Further Tips on Presentation Skills.

To further develop your presenting skills, here is further information to prolong your learning and set you off on your way to becoming a more confident and effective presenter.

12 Key Guidelines to Powerful and Effective Presentations

Attitudes and Planning

1. Why are we making the presentation?
   - To entertain?
   - To inform?
   - To change people’s thinking and attitudes?

2. Ask questions about the objectives before you start to prepare your talk.
   - Why do you want me to speak?
   - Who will I be speaking to?
   - How long do you want me to speak for?
   - How many people will I be speaking to?
   - Where will the talk take place?
   - What subjects or aspects do I have to cover and why?
   - What message do you want me to give?
   - What do you want to achieve from my talk?
   - What time of day is the talk?
   - Is it a social or formal event?
   - What facilities are available (OHP, screen, microphone etc)
3. Think adrenaline...not nerves.

4. Get there early. Get to know the room. Know your equipment.

5. Focus on your audience and your message...not on you.

6. Know your audience and know they want you to succeed.

Prepare any handouts, if required, or promotional material. Only hand out after your talk

7. Practice, Practice, Practice.

Preparation

8. Prepare carefully.
   - Assemble and arrange your ideas, use a mind map.
   - Never read a speech.
   - Write down key words on the 6 by 4 cards.
   - Number your cards and record timings and non-verbal actions.
   - Divide your talk and cards into ‘chunks’. Pretend it’s a book and you are writing chapter by chapter

9. Critical...the ten E’s.
   a. Be excited about your talk.
   b. Be eager to share your knowledge
   c. Be enthusiastic with your delivery.
   d. Earn the right to talk on your subject.
   e. Make it enjoyable for your audience
   f. Engage with your audience through eye contact and movement
   g. Entertain as much as possible
   h. Speak just enough, no more
   i. Exit your talk when your time is up

The presentation itself

10. Your talk has to make impact and needs;
   - A powerful opening.
11. Grab the audience’s attention with your opening 30 seconds – consider the following;

- **Current events**: Look for something relevant in the newspapers, in magazines or on TV.
- **Humour**: Think of something humorous but take care of political correctness.
- **Anecdote**: Tell a story relevant to the opening.
- **A quotation**: Used correctly quotations can be effective openers and closers to a talk. There are many fine Quotations in special books to help you on most subjects.
- **A real-world situation**: Relate to something that has happened and shocked the world.
- **A question**: Get the audience involved by asking a question

12. What makes a great experience for your audiences?

- Good eye contact.
- The appropriate body language.
- The way you stand.
- Speed of delivery.
- Pausing.

**WHEN YOU WANT TO SPEAK LIKE A PROFESSIONAL**

If you want to speak like a professional, there are a few things to remember. Here are ten things that professional speakers do.

1. Only accept the right events. Don't put yourself forward to deliver a speech outside your area of expertise.
2. Research, research, research. However much you think you know, it's only a fraction of the information on your topic. Keep finding out more.
3. Tailor every speech. Make changes to your speech to make it fit each audience, every time.
4. Deliver what the organiser asks for. Make sure you know what the organiser wants, and supply it exactly.
5. Speak with the minimum of notes BUT never read your talk
6. Tell personal stories. Use your experiences to make points, it's much more powerful than "standard" stories.
7. Make a real connection. Don't just speak to an audience, speak with them.
8. Go the distance. Deliver for the time you promised, not more or less.
9. Get there early and when you’re set up (at least 30 minutes before the event starts) go networking. Meet your audience, find out about some of the personalities which you may be able to use in your presentation
10. Stay around at the end. People will want to ask you questions, respect their requests, and be available.

Make sure your next speech is more professional than your last.

**10 Tips for Planning Successful Visual Aids**

1. Use visual aids sparingly: No more than 1 visual aid for every two minutes of presentation.

2. Use visual aids pictorially: Use graphics, pictures and charts.

3. Present one key point per visual: More than one idea per visual can detract from the impact.

4. Make text and numbers legible: Minimum font size is 20 pt.

5. Use colour carefully: Use no more than 3-4 colours per visual aid to avoid cluttered rainbow effect. Colours should contrast with each other for maximum visibility, for example a dark blue background with light yellow letters or numbers.
6. If giving handouts make sure the visual can be printed and maintain clarity.

7. Graph data: always use graph data instead of tabular data.

8. Make pictures and graphs easy to see and not too fussy!

9. Make visuals big enough to see. View from the back row to make sure that it can be clearly seen.

10. Avoid unnecessary visuals: There is no need for a visual if it is something that can be stated simply and verbally, such as the title of the presentation.

10 Tips to Help you Rehearse your Presentation...

1. Write down all you want to say – or have mind maps.

2. Read it aloud at least five times.

3. Read it out to an empty room (preferably the one in which you will be delivering).

4. Walk the stage and rehearse the opening at least three times before the audience arrives.

5. Make sure you get a great introduction (write your own)

6. Make sure the stage is set to your requirements: table, screen and any props.

7. Tape or video your speech once you have rehearsed it.

8. Condense the notes onto numbered cards.

9. Practice your talk in front of a friendly audience to get their positive feedback and constructive ideas on how to improve it.

