

Five Tips for Making a Great Presentation
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1) Plan your session to communicate one or two simple, direct **themes or essential questions**. During the course of your presentation, touch on these key ideas repeatedly as you build a supporting case using research or data. Your objective is to have the audience walk away from the talk with your theme firmly in their mind and motivation to learn more about the topic.

2) Start your presentation by creating a sense of **anticipation** in your audience. Focus thinking by asking a question. If time permits, ask the audience members to talk about the question for one minute with the people around them and solicit responses. This makes people create a picture in their mind and talk about it, which helps direct their thinking toward your topic. The key words for the **first few minutes** of the presentation are:

- **Focus**- Get people thinking about the task at hand
- **Anticipation** - Create a need in people to listen and learn more
- **Engage** - Get people to make pictures in their mind and talk about them
- **Theme**- Introduce your key point as a statement or question

3) **Tell a story** using words and pictures. Show your theme to the audience using key words on overheads or PowerPoint. Provide pictures or illustrations that help people create a mental image of your main ideas. Don't use more than about 10 words for any one slide. If you need to present data, tables or lengthy text, provide these as a handout or save them to a web page and give the audience the address on a handout. Give the audience a way to contact you for further information. Use a minimal number of slides. Keep returning to your theme and provide a coherent set of supporting points that the audience can use to store this new knowledge. Provide less content but teach it better.

4) Avoid the following **presentation killers**:

- Reading to the audience off overheads or PowerPoint slides
- Standing next to the projector so you block the screen
- Reading your presentation from a script
- Rushing through too many overheads in an effort to "cover" more content

5) In the final analysis, the objective of a presentation is to **teach** and create a genuine interest in learning more about a topic. Attempting to cram lots of facts into a session and cover them as quickly as possible is simply a poor strategy.

* If you get an opportunity to host an extended length session, resist the temptation to add more content. Instead, use the extra time to use the information you presented by asking your audience to actively **apply and synthesize** what they have learned.