10 Tips for a Great Presentation

1. **Start with an End in Mind**
   Why are you speaking? What do you want the audience to do after listening to your presentation? This will help you focus on the message you want to share with your audience. It will help you focus on who is your audience, the key points, and what you want your audience to do after listening to you.

2. **Keep It Simple**
   Speak to *express* instead of speaking to *impress*. Use straight-forward and simple words, and don’t rely too heavily on PowerPoint. Your audience will soon lose interest in what you are saying.

   Keep the structure of your presentation simple. An opening, body with tree major points, and a closing will help you connect with your audience. Be sincere, concise, and simple in your presentation and you will always connect with your audience.

3. **Practice, Practice, Practice**
   Master your presentation by practicing. First, read your speech to yourself a few times. This allows you to work out the majority of the rough spots in your presentation before you start rehearsing.

   Next, rehearse in front of a mirror or, even better, a video camera. Also try to rehearse in front of someone whose opinion you value.

   Finally, practice as close as possible to your speaking environment as possible. For example, if you will be speaking behind a lectern, practice with your notes on an ironing board.

4. **Visualize Success**
   The key to making visualization work for you is involving as many senses (sound, touch, sight, smell, etc.) as possible in your visualization. Visualize yourself giving a successful presentation where you see yourself as a confident presenter, hear yourself handling questions, etc. Visualize successful presentations so that it becomes real.

5. **Eat the Elephant**
   Break the group into individuals. Look for friendly faces in the audience who are paying attention and engaged in your presentation. Look at them and “talk” to them for a few moments, then move on to another friendly face.
6. **Nail Your Presentation Opening**
   Know your opening like the back of your hand. Know exactly what you are going to say. Once you get started and gain some momentum you will start to gain confidence for the rest of your speech. It helps to pause for 3-5 seconds before you are about to start your presentation so that can focus on what you are about to say.

7. **Nail Your Presentation Ending**
   It’s the last words your audience hears and reminder about you. You can have a great opening and body and have a bad ending and your audience your always remember how you ended. Ask your audience to take action, think about an idea, etc., so that they understand why they are there.

8. **Backup if You Forget**
   If you forget what you are about to say or lose your place in the presentation do the following:
   - Stop speaking. Take two steps backward. Then take a deep breath. Collect your thoughts. Smile. Take two steps forward and proceed with your presentation.
   - Go back and repeat the last sentence. That will help trigger what comes next in your presentation.
   - If you really go blank, ask an audience member what was the last sentence you said. You will be surprised how many people will volunteer this information to help you. This will give you time to collect your thoughts, involve the audience, and go forward with your presentation.

   If you forget a piece of information, collect yourself and then go forward. Unless the audience has a copy of every single word of your speech they will never know you forgot something.

9. **Realize Presentation Nervousness is the Tool of Great Presenters**
   Believe it or not, all presenters, whether professional or occasional, are nervous when presenting. The difference is the best presenters use nervousness to their advantage by turning nervousness into positive energy. Here are some tips to control nervousness:
   - Walk from the back of the room to burn some of the nervous energy.
   - Slow your breathing
   - Stretch

10. **Get Excited About Your Presentation**
    If you’re excited, your audience will be excited. Some of the ways you can become excited is:
    - Remember what you say is important and can make a difference for your audience.
    - Every opportunity to present is a chance for you to succeed.
    - Every time you speak you become better than the last time.

adapted from http://www.thesykesgrp.com/Presentation10Tips01.htm