

PRESENTATION DELIVERY

TIPS ON PRESENTATION DELIVERY

Few things in the business world are scarier than delivering a presentation, yet few are as important. Do it right and you can boost your career and win new business; do it wrong and you risk losing credibility and clients.

These eight handy tips can help you win over any audience.

1. LEAVE YOUR PERSONAL LIFE AT DOOR

You set the tone and mood of the room as a presenter and though it may not be visible, any distractions will be apparent to the audience. Develop a strategy to be in the right frame of mind. Listen to music, prepare a special playlist, or take time out to make sure your head is clear. Your audience deserves the best version of you, no matter what's going on in your world.

2. REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE

To develop your presenting skills and increase confidence you must prepare, practice and learn from each presentation. Rehearse what you are going to say out loud a minimum of three times. This will ensure you've found your flow and help eliminate any "ums", "ahs" or other filler words.

3. BE PASSIONATE

If you're not interested in your subject then no-one else stands a chance. You must bring some enthusiasm to your talk. Stand up and give the best of yourself. Try and feel the adrenalin from your nerves as a positive and use it to give yourself some energy.

4. SPEAK ENGLISH

You need to speak in English and not in business speak for your message to be understood. This isn't about dumbing down, it's about talking in a universally understood language rather than your industry dialect. To be clear, concise and understandable you must stop:

- Using concepts, acronyms and jargon without explanation

- Assuming levels of understanding that are simply not there
- Bombarding the audience with too many numbers without context
- Using 10 sentences to say what could be said in two

5. GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

Every audience wonders what's in it for them, so start a presentation with a reason to listen. You only have 45 seconds to get your audience's attention so make it count. You don't need to tell jokes or do anything out of the ordinary, simply explain why your presentation is worth listening to.

6. DON'T LET THINGS SLIDE

Prepare the presentation slides for the audience and not for you. A good speaker will always use their own notes to prompt them and keep them on track; a bad speaker will use the slides as their notes. The slides aren't supposed to be your notes or your crutch, they are for the audience.

7. BE PREPARED

Know the presentation room and equipment. Check, double check and triple check everything — and always have a back up plan in case the equipment breaks down.

8. YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW EVERYTHING

It's okay to not know the answer to every question. Admit you don't know, explain why you don't know and say you will get back to them. The trick is to manage the stress you feel when this happens.

9 Quick Tips For Successful Presentations From A Steve Jobs Event

1. He begins by acknowledging the crowd. Jobs realize that he's there for the audience, and he shows his awareness by focusing on the crowd. He waits for them to react, to finish their

applause. He doesn't rush their responses. That's how you establish a rapport with the people in front of you.

2. He uses mostly open gestures. Job is a seasoned presenter, and he doesn't betray much nervousness. But he does tip us off to his nerves in the beginning with some awkward hand gestures: he can't quite decide where to put them. But soon he settles down and makes his gestures mostly open. Aside from a tendency to put his hands behind his back when he doesn't know what else to do, which is not very effective, most of his gestures are strong and open.

3. He frames the talk at a high level at the opening. Job begins by saying, "I've got some updates to talk about, and then a major product announcement. So let's get started." And then he's off and running. He doesn't make the mistake so many inexperienced presenters make by wasting those first critical minutes in a detailed examination of the agenda. That's boring. Instead, tell us why we're there, in a quick framing sentence or two – or story – and then get on it with it.

4. He keeps his remarks both emotional and grounded. Jobs is not afraid to quote a competitor – especially when it makes a good point about Apple – and he lets us know how he feels about Apple products. He used words like "cool" and "wonderful" and "exciting" regularly. He keeps our interest by letting us know how interested he is.

5. He uses visuals well – including video. Virtually all of Jobs' slides are pictures. Very few bullets and certainly no speaker notes. And his use of video is instructive: the video is touching – including a moving account of how the iPad helps autistic children cope better – and takes us places that Jobs would have to work much harder to do with words.

6. He's focused on the audience. Jobs never makes the mistake less experienced presenters do by talking to their slides (or video). He's always talking to the audience. He knows what he's going to say, and uses the visuals as an enhancement, not a crutch.

7. He tells a good story. Jobs builds suspense by keeping the iPad 2 announcement to the end of his part of the presentation. He leads up to the big deal, rather than “telling them what you're going to say, saying it, and then telling them what you said.”

