

# HOW TO BE A STAR PRESENTER

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## PREPARATION

1. Start preparation at least two months before the event. Make a commitment not to be boring, mediocre or colorless. Your job is to create good theater that has a motivating and magical effect on your audience.
2. List the desired outcomes from your presentation. Establish clear goals (e.g., advance an agenda, build a stronger relationship with you, etc.). And write these goals with emotional juice. For example, instead of writing “give a good speech,” write “give a speech that taps deeply into my passion for conservation.”
3. Don’t begin by drafting an outline. Instead act like a madman and free up the creative idea-generator within you. After that nonjudgmental brainstorming, only then produce an outline from those ideas.
4. Write out the whole speech word-for-word based on the outline. Never let anyone write it for you. Use simple, vivid and conversational language, colorful metaphors and clear, compelling evidence. Thus create a persuasive articulation of your viewpoint. Revise it relentlessly. And then revise it again.
5. Don’t drown your audience with excessive information. Select three main points. Decide what the real story is beneath these messages. What is the emotional journey you want to take the audience on?
6. Based on your script, generate a list of key points in brief sentences (sometimes called ‘bits’). This is all you will have with you on stage. Don’t read your speech because you will fail to develop a rapport with the audience.
7. Practice your presentation out loud as much as possible. Use a coach to help you. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.
8. Think hard about, and focus on, the deepest concerns of your audience. What’s in it for them? Make sure your agenda is interwoven with the agenda of your audience. Appeal to something larger than self-interest.

9. Present opposing views as fairly as possible to give you credibility and to generate trust.
10. Delete trite remarks such as “It is a privilege to be here” at the beginning, and “Thank you” at the end.
11. Avoid jokes. Everyone has heard them. 99 percent of them are pathetically lame. Instead use observational humor as much as possible, and be self-deprecatory.
12. Fill out an informational form. Attached is an example.
13. Call other participants in the event and the organizers to find out all you can about the audience and their concerns.
14. If you are not sure how to construct your speech, try: “The five questions I’m most frequently asked about Topic X are....” Pose each question to the audience and answer it for them in a conversational manner, just as you would someone you meet at a party.
15. Find interesting stories by asking yourself, “When did something go wrong? Where did I suffer?” Write it out, and then cut it by 50 percent.
16. Avoid PowerPoint slides. They are impersonal, tired and often mindnumbing. They deflect you from your goal of painting a picture with passion and language. Technology does not make you a great speaker. Too often PowerPoint slides are an electronic crutch to help you avoid the hard work of practice. You are giving the presentation to provide leadership and inspiration, and you are the best visual. PowerPoint slides distract attention from you as the focal point of the room – and, therefore, dilute the impact of your message.

### **DELIVERY**

17. Traditional podium speaking is no longer adequate. You need to move closer to the audience. Walk into the audience if possible.
18. Meet and greet audience members before your presentation.
19. Deal with your nervousness and ‘butterflies’ by thorough preparation, acting confidently, exercise, stretching, smiling, deep breathing, visualization, and having a positive mental attitude that focuses on the needs of the audience, not on yourself.
20. Start your presentation by powerfully grabbing the audience’s attention. You have something of great value to say and the audience is waiting to feel your intensity and personal voltage.

21. Make eye contact with one person at a time for 3 to 5 seconds. Don't scan the audience. In a sense you are talking one-on-one and establishing a relationship with individual members of the audience. Your goal is to establish a sustained human connection with your listeners.
22. Be as physical as possible. Be energetic, enthusiastic and passionate. Convey a high level of commitment and sincerity. Show you care and that you have convictions. Project vocal energy. Make a total commitment to the immediacy of the moment.
23. Use props as much as possible. Hold things up (newspaper, articles, flyers, money, anything).
24. Encourage audience participation. Let them tell you their stories. Get the audience to offer solutions. Encourage questions.
25. Use the power of pauses. Don't be scared of silence. Eloquent pauses build interest and suspense.
26. Encourage the audience to write down the first step they will take before they leave the room. Your presentation will be successful to the point you motivate your audience to do something. It isn't what you say that matters but what the audience hears, feels and does.
27. Ending on Q&As provides a weak wrap-up. Take questions before the end of your presentation. Then after Q&As, end with a stirring call to action, or a favorite story that makes a compelling point.
28. Actively listen to what the audience members are asking. Use their names if you know them. Re-state to everybody your understanding of the question to check you have understood it (i.e., listen actively).
29. Don't go overtime. Ever.
30. Prepare a handout so the learning is reinforced.

### **MODERATING A PANEL**

31. As a moderator, your job is to exercise leadership so that the audience walks away saying, "The panel was great," not "Fred and Alice were pretty interesting."
32. Your responsibility is to ensure the panel works as a unit and that individual presentations complement one another and avoid overlap.
33. Preparation is the key. Ahead of time, you need to tell the panelist when and where to turn up, how to shape their comments and how long they have to speak.

34. Three weeks before the event, provide questions to the panelists, and then hold a conference call to discuss questions, individual approaches and ground rules.
35. Get the panelists together for a short meeting before the event so everyone feels comfortable with one another and understands each other's viewpoints.
36. Work hard on the introduction of each speaker. If you can tell a humorous story about each one, so much the better.
37. Your prime job as moderator is control. You have to control the content, control the flow, control the time and control the questions. Never allow any single panelist to dominate, exceed time limits or stray from the topic. Do not allow an audience member to steal the spotlight. Apportion audience questions among the panelists. Start and end on time. Be authoritative – interrupt panelists if you have to.
38. It is critical that panelist adhere to time limits. You are abdicating your responsibilities as moderator and harming the other panelists if you allow them to go over.
39. To avoid the potential embarrassment of a silent audience, prepare a few questions to kick-start the discussion.
40. If two or more people raise their hands at the same time, reassure the people not selected that you won't forget to come back to them for their questions later. Protect the soft-spoken and inarticulate.
41. Reserve 30 to 50 percent of the time for audience participation, and ask every questioner to give his or her name and affiliation. Repeat each question in your own words to the whole audience.
42. Remember: panel presentations sink or swim on your leadership as the moderator, on your interpersonal skills, and on your ability to provoke a stimulating discussion.
43. End the session by giving a coherent summary of what has been said, and by thanking the panelists and the audience. Afterwards, send each panelist a thank-you note.

## Attachments