You'll see that the sheet has three columns, and you build them as follows:

## Column 1.

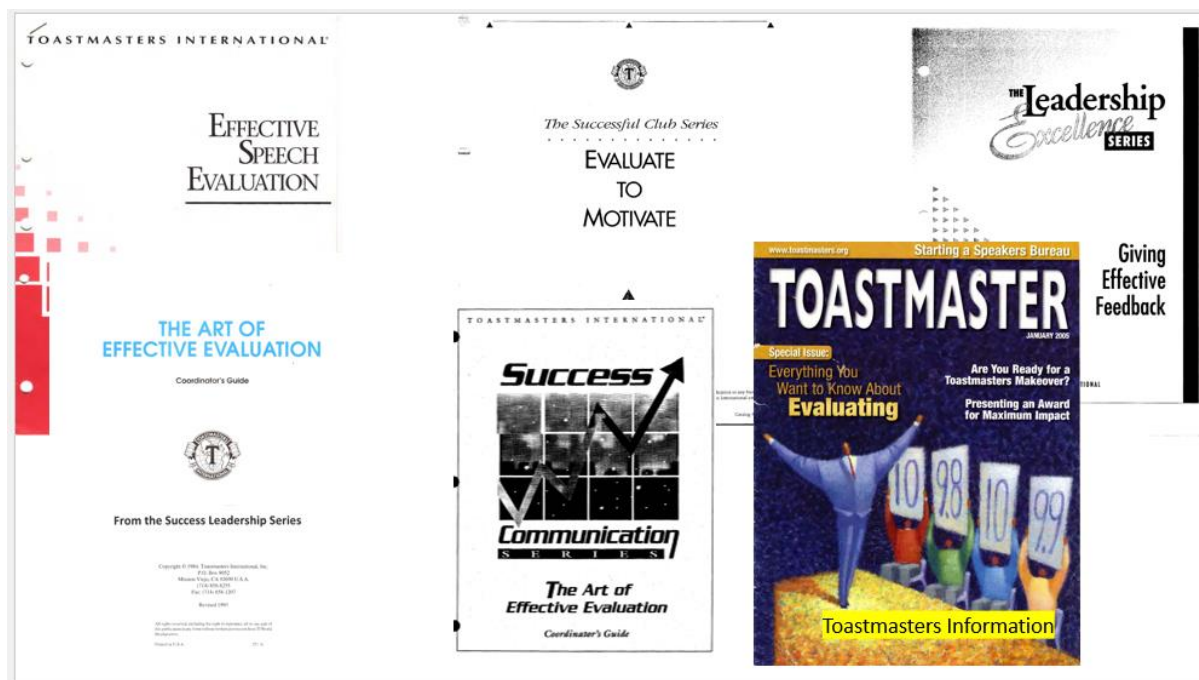
This contains the attributes for a speech. Mine have been grouped into what I heard, saw, felt, understood, and summary words. In order to fill in the attributes, don't reinvent the wheel. Toastmasters produces plenty of documents that will list the attributes of a speech.

On my OneDrive, you can download two basic manuals: your speaking voice, gestures. Plus, the effective evaluation booklet. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.



Link to evaluation booklets: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AjZOWUmHbRltg50qnD1ACiljMwyDg?e=WabKrl>

Just look at all the courses that Toastmasters offers to help you with evaluation, and you'll find plenty of reference material. I put a selection in the picture below.



You'll see specific evaluation courses, the art of effective feedback, and never forget the Toastmaster magazine which always has articles packed with tips on evaluating.

The value of these documents is that generally within them you will find lists that highlight the attributes of good speaking.

**SPEECH PROFILE**

This profile has been designed to help you determine what is right and what needs improvement with your voice. Before using it, please read the section entitled "Your Speech Profile." Instructions for using the profile appear on the previous page.