8. He doesn't use jargon. Jobs' language is straightforward, direct, and enthusiastic. He uses little or no jargon – occasionally a tech term will creep in, but then he is the head of a high-tech company – and keeps his remarks grounded in real activities of real people. He's always telling us what his gadgets can do, not what esoteric features they have.

9. Finally, he has fun. A speaker's enthusiasm is infectious – literally, because we have mirror neurons in our heads that share the emotions we see around us. If the speaker is nervous, we get nervous. If the speaker is jazzed, we get jazzed. That's why a Jobs presentation is fun to watch.

Fix Your Presentations 21 Quick Tips

Most business presentations range from incredibly boring to, well ... just plain boring. I'm sure you have a few offenders within your own team.

It doesn't have to be this way, though.

Here are 21 ways to make certain that your presentations hold your audience's interest—and help them make the decision you want them to make.

Preparation

- **Build a story.** Presentations are boring when they present scads of information without any context or meaning. Instead, tell a story, with the audience as the main characters (and, specifically, the heroes).
- **Keep it relevant.** Audiences only pay attention to stories and ideas that are immediately relevant. Consider what decision you want them to make, then build an appropriate case.
- **Cut your intro.** A verbose introduction that describes you, your firm, your topic, how you got there, only bores people. Keep your intro down to a sentence or two, even for a long presentation.
- **Begin with an eye-opener.** Kick off your talk by revealing a shocking fact, a surprising insight, or a unique perspective that naturally leads into your message and the decision you want made.
- **Keep it short and sweet.** When was the last time you heard someone complain that a presentation was too short? Make it half as long as you originally thought it should be (or even shorter).
- **Use facts, not generalities.** Fuzzy concepts reflect fuzzy thinking. Buttress your argument, story and message with facts that are quantifiable, verifiable, memorable and dramatic.
- **Customize for every audience.** One-size-fits-all presentations are like one-size-fits-all clothes; they never fit right and usually make you look bad. Every audience is different; your presentation should be too.
- **Simplify your graphics.** People shut off their brains when confronted with complicated drawings and tables. Use very simple graphics and highlight the data points that are important.
- **Keep backgrounds in the background.** Fancy slide backgrounds only make it more difficult for the audience to focus on what's important. Use a simple, single color, neutral color background.
- **Use readable fonts.** Don't try to give your audience to get an eyestrain headache by using tiny fonts. Use large fonts in simple faces (like Arial); avoid **boldface**, *italics* and ALL-CAPS.
- **Don't get too fancy.** You want your audience to remember your message, not how many special effects and visual gimcracks you used. In almost all cases, the simpler the better.
- **Check your equipment ... in advance.** If you must use PowerPoint, or plan on showing videos or something, check to make sure that the setup really works. Then check it again. Then one more time.

- **Speak to the audience.** Great public speakers keep their focus on the audience, not their slides or their notes. Focusing on the audience encourages them to focus on you and your message.
- **Never read from slides.** Guess what? Your audience can read. If you're reading from your slides, you're not just being boring—you're also insulting the intelligence of everyone in the room.
- **Don't skip around.** Nothing makes you look more disorganized than skipping over slides, backtracking to previous slides, or showing slides that don't really belong. If there are slides that don't fit, cut them out of the presentation *in advance*.
- **Leave humor to the professionals.** Unless you're really good at telling jokes, don't try to be a comedian. Remember: When it comes to business presentations, polite laughter is the kiss of death.
- **Avoid obvious wormholes.** Every audience has hot buttons that command immediate attention and cause every other discussion to grind to a halt. Learn what they are and avoid them.
- **Skip the jargon.** Business buzzwords make you sound like you're either pompous, crazy, or (worst case) speaking in tongues. Cut them out—both from your slides and from your vocabulary.

- ☐ **Make it timely.** Schedule presentations for a time when the audience can give you proper attention. Avoid end of day, just before lunch, and the day before a holiday.
- ☐ **Prepare some questions.** If you're going to have a Q&A at the end of your presentation, be prepared to get the ball rolling by having up a question or two up your sleeve.
- ☐ **Have a separate handout.** If there's data that you want the audience to have, put it into a separate document for distribution after your talk. Don't use your slide deck as a data repository.