

Do Your Sales Presentations Make You or Break You?

■ By Kate Tunison, *PresentingPlus!*

Practice until you know it so well you can be interrupted, or questioned, and not get flustered.

You've studied your client's issues; you have asked the right questions and know your competition. You are confident you have an excellent solution and have even secured an appointment to present your proposal. Wow, you are almost there, but don't mentally spend your commission yet! Your presentation can be a huge differentiator for you and could make or break your sale. Here are five basic ways to ensure you get off to a good start and stand out from the crowd:

1) Don't Be on Time ... Be Early. Arrange to arrive early so you can be assured all media is

working properly. Don't wait until the last minute to set up. Be ready before the appointed time and welcome participants into the meeting space. Own the room. As others arrive on your "turf," it will be a confidence builder. In all my years of presenting sales proposals, and training, no one has ever turned me down when I asked to visit the venue prior to the presentation. If you are able, visit the site up to 24 hours before you present. This extra time allows you to stand in the space and visualize your presentation while you are in the room, and most importantly, after you leave. This is powerful; don't overlook the impact visualizing a successful presentation can have on your confidence.

2) Connect and Engage. If you are using PowerPoint or Keynote, position your computer so the monitor faces you and you face the audience. You will be able to see your slides without turning your back to the audience, a big no-no. This also allows you to have eye contact and engage with your audience, a big yes-yes.

3) Know Your Material! Don't wing it. Reading your slides is a guaranteed way to lose the attention of your audience. Potential clients like their suppliers to be confident. So remember, *there is no such thing as too much practice.* You are the presentation, not the slides.

Don't wing it! There is no such thing as too much practice.





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4) **Move with Purpose.** For business meeting presentations, imagine a four-square-foot box around you and stay in this general area. Pacing back and forth indicates nervousness and a lack of self-confidence. You may think your audience is paying attention because they are watching you. They are watching...*just not listening*. When you do move around, move with purpose.

It's all about connection,
not perfection.

5) **Use a Fine Design.** Every slide does not have to be a list of bullets. Use graphics, photos and quotes to help support your message. There are lots of great sites out there to help you communicate the benefits of your solution. Some sites are free and some are pay as you go. Use them to make your presentation engaging and help you communicate your ideas.

Here's a last bit of advice: Whenever you get the chance to present your proposal, remember it is about connection, not



perfection. You may have dotted all your I's, crossed all your T's and have all the correct answers for your client's questions. However, I have a sincere belief that it is the people who can effectively communicate their ideas and connect to others who usually end up winning the clients, gaining recognition and even getting a promotion. ■



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