



Everyone's a Critic

Tips for better presentations

I quite enjoy giving presentations! Though I'm not sure my audience has always enjoyed receiving them.

There's a few reasons. I do tend to speed up my speech, and if I'm not careful, a well-constructed sentence can turn into ***awellconstructedsentence...*** Also I have been known, when excited, to let slip in the odd swear word. Combining both of those with a broad Scottish accent and all spoken without the need to draw breath you can see how I have problems to overcome.

So, over many years I've made sure that I have developed and presented many presentations, both in my day job and as a member of a couple of global benchmarking and leading practice organisations. Even did a presentation on giving presentations 😊. *If you would like to have a look at it click on the [EPRAKT link](#) and it will take you to our website and a paper on presentation skills and tools for developing effective presentations*

Here is the summary of my tips to help you be a better presenter.

Be likeable

If an audience likes you, they will forgive you most things. People like you when you get the essential things right. In my opinion, they are;

- Being prepared
- Being committed to your topic or material
- Being comfortable with the audience, and
- Being interested in the presentation and audience

Define your objectives

It's the first priority in any presentation and it's first and most important thing that should be done .

The objectives answer the audience's question "Why are we listening to this presentation?"

It's ok to be nervous

Just don't tell everyone! If you do the audience will feel obliged to worry about you and if they worry about you then you won't inspire confidence.

Build relationships

The best presenters don't just stand there making a case, they're building relationships with every person in the room. And it's not just a short-term relationship, its one with the potential to last. While you speak the audience is forming an opinion of you, are you friendly, helpful, genuine and knowledgeable or maybe the opposite.....

First 2 minutes

The first 2 minutes in your presentation are critical, in that time the audience is assessing you and impressions are registering. The audience is scanning you for clues to your character and temperament. Why do they do that? Because presenting is a skill where preparation and attitude are apparent almost instantly.

Be a leader

Not just a spokesperson. As a leader, you are there to help people, show them what to do, where to go, how to get there.

Look into their eyes

When presenting look everyone in the eyes at least once, smile with our eyes and face, **move**, there's nothing more boring than something that never moves. Don't stare at the overheads or screen or look over the heads of the audience or fix your eyes on the computer screen.

Be time flexible

The presentation should be of a duration the content deserves, But.. be prepared to drastically reduce the length. It's pretty common when presenting to executives to be asked to cut you presentation down from its planned 30 minutes to 10 or less. Plan and practice for this, what is the critical information you must convey, what are the key points they should take away.

Having watched literally hundreds of presentations the most common mistakes I have seen presenters make are,

- Not establishing an initial rapport with the audience
- Having an awkward stance/gestures and lack of movement
- Too much detail in the material – too statistical not human
- Poor eye contact and facial expressions
- Lack of humour
- Speaker unprepared, lack of clarity of the objective, lack of knowledge of the material
- Pace too fast, no pauses
- Boring language and material
- Low speaker energy
- Presenter tense and uncomfortable

There are many articles that suggest that the ability to present well is critical to leadership success in business. If that is the case I hope this article helps you to improve your presenting.