



**Proven Techniques
You Can Use
to
Give Powerful
Presentations**



By Sylvia Henderson



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About the Author

Sylvia Henderson, MBA, is Chief Everything Officer (CEO) of Springboard Training—your springboard to personal and professional development. She provides the people, tools and resources that help you show you're as great as you say you are, focusing on interpersonal communications, positive first impressions, and professional behaviors.

Sylvia has 30+ years' experience as a corporate trainer, non-profit leader and professional development manager practicing the leadership, communication and motivational skills she now presents in her programs. Her business focus is on staff, administrative, and supervisory professional development.

Sylvia is an Adjunct Faculty member at Prince Georges College (MD), a nationally certified Girl Scout trainer, and a published author. She earned Education and MBA degrees in Pennsylvania. Her professional affiliations include the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Toastmasters International, and National Speakers Association (NSA).



"Your springboard to personal and professional development!"

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Introduction

Seems like the busiest people are most aware of their own personal development.

Since you are one of these busy people, this tips booklet gives you information you can use immediately to develop your presentation and public speaking skills.

When you diet (or try to gain weight) you do not try something new every day. A lasting change comes about when you initiate a new step once a week and practice every day. Eventually, real behavior change—that lasts—becomes a part of you.

These tips are specific actions you can take to improve or fine-tune specific skills. Take them one week at a time. In time and with patience, you should observe a measurable improvement in your presentation skills.

Good luck on your journey!

Table of Contents

The Words You Say	4
Your Voice As A Tool	5
Make It Interesting	6
Plan for Success	7
Logistics	8
Body Language	9
Presentation Visuals	10
Electronic Equipment	11
Difficult Situations	12
Delivery Techniques	13
General Presentation Tips	14
Resources for Further Study	15
10 Tips to Promote YOUR Business With This Booklet	16

The Words You Say

- 1 Keep words positive – can instead of cannot, do instead of do not, like instead of dislike.
- 2 Kick the “but...”
“Yes, but...” cancels the positive and alerts the listener to be wary of what comes next.
- 3 Explain terminology and define acronyms and jargon.
- 4 Eliminate extraneous words—ahs, umms, likes, and you sees.
- 5 Tell the audience what you are going to talk about in your presentation (introduction), talk about it (body), then tell them what you talked about (conclusion).
- 6 Use humor carefully. Expect a diverse audience and avoid offending or condescending to them.
- 7 Refer to a thesaurus for alternative words. It helps build your vocabulary, too.
- 8 Be specific with information and data. Use concrete – and correct – numbers and examples and make them understandable and tangible.
- 9 Use confident words. Instead of “I hope you will consider” try “I recommend that you to consider”.
- 10 Insert power words into your speech:
 - Exciting
 - Critical
 - Decisive
 - Compelling
 - Unusual

Your Voice As A Tool

- 11 For vocal variety, vary your volume and pitch while you speak.
- 12 Change the amount of time you take to say words—the rate of your speech.
- 13 End sentences with periods rather than question marks. When your voice goes up at the end of a sentence you sound as if you are asking a question which, with statements, translates to the listener as uncertainty.
- 14 Pause after commas, colons, semi-colons, and periods in sentences.
- 15 Project your voice from your diaphragm rather than yell.
- 16 Practice changing your pitch—whether your voice goes up or down—of the words in these sentences. An “up” arrow ↑ means you should make your voice go up for the next word; a “down” arrow ↓ means you should make your voice go down.
 - Can ↑ everyone ↑ hear ↑ me ↑ now?
 - Can ↓ anyone ↓ hear ↓ me ↓ now?
- 17 Articulate words by enunciating clearly and pronouncing words succinctly.
- 18 Keep your hand away from your mouth. Words sound muddled and muffled when you cover your mouth and impede airflow.
- 19 Read appropriate quotations out loud to practice verbal delivery. Then use the quotations to give impact to your presentation.
- 20 Warm-up your voice before you start. Just before you are scheduled to speak find a private place and hum, count to 10, or sing a couple of music scales.

