

## 3 Presentation Mistakes You're Making (and How to Fix Them)

When people think of public speaking mistakes, they usually imagine disaster scenarios - their minds go blank in front of the boss, or the A/V equipment stops working, or the client asks a question that stumps them. And of course, these things CAN happen.

There are ways of approaching a presentation that dramatically limit the speaker's ability to make it relevant, engage the audience, and build a trusting relationship. And if you're going to put time, effort and energy into planning a presentation, shouldn't you do what it takes to maximize your impact?

Here are three critical shifts in thinking that will take your public speaking from good to great:

### 1. The presentation is about your audience, not about you.

An effective presentation isn't one where you cram in all of the information you know on a particular topic. An effective presentation is one where you have identified the following:

1. What's keeping your audience up at night (such as making money, saving time, looking good in front of their boss, etc.)
2. What gets them out of bed in the morning (such as beating the competition, developing the next generation of leaders, discovering new markets, etc.)
3. How to map the content you deliver to either or both of those lists.

### 2. You are the presentation, not your deck.

Your PowerPoint, Keynote or video reel is the *support* for your presentation. It provides visual and auditory reinforcement to help your listeners focus on and recall key concepts. But it is not the presentation.

It is up to *you* to bring your message to life, using stories, analogies, metaphors, data, statistics, client examples, as well as vocal variety, gestures, facial expressions, movement throughout the room, and more. A deck is one-dimensional, and it is up to you to make it dynamic and inviting.

### 3. Your presentation is a dialogue, not a monologue.

Speaking to a group is an opportunity to build rapport, create buy-in and learn with and from others - none of which happen when you don't engage others in your presentation. Treating a presentation like a lecture, where you offer a one-sided monologue to just deliver the content and then get out of there, is a missed opportunity.

Turning your monologue into a dialogue doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as taking a poll, asking for some real-time feedback, taking questions throughout the presentation rather than waiting for formal question and answer session, or even giving participants the opportunity to have a dialogue with one another.