

Progressions Inc.

Sales Training & Consulting



Stand Up, Stand Out... Presentation Skills to Connect with Your Audience

When speaking to a group of people it's important to exude confidence. Visualize and see yourself succeeding. All great athletes and stars of most any type visualize prior to any act that might stretch them. The power of visualization is essential in delivering an effective presentation.

Before going on stage rehearse in your mind what the audience may see, feel and think about what you have to say. Make sure to have eye contact and smile. Throughout your presentation make sure to connect with each individual in the room so that they feel as if you are speaking just to them. Project confidence. If you know your material and you have practiced, it is much easier to be confident in your delivery. If you make a mistake, the audience doesn't really know it because only you know what you planned to say!

Ask questions. To engage the audience it's important to ask questions throughout your session. Pull them in and tweak their interests.

First ask the audience for volunteers. Those that are most outgoing and comfortable in speaking up will participate. After the room seems more comfortable and several people are participating, then ask others yourself. In this way you will create an element of surprise and keep the entire room engaged in anticipation that you might call on them.

Relax and let your audience know that "you are real". No one likes a stuffy presenter or someone that's too consumed with themselves. Be human, if you make a mistake laugh at yourself. The audience will enjoy you even more.

Be sure to tell stories. They should be your own stories for authenticity, but do tell them. The stories paint pictures in words and help the audience understand the situation through example.

It's critical to see yourself as the audience sees you. Everyday is interview day and you are standing in front of a group of people with them having all the time needed to "check you out". So before going on stage make sure you have "checked yourself out" for anything that might lack in professional packaging.



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Utilize interactive exercises and breakouts. The key to any successful presentation is to mix it up. A presenter should present key points followed by questions from the audience. Breakouts sessions are an excellent way of encouraging the less active participants as they will speak up more in a smaller group.

Have materials prepared in advance as handouts for these breakout sessions. Games and brain teasers are always good. Breakouts can be in groups of 2, (a partnership), 3, 4 or in groups up to 8.

Use props but do not overuse them. If you find that you are a bit nervous or tentative about standing in front of a group, it is often helpful to have a prop such as a flip chart, graph or power point presentation. At the National Speakers Association it said that a great speaker does not need props as they should engage the audience all by themselves. However, as you are developing your skills a power point presentation to keep your focus can often give you additional confidence and therefore help your speech overall.

Have fun yourself and the audience will too. The more you project your enjoyment of the process the more the audience will have fun right along with you. Developing presentation skills is important for everyone. Practice makes perfect!

Here's wishing you great success in communicating with others.



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