

GUIDELINES

Dynamic Presentations

The way you deliver a presentation has as much effect as the words themselves

BY CAROLYN B. THOMPSON

Surveys show that less than 10 percent of a speaker's impact is the result of the words spoken. The real impact comes from your tone of voice, facial expressions, and other body language. You still need to prepare the words that will be the basis of your presentation, but the power of your message will be in your delivery. Here are some do's and don'ts for more effective presentations:

Preparation

- Research your audience so you know what they want to hear.
- Match your clothing to your audience, but try for one notch higher (people are impressed when you dress up for them).
- Don't wear new clothes or shoes (you don't know how you'll look or feel in them).
- Plan for the questions you'll get and prepare answers beforehand.
- Prepare handouts so your listeners will remember you when they're back at the office.
- Go early and meet your audience before the session begins.

Presentation

- Match your style, voice level, tone, and gestures to your audience.
- Use a mixture of presentation styles (active, visual, auditory) so that you hit everyone's learning style.
- Use humor to handle strange noises (dishes clattering, microphone hiss, slamming doors) or if you make a mistake (your zipper or button is undone, you lose your train of thought).
- Don't exaggerate: Your audience will always find out.
- Distribute evaluation forms and ask the audience to return them before leaving.
- Use the information from the evaluations and make changes to address any consistently negative evaluations.

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