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
<b>Loudness or Volume:</b>								<b>Loudness or Volume:</b>
Too quiet	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Good projection
Inaudible	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Easily heard
Flat	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Vibrant and dynamic
<b>Pitch:</b>								<b>Pitch:</b>
High	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Low
Shrill	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Full
Monotonous	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Varied
<b>Voice Quality:</b>								<b>Voice Quality:</b>
Nasal	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Open
Breathy	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Clear
Harsh, raspy	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Mellow
Lifeless	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Enthusiastic
<b>Articulation (Word Usage):</b>								<b>Articulation (Word Usage):</b>
Slushy	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Clear
Lazy lips	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Crisp
Tangled tongue	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Controlled
Tight jaw	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Open mouth
Mumbling	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Projection
Mispronunciation	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Pronunciation
<b>Timing or Rate:</b>								<b>Timing or Rate:</b>
Jerky	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Smooth
Slow, plodding	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Fluent
Unvaried	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Varied, exciting
Hesitant	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Deliberate
<b>Vocal Variety:</b>								<b>Vocal Variety:</b>
Emotionless	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Conveys emotion
Unfriendly	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Genial
Strained	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Natural
Dull	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Vital

At the back of the "your speaking voice" manual that Toastmasters provides you find the speech profile that I used as a basis for column one because it lists the six key attributes of vocal variety: volume, pitch, voice quality, articulation, pace, vocal variety.

If you look at my tip sheet on the last page, you can see how I've used these to list the attributes for my vocal variety evaluation.

**Column 2**

In the second column you need to put the characteristics of that attribute. As an evaluator you need to understand what makes an attribute good, or what makes it need improvement. You'll see on my sheet that there are two parts to each characteristic separated by/representing good/needs improvement.

Again, the Toastmasters manuals will come to your aid. If you look at the back of those two documents, you'll find a page to help you evaluate that aspect to speaking.

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Flat	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Vibrant and dynamic
<b>Pitch:</b>								<b>Pitch:</b>
High	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Low
Shrill	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Full
Monotonous	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Varied

The example above shows the start of the voice evaluation, and the first thing they show you is volume. Good characteristics are listed down the right, and characteristics that need improvement down the left. You'll find very quickly you can populate the second column so that when you're watching a speaker you be able to recognise if what they're doing is good or gives you the opportunity to offer a recommendation and tip.

### Column 3

The third column is the important one. It's where you put your tips to help people improve poor characteristics. Where'd you get the tips? Three sources:

#### 1. Copy them from other Toastmasters.

It's what I did when I started. One of the first tips I heard was to keep your hands in a natural position consider your carrying two shopping bags. I've used it ever since. Listen to tips the other Toastmasters offer and if they're good use them yourself.

#### 2. Use mine.

You're welcome to use any of mine you want to. I found over time the one that suggests using a wine cork to improve your enunciation is particularly popular. I think it's because people feel they have to empty the wine bottle first! You should note this does not generally improve enunciation.

#### 3. Make them up.

I watched a person who was prone to wander about in a pattern on the stage rather like the Shadows. Searching for a tip I told him to bring his doormat into his next speech and stand on it. When he next spoke, I brought mine in and put it on the floor and told him I was going to mark him down every time he stood off it. It worked and kept him in a central position. As long as what you offer helps people improve then it's absolutely fine.

### Part 2 - Using the tips sheet for effective evaluations and competitions

#### Learning to take notes fast.

I suggest you take the tip sheet to every meeting and become a super toastie. Super toasties go to a meeting to do everything. You don't have to be the nominated evaluator to evaluate a speaker, nor table topics evaluator to evaluate the table topics. Evaluating every speech will improve your understanding of what goes into a good speech and make it easier for you to observe and listen and pick up the key attributes of the speaker.

C - Good stance  
C - Good step back  
C - lapel  
C - Good gesture / closed / closed door.  
C - stand with camera  
C - create key / wings. / mug / heart / things  
C - Good vocal variety -  
R - Dad ~ nice dramatic voice / accent.  
L Mum → good.  
L - Structure → WHIFM. - signpost -  
L # you body type to send.

