

## What Makes a Good Presentation?

Without exception, all good presenters have one thing in common: enthusiasm, both for their subject and for the business of presenting it. Enthusiasm is infectious. Audiences can't help but be affected by it. And, the best public speakers always make what they say sound as if it really matters. They know that if it matters to them, it will matter to their audience. Many factors contribute to the success of a presentation – new and unusual content, a clear structure, a good sense of timing, imaginative use of visual aids, and the ability to make people laugh...and think. But above and beyond all of these is enthusiasm.

### Key Skills

#### Voice and Delivery

As a presenter, the ability to pace your speech and use your voice to create impact is the single most important skill you need. You will be more effective if you are in control of your voice by your use of stress, pausing, intonation, volume and silence

#### Content Language

You can't give a good presentation unless you have something to say. Being confident about your content is crucial. In this course we will identify and organize all the key words and phrases you are likely to need and teach you how to make simple visuals work for you.

#### Rhetorical Technique

Once you are in charge of your voice and your content, you can start to think about how best to present your subject. We will study the techniques successful speakers use automatically and then you can choose the techniques that suit you best and work on perfecting them.

#### Handling Questions

Perhaps the most unpredictable part of a presentation is the question session. This may be after your talk or you may invite questions during it. Learn how to systematically field different types of questions and deal effectively with the subjects your audience may raise.

### How to Become a Good Presenter

1. Leave Nothing to Chance
  - Check everything before you are due to speak – room, seating visibility, acoustics, equipment
2. Know Exactly How to Start
  - Plan the first minute of your presentation down to the last detail. Try to memorize your opening words. This will help you sound confident and in control.
3. Get Straight to the Point
  - Don't waste time on long boring introductions. Try to make at least one powerful statement in the first two minutes.
4. Talk to Your Audience
  - Many of the best presentations sound more like conversations. So, keep referring back to your audience, ask them questions, and respond to their reactions.
5. Know What Works
  - Certain things are always popular with an audience: personal experiences, stories with a message, dramatic comparisons, amazing facts they didn't know. Use them to the full.

6. Be Concise
  - Keep your sentences short and simple. Use deliberate pauses to punctuate your speech.
7. Speak Naturally
  - Don't be afraid to hesitate when you speak, but make sure you pause in the right places. Remember, you are not an actor trying to remember lines. A certain amount of hesitation is actually quite natural.
8. Know Your Audience
  - Speak for your audience, not yourself. Take every opportunity to show how much common ground you share with them. Address *their* goals, *their* needs, and *their* concerns.
9. Treat Your Audience as Equals
  - Never talk down (or up) to your audience. Treat them as equals, no matter who they are.
10. Be Yourself
  - As far as possible, speak to five hundred people in much the same way you would speak to five. You will obviously need to project yourself more, but your personality shouldn't change.
11. Take Your Time
  - Whenever you make a really important point, pause and let the full significance of what you have said sink in...before you move on.
12. Don't Make a Special Effort to be Funny
  - If you make a joke, don't stop and wait for laughs. Keep going and let the laughter (if it comes) interrupt you.
13. Let Your Visuals Speak for Themselves
  - Good visual are just that – visual. Don't put boring tables of figures and long lines of text on the overhead and read them out. Stick to the main points. Experiment with three-dimensional charts, cartoons, and interesting typefaces – anything to catch your audience's attention.
14. Never Compete With Your Visuals
  - When showing a visual, keep quiet and give people time to take it in. Then make brief comments only. Point to the relevant parts of the visual as you speak. If you want to say more, switch off your projector as you do so.
15. Develop Your Own Style
  - Learn from other public speakers, but don't try to copy them. Be comfortable with your own abilities. Don't do anything that feels unnatural for you, just because it works for someone else.
16. Enjoy the Experience
  - The secret of being an excellent speaker is to enjoy the experience of speaking – try to enjoy it!
17. Welcome Questions From Your Audience
  - When members of your audience ask you a question, it is usually because they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your message across better.
18. Finish Strongly
  - When you are ready to finish your presentation, slow down, and lower your voice. Look at the audience and deliver your final words slowly and clearly. Pause; let your words hang in the air a moment longer, smile, say '*Thank You*' and then sit down.