Make It Interesting

- 21 Capture and hold your audience’s attention by relating personal stories.
- 22 If thinking of stories is difficult for you, ask yourself the following questions and jot down the answers you come up with. They may feed into stories you can use in your presentation.
 - What is the most bizarre thing I’ve ever heard or seen about...*[topic]*?
 - What stories did I hear when I was growing up relating to...*[topic]*?
 - The biggest mistake I ever made in this *[topic]* area was...
 - My wildest vacation took place when...
- 23 Research and locate quotations to use through Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations (originally established 1901) either in book form or on the Internet at: www.cc.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/bartlett/
- 24 Use little-known facts and obscure information. One source of a great deal of information about a wide range of topics is: www.fedworld.gov/
- 25 Create an interesting title for your presentation. Make it results-oriented rather than information-intensive.
- 26 If creativity is difficult for you, consider completing one of the following titles:
 - *[Number]* Ways to *[Topic]*
 - Everything You Need to Know to *[Action or Skill]*
 - What You Don’t Want to Miss About *[Topic]*
 - *[Topic]* 101
- 27 Integrate a product sample into the presentation so that people can see what you are talking about. (Especially effective for introducing a new product.)

Plan for Success

- 28 Fine-tune your presentation components to meet your audience demographics:
- Introduction
 - Presentation title
 - Key points of interest
 - Amount of reading required
- Make your presentation relevant to your audience.
- 29 Determine the needs of your audience and the organization. Prepare the presentation to fulfill those needs:
- Increase sales
 - Motivate
 - Solve problems
 - Pull together a cohesive team
- 30 Clearly identify the purpose of the presentation and the objectives that will be met to fulfill the purpose.
- 31 Rehearse in front of a mirror to see how you look when presenting. Wear similar attire to what you will wear for the actual presentation.
- 32 Organize your presentation following the ABC's of presentation structure:
- Use an Attention-getting opening.
 - Present the Body using a variety of techniques.
 - Close or Conclude by summarizing the body and calling for action.
- 33 Make keyword notes rather than script your presentation to avoid reading the script.
- 34 Imagine yourself presenting. Close your eyes and “walk through” your performance visualizing the audience, your delivery, and how you will work the room.

Logistics

- 35 Make sure the room accommodates the maximum size of the expected audience comfortably.
- 36 Request a room that has electrical outlets within easy reach of planned equipment and where wires and cables are not exposed across walking pathways.
- 37 Adjust temperature controls to a cool—but not uncomfortable—setting to keep your audience awake and alert.
- 38 Learn the room. Check the room ahead of time, get a feel for the speaking area, and set-up and practice with equipment and presentation visuals.
- 39 Start, break, and end on time. Show that you respect time and want your audience to do so, too.
- 40 Provide water and plan stretch and biology breaks every 50-minutes.
- 41 Request adjustable lighting. Turn lighting in front of the room or in front of the projection screen down or off to eliminate washed-out images.
- 42 Close blinds and curtains to remove distractions and eliminate glare from projected images.
- 43 Project images onto a screen rather than a wall (for a clear image) or whiteboard (which produces a glare).
- 44 Place handouts, if any, on the seats or table settings where you want people to sit...in front of the room.

Body Language

- 45 Make yourself approachable. Smile. Make eye contact. Act “naturally” rather than stiffly or exaggeratedly.
- 46 Move with purpose. Avoid jerky, quick, or repetitive movements. They make you appear nervous or anxious.
- 47 Maintain socially-acceptable grooming standards—clean, moderate fragrances, hair, jewelry and clothing that does not distract.
- 48 Give a firm, dry, warm handshake. Shake two or three times, then relax your grip and gently pull your hand away to end the handshake.
- 49 Appear confident. Establish good posture, stride with a purpose, and keep your head and shoulders erect.
- 50 Use “open” gestures. Sweep your hands and arms out towards the audience. Keep your palms up or out in an inviting and inclusive gesture.
- 51 Make eye contact with each individual in the audience for approximately five seconds per person.
- 52 Move towards the audience to include them and establish a relationship with them.
- 53 Back away from the audience to end a train of thought or cut a discussion.
- 54 Nod when you make a point on which you want your audience to agree. They will tend to nod along with you and agree subconsciously.