I use my logbook to record my thoughts at the side and put a C or an R in the left hand column. That makes it easy to sort out my CC,RR,CC,S evaluation structure very quickly. An example of my notes is adjacent.

If you find it a bit overwhelming with so many tips and things to watch then I suggest you start by picking one attribute, say body language, and going to the meeting and just evaluating everyone's body language. At the next meeting you could then just evaluate everyone's vocal variety. You'll find that you can't do that without noticing some of their body language! Gradually you can build your fluency with all the attributes of the speaker.

Note that many evaluations focus on the first two sections; what you see and what you hear. That's because they're the easiest attributes to observe. However, the last two sections, what people feel, and what they understand are far more important. The see and hear are superficially more important but in persuading and inspiring audiences feeling and understanding are far more powerful. They're also far harder to evaluate so take they time to develop, but it's worth spending the extra time because not only are these important in Toastmasters they'll be the keys to effective evaluation in the workplace.

Similarly, with table topics, start off by evaluating every third topics speaker. Then move to every other speaker, and finally already to evaluate every table topic.

### **Competition Level Delivery.**

**Notes:** Simon Bucknall is superb at delivering his evaluations without notes. However, I've seen people start fantastic evaluations, and then come unstuck because they forgotten one of their recommendations. I personally always use notes and I put them on 5cm x 7cm pink card. That way there hidden in the palm of my hand but they're not obvious and if I move my hand the audience doesn't see a flash of white.

### **Your recommendation is a gift**

Think of your recommendation as a gift to the speaker. Gifts have two properties:

1. They're optional.

Your recommendations shouldn't be a command they should be the same as a gift – optional to accept. You can make your recommendation optional by using phrases such as “you may like to try...?” or “have you thought of trying...?”. This will make your recommendation sound like a helpful suggestion and give them a choice in accepting it.

2. They must include a positive method for them to improve.

The key part of your recommendation is the tips in column 3 of the tips sheet. They're positive methods that people can use to get better. If your recommendation doesn't have a tip, it's a criticism and that doesn't help people grow.

### **Understanding timing**

## **Structure of Evaluation**

- **Commend**
- **Commend**
- **Recommend (1'00")**
- **Recommend**
- **Commend (2'00")** ●
- **Commend**
- **Summary (2'30")** ●

I see more people lose evaluation contest by disqualification than anything else. In general, that's because they don't manage the timing of the commend, recommend, commend pattern and in particular the first commends. I suggest you keep the first commends to around 45 seconds. This allows you to go into your recommends which should be finished before the green light comes on at two minutes. If that happens then you're in control of the timing because now you can deliver your second set of commends until the amber light goes on. Then you know you have 30 seconds to wrap up with your summary. I suggest you practice this with one of the timers that will go on your phone or on your laptop so that you get the feeling of the first 45 seconds of commend which generally run

on far too long and then leave people struggling for time towards the end.

I like to finish on a summary and always use the phrase “in summary” to start it so that the judges who have 15 points to award for a summary know that I’m using one. I’m not a great fan of a summary that just repeats what you’ve already said so on my tip sheet I have a series of summary words that highlight how well the speech was rehearsed and prepared, the value that it sounded for the audience, and finally, the speaker’s greatest asset which is what I want to finish on.

### **Part 3 - Using Evaluation skills effectively.**

When it comes to delivering evaluation in the workplace two things are key: context and timing

#### **Your evaluation must be in context**

I always look for a maximum of two tips that I can offer people. Even if they’re a beginner and I can think of extra tips I never offer them in evaluation. Firstly, it’s demotivating for an evaluator to come up with a long list of things you can do better. Secondly, if the speaker has a long list of things they can do better they won’t focus on making just one step further forward. The overwhelm will block them doing anything. Anytime the speaker goes away with one concrete tip to improve they will use it and get better.

