Presenting Memorably

A good delivery helps ideas stick in the audience’s minds. The quality of delivery is often what separates a memorable presentation from a forgettable, albeit still informative, presentation.

**Voice**

- Speak *clearly* and *confidently*. Having persuasive content and a structured presentation means nothing if no one can understand you or if you seem unwilling to stand behind your ideas.
- Sound as if your topic *interests you*. Audiences will not listen to what you have to say if your voice is monotone or if you seem uninterested in your topic. Avoid uptalk unless you are talking to a younger audience or are trying to motivate your audience.
- Speak *slower* than you normally would and remember to *take* full breaths. Many presenters talk too quickly due to nervousness or being short of breath. Speaking slower and breathing fully will help you stay *relaxed* and remain *focused*.
- A deliberate pause not only gives you a chance to catch your breath; if used effectively, *strategic silence* can highlight key ideas as well as provide time for the audience to consider your material further. Avoid prolonged, unintentional silences, as these discomfort the audience and harm your credibility by making you seem unprepared.
- If you are presenting as part of a group, be sure to address one another by your names; doing so helps the audience *remember* who you are.
- Avoid unnecessary *fillers* – like, uh, um, and, so. Just *pause* when the need to fill the air arises.

**Posture**

- Stand in a way that inspires *confidence* and *authority*. You are the expert people are here to listen to, so project that image to them, and *avoid* the following:
  - Crossing your arms - makes you seem standoffish and disinterested.
  - Swaying or rocking back and forth – could distract audience members.
  - Crossing and uncrossing your legs or fidgeting in any visible way.
  - Placing your hands in your pockets – not appropriate for a formal presentation.
  - Turning your back to the audience in order to read your slides or referring too often to your notes – you have an audience, acknowledge their presence by *looking at them*. 
• **Balance** your weight by standing up straight. Good balance improves your ability to breathe fully and helps you project your voice better.

**Body Language**

• Maintain appropriate **eye contact**. Instead of fixing your attention on one spot, be sure to turn towards various parts of the room during the presentation.
• Make use of deliberate, timely hand gestures. Don’t “talk with your hands” or gesticulate wildly.
• **Smile** – don’t be excessively cheerful, but don’t be dour. Look pleased to be presenting and confident in what you are saying.
• In group presentations, do not fidget while other members are speaking. It will unnecessarily draw attention to your movements instead of what they’re presenting.
• **Do not read to your audience**. Deliberately drawing your audience’s attention to a visual aid is fine, but refrain from looking away from your audience for too long.

For tips on how to structure an effective presentation, consult our “Creating Effective Presentations” tip sheet.