Sport Management is a wide and diverse field, which makes it difficult at times to give precise guidelines for speaking and oral presentations. Sport managers speak in many different areas, including marketing, management, organizational behavior, customer service, event management, law, and governance. With graduates taking positions within sport organizations, high schools, colleges and universities, and other areas within the sport industry, it can seem like the field is so diverse that there can be no real guidelines across the entire field when it comes to speaking. This is not the case, however, as no matter which area of Sport Management you find yourself in, you will always need to have business on your mind and selling on your tongue. We live in a capitalist society driven by dollars and cents.

Sport Management is about sales, much like life is about sales. In life, you are constantly selling – you thoughts and ideas, your appearance, your needs and desires, and, most importantly, yourself. In order to be successful in the Sport Management field, you need to be able to speak and deliver oral presentations that sell yourself. Most people entering this field enter into it thinking that after graduation they will take a position with their favorite sports team or college/university only to be disappointed when they leave college and realize it is much more difficult than they thought. The most common way for a person to get their foot into the door in this field is through ticketing. You have to understand that, in selling a product (like a ticket), a consumer not only buys that product, they also buy you as the seller. If they do not buy into you, they may not purchase the product. This is the key to Sport Management.

Audience – It all starts here. Oral/speaking presentations need to be geared toward selling to a specific audience. This may change, depending upon the situation, so a certain amount of flexibility is needed in order to adapt. If you do not understand your audience, you will not sell (or speak) appropriately and will be wasting your time.

Knowledge – You cannot deliver an effective oral presentation (or sale) if you do not know enough about your topic (or the product to be sold). You must do the research so that you are confident in your abilities to speak about the content of your presentation. Just like a dog

The basics of speaking are, for the most part, consistent across disciplines. Knowing the expectations of a discipline is an important part of adapting to your audience, however. The papers in the “Speaking, in my opinion…” series do not represent an official statement from the department. They do, however, give you an introduction to different faculty opinions on effective speaking.
can smell fear in a person, people quickly pick up on a person who is speaking about something they do not know very well.

**Preparation** - Preparation is the key to effective speaking. When you are not prepared, it shows. Make sure you are ready to speak before opening your mouth. This is tied closely with your knowledge concerning the subject of your speaking, addressed above. Practice, practice, practice. Your first time going through the speech/presentation should not be when you are delivering it. Remember the Boy Scouts motto – “Be Prepared!”

**Time** – An often-overlooked key to effective speaking is time. No one wants to listen to a person drone on and on, putting them to sleep. Once this occurs, you have lost your audience. People are busy, and you need to be able to effectively time your presentation that you keep the audience engaged and give them the information they need to make the sell, and leave it at that. KISS – Keep It Simple, Stupid!

**Professionalism** – Your demeanor and appearance are just as important as the content of your speaking. Asking people to buy into what you are selling, whether it is a sports ticket or an argument, is like asking them to trust you. It is much more difficult to trust a person when they appear unprofessional, using inappropriate wording or making inappropriate jokes, appearing sloppy in their attire, etc. You will be amazed in how dressing professionally will cause you to act more professional, and more importantly will affect the ways in which other people act toward you.

The aforementioned guidelines for speaking within Sport Management may be tailored to whatever area you find yourself in, but you must remember that this field is all about selling. The most important asset you have is *yourself*! You must learn how to integrate the idea of selling yourself into your speaking, oral communication, and presentations. Doing so will not only lead to more effective speaking but will also allow you to become more comfortable with speaking.