But also, the tip has to be relevant to their content. If a speaker delivers a tremendous speech that gives the audience excellent value, then giving them a trivial tip about their body language will make it sound like the value of the speech was secondary. If the tip you have won’t make the speaker significantly better, then don’t worry about giving it. Despite the Toastmasters focus on always giving a recommendation, it’s not compulsory. Let the speaker feel good about their speech.

#### **Pick the right time for Evaluation**

In Toastmasters the time of evaluation is fixed. It comes shortly after the speech. That necessity is driven by the agenda and the need to fit everything into the meeting time. But that doesn’t apply outside the meeting.

If the speaker has made a great attempt, as in the context point, let them enjoy the moment. Not only will they not want to hear your potted advice immediately afterwards, they’re unlikely to take it on board. I always think there’s a time for praise (commendation) and a time for tips (recommendation) and they’re not the same. Immediately afterwards is a great time for commendation and then leave it so the speaker can bathe in the glory of their achievement. At a later stage you can introduce your tips for improvement in the planning if their next speech or presentation.

#### **Conclusion.**

Whether in Toastmasters or the workplace, effective evaluation is one of the most powerful skills you can develop. It isn’t a straightforward skill, and you’ll definitely take time to be good at it. But when you are good, it will pay dividends to the people you’ll help at Toastmasters and at work. And of course, the big beneficiary in all this will be you. You’ll have more effective colleagues and better personal skills so make the time investment to get the rewards.

#### **Any questions?**

If you’ve got any questions on this material, you’re welcome to email them to me at:

[bob@bobferguson.co.uk](mailto:bob@bobferguson.co.uk).

Attribute	Characteristic Good/Improve	Tip
<b>Heard</b>		
<b>Language</b>		
Appropriate language	Simply understood/Too much jargon	Letter count/child's version
Strong word pictures	bland /strong pictures/engaging senses	Use vivid adjectives that describe senses
Good sentence structure for humour	Punch word at last	Edit to develop
Characterisation	Dialogue/Narrative	Use dialogue to add interest
<b>Delivery</b>		
Voice	Clear, Mellow/Harsh, Nasal	Exercises before speaking
Volume	well projected, vibrant/flat, inaudible	Record & Listen back
Pitch	varied, full/monotonous, shrill	Highlight key words in sentence
Pace	varied, dramatic/single rate, fast or slow	Choreograph VV until natural
Pauses	allow thinking/non-existent	Think like a singer
Clarity and Enunciation	every word clear/mumbled or unclear	Record, practice with cork in mouth
<b>Visuals (What you see)</b>		
Facial Expression	Clearly expressive, relevant/Trampled on	Pause for expression, make appropriate
Gestures	Purposeful & Relevant to room size.	Arms in (Shopping bags) except, only to add value, size of room
Eye contact	Strong but nor staring/Looking up or down sideways while thinking	Look at audience while thinking and one person per sentence.
Use of stage	Deliberate/Random	Only move with purpose
Props / Visual Aids	Supportive & Easy to see/Distracting	Check from back of room, ask family if they understand
Notes	Subtle & good eye contact/distracting	Coloured/small/Aide only
Appearance	Appropriately smart/too casual	Image or lack of respect
<b>Emotions (What I felt)</b>		
Emotion/Passion/Enthusiasm	high levels/too bland	Let audience feel your emotions through body language, language and expression
Humour	Got laughs /jokes mis-fired	Repeat to get timing, sentence structure Exaggeration and extreme reaction
Involvement/ sense of being there	Absorbed/remote	Step in and out of speech
Audience reaction	Enthusiastic, engaged/none	Use questions and image vocabulary to engage
Rapport	People felt part /alienated audience	Align your experiences with the audiences
Common Interest	One of us/ doesn't live in our world	Show this problem has affected you too.
Sincerity/Belief	Coming from heart/read it off the internet	Show your involvement with the material
How it made me feel	Inform, entertain, motivate/not moved	Get audience to apply to their own circumstances
WIIFM	Lots of value/ nothing for me to take away	Should start with WIIFM when planning speech
<b>Understood</b>		
Speech purpose	Clear & relevant/confused or not relevant	Make it clear how the audience will benefit and what steps they'll need to take.
Structure	supports purpose, on of 7 types?	Use one of 7 types
Use of Story	Strong personal/ not used	Value of stories, emotional
Logic/Flow/Organisation	Clear, signposted/confused	Start with signs and flag intermediate steps
Reflected speaker's knowledge	Deeply knowledgeable/superficial	Show depth of study or qualify
Call to action	Appropriate/missing	Leave the audience with something to do
<b>Summary</b>		
How was it crafted/prepared/practiced?	Evidence of preparation	
Value to Audience	WIIFM	
What was the speaker's greatest asset	Speaker's Asset	

