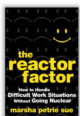


CREATING A STELLAR PRESENTATION

As a Certified Speaking Professional, I have learned what it takes to be memorable. Here are six considerations for creating a stellar presentation:

1. Before you speak, consider the following:
 - a. Whenever possible, learn the attitudes, needs, and beliefs of the audience, and identify their issues. Focus on what *they* want versus what *you* want to deliver.
 - b. Understand the layout of the room in advance when you can. This small task will help you feel more confident during your presentation. Practice in this environment if possible.
 - c. Rehearse your presentation—even if you are not sure if you will speak—whether it will be extemporaneous or planned. Lack of preparation is the number one reason why speeches go bad—and why people are overly nervous.
2. Anxiety: Learn how to control yours; this is a learned skill, to be sure. Understand that the audience can tell immediately when you are highly nervous. This unrest is typically caused by lack of self-confidence, which is then exacerbated by poorly drafted presentations, little or no practice, and not knowing your audience. Think about a nervous speaker you previewed; did their anxiety build confidence in their message?
3. Construction: Use the following 11-point model to plan your presentation. You will see later in this chapter that it can also be used for planning meetings.
 - a. #1 Close. It may sound strange, but you actually want to *start* your planning by determining how you'll end your speech—in other words, what you want the audience to remember. By doing so, you will save time putting your presentation together.
 - b. #2, #3, #4—Key Points. Establish the three key elements of your presentation so that it becomes memorable for the listener. Remember that people generally remember things in groups of threes (see information under meetings).
 - c. #5, #6, #7—Details. These sections include your data, examples, and information pertinent to the three issues identified above.
 - d. #8, #9, #10—Summary. Develop this part by thinking about the three issues; and, in one sentence, ask—what do you want people to take away from each?
 - e. #11—Opening. What is your hook and the sound bite that will move the audience to the edge of their seats?



4. Delivery is the key. The flow will keep audiences engaged and interested in your message.
 - a. The hook (opening) is how you draw in your audience. Without a hook, you remain in the league of the norm and forgettable. A hook delivered with graciousness and a pleasant look leaves the audience spellbound.
 - b. The key points help the group know what the structure of your presentation is and keeps them interested.
 - c. The summary tells the group what they need to remember. Don't expect the audience to think of this themselves.
 - d. Questions and answers (Q&A) are asked *before* you close because you want the audience to walk away with your core message.
 - e. Tie the close back to the opening and you have a memorable and exciting presentation, whether it is three minutes, two hours, or longer!
 - f. Flow: use the following diagram to give listeners the capability to stay with you and follow your material. This also gives you confidence in your material.
 - g. The opening is your hook. You take a deep breath and feel comfortable.
 - h. Tell the audience the three key points you will cover—it's like their mental agenda.
 - i. Now relate the details for each of the three key points, including the data, examples, humor, and stories.
 - j. Review a brief summary for each of the key points.
 - k. Ask for Q&A, and comments.
 - l. Close with what you want them to think, feel, or do.
5. The number one success element to help perfect your platform skills is authenticity! Be yourself. I recommend that you watch people who are compelling, or listen to their speech on an audio file. Dissect what they are doing and learn, learn, learn.
6. Pledge to yourself to be a lifelong learner. This ongoing learning gives you information to think and speak on your feet.

