

Online Free Resources

We develop people – they develop your business

Everyone from the most successful businesspeople to new recruits can feel intimidated by the prospect of having to deliver a presentation or pitch.

Great presentation skills are a valuable asset whether it's in business or in everyday life. Every pitch, conversation, email and phone call is a form of presentation, so having the skills at your disposal goes a long way to ensuring you don't miss out on a business opportunity.

Many believe memorable presenters are naturally gifted, but it's a skill anyone can easily learn.

Here are ten tips designed to give you the confidence and personal gravitas to present with impact.

10 Top Tips for Presentation skills

Written by [Steve Thomson](#)

1. **Know Your Audience.** Do your homework about the people to whom you are pitching or presenting and avoid jargon. This gives you a better chance of giving the right information in the right language. For example, if your research reveals someone to have a degree in mechanical engineering it's probable that he or she will appreciate a direct step-by-step presentation, while someone with a background in art will perhaps favour a more 'story-telling' style.
2. **Prepare, then do some more preparation, then prepare again.** NEVER go into a pitch with half the answers.
3. **Be focused and succinct.** Don't waffle and try and keep to one simple message. Know what you want as an end goal because if you have a clear picture in your mind of what you will gain or achieve by winning the pitch or making a great presentation, it's more likely you'll get your message across well.
4. **Be confident and charismatic, not cocky and arrogant.** How you stand makes all the difference in how people respond to you. So relax your shoulders, stand tall and keep your head upright facing the audience, and you'll feel and look more confident.
5. **Don't get bogged down by your support material.** If you rely on PowerPoint, what will you do if the laptop packs in or the file is corrupted? If you rely on storyboards, what will you do if the person to whom you are presenting says they don't want to look at them? By all means use the technology, but always be ready to 'go it alone' should the need arise.
6. **Dress appropriately for the occasion.** For maximum personal impact and gravitas make sure you are well dressed and the outfit is tailored to reflect your audience. Under no circumstances should you wear jeans and a scruffy t-shirt – this will show a lack of respect to your audience.

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7. **Wear comfortable shoes.** Discomfort will undermine your presentation every time and will distract you from your end goal.
8. **Use open body language and exaggerate your movements.** Look at your audience and keep your eyes moving to help engage and include them. Be larger than normal with your gestures, speak more slowly and distinctly, and pause for longer. Move around the stage or room a little to add interest to your presentation.
9. **Get the tone of voice right.** During a presentation an audience will only retain 10 % of the words you deliver, but around 35% of the sound of your voice and approximately 55 % of your body language. Your voice then is one of the main things people will remember about your presentation. Make it sound as attractive as possible by slowing it down, breathe from the diaphragm and keep your throat, neck and shoulders relaxed.
10. **Avoid certain foods and drinks directly before the presentation.** Coffee and caffeinated soft drinks can make people highly excitable; chocolate, cheese and milky drinks negatively affect your voice; and sweets give a quick burst of energy, which falls away very quickly, leaving you high and dry mid-presentation. Better to run on your natural energy and excitement.