20 TIPS FOR DELIVERING A SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION

Have you been asked to speak or deliver a presentation at an upcoming event? Do you want to always be prepared when someone asks you to "say a few words?" The most experienced speakers use a checklist as they prepare to write and deliver their presentations.

No matter how long your presentation - it could be 2 minutes, 20 minutes or 2 hours - I have found that this checklist of 20 tips helps me to prepare and deliver successful presentations to any audience – every time.

TIPS WHILE PREPARING YOUR PRESENTATION

1) **Prepare with your audience in mind** - It is NOT what you want to say. Rather, focus on what you want your audience to DO when you finish our presentation. What "action" do you want them to take? What "key point" do you want them to remember, etc.?

2) **Begin your presentation with "The End in Mind"** - Think "B.L.O.T" (Bottom Line On Top) What is the ONE THING that you want your audience to do? Begin the key **What** it is and **Why** it matters to your audience!

3) **Use the Classic model to structure your presentation** -
   
   - Tell your audience what you are going to tell them.
   - Tell them. This is the body of your presentation.
   - Tell them what your just told them - Your summary, your "call to action," the ONE THING that you want your audience to remember.

4) **Prepare by writing your presentation** - We naturally speak at the rate of 150 words per minute (WPM). So 20 minutes multiplied by 150 WPM = 3,000 words. Using this as your guideline, edit your presentation to fit your time allotment. Remember: Not too much - Not too little - Just the right amount of content!
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TIPS FOR DELIVERING YOUR PRESENTATION

5) Memorize two sections of your presentation -

- Your opening 30 seconds - You never get a second chance to make a positive first impression.
- Your closing 30 seconds - Audiences remember best what they hear last!

6) Communicate and confirm your equipment needs in advance - Prepare a checklist and confirm in writing what you will be bringing and what the event coordinator will be supplying. This is especially important when you are planning to use a projector, laptop, etc. Make it a point to meet with the audio / visual (A/V) crew as soon as you arrive onsite. Treat them as professionals. They want to make you shine!

7) Get comfortable with the physical setting - If, at all possible, plan to attend a prior presentation in the room where you will be speaking. This gives you the opportunity to experience what your audience will be seeing and hearing during your presentation. Make arrangements to actually "run through" part of your presentation "on stage." Communicate with the event organizer and detail any changes that need to be made in the seating arrangement, lighting and audio systems.

8) Your audience will "Tune-in / Tune-out" during your presentation - Audiences "listen" at a rate of 450 to 600 WPM! Audiences are always tuned into "WII-FM" (What's In It For Me!) Audiences make snap decisions to pay attention - when they think what you are saying applies to them - or to "tune-out" when they decide that it does not.

9) Remember the "Power of the Pause!" - Plan several 3 to 4 second strategic pauses. Pauses give you a chance to breathe and to collect your thoughts. Pauses give your audience a chance to absorb what you just said. Strategic pauses add significance to what you say next!

10) Maintain Eye-contact with your audience - Find a few "friendly faces" in your audience. Occasionally making eye-contact with them will build your self-confidence. However, ensure that you make eye-contact with each of the five audience zones - Front, Back Left, Right and Middle.

11) Pace your presentation - Respect the time commitments of your audience. Practice delivering your presentation aloud. Time your presentation during your practice sessions. Take note of the mid-point mark, and final five minute mark for your presentation as you practice. Place a digital clock with a large screen on the floor during your presentation. Do NOT look at your wrist watch - your audience will notice this and, many of them will begin to "tune-out" or prepare to leave!
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TIPS FOR CREATING POWERPOINT SLIDES

12) **You are the Presentation!** - Your audience came to hear what you have to say and share about your topic. They did NOT come to watch your PowerPoint Slides and Videos!

13) **Do not write complete sentences on your slides!** - If you do, it is almost impossible for you NOT to read them - usually with your back to your audience! Do not insult the intelligence of your audience. Remember that your audience can read your slides 3 to 4 times faster than you can speak them!

14) **Take advantage of the "White Space" on your slides** - Let your slides "breathe!" Never use a font size that is less than 30 points. Audiences do NOT read - they scan! Don't add bullet points, make sure that each slide makes ONE point!

15) **Choose appropriate visual images** - A picture is worth 1,000 words - when it reinforces your message. Allow your audience o "absorb" your images for @ 3 to 4 seconds before you comment on them.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE

16) **Phrases to Avoid** -

- "If I had more time, I would..."
- "I only have 20 minutes, so I am going to rush through..."
- Saying "And finally..." 10 minutes before you actually end your presentation!
- "This is my first time..."

17) **Phrases to Substitute** -

- "I am going to focus on three key points."
- "I have prepared additional material on this topic and here is how you can obtain it..."
- "In closing, here is what I want you to (remember, do, etc.)..."
- "I was invited to speak to you because..."

18) **Encourage audience questions** - Anticipate the questions as you prepare your presentation. Prepare your answers to these questions. Practice speaking your answers aloud! Be prepared to initiate questions by saying, "The question that most people have about..." Always end your presentation by restating what you want your audience to remember or do next!

19) **Audiences remember stories** - And they forget, or get confused by too many numbers and statistics! Don't say 78.9%. Rather, say, 4 out of 5 customers... Do use relevant numbers, but make these numbers memorable by including a story about a real customer who is representative of that number. Statistics tend to be forgotten or confusing. Well-told, relevant stories are remembered and get retold - to other customers! Pick good stories and practice telling them!
TIP FOR DELIVERING A SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION

20) Visualize Your Successful Presentation - Successful athletes and business leaders always take one minute to visualize completing a successful completion before they speak, tee-off or swing the bat. Visualize your audience applauding your presentation. This will focus your energy and your thoughts. This will build your confidence. This will ensure that both you and your audience have a satisfying and successful experience!

TIP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATIONS

Follow this link to my PowerPoint Home Page to access additional resources and tips for delivering successful presentations.

Danny Rocks is the Catalyst for The Company Rocks - http://www.thecompanyrocks.com - Danny is a speaker, a trainer, an author and a consultant. Danny focuses on helping clients to improve their business communications skills.

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