### Tips Sheet



## General Structure

### Structure:

Either Start-Middle-End or Introduction-body-conclusion

### How to use:

- Use the intro to set the scene and a hook to raise the expectations of the audience.
- Provide all the details in the middle or body.
- Provide a summary conclusion as a memorable ending.

### When to use:

- Use it as a default if none of the other structures are any better.

## Tell Them/Tell Them/Tell Them

### Structure:

This is similar to the General Structure

### How to use:

- The first Tell Them provides an executive summary and Road Map for the talk.
- The second Tell Them is the detailed information.
- The third Tell Them is final summary of the key points.

### When to use:

- The most common use is in training or education but it's very similar to the structure used on News at Ten. The repetition of key facts helps people remember the information.

## PREP

### Structure:

Proposition, Reason, Example, Proposition.

### How to use:

- First explain what your proposition, proposal or opinion, is.
- Then give your personal reason behind your belief.
- Thirdly, give an external example validating your belief. This is very powerful rather than relying on your opinion.
- Finally repeat your proposition, proposal or opinion.

### When to use:

- When justifying your opinion or proposal. Very useful in meetings and especially in interviews.

## Past/Present/Future

### Structure:

Show two time steps of progress: from the past to now and from now to a future date.

### How to use:

- Research the reasons for progressing from the past to present day.
- Use them to justify future progress.
- The third Tell Them is final summary of the key points.

### When to use:

- Often for explaining your belief in future progress by extrapolating the progress over a historical time interval. Sometimes used in visionary speeches to encourage people they can go forward with confidence based on past performance.

## Then/Now/How

### Structure:

Show one time step of progress to how things were to now, plus how you achieved the transition.

### How to use:

- Describe the situation or life in the past.
- Describe the story of the change and the key factors.
- Show what is responsible for the change and how the audience can get to use it.

### When to use:

- An excellent structure to validate a method or product you use or sell.

## Problem/Cause/Solution

### Structure:

Part of root cause analysis after a problem has been encountered.

### How to use:

- Define the problem and the symptoms that illustrate it.
- Explain the cause so that you're not just treating the symptoms.
- Finally explain how the solution cures the root problem.

### When to use:

- Common in technical presentations to plot a way forward after a problem.

## AIDA

### Structure:

Attention, Interest, Desire, Action

### How to use:

- Grab the audience's Attention with an impact statement to hook their interest.
- Build their Interest so that they understand how this issue affects them.
- Generate Desire for the solution you have to their situation.
- Give them a single action to acquire the solution.

### When to use:

- Most commonly used in sales presentations as well as in sales literature.

## STAR

### Structure:

Situation, Task, Action, Result.

### How to use:

- Explain the Situation that made you act.
- Define the necessary Task that came from that situation.
- Explain the Action you took and why it was appropriate.
- Give a summary of the results you produced.

### When to use:

- Excellent for answering questions on your achievements in Q&A sessions, meetings, or interviews.