

101 Tips to Spice up your Presentation

Preparing for your presentation

Know who your audience will be:

1. How many people will be in attendance?
2. What kind of work do they do or profession they are in?
3. What is their level of understanding about your subject/ products and services?

Remember your objective

4. You may need to inform and persuade
5. Be confident with your material and delivery
6. What are you going to tell them? -- Identify 5-9 key points you want your audience to take away, know them by heart, and be prepared to repeat them throughout your talk

Anticipate the questions

7. Consider the points your audience is likely to ask for further information about
8. Identify points they want to hear
9. Pinpoint the details they are likely to challenge
10. Be aware of any points that are likely to upset them
11. Carefully plan how you will deal with all these scenarios

Practice, practice, practice

12. Make several "dry runs" before the actual presentation
13. Rehearse in front of a mirror, with a tape recorder, and/or a video camera
14. Have a friend, family member, or co-worker listen and offer a critique
15. Time your presentation
16. Stop, go back, and repeat the segments you did not present the way you intended

Take care of yourself

17. Get plenty of rest the night before your presentation
18. Don't strain your voice the day(s) before your presentation
19. Don't eat or drink right before you talk; if you do, be particularly careful with food and drinks and don't spill them on your clothes
20. Drink plenty of water in the 12 hours before your talk; avoid milk, thick juices, and other beverages that will make your mouth and throat sticky
21. Make sure you use the restroom before your presentation
22. Check your appearance – hair, clothing, etc. before entering the room

Verbal communication strategies

Volume

23. Make sure everyone can hear you; ask people sitting in the back if they can hear you
24. If you speak too quietly, it will be hard to hear; if you speak too loudly, it will be annoying
25. If you are comfortable, slightly lower the volume to draw people in, and then raise the volume to make key points

26. Think about making your voice fill the room

Pace

27. Go slower where you want to make an important point clearly, but don't go so slow that you lose your audience
28. Go faster where you think people will understand, but don't rush through the material so quickly that the words can't be understood

Pauses

29. Use pauses to punctuate the flow of your presentation
30. Strategically-placed pauses can help you dramatize or clarify a point
31. Use pauses to give participants time to think about what you just said
32. Use pauses combined with eye contact when you think you have lost your audience or when some audience members seem to be involved in a side conversation
33. Use pauses of no more than 10 seconds when you need to collect your own thoughts and think through what you will say next

Inflection

34. Use inflection to convey emotions
35. Don't use a monotone voice
36. Don't over-inflect and make your voice shrill, squeaky, or sing-songy
37. Practice using inflection on key words and points to add flair and enthusiasm
38. Listen to your inflection on rehearsal audio or video tape to see how you sound

Tone

39. The tone for most oral presentations is relaxed but serious
40. This is especially the case when presenting to peers and colleagues
41. Presentations to your managers, customers, competitors, and professional associations will be more serious and professional
42. Jokes, if told, must be politically correct (that is, not capable of offending anyone) ... and funny
43. Don't tell a joke unless you know it well; there are fewer things worse than a botched joke

Avoid Artificial Fillers

44. Listen for stammer words that are fillers: "Y'know," "Uhh," "Like," "So," "Well"
45. Many people have other unique filler words that they noticeably over-use
46. Be conscious of fillers as you rehearse and eliminate them from your presentation
47. Have a listener count how many times you use such words

Nonverbal communication strategies

Research has shown that most of a message is delivered through nonverbal means

48. 7 % is conveyed by actual words or content
49. 38% is transmitted by tone of voice and volume of speech
50. 55% is delivered via non-verbal information, such as facial expressions, posture, hand gestures, and how you carry yourself

Body Positioning

51. Don't stand directly in front of your slides, charts, graphs, etc.
52. Stand to the side of the screen or board and use your hand, pointer, or mouse to direct attention to important points, with the information to your writing-hand side
53. Direct all speech at your audience; don't talk into the screen or flip chart
54. Don't hide behind a podium or table, or sit in such a way that some or all audience members cannot see and/or hear you

Posture

55. Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart, with knees slightly bent when you are not moving about the room
56. This posture gives the appearance of being in control, relaxed, and confident
57. This posture should be comfortable and not awkward; practice ahead of time to get a feel for it

Movement

58. Be animated as you present your material
59. Move around somewhat, even if you must remain in the area of the podium or projector
60. Don't make erratic or unorthodox movements, like bouncing, rocking, pacing, or other distractions

Hands

61. Gesture naturally, not mechanically, with your hands
62. Do not use your hands excessively, unless it fits your personality
63. Be careful not to make unnatural hand movements that could be interpreted as lewd or culturally offensive (e.g. To a Brazilian audience, the "O.K." sign Americans make with their hands by forming an "O" with the thumb and index finger, with the remaining three fingers raised up, means the same thing as raising the middle finger in America)

Facial Expressions

64. Use facial expressions to show concern, enthusiasm, empathy, and understanding
65. Appropriate expressions will make you more believable to participants
66. Be genuine! Check yourself in the mirror before experimenting with facial expressions
67. Smile as much as possible, naturally

Eye Contact

68. Practice establishing eye contact with your audience to make them feel included
69. Spend several seconds looking at one person before moving your visual focus to another person
70. Eye contact of longer than 3-5 seconds can make a participant uncomfortable
71. When the audience stops looking at you, it can be the first sign that they've also stopped listening

Nervousness

Accept it

72. Recognize and accept the signs of nervousness—they'll diminish as you proceed through your presentation
73. Remember that a certain degree of nervousness can be very positive in giving you the

energy and drive you need for an enthusiastic presentation

Be prepared

74. Reduce nervousness by knowing your content and presentation ahead of time
75. Rehearse several times prior to presenting

Be your natural, professional self

76. Keep in mind that the audience trusts that you are qualified to deliver this material
77. Remember that your peers and/or superiors consider you to be the best choice for the job

Know the audience

78. Familiarize yourself in advance with the audience's size, composition, and needs
79. Provide examples relevant to the group
80. Speak with a few people one-to-one before you begin to build familiarity

Maintain physical control

81. Breathe deeply and slowly before you begin in order to establish your composure
82. Pause frequently to take a deep breath during your presentation
83. Direct your attention toward a friendly face occasionally for reassurance
84. Move around slowly to prevent "paralysis"

At the podium or stage

Appearance

85. Be aware of the image you are projecting as the speaker—you never get a second chance to make a good first impression
86. Dress appropriately for the occasion and audience
87. Avoid distracting colours and patterns in your clothing
88. Check for all the non-verbal cues addressed above
89. Project calmness and authority

Opening and introduction

90. The opening should capture and hold the listeners' attention
91. In the first minute, you should state the problem (need or opportunity) that is the focus of your discussion
92. Explain why is it important, who it affects, and how
93. Tell them what you're going to tell them in response to the problem, need, opportunity, or situation

Delivery

94. Now tell them what you came to tell them
95. Be convincing, know your material, and present your logical points in a confident and organized way
96. Stress the main points of the content; reiterate them throughout your presentation
97. Be objective and air both positive and negative views where appropriate
98. Listeners should be able to build their notes into a near replica of your presentation outline

Conclusion

99. Finally, tell them what you told them
100. Tie all your ideas together in a summary that clearly and neatly packages your message
101. When you finish your presentation, the audience should leave with an unmistakable understanding of your message