

You Can Be a Better **PRESENTER**



25 Tips for More Effective Presentations

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Welcome!



If doing a presentation terrifies you, read on!

The following simple tips will kick-start your presentation skills at work, conferences or wherever. Soon you'll be engaging your audience, managing your jitters and zooming through your presentations like a pro.

Read on...



PART I **Your Audience and You**



Speak to Engage



Blah, Blah, Blah...

Avoid reading from a prepared speech, or reading directly from your slides.

Increase Interaction

Seek to engage your audience through more interaction. Adult learners often appreciate much of what you are saying, they just need to be reminded of it. If your audience is acknowledged for their own experience, their engagement in what you are saying will increase significantly.

Get Interactive

Interactive techniques can range from the simple (e.g. ask questions of the large group, take informal polls or give them a short quiz to individually do in their seats) to the complex (e.g. put them in groups and give them a task).

Get Personal

Wherever possible, weave your own personal stories and examples into your talk. Storytelling can help you relax, and it immediately brings people's attention back into the room.

Use Novelty

Don't discount the power of using novelty in your presentation. I still remember dozing off in a talk when the presenter suddenly put on a large 'Cat In The Hat' hat. *Bing!* I was suddenly wide-awake.

Deal with Monopolizers

If you have an audience member who is monopolizing the discussion, you can do three things:

- quickly paraphrase what they've said so they feel heard
- slowly and subtly walk towards them decreasing the size of their 'stage'
- say, *"Thanks for that, let's see what someone else has to say."*



Move Around



👍 Get Moving

Pace your presentation evenly. Try to get out from behind the lectern or table and move around the room as much as possible.

👍 Use a Wireless Presenter

Using a wireless presenter (~\$30) will allow you more freedom to move around the room and makes you look like a pro.

👎 Be Aware of Your Screen

Avoid walking in front of the projector screen, as it's very distracting for your audience. If necessary, use masking tape to map yourself out a "safe area" on the carpet.

Practice



👍 Practice Your Presentation Before-hand

Most of us know this but very few of us actually do it! We're not sure why, perhaps secretly we all love to live dangerously. However, the peace of mind and confidence that comes from being prepared will convince your audience of your sincerity.

👍 Get Feedback From a Trusted Source

Without realizing it, you may be gesturing or speaking in a distracting or unnecessary way. Get a second opinion from someone you trust who will be honest with you.

👍 Get Professional Help

If you haven't been to a *Toastmasters*® meeting, you'll be surprised by how enjoyable and useful they are.. The meetings are fun, the people are supportive and there is a good chance there is a lunchtime meeting close to where you work. Try it!

Timing



Time it Right

If you want to thoroughly frustrate your audience, take 75% of your allotted time to cover 20% of your presentation and rush through the last 5 minutes. *See 'Practice'.*

Warn Me

If you're afraid you can't speak and watch the clock at the same time, ask a co-presenter or colleague to subtly give you a 10, 5 and 2 minute warning.



PART II

Your Presentation



The Title



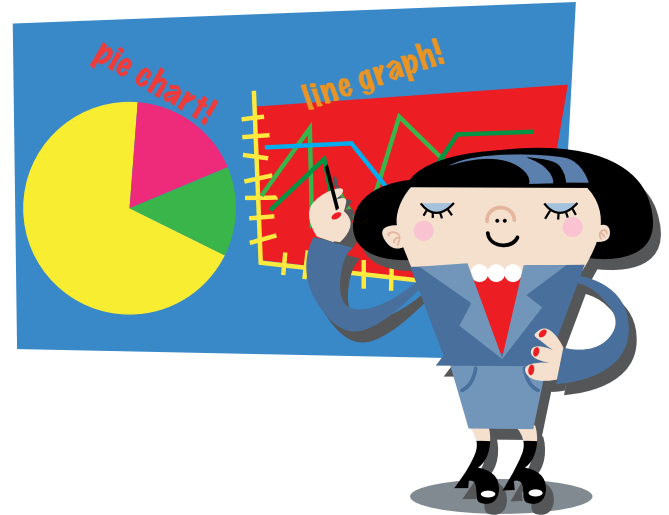
👍 Choose Your Title Wisely

Think like your audience. What will they expect from the title you have created? If the title does not accurately convey the topic of your presentation, there will be dissatisfied people who leave halfway through.

👍 Keep it Broad

At the same time, if you have points of interest for a broad audience, avoid including too many specifics in your title so potential attendees won't discount your presentation as something outside their area of interest.

Slides



👍 Improve Your Slides

Badly formatted slides can really kill your presentation. How to create good slides is a whole topic in itself, but you can educate yourself on what is considered a good slide these days by checking out the Resources at the end of this article.

👍 Take it for a Test Drive

Arrive in plenty of time to fully test your equipment and get comfortable with it.

Structure

👍 Use Learning Objectives

Open and close your session with clear learning objectives. Correctly-written learning objectives are statements of what participants will be able to do at the end of the session. For example:

At the end of this session, you will all be able to:

- a) list three techniques for increasing audience engagement
- b) explain two ways to deal with audience members who monopolize the discussion
- c) state four best practices for designing slides.

👍 Use Action Verbs

“To understand” is NOT a learning objective. Use an action verb instead.

👍 Close the Loop

Repeat the learning objectives again at the end of the session to help integrate learning.

👍 Three Key Messages

It’s said we can only remember three points after a presentation, and we need to be exposed to these points five to seven times in order to fully integrate them. So decide what are your three key points and reinforce them several times during your presentation.

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Quiz your audience on the three points at least once during the session.

Handouts



👍 Offer Take-Aways

Provide take-aways in the form of handouts, tools, links, etc. that give your audience the impression of good value for their time spent.

👍 Make Enough Copies

If you’re going to distribute a hard copy handout, make sure you have extra copies. This prevents scuffles in the audience for scarce copies.

👍 Pass Them Out

There are two schools of thought regarding when to pass out handouts:

- distribute them at the end so the audience can fully focus on your speaking
- distribute them at the beginning so the audience can make notes.

👉 I’ll let you decide this one yourselves.

However, note that your audience can read approximately seven times faster than you can speak, so if they have a handout, they’re likely reading way ahead of what you are actually speaking to.

Finally...



Remember that a successful presentation is all about leaving your audience feeling fully informed and satisfied.

If you:

- speak to engage
- move around
- practice
- time it right
- improve your slides
- and reinforce key messages

...you can and will be a better presenter!

Resources



Reynolds, G. (2008). *Presentation Zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

Duarte, N. (2010). *Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences*. www.duarte.com

Duarte, N. (2008). *Slide:ology: The art and science of creating great presentations*. www.duarte.com

Edward Tufte. www.edwardtufte.com

Toastmasters International. www.toastmasters.org