

Tips for a **Dynamite** Presentation



By Mary Lynn Wagner

Training sessions can be improved dramatically with a few simple techniques. Below are 10 tips that can be used to increase the quality of any presentation.

Before the Presentation

1. Determine the type of presentation. Are you going to inform, persuade, or entertain?

If you are going to inform the audience, focus on the facts and provide examples that support the facts. Make sure the information provided will be easily understood by the audience.

If your objective is to persuade the audience, state the problem using logical examples interspersed with emotional stories that will persuade the audience. Facts alone will not persuade your audience.

Entertaining speeches are designed to provide pleasure and enjoyment. In order to accomplish this, you should include the types of details and examples that you would find in any narrative or descriptive essay.

2. Talk to potential audience members. Prior to the presentation, ask several people

who could potentially attend the presentation for their ideas and thoughts on your topic. This is a great way to make sure your topic will be interesting and relevant to the audience. In addition, it will give you information on the audience's range of knowledge and experience. Once you have gained input on the topic to be discussed, choose no more

than three main points to be discussed during each hour of the presentation.

3. PowerPoint Development. There are five basic tips to keep in mind when developing a

PowerPoint presentation:

- **Less is Best** – Use only one main idea per slide. The message should be clear and concise.
- **Rule of SIX** – Only use six words in a line and no more than six lines per slide.
- **Two Rules of Two** – Don't use more than two colors and two fonts on a slide. Recommended colors: Blue background with yellow or white lettering. Consistency is critical to achieve a professional look and helps keep your audience engaged.
- **AVOID** – Capital letters, overusing initial caps and centering.
- **Logic** – Slides should be in a logical order so that the attendees can follow the presentation.

Beginning the Presentation

4. Objectives. At the outset of the seminar, clearly state the objectives, skills, knowledge or attitudes that will be acquired during the seminar. Be very specific with your objectives. Once the objectives are stated, ask the audience if there is anything else that they would like to learn during the course of the seminar. This provides you with an opportunity to see what the audience really wants to know and allows you to make sure that you directly address the interests of those in the audience.

During the Presentation

5. Use stories and acronyms whenever possible. Stories grab the attention of your audience and are well remembered. Using stories and acronyms throughout your presentation allows you to reinforce the information that is being presented in an interesting way. Repetition throughout your presentation is critical. The statistics below clearly show that there is a dramatic loss of learning in presentations without repetition.

- 42% loss of learning 30 minutes after a presentation without repetition.
- 56% loss of learning 1 hour after a presentation without repetition.
- 64% loss of learning 8 hours after a presentation without repetition.
- 75% loss of learning 1 week after a presentation without repetition.
- **Tip:** Information should be repeated at least 6 times for a person to remember it.

6. Handouts. Using handouts during your presentation is another way to reinforce the learning process. Handouts can be comprised of reference tools, charts, diagrams, articles, manuals, etc.

7. Tempo. Vary your instructional techniques every 15-20 minutes to maintain interest and participation. Mix passive activities such as observation, explanation and demonstrations with interactive activities such as Q&A and small group discussions. Most importantly, make the interaction as

interesting and fun as possible for the participants.

8. Passion. If you are not excited about the topic being discussed, how can you expect that your audience will be? Your attitude is catching. If you demonstrate your excitement through your voice, stories, and handouts the audience will surely catch your passion and become more interested in what you have to say.

9. Promoting Questions. Below are a few tips for promoting questions during your presentation.

- Bring up questions that other people have asked at previous sessions.
- Provide a graffiti wall or flip chart for the audience to write down their questions at any time throughout the presentation.
- Design questions into the content and delivery of your presentation.
- Pass out index cards for the audience to submit their questions.
- Arrange for someone in the audience to ask the first question to start the ball rolling.

End of the Presentation

10. Determine what was learned. In order to gauge what the audience learned and felt was most important, you should ask the following question: "What two things did you find most helpful that you will take away from today's seminar?" Depending upon the size of the group and the time available, you may decide to ask all the participants or just random participants. Asking this question accomplishes two objectives. It will reinforce the learning for the rest of the audience and let you know what parts of your presentation were most valuable and why.

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