



Inviting a Guest Speaker to your Unit or Group Meeting

What to Do Before Your Introduction

Talk with your guest speaker well in advance of the presentation. Ask about:

- The proper pronunciation of his or her name and the way he or she would like to be addressed by the audience.
- Relevant work or life experiences. Why is this person an “expert”?
- The length and style of his or her presentation. If possible, speak with other people who have attended this person’s presentations.
- Any necessary equipment or the preferred room set-up. Who will arrange this?
- Prepare brief notes for your introduction.

On the day of the presentation, you should:

- Arrive early to greet the speaker.
- Ensure everything is ready for him or her.
- Offer refreshments (possibly a glass or bottle of water to sip during his or her presentation).
- Offer assistance in setting up.
- Show your guest speaker around the meeting space (e.g., the location of the washrooms).
- Find out how he or she wants to handle questions from the audience.
- Check your notes with the speaker to ensure your information is correct.

How to Introduce Your Guest Speaker

Giving an introduction is very important because it:

- Sets the tone of the presentation.
- Generates audience interest in the presentation.
- Stimulates the speaker.
- Makes the presentation relevant to the audience.
- Presents the topic.

Here is a sample format for a presentation and an example of how one could be done:

Give general background on the presentation and topic.	“I know that many young women are interested in learning more about life at university.”
State who has come to talk.	“So, tonight we are lucky to have Kim Sutton with us to talk to us about her university experiences.”
Provide some information about the speaker’s background.	“Kim is in her third year at McGill. She is a Link Member and was in this Rangers unit three years ago.”
State the topic of the presentation.	“Tonight Kim is going to talk to us about choosing the right university, life outside of classes and how to survive your first year.”



Point out how relevant the information is for the audience.	"Since the majority of us have already applied to colleges and universities, and the rest of us are busy deciding what to do, Kim's presentation couldn't come at a better time for us."
Tell the audience about any rules or guidelines so that they know what to expect.	"Kim has a 20-minute presentation, and she would like to answer all of your questions following her talk."
Welcome the speaker to the front and lead the applause.	"Now, please help me welcome Kim Sutton..." (Begin clapping.)

Here are some brief "don'ts" when it comes to introducing a guest speaker:

- Don't use clichés.
- Don't put the speaker on the spot by highlighting how funny or enlightening she is.
- Don't joke around with the audience.
- Don't tell a story about the presenter.
- Don't try to do introduce someone without some preparation.
- Don't talk for too long!

How to Thank Your Guest Speaker

Once the presentation is over, you will need to thank the guest speaker for sharing her time and expertise with the audience. There are some things you can do to prepare for a thank you, but the only real way to prepare is to listen carefully to the presentation.

Here's what you should do when thanking your guest speaker:

- Wait until everyone has finished talking.
- Briefly and sincerely explain why you enjoyed the presentation. For example, it might have been interesting (e.g., it raised your awareness of a topic); informative (e.g., it gave you a deeper understanding of the topic); or entertaining (e.g., it was a lot of fun).
- Talk specifically and accurately about what was mentioned in the presentation. You might even return to the relevancy of the topic for the audience.
- Thank the speaker on behalf of your group.
- Start the applause, but don't ask the group for it.
- Present a small gift to the speaker.