

Presenting with Confidence

Develop Your Presentation Skills to Captivate and Engage Your Audience



Course Book

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Introduction - Why You Can't Ignore Your Presentation Skills

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld had this to say about our oft-mentioned fear of public speaking:

"A recent survey stated that the average person's greatest fear is having to give a speech in public. Somehow this ranked even higher than death, which was third on the list. So, you're telling me that at a funeral, most people would rather be the guy in the coffin than have to stand up and give a eulogy."

Many surveys have attested to the extent of our fear of public speaking. This idea, perhaps, first originated in David Wallechinsky, Irving Wallace, and Amy Wallace's book *'The Book of Lists'* which referenced a 1973 Bruskin survey, which said that 41% of the 3,000 American respondents listed "speaking before a group" as their greatest fear, even more than heights, financial problems, or death.

Whether this is still completely accurate or not, it's a known fact that people do not enjoy public speaking. However, it's a key skill that you must master in order to succeed in any kind of business. This is true not only of high stakes presentations, but also in the way you present yourself to your audience.

The Problems We Face with Public Speaking

Many people experience intense anxiety when called upon to present in front of groups. There may be physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, shaking, dry mouth, shivers, or going blank. For some people this anxiety occurs not only in front of large groups but even in front of small, informal groups. In fact, it could be worse in smaller, more intimate groups. This fear can cause some people to avoid giving presentations at all.

As you can imagine, for small business owners and entrepreneurs, this type of fear can be very problematic. It can limit the types of opportunities you have to build your credibility and to pitch your product or service. Luckily, anyone can overcome their fear of public speaking by learning some effective calming tips and by practicing proven presentation techniques.

Even if you are lucky enough to not suffer from this public speaking anxiety, you may be undermining the effectiveness of your presentations by using outdated or ineffective presentation techniques or approaches.

Why Public Speaking Is So Important

Public speaking is vital to any type of business because communication is the foundation of business success. Good communication allows business owners to form meaningful connections with others and influence decision making. It's at the heart of everything we do.

Improving your communication skills will have a positive impact on how you communicate with clients, customers, colleagues, team members, business partners, and even friends and family members.

Learning presentation skills will allow you to appear more confident and collected in front of your audience. It will reduce your anxiety and could make it disappear entirely. At the very least, you will be able to control and channel your anxiety. Even some very good public speakers admit to being

nervous when speaking in front of groups, but they know how to keep it from controlling them.

Indirectly, better public speaking skills will improve your sales, your reputation, how you are seen among your competitors and peers, and your standing in the marketplace. If you're more proficient at public speaking, you'll be invited to speak more often, which will turn you into a thought leader in your field.

Learning Objectives:

- Apply public speaking best practices to any situation
- Build a compelling elevator pitch that you can use to quickly introduce yourself and your company
- Create an engaging presentation to position a particular view point or opinion
- Present a sales pitch to help you increase sales of a specific product or service
- Create a plan to continuously improve your public speaking skills

This course is broken down into 4 modules to take you step-by-step through Presenting with Confidence.

The modules follow a logical order, so while you can skip around if you want, it's best to work through them one at a time.

As you go through each module, use your Action Guide to help you complete the Action Steps at the end of each.

Action Steps:

1. Think of some really great presentations you have seen (Shark Tank pitches, TED Talks, etc.). What are some methods those presenters used that really impressed you?
2. Similarly, think of some really terrible presentations you have seen. What were some methods those presenters used that undermined their message?

Sample

Module 1 - Apply Best Practices to Elevate Your Public Speaking

Good presentation skills are the foundation for effective public speaking for small business owners. Whether you're just getting started or are looking to brush up on your skills, here are the best practices of public speaking to help you elevate your presentation skills across any type of speaking engagement.

At the root of presentation skills is communication. No matter what type of presentation you're giving, the key is to communicate with your audience. In order to effectively communicate with your audience, there are things you need to do before and during your presentation.

Before the Presentation

Know Your Audience

Adjust for Size

Be Flexible

Observe Timing

Get Plenty of Fuel

Voice and Tone

Know Your Audience. Spend some time researching your audience. Try to get as much information about them as you can. Useful information includes demographic details (such as age and gender), number of people attending, and whatever you can find out about their attitudes and feelings.

You should also know your audience's level of knowledge about the subject to ensure that you're not boring them with things they already know or talking over their heads.

Adjust for Size. Adjust your tone for larger or smaller groups. For a group of 50 or over, you can use a more formal tone. Your presentation will be less interactive. For smaller groups, plan to be less formal and to involve your audience more in the presentation.

Be Flexible. Although your presentation may be well planned out and rehearsed, expect the unexpected. Be ready to adapt. You may have prepared a presentation for a large, knowledgeable audience only to discover that you need to talk to a small audience with less knowledge. Be ready to scale back or change your presentation on the fly.

Whatever happens, maintain a sense of humor when things don't go as planned and try to give the best presentation to whatever audience you have.

Observe Timing. Always practice with an eye on your timing to make sure that the presentation stays in the parameters. You need to fit everything you have to cover in the allotted time. When you time your presentation, you may find yourself running short and having to add more.

Get Plenty of Fuel. Your brain needs fuel. Even if the time before the presentation is hectic, make sure you have something to eat. If your brain doesn't have the nutrients it needs, you're more likely to suffer from

cognitive problems such as anxiety or "brain fog." The best thing to eat before a presentation is a protein-rich snack like nuts or eggs. Avoid anything heavy that might slow you down or cause indigestion.

Voice and Tone. When people are nervous, various things happen to their voice and tone. For some people, their pitch rises, while for others their voice becomes flat. Nervousness also tends to cause speakers to use fillers like "um" or make long pauses. Try recording yourself giving the presentation beforehand and listen for these. Keep this in mind and try to control your voice and tone during the presentation.

Controlling your voice and tone is not only important for improving your presentation, but can also have a positive effect on your body. If you manage to bring your tone down and control it, you may feel more relaxed.

Best Practices During a Presentation



Use a Delivery Style that Matches Your Personality

Have Fun

Don't Read

Use Facial Expressions

Beware Body Language

Use a Delivery Style that Matches Your Personality. If you're not naturally a joker, don't use the stage as your first chance to try stand-up comedy. Use a delivery style that plays to your natural strengths. Think of your delivery style as an extension of the way you communicate with people every day.

Have Fun. You want your presentation to come off as relaxed and not stiff. It's completely possible to be both professional and fun. Make the content of your presentation interesting and try wherever possible to use humor or draw the listeners' curiosity. The bottom line is that if you feel that your presentation is fun, this will rub off on the audience.

Don't Read. It's okay to use notes but don't read from your notes. If you're using PowerPoint, don't simply read off the slides. For your notes or outline, use bullet points, keywords, or headings to remind you of important points to cover. As you practice and give more presentations, you'll get better at this. You'll find a particular style that works for you. If you're not extremely familiar with the subject matter or have trouble remembering key points, practice until the content is stuck in your brain. Anything is better than reading.

Use Facial Expressions. Along with controlling your voice and tone during a presentation, you should also think about your facial expressions. Your facial expressions should mirror what you're saying in the same natural way that they do when you're talking to friends. When you tell a joke, you should be smiling. When saying something serious or sad, you may wear a frown. You can practice your speech in front of a mirror beforehand to practice keeping your facial expressions natural.

ATTENTION:

This is only an excerpt from our full course Presenting with Confidence. The full, customizable course contains 3 modules and an introduction & conclusion module.

When you purchase a license for the course, you'll receive the editable files for the Course Book, Action Guide, graphics, tweets, and other resources.

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