PRESENTING | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Top ten rules for effective presentations

And the best practical tips for overcoming stage fright!

by **Chris Widener**

1145 words | 4 pages

I am of the belief that the majority of people can improve their presentations dramatically by focusing on eliminating bad habits and presentation skills more than seeking to add anything on. How often have you come out of a seminar and overheard someone say, "Wow, she was great! Did you see how effectively she used her hand gestures?"

That said, here are some ideas to help you become a better speaker.

1. Keep it simple

Speak naturally
Make eye contact
Don't do crazy things with your hands
Don't do much more than speak, i.e. managing props etc.

2. Be impassioned

3. Balance the format of your information

4. Build the relationships beforehand if possible

5. Get the audience to participate at varying levels if effective

6. Show, don't tell. That is, use stories, not facts and figures

7. Get rid of distracting idiosyncrasies

8. Don't misinterpret people's actions and get discouraged

9. Know your material

10. Never, ever, go overtime

And The Best Practical Tips for Overcoming Stage Fright

As one who does some speech coaching, I have heard all of the crazy ideas on how to conquer stage fright, but I think in more basic ideas. Actually, just a few. Here they are:

1. *Know your stuff!* The best thing you can do is to be overwhelmingly, thoroughly, and completely prepared and in mastery of your material. Much of the fear comes from wondering if you will make a mistake, or if the audience will know more than you. There is one sure way to beat that and that is by knowing your material inside and out.

2. *Focus on getting through the first five minutes.* That is where the problem lies. Rarely do you see someone who seems fearful all the way through his or her presentation, do you? No, they settle in and get comfortable after a while. Don't look at it as a fifty-minute speech. Look at it as a five-minute speech.

3. *Breathe!* Fear is a bodily reflex and one that you can overcome. When you get afraid, you start to breathe in short, fast breaths. Before you speak, or while you are being introduced, you should sit quietly and breathe slow, deep breaths.

4. *Tell yourself that the world won't fall apart if you do a rotten job.* Face it; unless you are delivering the State of the Union Address, the world will keep right on revolving if you don't do well. Even as a professional speaker there are times when I don't do as well as I want to (Very, very rarely though - keep those bookings coming!). People usually appreciate it anyway and you'll keep right on going.

5. *Understand that you are your own worst critic.* I had some friends who used to play in all the hot clubs in New York City and I would occasionally go with them to watch them perform. Afterwards they would say, "Oh man, we were terrible tonight!" I hadn't thought so. The audience hadn't thought so either. Most people aren't going to come to your presentation with the goal of picking you apart. So you shouldn't pick you apart either.

Obviously, this is mainly for the one giving the occasional talk, not the professional speaker.

6. *Understand that most of the people in the audience would be scared to death to give a speech too, and are glad that it is you and not them!* For the occasional speaker, it is okay to say, "Excuse my nerves, I am not used to this." When I hear that, I root for the guy, not cut him apart (Unless I paid big bucks to be there.)

7. *Make 'em laugh.* That is the best way to start with a crowd. I have a joke that I start 95% of all of my speeches with. It is a guaranteed laugh and always settles the crowd in. Sometimes it has nothing to do with my topic and I just say, "What does that have to do with my topic? Nothing, but I just love that joke!" Then I go into my speech, and we are all a little more relaxed because we have laughed together.

Chris Widener is an example of how anyone can overcome any odds to achieve a successful life and help others achieve the same. Chris has overcome many obstacles... living through his father dying suddenly when he was four, being sent away from his family to live with relatives at age nine and becoming involved with drugs and alcohol by the age of twelve. Chris overcame those obstacles and has for the last ten years worked with some of the most financially successful families in America, helping them to achieve both personally and professionally. Now he can do the same for you!

Consulting Services

Chris Widener is proud to offer his consulting services to you. The following three areas are his specialty areas. If you have been considering the help of an outside source to help you in business or life issues, you'll want to read the following information.

Personal Growth

As a person who has worked for 10 years with people from all sorts of backgrounds, Chris Widener is an expert in personal growth. Our lives aren't just all business. We have intellectual pursuits, spiritual lives, families, hobbies, and recreation to think about too. For the best advice on how to maintain a balance in all of the areas of your life, Chris can be your own personal growth coach.

Business

Starting a new business or just want a boost for an existing one? Chris Widener is the resource you are looking for. Chris has a knack for taking complex issues and boiling them down to a step by step plan of action to help you achieve your business goals. Drawing from his own experience and a network of successful contacts, Chris can help guide you down the path of success.

Got problems? From small problems to large ones, Chris can help you get solutions! He will help you determine the problem, and then get you on your way to solving the problem in no time.

Sometimes you need an outside source to take a look at what you are doing and provide smart, creative advice. Email Chris today!

Speech Coaching

As a professional speaker, Chris is one of the best. Now, he can help you become your best whether you speak every day or simply have a once a year speech coming up. Chris has both on-site coaching and video assessments available. Email Chris today to find out how you can reach your peak as a speaker.

For strategy, advice, encouragement and an honest appraisal, give Chris a call. 425-444-GOAL