

### *A Familiar Audience*

If yours is an audience you already know, you may already have the answers to many of these questions. Going through them, though, and creating a quick profile helps you focus.

There are a few questions uniquely relevant to an audience that knows you that can help you pinpoint their key elements and some predictable responses.

- How do they feel about you? Do they know you well personally? Is your relationship casual and friendly or more distant and formal? This could help you decide how relaxed and informal you want to be.
- What is their perception of you and your work? Do they know your responsibilities, expertise, power, status? What do they think about that? Are you on the same level, below, or above your audience in terms of job status and knowledge?
- How does your work or position affect them? Is there a little awe and wonder, if you're a very senior person? Maybe some resentment and stereotyping? Can you be seen as dangerous to them? Threatening? Or inconsequential, perhaps, which would make you sharpen your focus on being extremely relevant, with crisp, enlightening information?

Answering these questions is obviously vital to your preparation—both for style and for content.

### **Why Are They Coming**

Find out why your audience is coming. Knowing that will tell you what their mood will be when you begin and what you might want to change or upend right at the start.

Take the time to ask this question of the people who arranged the talk, if it's an unfamiliar audience. If it's a familiar audience within your own workplace, ask a few of your fellow employees or whoever organized the meeting. Spend a moment putting yourself in their place, thinking about why they will be at the meeting and how that affects them.

### *Coercion*

Are they being told to go? Although this won't make you happy, you'd better know it up front. Knowing this would affect how quickly and thoroughly you must intrigue them with your topic and how relevant to