



Public Speaking & Presentation Tips

Speaking to a group can be intimidating when you first think about doing it but it can also be empowering. In order to make an impact, your presentation needs more than just good content, it needs to be delivered effectively as well. Follow the tips below to deliver an engaging and effective presentation.

Before the Presentation

- Identify the audience.
- Define your purpose.
- Identify two or three speaking points and the support you will provide for each.
- Decide how to make the biggest impact when presenting the information – from most important to least important or vice versa.
- Anticipate questions or counterarguments and how to respond to them.
- Prepare a conclusion that clearly states what you want your audience to think, feel, and do.
- Analyze your presentation by asking the following questions:
 - Does your presentation grab people’s attention? If not, add one of the following every few minutes: make a startling statement; ask a provocative question; share and astonishing fact, figure, or statistic; provide expert testimony; or tell a personal, amusing, or heart-tugging anecdote.
 - Are your transitions smooth?
- Practice in front of a mirror, family or friends, or make a video of yourself.

During the Presentation

- It’s much more interesting to watch a person speak than read. Try to memorize what you want to say or use notecards with key words or phrases written on them. If you use a script, highlight or bold key points that you can look at and then look up from the script.
- When referring to notecards, keep them away from your face, anchoring your forearms to your waist if necessary.
- If you get lost, pause and regroup. A moment of silence will seem much longer to you than it will to the audience.
- When standing still, stay still. Don’t shuffle or sway, which conveys uncertainty.
- When moving, move with purpose and effect.



- Make eye contact with different audience members as you go along.
- Use facial expressions to show interest, sympathy, surprise, or outrage.
- Use your hands, arms, and shoulders to add emphasis to your facial expressions.
- Speak loud enough for the back row of your audience to hear you.
- Speak clearly and at a slower pace than your normal conversational rate so your audience doesn't miss anything.
- Speak confidently and energetically so the audience believes in you.
- Avoid filler words, such as "uh, um, like, well, you know, okay, and right". If you catch yourself using these filler words, pause and move on.
- Use visual aids when people will be able to see them: an artifact; a sign; pictures or words on a flip chart; a PowerPoint; or a video recording.

After the Presentation

- Reflect on the effectiveness of your presentation, noting any changes you will make the next time you present on the topic.
- Determine next steps.