

How to become a good presenter

1. LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE

Check everything before you are due to speak — room, seating, visibility, acoustics and equipment.

2. KNOW EXACTLY HOW TO START

Plan the first minute of your presentation down to the last detail. Try to memorize your opening words. This will help you to sound confident and in control.

3. GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

Don't waste time on long boring introductions. Try to make at least one powerful statement in the first two minutes.

4. TALK TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Many of the best presentations sound more like conversations. So, keep referring back to your audience, ask them questions, respond to their reactions.

5. KNOW WHAT WORKS

Certain things are always popular with an audience: personal experiences, stories with a message, dramatic comparisons, amazing facts they didn't know. Use them to the full.

6. BE CONCISE

Keep your sentences short and simple. Use deliberate pauses to punctuate your speech.

7. SPEAK NATURALLY

Don't be afraid to hesitate when you speak, but make sure you pause in the right places. Remember, you are not an actor trying to remember lines. A certain amount of hesitation is actually quite natural.

8. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Speak for your audience, not yourself. Take every opportunity to show how much common ground you share with them. Address *their* goals, *their* needs, *their* concerns.

9. TREAT YOUR AUDIENCE AS EQUALS

Never talk down (or up)-to-your audience. Treat them as equals, no matter who they are.

10. BE YOURSELF

As far as possible, speak to five hundred people in much the same way you would speak to five. You will obviously need to project yourself more, but your personality shouldn't change.

11. TAKE YOUR TIME

Whenever you make a really important point, pause and let the full significance of what you have said sink in ... before you move on.

12. DON'T MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO BE FUNNY

If you make a joke, don't stop and wait for laughs. Keep going and let the laughter (if it comes) interrupt you.

13. LET YOUR VISUALS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Good visuals are just that – visual. Don't put boring tables of figures and long lines of text on the overhead and read them out. Stick to the main points. Experiment with three-dimensional charts, cartoons, interesting typefaces – anything to catch your audience's attention.

14. NEVER COMPETE WITH YOUR VISUALS

When showing a visual, keep quiet and give people time to take it in. Then make brief comments only. Point to the relevant parts of the visual as you speak. If you want to say more, switch off your projector to do so.

15. DEVELOP YOUR OWN STYLE

Learn from other public speakers, but don't try to copy them. Be comfortable with your own abilities. Don't do anything that feels unnatural for you, just because it works for someone else.

16. ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

The secret of being an excellent speaker is to enjoy the experience of speaking – try to enjoy the experience!

17. WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM YOUR AUDIENCE

When members of your audience ask you a question, it is usually because they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your message across better.

18. FINISH STRONGLY

When you are ready to finish your presentation, slow down, and lower your voice. Look at the audience and deliver your final words slowly and clearly. Pause, let your words hang in the air a moment longer, smile, say Thank you and then sit down.