

Tips for Delivering a Successful Presentation

Brought to you by the Channing Bete Company. For over half a century, we've helped our customers communicate practical and targeted messages that help people improve the quality of their lives.

Whether you are a first-time or seasoned presenter, this Tip Sheet will help you deliver a dynamic and memorable presentation.

1. Know your audience

Let's assume you already know your topic inside and out and have assembled the necessary materials for your presentation. Now, how much do you know about your audience?

➤ **Are they interested in the topic, or is their participation mandatory?**

Knowing the interest level of your audience will help you tailor your presentation to capture—and hold—their attention.

➤ **How old are they?** If you are presenting to young people, bear in mind that they are probably more used to the fast pace of the Internet, movies, television, video games, or instant messaging than they are to a presentation. Be ready to hold their interest with interactive group exercises, games, motivational prizes, or other distractions.

➤ **How many will be attending?** Using motivators such as refreshments, prizes, or other types of rewards can help you attract participants. You may want to do some publicity as well, such as creating a flyer to hand out at meetings, writing a press release for distribution to local media, or putting a notice in your school's or organization's newsletter.

➤ **Will they be comfortable in the space?** Will they be in a large auditorium or intimate office space? Wherever your presentation will be given, make sure the room has adequate seating; a comfortable temperature; wheelchair access; writing surfaces; room for group activities; and, if necessary, assistive listening devices.

2. Practice, practice, practice

Actors don't just memorize lines and get up on a stage—they rehearse, often for weeks, before a play opens. Choose someone whose opinion you trust—a friend, family member, or colleague—and practice delivering your presentation. The feedback you get from this audience can help you feel more prepared and comfortable in front of a larger one.

3. Make it personal

People learn best when they are engaged, so your delivery is just as important as the content. By sharing an anecdote or personal story, you can break the ice, capture your audience's interest, and keep them attentive as you go.

4. Act naturally

It's important to make the information you are delivering sound fresh and interesting, no matter how many times you have presented it. Make sure you know your material cold, so you can put it into your own words rather than having to stick to a prepared script. And don't just stand there—keep things moving by... moving! When you move around during a presentation, you help break down any actual space barriers between you and your audience—and help remove perceived ones as well.

5. Make 'em laugh...

Humor is a wonderful way to bring warmth to your presentation and keep it lively. Even when your topic is a serious one, you can find ways to inject a light note in the course of the presentation. Just keep the humor appropriate, and you'll keep your audience on your side.

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6. ... and look them in the eye

Don't remain focused on the screen, the floor, your script, or note cards. Eye contact—no matter how brief—keeps you in touch with people and helps you gauge their responsiveness.



7. Share your enthusiasm

Even when the subject is a sensitive one, your passion should be allowed to shine through. The more you share of what you know, the more your audience will take to heart.



8. Encourage feedback—before, during, and at the end of the presentation

Before you start, ask the audience to volunteer information about what they expect or hope to learn from your presentation. You can make notes of their responses, and refer back to them at the end of the session to help assess the presentation's success.

Throughout the presentation, use engaging, interactive exercises; group discussions; problem-solving activities; and question-and-answer sessions to stimulate active learning and help improve retention. (Try not to spend too much time on any single answer, and if you don't know the answer to a question, say so. You can always offer to find the answer at a later time, or direct people to sources of information.)

In addition, have an evaluation form ready to distribute to audience members. These will show you how much the audience knew before the presentation began, how much they learned, and any areas in which you may need to improve your presentation.



9. Be prepared—and prepare to be flexible!

Nothing is more difficult to watch than a presenter who has lost his or her place, drones on at one pace, or remains unresponsive to the audience. Be ready to make adjustments to your presentation, such as jumping ahead, going back to cover something that may have been missed, or taking a break to let people move around if it seems their attention is wandering.



10. Keep learning active even after the presentation has ended

Handouts—such as surveys, worksheets, or Channing Bete Company® booklets—will support learning, keep your message alive, and allow readers to use the knowledge they have gained from your presentation.

Above all, remember that people *need* the information you are giving them. By sharing your knowledge, you are helping make their lives better.

For additional information about Channing Bete Company® publications, including research-based booklets, handbooks, folders, interactive workbook packages, and presentation packages, visit www.channing-bete.com.

You'll also find more tips and strategies for making dynamic presentations in "Making Great Presentations With Channing Bete Company® Presentation Kits; A Trainer's Kit" (93743). This 3-part tutorial prepares session leaders to make the most of our content-rich presentation packages, and provides tips and techniques for making professional-level presentations. For information, go to www.channing-bete.com/presentationkits/presentation-tutorial.html.