

## Title:

Expressing You! - Bringing your Presentation to Life

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## Summary:

No matter who you are or what you do the ability to present yourself and your ideas powerfully is vital in today's dynamic information age. Speaking well can influence other's views, close a deal, motivate your team, enhance your business, and elevate your reputation. This article outlines 7 key action areas to guarantee you give your best presentation each and every time.

## Keywords:

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## Article Body:

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Whether you are an investor, entrepreneur, employee, self-employed or unemployed the ability to present yourself and your ideas powerfully has never been more important than in today's dynamic information age. Speaking well can influence other's views, close a deal, motivate your team, enhance your business, and elevate your reputation.

Many people get jitters speaking in public. Lilly Walters author of "Secrets of Successful Speakers" says 75% of stage fright can be reduced by rehearsal and preparation, 15% by deep breathing, and 10% by mental preparation. Thorough preparation alleviates anxiety and ultimately provides a consistent structure for achieving extraordinary results.

## PREPARE

Create template presentations before you need them. If you use power point, keep text to a minimum with only one idea, no more than six lines per slide, large, readable, and consistent fonts. Most business people prefer little to no slide animation. Summarize often. Never read from your slides/flipcharts and always face your audience. Remember, you are the star not your visual aids.

Customize for your audience. Go to websites and printed materials to gather

information like vision, mission and values first. Then interview relevant people to find out where the "pain" is in relation to your product, service, or topic. Ask questions like, what are the internal/external challenges/changes your organization is currently facing? What is the objective/purpose for the meeting? What result would you like to see achieved? Are there others presenting? If so, who are they and where are they on the schedule? How much time will I have? How much Q&A should be included in my total presentation time? Is there anything else you could add to help me do an even better job?

Get details like the date, directions to venue, meeting start/end times, presentation start/end times, dress code, attendees, VIP's, agenda, equipment availability, etc. If you're flying in, ask about the closest airport and number of miles/kilometers to venue, recommended transport from airport to meeting site or hotel and all contact phone numbers. If you are meeting overseas, inquire about business and cultural etiquette.

Organize memorable openings and closings by asking a question, mentioning something relevant in the news, using a quotation or audio/video clip. Most adults are visual so be creative. Weave humor throughout your talk. If you don't consider yourself to be funny, use humorous photos, drawings, unusual clip art, quotes or media clips. Never tell a story or joke that would remotely offend anyone. Relate your closing to your opening coming full circle. Answer questions. End with a strong summary and a compelling call to action.

#### PRACTICE

When your content is ready, start practicing aloud. Pay special attention to or memorize your beginning, key points, and ending. If you need insurance, use note cards or visual cues. During this process, you will inevitably make revisions and improvements. After rehearsing aloud several times, record yourself on video. Time yourself. Watch your practice session and make adjustments until you are comfortable with your content and delivery.

#### PLAN

Plan what to wear in advance choosing clothes that make you look and feel great. Dress appropriately. To gain instant respect and boost your confidence, dress a bit better than your audience does.

Reconfirm date, time, venue, and agenda. If you are traveling for your meeting, pack early including a checklist for last minute items. Always have a multimedia CD backup, wireless remote and carry everything you will need for your presentation with you. To be safe, carry an extension cable, a power strip, adaptors, and backup batteries.

#### PROTECT

The day before and the day of an important presentation, avoid alcohol, smoke, caffeine, chocolate, and antihistamines because of their drying effects. If flying, recycled air in planes is dehydrating and speaking above engine noise can put a strain on your voice so talk as little as possible in-flight. A moist vocal tract will give you the best sound with the least amount of physical exertion. To stay hydrated, consume eight to ten glasses of water daily.

To prevent excess mucus, avoid dairy products and sugar. Grain alcohol, vodka, beer, and red wine can also increase mucus. If you cannot avoid alcohol, choose white wine before a presentation.

Sufficient sleep is absolutely essential to maximum performance.

#### PRIME

1. In the morning, do a good physical workout to give you energy and focus for the day.
2. Do some self-massage and vocal warm ups in the shower. Massage the base of your tongue, the temporomandibular joint (just by your ears between your cheeks and jaw) and neck and shoulders. Make funny faces to exercise facial muscles, do your favorite tongue twisters, and sing an uplifting song.
3. Before and during your presentation, drinks should be without carbonation and not too hot or too cold. Avoid combining protein and starch in the same meal and only eat fruit on an empty stomach.
4. Run through your presentation physically if you have the time.
5. Arrive early. Set up well in advance. Test and double-check all equipment.
6. Own the room imagining your energy fills the entire space extending to all walls and corners. State your intention aloud four times facing a different wall or direction each time. (i.e. "to win the business")
7. Close your eyes. In your mind's eye, imagine a person, place, or thing that you love. If you are religious or spiritual, you may want to connect with your higher power. Allow six or more deep breaths. Breathe in love on the inhale and on the exhale, let go of any tension, anxiety, or stress.
8. With your eyes still closed, mentally run through your presentation. Visualize success seeing your desired outcome.
9. Play a fast piece of music you love, dance, or walk briskly around the

presentation room to pump yourself up and burn excess adrenaline. If it's not possible for you to do this, run in place or jump up and down for 20-30 seconds somewhere private. If neither is possible, do simple isometric exercises, tensing and releasing muscles while sitting or standing.

10. Acknowledge yourself for the time and energy you have invested to do your best. Trust and BE yourself.

#### PRESENT

Start and stop on time. Address audience comfort before you begin. Be flexible and able to cut your presentation short, if necessary. Make direct eye contact and speak to your audience as if you were having a conversation with a friend. Move around and gesture freely. Smile, have fun, and be enthusiastic about what you are saying. Focus on delivering maximum value to your listeners. Now, it is all about them.

#### PLAYBACK

If you can, record all of your presentations on video for playback and feedback. A discreet alternative is a pocket-sized audio recorder. Recordings are especially useful for capturing questions, objections, comments, and action items. Always leave a handout, flyer, brochure, or business card making it easy for people to contact you.

The path to mastery is practice. Confucius said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Enjoy the journey.