

## § 5.73 The Top Twenty Tips of the Trade for the Delivery of Oral Testimony by a Witness

In summary fashion, this listing of substantive and stylistic tips can be helpful to a witness in delivering oral testimony on hearing day:

- **Tip 1**—Committee State of Mind: Try to determine the committee's, and its respective members', state of mind concerning the hearing topic and your case.
- **Tip 2**—Witness State of Mind: Try to convey to the committee, through your testimony and body language, your own state of mind in making your case and advocating your position.
- **Tip 3**—Know and understand the committee, its processes, its priorities, the purpose of the hearing, and all relevant issues.
- **Tip 4**—Master the issues. Remember that you are the expert. The committee is depending on you to deliver a message that will be informative, compelling, and helpful.
- **Tip 5**—Stay the course and stick to the script by keeping your message and testimony simple, clear, and direct.
- **Tip 6**—Nail the big points early in your remarks. Come out swinging and make a strong first impression.
- **Tip 7**—Use powerful introductions and closings.
- **Tip 8**—Highlight and annotate the script to remind yourself to add extra emphasis for the opening and closing sections, as well as for key messages within the text.
- **Tip 9**—In presenting your major themes, exhibit knowledge, understanding, and passion about the issues, your case, and your position.
- **Tip 10**—Limit your testimony presentation to three-five main points. Hit the major points clearly and succinctly, and then move to the next item after demonstrating support and rationale.
- **Tip 11**—Summarize your message in headline fashion. Think “sound bites.” After making your basic case to the committee members, remind them in highlight fashion what you just told them.
- **Tip 12**—Be sure to submit the full text of your written statement for the record.
- **Tip 13**—Be respectful, but be a peer of the panel. Communicate on the committee's level. Avoid speaking “up” or “down” to the committee.
- **Tip 14**—Exude confidence in your presentation and command of your subject.
- **Tip 15**—Remain cool, collected, and even-keeled throughout the hearing.
- **Tip 16**—Project your voice in a conversational manner. Speak to the committee. Don't lecture or read.
- **Tip 17**—Be attentive to all remarks and responsive to all questions from the committee.

- **Tip 18**—Engage the committee with your statement, responses, and demeanor. Try to persuade the members of the committee that they should embrace and discuss your message.
- **Tip 19**—Use descriptive and engaging highlighting and enumeration phrases to emphasize points clearly, including major themes, sub-themes, reasons, explanations, and other support factors. For example, incorporate phrases such as: “Our first goal is ... my second point is ... the paramount piece of evidence is ... the final accounting will be ... our primary challenge is ... our major hurdle is ... our chief purpose is ... our key conclusion is ...”
- **Tip 20**—Leave the committee with the impression that you are well-prepared, that you have a strong and persuasive message and good ideas, that you are adding value to their quest for information, and that you are willing to be helpful in contributing valuable ideas for use in their decision making process.