

SPEAK UP

You don't need a big crowd for your career to benefit from being able to speak in public. **Ben Pike** reports

**JOB
OF THE
WEEK**

PICTURE: MARTIN LANGE

74%

OF PEOPLE
SUFFER SPEECH
ANXIETY

23%

OF PEOPLE SAY
PUBLIC SPEAKING
IS THEIR GREATEST
FEAR

27%

OF PEOPLE BREATHE
DEEPLY TO
OVERCOME STAGE
FRIGHT

85%

OF AN EXECUTIVE'S
WORK DAY
INVOLVES
SPEAKING AND
LISTENING

.THE capacity of electronic communication to connect individuals with the rest of the world is coming at the expense of their fundamental ability to relate to people face to face.

The deterioration of the essential skill of speaking in public is stifling career progression and people's ability to be better at their jobs.

Leadership Management Australasia executive chairman Grant Sexton says no matter what the job, improving their public speaking ability is one of the best ways individuals can improve their performance at work.

"Electronic communication is becoming so prevalent we are losing that ability to communicate on an emotional level, which is what you do

when you look at a group of people eyeball to eyeball and convey your message," he says.

"People who are dealing with the public – whether it be customer service or sales – obviously doing (a public speaking course) is improving their ability to communicate."

After fear of death, public speaking rates as the greatest fear for Australians, according to a Newspoll survey.

Sexton says many people have a fear of speaking up in meetings but if they can overcome that, it will go a long way to aiding their career

progression. He says there are a few key points to remember when speaking up in a meeting:

- Be clear on the message you are trying to get across.

- Don't be defensive or critical. Allow your point to stand on its own merit.

- Articulate the reasons why you believe your point is important, the benefits that will be achieved and the risks to be avoided.

- Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you have told them.

Toastmasters International second vice-president

Mike Storkey heads an organisation with 30,000 members Australiawide.

He says Toastmasters allows people to develop their inherent skills and provides them with new skills in leadership and communication.

"Rather than going to a seminar as many people do to

get these skills – where you have a three-day crash course which you may struggle to remember three months later – Toastmasters is held on a regular basis where members go to club meetings and learn and practice their skills in a supportive environment,” Storkey says.

“When you sit down in front of a potential employer it is how you present yourself that is often the difference,” he says.

