

# Do These 5 Things to Turn a Stressful Presentation to Your Boss into an Opportunity

Going into a presentation (already a high-pressure situation) knowing that one person in the room can restrict or release your access to valued resources -- like money, time, staffing, or career advancement -- can significantly hike up your stress level. And while some amount of stress in a presentation can be helpful as a catalyst to make sure you're prepared, practiced and polished, too much can cause everything from panic attacks to gastrointestinal pain.

Here are five strategies for delivering a confident, competent presentation without getting rattled by your boss:

## **1. Consider your presentation a career booster, not a career ender.**

Your mindset matters when it comes to a presentation. You get to choose whether you see this opportunity as an exciting chance to demonstrate your commitment to and passion for the work and the company, or whether you see this presentation as "one strike and you're out."

## **2. Ask yourself, "What keeps my boss up at night?" and address it.**

It could be meeting next quarter's sales goals, implementing a potentially divisive change campaign, or even making your own boss look good. When possible, acknowledge that their pain point is *your* pain point, and show how your presentation addresses it. This demonstrates empathy and shows that you're thinking like a boss.

## **3. Know the weakest part of your presentation -- and fix it in advance.**

Put extra time into working to make your weakest link stronger, and also be prepared to address it head on if and when your boss calls you on it. Whatever you do, don't fudge your answer. Tell the truth -- and then communicate your concrete, timely plan for improvement.

## **4. Don't stare down your boss.**

Fight that natural instinct to let your boss' eyes be the sole focus of your attention. Locking eyes with your boss (or anyone, frankly) without looking away will be uncomfortable for both of you.

Sustained eye contact tends to signal either confrontation or intimacy -- neither of which is appropriate for a presentation. Make your boss one of the people you connect with, but not the only one.

## **5. Make your colleagues look good.**

At the beginning of your presentation, make sure to acknowledge your colleagues' expertise and contributions, and set the expectation that there are others in the meeting who may also be able to share their insights and experiences.

And then, invite them to do so. You'll look like a team player to your boss, and you'll have given your co-workers an opportunity to shine, too.