

Farewell to a Colleague.

Giving a send-off to a colleague is a task that is likely to be encountered from time to time.

Often it occurs in the workplace but it may occur in other situations such as voluntary associations etc.

A competent farewell has four components.

1. A thank-you to the individual for the personal characteristics they have brought to the group. Look for a significant personal characteristic

- Sense of humour,
- Helpfulness to colleagues,
- Reliability,
- Find stories of memorable events to include.

2. A thank-you to the individual for their contribution to the organisation.

- State a significant contribution the person has made to the organisation.
- Don't just regurgitate the personnel file
- Don't speak about yourself
- Only talk about the organisation in relation to the individual.
- Focus on the person leaving !

3. Inform the audience what the individual's next stage is to be, e.g. a promotion, or another job, or retirement. (Some of the audience may not know) If to another job, mention skills and characteristics that will ensure their success.

If to retirement, find out what plans they have, and briefly mention them. This will give the retiree a lead when he/she replies.

4. Formally present him/ her with the gift (if there is one) and ask the audience to join you in wishing the individual good luck for the future.

Call on him/her to 'say a few words' in reply. .

In conclusion

As with any speaking exercise, thorough preparation is required to make the farewell presentation a success.

Resist the temptation to be funny at the individual's expense, the speech is in their honour. Unless it is very special occasion, keep your speech below three minutes.

Avoid the use of sloppy language, in particular the phrase "I'd like to".

Eg. instead of saying "I'd like to present you with this gift"

Say "I present you with this gift"

Or, On behalf of your colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to....