Presentation Visuals

- 55 Gauge text size, darkness, and thickness by its visibility from the farthest points of the room. Include side views as well as rear view.
- 56 Limit colors to four:
 - Black → primary color for text and graphic outlines.
 - Blue → secondary color for text and graphics.
 - Red → bullets and highlighting.
 - Green → highlighting.
- 57 Integrate visual aids only if they support the message or information, not because the medium is pretty, interesting, or costs a lot of money.
- 58 Make titles and headers interesting with creative lettering, borders, and shapes.
- 59 Create a consistent look. Incorporate corporate logos and colors, arrange information in similar locations, and use the same backgrounds on each visual.
- 60 Use font and text with serifs (little “hooks” on all the characters) for printed material, **sans-serifs** (without serifs) for projected material and posters.
- 61 Toys, models, and samples are also visual aids. Use them appropriately, for variety.
- 62 Draw borders to help focus and direct the reader’s eyes.
- 63 Backup presentation files to a disk medium that the meeting facility can accommodate.

Electronic Equipment

- 64 Use a lapel or wireless microphone to allow yourself to move freely around the room.
- 65 Sit at the seat farthest from the projection screen and observe the image. Adjust the projected image so that it is visible from the farthest points of the room.
- 66 Place projection equipment to not obstruct audience views. Move seating around or block-off the seating area if necessary.
- 67 Practice setting-up and using equipment prior to the actual presentation—connections, power switch, focus.
- 68 Bring non-electronic backup visuals in case the power goes out or the equipment stops working.
- 69 Bring extra supplies in case the facility does not provide them:
 - 3-pronged plug adapter
 - Extra power cord
 - Duct tape (to cover cords on the floor)
 - Spare projector bulb
 - Extra pens and a dark marker
- 70 Cover the projector lens with a piece of cardboard taped to the top of the lens. Flip the cardboard cover up and down to reveal and hide the projected image rather than turn the equipment power on and off.
- 71 Turn the front lights (closest to the projected image) “off” to sharpen the projected image and leave the room lights “on” so that the audience can see their notes and interact with each other.

Difficult Situations

- 72 Talk to the person privately to mutually reach an understanding of the behavioral norms for the session.
- 73 Physically move closer to the person while continuing to present your material. This will make them stop talking or look up at you and give you their attention.
- 74 If you cannot answer a question, present the question to the audience and ask if anyone would like to share their views or experiences.
- 75 Ask a question, pause to allow time to formulate an answer, then call on a quiet person to engage them and invite them to participate. Ask the question before calling on them so they are not surprised by the question.
- 76 Move away from someone who dominates a discussion to signal a transition to another topic or another person.
- 77 Ask if there is a question or something a talkative group would like to share with the rest of the group.
- 78 Stop talking. Be silent until multiple group discussions cease.
- 79 If you are scheduled to speak on the day that a distracting event has occurred:
 - Try to get your presentation re-scheduled - OR –
 - Be prepared to talk about the distracting event. It may be the only topic that interests your audience at the time.

Delivery Techniques

- 80 Smile.
- 81 Use your nervous energy to present with enthusiasm and passion.
- 82 Move around the room to keep the audience focused on you. Changing your position keeps them alert.
- 83 For question-and-answer sessions:
 - Repeat or rephrase the question.
 - Pause for a moment to formulate an answer.
 - Answer the question.
 - Ask, “Did I answer your question?”
 - Move on if “yes”, or try again.
- 84 Be confident enough to say “I don’t know but I’ll find out and get back to you”...and make sure that you do.
- 85 Use a variety of delivery techniques to maintain audience interest:
 - Short lectures.
 - Ask questions for discussion.
 - Tell a story or ask for audience experiences.
 - Break the audience into small groups to solve problems.
- 86 Avoid apologizing and calling attention to inexperience. Your audience will not know unless conditions are obvious or pointed out to them.
- 87 Place a pointer down on a table or podium when you are not using it. People focus on what is in your hands rather than what you are saying.
- 88 Take loose change and keys out of your pockets. You are less likely to reach in to jangle them and you eliminate distracting bulges.

