



# Successful Presentations

## Effective Public Speaking

After you are introduced and the moderator or your co-speaker hands things over to you, all eyes are on you. You've prepared your content, and your slides, and you are comfortable with the mic. You are ready to drive home your message with stirring delivery. Here are some guiding principles to make it memorable.

### **Be Passionate**

Be passionate about your topic so you keep the audience's attention and inspire them to take action. Talking to an audience about something that you have a profound interest in and a deep desire to communicate to others will help illustrate your authenticity and sincerity. What you are saying will sound less-rehearsed, so you'll also come across as more natural.

### **Make a Connection**

Creating and maintaining a connection with the audience will help set an atmosphere in which participants will actively engage and be more likely to pay attention to you than to their mobile devices. Using case studies and storytelling to explain a concept is an effective way to connect with an audience.

### **Be Yourself**

Be yourself. Don't focus on how the audience perceives you; focus instead on creating a connection with them as though you are having a casual conversation in a small group. This will help put you at ease, make your audience warm up to you and show that you are authentic and sincere. Don't try to emulate other speakers you have heard; use your own style.

### **Accept Mistakes**

Don't worry about making a mistake or being nervous; the audience will understand. If you do make a mistake, skip over it as though it didn't happen (unless it's a major faux pas). Never apologize to the audience. Not only will they probably not notice the mistake, but apologizing brings attention to it and will distract you from the rest of your presentation.

## **Don't Obsess About Delivery**

Be aware of your body language, posture and gestures but don't focus on it so much that it distracts you from your message. Stand comfortably with your hands at your sides. You can use your hands to emphasize points, but be sparing with your movements; too much can distract your audience and too little can look stiff. Maintain eye contact with individuals in the audience for 3-5 seconds. Or, if you're talking to a larger group, engage sections of the audience for 1-3 minutes. Move around the stage rather than standing behind the podium. Let the audience see you and your enthusiasm, but be aware of the edges of the stage.

## **Practice Speaking Aloud**

Practice your talk in front of other people or record it to know how you will sound. But don't memorize it. If you forget words or sentences during the live event, it can throw you off balance.

When you're on stage, take a deep breath and speak more slowly than it feels like you should. Nervous presenters often don't realize how quickly they are talking. They just want to make sure they get the point across before it escapes. But the audience's ears won't keep up. Take it nice and easy. Use a conversational tone so you don't sound like you've learned your speech by heart. Make sure that your voice is at the right level – not too soft and not too loud and use voice inflection and well-placed pauses.

## **Rehearse**

Allow time for a sound check with the audio visual technicians. Arrive early to your presentation location and take the time to walk to the stage, test the mic and click through your slides. You can use this time to check where the speakers are located and how the audience will be arranged in the room. Walk through a few bits of your presentation or just your introduction using the mic so you'll hear how you sound as you change your inflection and move to address the audience. This will give the sound engineer a chance to make adjustments to match your personal style.

## **Stay on Time**

Don't worry about finishing earlier than your allotted time. You can use the remaining time to answer questions or allow attendees extra white space to reflect on what they have learned.

Similarly, don't go over your allotted time, even if there are still questions that haven't been answered. Going over your allotted time reduces the amount of white space for the attendee and may make them miss part of the next session, which will frustrate them. Don't undo all your hard work in delivering your session by alienating the audience.