

Effective online presentations require organization, planning

Business First of Louisville - by [Jeff Davidson](#)

Sooner or later, you may find yourself making presentations via Web or long-distance connections. In such cases, the entire presentation represents a visual of sorts. Here we'll take a brief look at a handful of critical factors for succeeding in such arenas starting with online presentations.

Much of the training that used to be done in person is giving way to the Web. Organizations such as MentorU.com, in partnership with Placeware.com, already have developed a library of more than 250 programs available for replay by corporations as well as individuals.

As with any new media, more people will employ Internet technology for making presentations. Using the Web you have to be more dramatic to keep potentially distracted listeners online and alert.

Here are 10 tips for inspiring your cyberspace audience and making your online presentations stand out from all the rest.

1. Barricade yourself

Ensure that absolutely nobody can intrude while you're giving a presentation. No phones, no beepers, no buzzers, no knocks at the door. This privacy is necessary for two reasons. The first, of course, is that those sounds could make their way onto the program itself. The second, and perhaps more important, reason is that you'll be more confident if you know that you can proceed without interruption.

2. Use a telephone headset

Headsets ensure that you have fluid motion, reduced potential for fatigue and freedom to shift positions. If you can't use a headset, make sure that you have a highly comfortable chair, plenty of desk space and room to maneuver.

3. Be at your best

You need to get a good night's sleep and eat a balanced meal before you give a presentation. Also, bring a cup of tea or water to keep your throat clear. Listeners can tell when your energy is down, when you are rushing and when your voice is getting fatigued.

4. Have your materials arranged in advance

You don't want to be shuffling through papers or other documents when you need to give your complete attention to listeners. Lay out your materials at least 20 minutes before your presentation begins.

5. Mentally rehearse your presentation

No matter how many times you have given a presentation, the dynamics of a Web-based presentation are different than those of other media.

Whether or not you're working with a host or interviewer, you want to be prepared to deliver your presentation from A to Z without a hitch so that your listeners get the best.

6. Visualize your audience members

Who are they? Where are they? As with a live audience, your mission is to find out as much about the audience members as possible (well before your webcast). What kind of environment do they work in? What are their challenges? What are they hoping to get from your session?

If you don't know the answers to these questions, you'll have your work cut out for you.

7. Orchestrate your presentation

What are the highs and lows? Where do you want to enthrall your audience? Where will you make dramatic pauses? What parts of your speech will you stress? Your goal at all times is to be as informative and as entertaining as possible.

8. Prepare for questions in advance

Live online programs increasingly allow for participants' questions. You can't always anticipate what is going to be asked, but you can be prepared. What do people ask when you make presentations at conferences and conventions? Chances are that some of the same types of concerns will come up here. Welcome and encourage questions.

9. Prepare for your closing

Even if you have slated a Q & A session near the end of your presentation, take back the reins and have at least a two- or three-minute closing prepared. As with an on-site audience, people need a sense of closure, and the best way to ensure one is through preparation.

10. End on time

Your audience, as well as the online facilitator and conference host, are counting on you to stick to the schedule. They may have other things scheduled. They certainly have their personal agendas. Participants and providers remember those presenters who go over the allotted time and appreciate those who don't.

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