

# Effective Presentations

## Giving Effective Presentations

Presentation and public speaking skills are highly valuable. Having strong presentation skills are essential to you as a resident, but will also be needed throughout your career as a physician for perhaps, professional conferences at meetings and conferences or maybe you will be asked to speak to members of the community.

Giving presentations can be a very challenging event. Too often, presenters become so nervous that they stumble through the presentation, feeling the whole time as if they are being judged by the audience. It is important to remember . . . the audience is not judging you. They want you to succeed and are not there to judge, but rather, to learn. Therefore, calm your fears and realize that there is no great secret to giving a great presentation. The key to a great speaker is that he/she has mastered all essential presentation skills.

## Organizing and Preparing for your Presentation\*

### *Start with the end in mind*

- What does the audience expect?
- Determine the most important points of your talk (*what you want the audience to take away from your presentation?*) – write those down

### *Know your audience*

- Who are they and how much background information regarding your topic do they have?
- What is the purpose of the presentation?

### *Content, content, content*

- Solid content is important
- Content alone, however, will not make a good presentation – Visuals and delivery are also key
- Make it concise (*otherwise someone could read a book and learn it*) and make it appropriate for your audience
- Do not do a “data dump” – go back to the key points you outlined in the step above

### *Outlining your content*

- Write down your ideas and objectives using paper and pencil
- Determine a logical flow for your information
- Draw sample images or indicate “chart here” to support your information

### *So What?*

- As you are building your presentation, imagine you are an audience member and ask, “So what?”
- If you can’t answer that question, then cut that bit of material
- This will help you to ensure that all your content is relevant and necessary – not just fluff

### *Consider cases and metaphors*

- If appropriate, support your material with cases or metaphors
- Helps the audience to better understand content and makes it more memorable

### *Confidence – how to get it!*

- The better you know your material, the less nervous you will be.
- Don’t over-prepare or you may seem unnatural and boring
- Audibly rehearse your presentation – it is much different than just going over it in your head
- Anticipate questions – think of what the most common questions will be from your audience and prepare your answer

## **How to Deliver an Engaging Presentation\***

### *Start strong*

First impressions count!!

The first 2-3 minutes of the presentation are most important – this is when you engage the audience and make them want to hear what you have to say

### *Look at the audience*

Try to make eye contact with as many people throughout the room as possible.

Eye contact engages the audience – without it, you will seem like you are talking to yourself and others will begin not to pay attention to you.

### *Talk to you audience, not at them*

Make your presentation using a conversational voice and not a “lecturing” one

If possible, make reference to someone in the audience and how he/she may have experience with your topic or experience

If possible, ask someone a question or his/her opinion – if nothing else, ask a rhetorical question

### *Don’t over prepare*

If you over rehearse, it will begin to sound very mechanical and this is disengaging to your audience.

Practice, know your material, but don’t memorize it

### *Show some movement*

Make gestures

Move away from the podium when possible – a podium is a barrier between you and your audience

Be cautious of nervous movement, such as tapping a pen or jingling change in your pocket – the audience will begin to concentrate on this instead of your talk

*Keep your visuals simple*

Don't overcrowd slides with words

Use graphics whenever possible

You are your number one visual, the slides should only enhance what you have to say

*Watch the clock*

Never, ever go over your allotted time

If you end early, use the remaining time to address questions

*\*Adapted from Preparation Tips. Garr Reynolds [URL:  
<http://www.garreynolds.com/Presentation/prep.html> ]*

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