

Practice Before Your Next Call Checklist

Very few people take the time to practice. How often do you practice the way you speak, modulate your voice, write? How many times do you draft an email message before sending it?

Selling has evolved into a much more complex profession than it has ever been in the past. To convince a buyer that you are the best person to solve their problems requires practice.

Practice Your Presence

Few people enjoy seeing themselves on video or hearing their voice on recordings. Virtual meeting skills require both. Practice until you lose your discomfort:

You have one chance to make a first impression, and each time you have a virtual meeting, you are either expanding, confirming, or erasing that impression.

Never, ever wing it. Practice, rehearse, use well-thought-out speaker notes so that you don't forget your points, overelaborate, or talk too much.

For high-stakes calls, it takes at least three talk-throughs to master the pacing of your content and engaging use of your voice for emphasis and variety.

- ✔ Note all your slide changes, transitions and what can be eliminated if time runs short.
- ✔ Always practice using your speaker notes. Use your practice sessions to check the timing and flow of your presentation

Build pauses, or “white space,” into your presentation

Your Virtual Physicality

- ✔ Your physicality translates through a camera. We tend to move far less when using a webcam by assuming the classic “talking head” posture.
- ✔ When you are in person, you lean closer to drive home a point. You lean back when another is talking to give them space. You use your hands and are animated. Do the same on camera!
- ✔ If you're the leader, stand up. Standing projects your voice and gives you authority. Smile and be authentic. Keep in mind that it takes more energy to convey your message through the camera than if you were sitting in the same room.
- ✔ If you use your hands to talk in person, use your hands on-screen, just make sure your movements are on camera. Also, make sure your microphone isn't capturing background noise or changing the way you intend to sound.

- ✔ Amplify your personality, even if you feel like it's "too much." Don't underestimate how much a video screen can filter and mute your personality.

Your Voice

- ✔ Project the confidence that comes from preparation. Practice how your voice sounds.
- ✔ Practice using your voice as a way to stress points, highlight reactions, and underscore questions. There is a fine line between being expressive enough and being overpowering.
- ✔ Be authentic, poised, and purposeful. Your voice, tempo, and word choice are powerful tools to demonstrate confidence and drive consensus, but it requires practice and feedback. Talk too fast, and you may seem nervous.

Practice Your Technology

Nothing is more annoying than attending a meeting where the presenter fumbles with their technology. Don't waste people's time when you can practice and become very skilled at using your technology.

- ✔ Turn off all apps that you aren't using
- ✔ Pass screen sharing back and forth between people
- ✔ Log in to the meeting with a second device to see exactly what others will see
- ✔ Toggle between applications
- ✔ Use the phone dial-in over computer audio (VoIP) for better sound quality
- ✔ If you are whiteboarding, practice what you will write and where
- ✔ Use breakout rooms
- ✔ Disable notifications that pop up on your screen

Practice Technology Failure

- ✔ During your practice runs, try to make your technology fail so that you know how to recover during the real presentation.
- ✔ Send your agenda and slides in advance so that you can quickly switch to them in case of failure.
- ✔ Always have a PLAN B in place if your Internet connection goes down, your audio stops working, or your screen blacks out.
- ✔ Have the meeting link, passcode, and call-in numbers ready to send to all attendees in case.
- ✔ If all else fails, don't spend more than a few minutes trying to fix the issue. Apologize and reschedule.