General Presentation Tips

- 89 Ask everyone to turn off or silence their personal data devices and telephones.
- 90 Think of your presentation as a conversation between people...just a few more than usual.
- 91 Group information into five-minute segments to allow you to eliminate or add parts as needed.
- 92 Memorize your opening and closing statements. Starting smoothly helps you calm your nerves and communicate a confidence to the audience that will remain for quite awhile into your presentation. Your closing is the last thing your audience will hear and has the potential to focus them and move them to action.
- 93 Remove a large name tag before you stand to speak. This is especially important when wearing a tag with additional ribbons that drape down like a rainbow-striped flag.
- 94 Stand to your audience’s left of visuals, projected images or equipment – especially with an American audience. Americans read from left-to-right so your audience will see you before they see the visual images.
- 95 Practice, practice, practice. Volunteer to make presentations as much as possible.
- 96 Enjoy yourself! If you enjoy yourself giving a presentation, your audience will sense it and they, in turn, are more likely to enjoy the presentation with you.

Resources for Further Study

Pocket Reference Books©

Stuff for Busy People© Series from
Springboard Training, on:

- Communicating effectively.
- Communicating in times of stress.
- Motivational moments (inspirational readings).
- Pathways to Positioning© (work-life skills for professional success).
- Caregiving (co-authored with Beth Albaneze, CEO of House Calls, LLC).

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Presentations and Public Speaking

Toastmasters International

P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690

Phone: (949) 858-8255

E-mail: info@toastmasters.org

Web: www.toastmasters.org

National Speakers Association

1500 S. Priest Dr., Tempe, AZ 85281

Phone: 480-968-2552

Web: www.nsaspeaker.org

Successful Presentations for Dummies.

Malcolm Kushner. IDG Books.

ISBN #1-56884-392-5.

What to Say When You're Dying on the Platform: A Complete Resource for Speakers, Trainers, and Executives.

Lilly Walters. McGraw-Hill, Inc.

ISBN #0-07-068039-6.

Phone: (626) 335-8069

Web: www.Walters-Intl.com

10 Tips to Promote YOUR Business With This Booklet!

(It can even be customized for you.)

- 1 Send this booklet to your clients at year's end, thanking them for their business.
- 2 Use this booklet as a "thank you" for a sales appointment.
- 3 Mail this booklet to your prospect list to stay in touch with them.
- 4 Offer this booklet free with any purchase during a specific time, with a certain purchase amount, or when opening a new account.
- 5 Distribute this booklet to prospects at a trade show.
- 6 Give this booklet as an incentive for completing a questionnaire or survey.
- 7 Include this booklet as a "thank you" gift when mailing your invoices.
- 8 Package this booklet as a value-added bonus with a product you sell.
- 9 Deliver a copy of this booklet to the hands of the first "X" number of people who enter a drawing or come to your business location.
- 10 Provide copies of this booklet to people and organizations who can refer business to you.

What are you waiting for?

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Sylvia Henderson, Chief Everything Officer (CEO), facilitates workshops and conference general sessions, keynotes, develops educational tools, and authors books and program-related articles. Special programs include podcast segments, audio & video downloads, teleseminars & webinars, and retreats. We continually learn of and use new technology opportunities to deliver content to you and your organization. Personal and professional development and education are Sylvia’s passions both professionally and with her volunteer commitments.

Sylvia integrates principles of adult learning into her programs by actively engaging audiences in the learning process. She uses toys and props to generate interest and emphasize points. She weaves her avocation as a motorcyclist into analogies and metaphors that tie into messages targeting your needs.

Primary clients and audiences include:

- Staff and administrative personnel with leadership responsibilities,
- Professionals and entrepreneurs with customer / client contact and sales responsibilities (both internal and external),
- First-line through middle managers and supervisors, and
- In the youth market—high school and post-graduate students entering the workforce and “real world”.

On-site programs, and many audio and video programs, are tailored specifically to meet your needs. Contact Springboard Training for your (and your organization’s) personal and professional development needs at www.SpringboardTraining.com.



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