

Nine Quick Tips to Power Drive your Presentations

- 1. Think of a presentation or speech as a performance!** It may sound intimidating, but the more you approach a business presentation as an actor would a script, the more engaging, credible and effective you will be. We can easily recall content from movies and plays because the speakers use compelling vocal delivery and body language when delivering their word. So, when on a stage or in a conference room, step outside of your comfort zone a bit and be a performer.
- 2. Know your audience:** Every audience has different interests. Therefore, even if the topic is the same, every presentation you give should be tailored to address each audience's main areas of interest. Do some homework to determine, *on this topic, what does this audience care about most?*
- 3. Grab attention immediately:** How you open your presentation sets the standard for your audience's attention span. Openings should immediately capture your audience's attention. Short stories, examples, or physical demonstrations relevant to your overriding topic, are great "attention-grabbing" techniques. Within the first three minute of your presentation, you must convey to your audience that what you are about to share with them will be of value to them.
- 4. Deliver a memorable closing:** What is the most important message you want your audience to remember from your presentation? In a simple sentence or two, say what action should be taken (i.e., what you want the audience to know, do, think, or feel) and repeat the importance of that action for them.
- 5. Keep slides image-based, not text-based:** Do not create slides full of verbatim text. PowerPoint was designed to show images, not be a brochure on a slide. Slides with relevant images with a few keywords have a 65% higher message recall from audiences than slides with line after line of text.
- 6. Keep it short:** In general, presentations of 20 minutes or less have a higher "audience engagement" factor, than longer presentations. Keep your core presentation big picture, addressing the top two or three concerns of your audience, then open the floor to Q&A. Your audience will ask questions on points requiring more details.
- 7. Include examples and stories in all presentations:** Facts and data are important in presentations, but when a presentation become a big data-dump, audiences lose attention quickly. Make your presentation more memorable by giving examples or telling stories that support key message points.
- 8. Use your voice, facial expressions, and body language:** As said at the beginning, great speakers use performance factors to keep their audiences engaged. When speaking, focus on making direct eye contact with people in all parts of the room. Use vocal variation to emphasize key words and phrases. Vary the volume of your voice. Smile when you speak. Use facial expressions to reflect the meaning of the words you are saying.
- 9. You must practice!** Video record your rehearsals and replay them to help you improve your body language, vocal delivery, and content. We never see ourselves as others see us – and the camera doesn't lie!

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