

Building confidence with speech

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GLOSSOPHOBIA is the fear of speaking in public or of trying to speak. Physical symptoms of glossophobia include anxiety, clammy hands and a dry mouth.

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld believed that a person's number one fear is public speaking followed by death.

"This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy," he said.

PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd group chief executive and managing director Datuk Michael Tio shared that he used to have butterflies in the stomach before having to speak in front of an audience.

Over the years, he managed to overcome his fear through ample practice.

"It is important to know your subjects well before speaking. If I have to do a PowerPoint presentation, I will make sure that I prepare the slides and have a good understanding of the topic," said Tio.

The danger of not having information at one's fingertips could trigger a panic attack during public speaking, he added.

"Problems arise when you are suddenly at a loss for words in the middle of a speech. The situation becomes worse when panic starts to set in," said Tio.

"The most effective method is to



Partners: (from left) Tan, Tunku Dara and Tio at the sponsorship presentation.

do your homework before speaking. You don't even have to memorise the speech if you have a good grasp of the topic," he added.

As a successful entrepreneur, Tio said public speaking is extremely vital in helping one get ahead of the pack.

"Public speaking skills are essential because it is about building confidence.

"Besides knowing your topic well, you also need to show your passion when speaking," said Tio.

This year, The Star-ESU (English Speaking Union) Malaysia Public Speaking Competition is organised in partnership with PKT Logistics

Group Sdn Bhd.

Tio said the competition is a platform for youth to build up their confidence in public speaking.

"We know the Generation Y today is very active in voicing their thoughts on social media such as Facebook. So now is the time for them to tell the public what they have to say," said Tio.

Also present at the sponsorship presentation ceremony were ESU Malaysia chairman Tunku Dara Tunku Tan Sri Naquiah Tuanku Ja'afar and Star Publications (M) Bhd chief events officer Iris Tan.

Held for the 11th consecutive year, the competition tests the ver-

bal prowess of students and aims to promote the use of English among secondary and tertiary level students from the ages 16 to 20.

Through the years, the competition has complemented the government's efforts in increasing English language proficiency among the youth.

It has also helped cultivate an interest in public speaking and made Malaysian students internationally competitive.

Last year, Malaysia was represented by Marina Tan Hsien Wei, 18, who made history by becoming the first Malaysian champion of the ESU International Public Speaking Competition in London, United Kingdom.

Marina took home one of the most coveted titles in the global English public speaking circuit.

Tunku Dara said an excellent speaker had to grab the attention of the audience early in the speech.

"The speakers have to start their speech with a very interesting introduction or they will lose the audience very quickly," said Tunku Dara.

While Marina certainly made Malaysians proud with her stellar performance at the international arena last year, Tunku Dara said participants this year will have the same opportunity to shine with robust training before the competition.

"At the champions training camp,

the participant will also learn ways to write a well-structured speech with an introduction, body and conclusion," said Tunku Dara.

This year, the national finals will be held in April in Petaling Jaya.

Before that, training workshops will be held simultaneously in Menara Star, Petaling Jaya, and Star Northern Hub, Penang, on March 23 followed by the preliminary and semi-final rounds on April 6.

In the preliminary round, participants will start with a three-minute impromptu speech on topics provided 15 minutes in advance.

They will then have to deliver a five-minute prepared speech on the theme "A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand".

Those who qualify for the semi-finals and finals will be required to speak for five minutes on the theme "Ideas Are Our Greatest Weapons".

Contestants will be judged on the substance of their speech, style and technique, general effectiveness and the ability to answer questions from the panel of judges.

Other essential elements of a good public speaker such as body language, facial expressions and self-confidence will also be taken into consideration.

The winner will go through a champions training camp before proceeding to represent the nation in the international competition in London in May.



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