



Use this tip list as a guide for improving any training presentation.

Involve Your Participants

The average adult in the United States can speak at a rate of 125-150 words per minute and most people can comprehend four to six times that amount of information. To close the listening gap, engage your audience with discussion, activities, or written assignments to keep their attention.

The Rule of TELL THEM

Tell them three times – TELL THEM what you are going to tell them, TELL THEM, and TELL THEM what you told them. In other words, start with an introduction including the goals for the presentation, provide the content information, and summarize the presentation. This process will reinforce the message for the audience.

Be Flexible

If you move through your prepared material and realize that you are losing part of your audience, be prepared to shift gears. Take a quick check of your audience by a show of hands or a thumbs up or thumbs down on how things are going – “Do we need to flesh this topic out a little more?” is a better question than “Are we all on board?”

Treat Your Participants as Partners in the Learning Process

Make sure that you build in opportunities for the participant. Use self-disclosure, discussion, sharing of views and ideas, and problem solving. Let them play an active role in their own learning.

Vocal Warm-up

Some presenters like to warm up their voices before speaking. Consider speaking the long sound of the vowels in a varying level of vocal volume and inflection in order and then reverse the order (i.e., A E I O U).

Control Your Audience, Not Your Computer

Remember to face your audience and make eye contact. Do not hide behind a computer or other audio visual device.

Present with Enthusiasm

When making a presentation, speak clearly and loudly enough that a person in the back of the room can hear you. Project a positive, enthusiastic voice so the participants will hear your passion for the topic.

Create a Functional Learning Environment

Organize tables, materials, and equipment for optimal viewing before participants arrive to ensure more efficiency and cut down on lost time during the presentation. Do not forget to make your facility and overall environment accessible for all participants.

Dress for Success

When making a presentation, always dress for the audience. How you appear will have an impact on how the audience will respond to your presentation.

Make it Fun

By tying in contests, props, prizes, games, and activities, you can generate interest and reinforce learning at the same time.

Increase Program Retention

Studies show that using a variety of teaching techniques over using just lecture alone can increase retention. Audio visual materials, hands-on demonstration, and group discussion are all very good, but the best technique is to give the participants the opportunity to teach others what they just learned.

Focus on the Content, Not the Graphics

The purpose of the presentation is to communicate ideas and information, not to dazzle people with fancy graphics. When the session is over, you want your audience marching out discussing the ideas you set forth, not talking about the neat graphics or special effects.

Use Quotations

Appropriate quotations can make a noticeable impact on your audience. If discussing the topic of servant leadership, consider using the Winston Churchill quote – “We make a living by what we get. We make a life out of what we give.”

What's in it for them?

Make the presentation relevant to the audience. The audience wants to exit your session with an understanding of how their time was spent and has added value.

Use Appropriate Humor

The right amount of humor can go a long way to build rapport with your audience and keep your audience interested and attentive. Do not push your luck. Rehearsing your presentation in front of a live audience is the best way to test the acceptability of your humor.

Have a Backup Plan

What happens if your projector dies, computer crashes or audio visual materials do not show up? Have a Plan B and practice the Plan B in case you need to use it.

The Power of Language

Use “power” and “command” words to get your audience’s attention and give the impression of confidence and competence. Instead of “I think you will agree” try “I am certain you will agree.” Instead of “I hope you will consider,” try “I recommend you to consider.”

When to Distribute Handouts

Distribute handouts at the end of the session or only at the time you want the group to read them. The handout can distract your audience from your presentation.

Jargon and Acronyms

The use of jargon or acronyms is discouraged as they can separate your audience from those in-the-know and those not in-the-know. Use common language understood by all. If you use an acronym or jargon, be sure to provide the definition or explanation.

Taking Questions from the Audience

When taking questions from the audience, repeat the question before answering the question so everyone can have the benefit of both the question and the answer.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Rehearse your presentation at home or where you can be at ease, in front of mirror, or in front of a friendly audience. Consider videotaping your presentation and analyze your voice (volume, tone, and inflection) and body language.

Use Body Language

Standing, walking, or moving about with appropriate hand gestures and facial expressions is preferred to sitting down or just reading from a prepared speech.

The Eyes Have It

Make sincere eye contact with different members of the audience. Use the three-second rule. It will allow you to connect with individuals and can build rapport with the audience. Effective eye contact can make everyone in the audience feel involved.

Five Things To Do When You Are Done

1) Thank the audience. 2) Make materials available. 3) Make yourself available. 4) Provide them with a method to reach you. 5) Get feedback – Find out what they thought of you, what they learned, and how you can improve your presentation.