

The following pointers are from a web page by Don Clark that contains several resources about making presentations.

<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadpres.html>

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Tips and Techniques For Great Presentations

Eleanor Roosevelt was a shy young girl who was terrified at the thought of speaking in public. But with each passing year, she grew in confidence and self-esteem. She once said, "No one can make you feel inferior, unless you agree with it."

- If you have handouts, do not read straight from them. The audience does not know if they should read along with you or listen to you read.
- Do not put both hands in your pockets for long periods of time. This tends to make you look unprofessional. It is OK to put one hand in a pocket but ensure there is no loose change or keys to jingle around. This will distract the listeners.
- Do not wave a pointer around in the air like a wild knight branding a sword to slay a dragon. Use the pointer for what it is intended and then put it down, otherwise the audience will become fixated upon your "sword", instead upon you.
- Do not lean on the podium for long periods. The audience will begin to wonder when you are going to fall over.
- Speak to the audience...NOT to the visual aids, such as flip charts or overheads. Also, do not stand between the visual aid and the audience.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough for all to hear. Do not speak in a monotone voice. Use inflection to emphasize your main points.
- The disadvantages of presentations is that people cannot see the punctuation and this can lead to misunderstandings. An effective way of overcoming this problem is to pause at the time when there would normally be punctuation marks.
- Use colored backgrounds on overhead transparencies and slides (such as yellow) as the bright white light can be harsh on the eyes. This will quickly cause your audience to tire. If all of your transparencies or slides have clear backgrounds, then tape one blank yellow one on the overhead face. For slides, use a rubber band to hold a piece of colored cellophane over the projector lens.
- Learn the name of each participant as quickly as possible. Based upon the atmosphere you want to create, call them by their first names or by using Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.
- Tell them what name and title you prefer to be called.
- Listen intently to comments and opinions. By using a *lateral thinking technique* (adding to ideas rather than dismissing them), the audience will feel that their ideas, comments, and opinions are worthwhile.
- Circulate around the room as you speak. This movement creates a physical closeness to the audience.
- List and discuss your objectives at the beginning of the presentation. Let the audience know how your presentation fits in with their goals. Discuss some of the

fears and apprehensions that both you and the audience might have. Tell them what they should expect of you and how you will contribute to their goals.

- Vary your techniques (lecture, discussion, debate, films, slides, reading, etc.)
- Get to the presentation before your audience arrives; be the last one to leave.
- Be prepared to use an alternate approach if the one you've chosen seems to bog down. You should be confident enough with your own material so that the audience's interests and concerns, not the presentation outline, determines the format. Use your background, experience, and knowledge to interrelate your subject matter.
- When writing on flip charts use no more than 7 lines of text per page and no more than 7 word per line (the 7 7 rule). Also, use bright and bold colors, and pictures as well as text.
- Consider the time of day and how long you have got for your talk. Time of day can affect the audience. After lunch is known as the graveyard section in training circles as audiences will feel more like a nap than listening to a talk.
- Most people find that if they practice in their head, the actual talk will take about 25 per cent longer. Using a flip chart or other visual aids also adds to the time. Remember - **it is better to finish slightly early than to overrun.**