

5 mistakes people make when presenting and how to overcome them

Often when we are asked to present, we focus on many things and miss the basics. We think about nerves, where you are going to stand, what you want to say, and it ends there and these are common problems that I have seen time after time.



Unprepared

The biggest way to lose your audience instantly is to be seen as unprepared. Perception is everything and the last thing they want to see is the presenter faffing around with bits of paper, fiddling around with IT equipment or flipcharts and worst of all not knowing the content well enough to deliver smoothly.



Late

Short & Sweet - turning up late, or even at the same time is unprofessional. Despite having to overcome unexpected travel delays or unforeseen circumstances this will not be forgotten no matter how good you are. You do not want the reason you are talked about to be because you were late and fell in the door, in a flap and flustered.



Monotone Voice & Lack of Engagement

Let's not send the audience to sleep by talking in the same pace for the whole thing with little engagement. If people are yawning and slumped in their chair, I expect you probably are not the most memorable and people will not retain what it is you are saying, and I have no doubt it is worth hearing.



Boring Content

Regardless of topic, a bored audience will simply feed negative energy into the room and affect your performance and you could miss the opportunity of sharing your important message. The last thing you want is to encourage people to pick up their phones and check emails and social media, worst of all talk to each other.



Too many slides/too much detail

If you are in a position to stand up and present to an audience, then I am sure you do have knowledge of your topic. To stand there with slides full of words will invite your audience to squint and disengage, to look at the back of your head while you read out the content line after line, page after page.... You may as well email a document and not present.

Here are the solutions to 5 easily overlooked problems when people present



Be Prepared

Run through your content so you know the order of events. Make sure you have a backup plan to ensure you can view your slides; be it on your phone, a USB stick or email someone else in advance. If you are using a flip chart check your pens and paper beforehand - have a basic step by step plan of how your event is going to go.

Perception is everything and people make a decision on their first impression in less than 7 seconds.



Be on Time

Makes sure you know where you are going and get there early. Pre-empt any traffic issues, where is the parking and do you need any cash – all of this can be done before the day. When people enter the room, be ready, relaxed and waiting, have all of your equipment and bits and pieces in place.

Make a good first impression and put your audience at ease, are they in good hands?



Monotone Voice & Lack of Engagement

This is an opportunity for you to wow your audience and enjoy yourself too. Spend time on your delivery skills and keep the pace up, not too fast and not too slow. Find opportunities to pause and breathe, take moments to look your audience in the eyes and to engage with them. People are more likely to hear what you are saying when your delivery sings to them.

Command control with your assertiveness and confidence.



Boring Content

Be reassured that attendees will probably have something in common with the subject you are talking about or at least want to know more about it. Keep their attention by offering bite sized pieces of information to digest and information that may resonate. The more you can engage your audience the better their attention span. You are surely looking for good feedback on your knowledge and delivery who knows what doors this opportunity will open for you.

Trust you are the expert and share valuable information.



Too many slides/too much detail

Be confident enough to allow yourself to talk freely. Using wordy slides will set you back, if you get nervous you will lose your way and risk spiralling into a wobbly mess so keep visual content short and to the point. If you have too much information the presentation will be too long, people will switch off and start thinking about something else. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to have your slides or flip charts as verbatim notes. If you can master this, you will appear confident and in control.

You know this stuff!! You can talk the talk.



ACTION

Write a list of all of the things that could possible things that may not go to plan, this will help you.

Its best to work out a strategy and overcome obstacles – IN ADVANCE