10. Enjoy the experience and repeat your talk to other audiences. Add material and fine-tune your talk to keep it alive!
Dealing with Presentation Panic

It is widely accepted that fear of public speaking comes only second to fear of death. However, your fear is easily overcome if you take the trouble to follow these easy steps.

1 Focus on the audience not on yourself. Presumably the principal reason for being asked to present is because you have earned the right either through reputation, expertise or simply because it comes with the job. Stop worrying about having to convince an audience about your credibility. Every audience has a minimum threshold of expectation; - that you know what you are on about and that you will be informative and interesting. You do not have to be funny. Every audience wants to see a presenter do a good job and can often be embarrassed for the presenter if he or she stumbles. The more you worry about your own performance the less likely it is that you will have the desired impact. Instead, focus on the audience, not on yourself and change your thought patterns so that you say to yourself: I'm thinking about the audience. I want them to enjoy and remember this presentation and I know they will because I'm prepared, I've got something interesting to say and I'm relaxed.

2 Ask about your audience. When accepting an invitation to speak, find out as much as you can about the audience. For example, who will be in the audience? how many people will be attending?, what is the male/female ratio? The more you can build up a mental picture of the audience in advance, the better. Sometimes it can be a good idea to obtain the names and phone numbers of two or three people who are due to attend and to ring them up in advance and ask them some questions relevant to your speech. Brief yourself about any sensitivities and gauge their expectations about your presentation.

3 Ask about the event. It is important you have as much information about the event surrounding your presentation. Different events present different challenges for a presenter. Speaking to an audience of 500 can be quite different to speaking to an audience of 50. Find out who else, if anyone, is speaking at the event. If you find you are on the programme just after a famous fluent keynote speaker then ask to swap places so that you present first! Find out how much time you have got to give your
presentation and make sure you stick absolutely to the time allocated. Do not overrun.

4 Ask about the venue. Try to visit the venue in advance. Check out the room, be clear about the layout, and find out what audio visual requirements will be available. Introduce yourself to the floor manager. You need to be in total control of your presentation, so plan to set the platform up just as you require. Will you require a lectern or not? Will you require a lapel microphone or a hand held microphone or none at all? Will you require a flipchart? Will you be using PowerPoint? If so, don't assume that the venue will have the necessary equipment.

5 Prepare your presentation. Do not leave it until the last minute to get ready in the hope that you can 'wing it' on the day. Chances are, you will fall flat on your face, have a horribly embarrassing experience and be even more terrified of presenting next time! Do the research in advance. Remember it's not just what you say but how you say it that is important. Imagine you are with guests at your home and you have to relate the information to them. Be natural, be interesting. If the topic is complex, by all means use notes to guide you but try to avoid reading your speech. The ultimate insult to any audience is to read your speech if it is transcribed in any handout material.

6 Practice your presentation. Once your presentation is prepared practice it in the way that suits you. I like to prepare alone and mentally rehearse while walking along the beach near my home. Sometimes I rehearse aloud much to the amusement of other beach walkers! Other presenters like to rehearse in the company of friends or colleagues. Personally I find this technique artificial, but if it works for you then do it!

7 Eat well in advance. Presenting will stimulate your adrenalin and soak up your energy hence it is important to have given your body a dose of energy before you present. However, try to have eaten well in advance of your presentation to prevent you from any embarrassing moments! Try to have some water handy just in case you get an attack of ‘dry mouth’!

8 Introduce yourself to members of the audience before your presentation. One of the reasons presenters get nervous is that they are talking to strangers. It is much easier to present to people you know or have met. I was 21 when asked to give
my first best man’s speech at a wedding. I hardly knew anybody and I was nervous. I recall walking from table to table at the reception and asking people if they were having a good time. This enabled me to meet several people on a one-to-one basis and in so doing, enabled me to bridge the gap between audience and presenter. It is a technique I still use today. It helps me to make eye contact and creates an impression of confidence. Try it; it will work for you too!

9 Be ready to make mistakes. Yes, that's right. Don't try and give a perfect presentation as I guarantee it will never go as planned. Expect for the unexpected. Just as TV audiences like TV bloopers, presentation audiences can be amused when things go wrong or you make a mistake. But if that happens, don't be flustered. Your ability to take it in your stride will endear you to your audience. You will turn a potential cringe into a laugh. Remember, you're only human and your audience will be forgiving because most of them would hate to be in your shoes anyway!

In Summary  Let’s go from here to here

The author of this article is Will Kintish, leading UK authority on effective and confident ‘people’ networking and presentation skills. If you’d like Will to speak at your conference or training workshops, call him on 0161 773 3727. Visit www.kintish.co.uk for further free and valuable information