

# GURU FUNDAE: EXTEMPORE

**DIPAK MISHRA**, AN MBA FROM IISWBM, KOLKATA IS A QA FACULTY AT MBAGURU. A DESIGNATED MENTOR FOR STUDENTS, HERE HE OFFERS ADVICE ON IMPROVING ONE'S SELF-CONFIDENCE.

**E**xtempore is the art of speaking without any preparation on a given topic. Most often, the term is used in the context of speech and stage acting.

## Why do we need it?

Appropriately put, why do we need extempore from the MBA point of view? The answer to this may be that many a time, decisions have to be taken on the spot by the man-in charge (read 'Manager'). At the same time, proper justification has to be given by the manager to his juniors to allay the frayed tempers of the people around him (if at all the tempers rise).

Accordingly, the manager has to be equipped with the skill in order to give an instant 360 degree turn to attitudes. The collateral impact that this makes is that it builds an instant rapport with the people around him. At the same time, this also brings out the leadership quality and the risk-taking ability of the individual, both at the policy and execution levels.

The body language and confidence level that the manager exudes coupled with the ability to express his thoughts articulately and fluently in English are a few other abilities tested through this skill.

## COMMON PROBLEMS FACED WHILE BUILDING THIS SKILL

- A sound knowledge base: How much knowledge is required for the individual to tactfully handle a contemporary, as well as, an abstract topic is the biggest question.
- Getting intimidated by the knowledgeable people giving you an in-your-face expression is one common problem encountered while building this skill.
- Constructing sentences properly, without disturbing the logical flow of the sentence is worth the consideration. From where we start to where we finally end, within that stipulated time, is yet another concern. Most often cross-questioning by people, coupled with

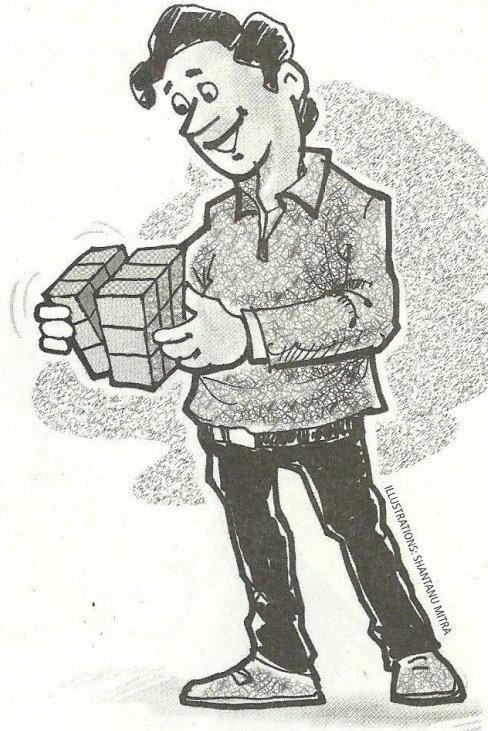


numerous facial expressions from the panel leads to nervousness with the result that one often digresses from the topic.

- Most often, the extempore round is followed by an interview round. At times, if one feels that the extempore was not up to the mark then the apprehension wins and affects the interview as well, especially if the panel for the interview happens to be the same.

#### How to build the skill

- Now, let's talk about the solutions to the problems mentioned above. Needless to say, the solution lies in building the skill against all odds.
- Start building your knowledge brick by brick. Develop your reading habit. Start subscribing to a magazine, which has a mix of all topics. The knowledge thus gained will give you confidence to tackle any topic that comes your way. The editorial section in the newspapers has to be given utmost importance. You may work through them by taking a stand on a particular topic and thinking about points to corroborate your position.
- Start speaking loudly on a topic, either in front of a mirror or even without one. The idea is that you should be able to speak, with a fair degree of fluency for about a minute on any topic you get. Practicing by speaking aloud will ensure that you are able to control your nervousness. Watch your body language while speaking on a topic. There shouldn't be any sign of nervousness. Also, speak in two postures-- sitting as well as standing. Try to speak non-stop for five minutes and keep an alarm clock to keep track of time.
- Watch your body language. Too much of hand movements can be taken as a sign of nervousness. The objective is to appear calm and composed, and so you should not use your hands excessively.
- Do not start speaking as soon as the topic is given to you. Think for a few seconds before you start. It has also been observed that those who start off immediately, run out of ideas and don't know what to say. Thus, they end up finishing their speech in hardly 35-40 seconds, or even lesser, in some cases.
- Structure your speech properly. Try and give it an introduction, a body and a conclusion. Define the topic adequately. Try giving examples to drive home your point of view. If the topic provides scope for narrating personal experiences, use the opportunity to do so.
- Time yourself well. If the panel has given you two minutes to speak, try to speak within that time



frame. It may not be a good idea to stop in the middle of one your sentences.

- You should be clear with your career graph. Moreover, your character traits should be visible in your extempore. This will create a positive impact in the interview, which may immediately follow the extempore. There is a high probability that the panel judging you in the extempore and the interview will nearly be the same with a functional expert joining in the interview.

Common topics that are asked range from the 'Abstract' (summers have come, black is beautiful etc) to 'Concrete' issues such as those related to Finance (disinvestment, black money etc) and those of national importance (Lokpal Bill, overdose of fasts, corruption etc). Most importantly, maintain your poise during the extempore. This will send the right signal to the panel judging you. *M.Y.O.D.*