

10 Timeless Tips for Giving Effective Presentations

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Most people are more afraid of public speaking than of death itself. In fact, [research](#) shows that public speaking is in fact one of the most common forms of social anxiety.

Regardless of your reason for giving a presentation, your main goal is to ensure that the message you seek to convey is presented in a clear, understandable and thought-provoking way. For some this may come naturally, but for most, public speaking conjures up feelings of insecurity. However, all is not lost; the challenge of facilitating great presentations can be overcome (or at least lessened) with these 10 tips.

1. Keep it simple.

Try to keep your presentation straightforward and to the point. Fancy talks, loads of facts and figures and complicated sentences can overwhelm both you and your audience. They will fidget, zone out or go to sleep. If you keep it simple, your audience is more apt to grasp the message you are trying to transmit.

2. Stick to three points.

To avoid overwhelming your audience with too much information, narrow your presentation down to no more than main three points. State the three points at the beginning of your presentation and then reiterate the points at the end. Even if they forget most of what you said, they will remember the three points. When I speak to audiences, I always start with my three “Whit-Bits:”

1. Surround yourself with happy, positive people;
2. Never stop learning;
3. And keep an open mind.

3. Engage your audience.

The best presentations engage the audience so come up with ways to make them feel involved. Pose questions. Ask for their points of view, or use them to help with your demonstration. People have short attention spans so try to do something interactive every seven to 10 minutes.

4. Use visuals.

Confucius said, “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” A flat presentation, where you speak all the time, will not be as effective as one where you use visuals or as memorable as one where you

engage the audience. Use pictures, animations, charts, graphs or even real-life objects to emphasize and illustrate your point. Try to stay away from a multitude of bullet points in your presentation. For example, when I give a dining etiquette presentation, I pass around unique pieces of antique silverware.

5. Be honest.

Before you can effectively present any information, you first need to be passionate about your subject matter. If you aren't, your audience members will lose interest, which will make them lose confidence in you as a presenter and the information you are trying to convey.

6. Move around.

Get out from behind the lectern to bring vibrancy to your presentation. Be spontaneous, move around the stage, or walk into the audience area. Don't be afraid to look each person in the eye. If for some reason you cannot be mobile, use your hands, facial expressions and gestures to make your point visually appealing. The larger the audience, the larger your gestures should be.

7. Share stories.

To keep boredom at bay, call upon your own experiences to make things interesting. Pepper your message with your personal stories. Your audience will better relate to your message, and remember it to a greater degree.

8. Be conversational.

The best speeches are given in a conversational tone. Try not to lecture your audience. Even if the subject matter is dry, use real-life examples to keep your presentation interesting.

9. Consult an expert.

The quality and tone of your voice will impact your presentation, either positively or negatively. Take a course in public speaking. Hire a vocal coach. Or watch videos on how to become a better speaker. Audiotape or videotape your presentation, and review it carefully to see where you can improve.

10. Practice makes perfect.

Whether you are an expert or an amateur, you can never practice too much. Even the most seasoned speakers rehearse before every presentation. Rehearse in front of a mirror or before other people. Get feedback and adjust your material and technique accordingly.

Most of all, enjoy your presentation, and others will enjoy it as well. These tips will get you on your way.