

ARTICULATING A VISION OR MISSION

The truest test of your leadership potential is your ability to animate your audience with passion for your cause. Like the Pied Piper, you need to be able to play an irresistible tune that will guarantee you a parade of dedicated followers. What an awesome challenge! If you're willing to take it on, we can offer flute lessons to make your vision more attractive, more visceral, and more inspirational.

The key is your ability to tap into your listeners' best instincts. If you can remember that your speech is not all about you and your dedication to your mission, but about making your audience feel better about themselves, then you have a much better chance of generating excitement. Almost everyone wants to feel morally capable of altruism, even in the midst of tough economic conditions. Avoid making yourself "holier than thou," because that achieves just the opposite effect. Instead, let your audience know how much you think of **them**. And **mean** it. Show that you trust their ability to recognize what's right and to act on it. The effect can be electric.

Of course, they'll have to like and trust you first. Here again, trust-building is crucial. Ultimately your task is to convince your audience that your values, your judgments about what's worthwhile, are worth emulating. Your job is much easier if your personal credibility is high: this means not just good ideas, but solid experience, a fine reputation, and most of all, a personality that very quickly exudes wisdom, warmth, confidence, and energy. A tall order, to be sure, but we can teach you how to project these qualities if you supply the basic ingredients. Here's a sampling of how you might get started:

- *Consider opening with the moving story of how you got involved with your cause*
- *Focus on the people most affected and what this policy or program means to them*
- *Explain why this issue engages you more than others you might have chosen*
- *Be upbeat and specific about the possibility of change or improvement*
- *Give concrete details about what's been accomplished so far*
- *Show pictures, charts, objects that demonstrate the effects of your program*
- *Make crystal clear what your audience can do to get involved, emphasizing how crucial their role can be—and then make it easy for them*
- *Acknowledge their involvement in other altruistic endeavors*
- *Mention some of your audience by name and show respect for their accomplishments*
- *Stress the values that everyone in the room can clearly share*
- *If there are differences, acknowledge them and explain why your policy or program transcends those differences*