

10 Free Tips For Improving Your Presentation



Trish Springsteen

www.trishspringsteen.com

Trish Springsteen
Mentor, Speaker, Coach and Author

Congratulations! You have just received your copy of :

‘10 FREE Tips For Improving Your Presentation’

Covering the 10 most important points about giving a presentation that often get forgotten, written by Trish Springsteen from **Trischel –innovative Communication Training**.

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Trish Springsteen

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Trischel
4 Light Place
Caboolture South
QLD Australia 4510

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The Purpose

The Easiest way to get a presentation wrong is to misunderstand the reason why it is being given.

Presentations, in a business setting, are given to achieve three main purposes:

- *To Inform*
- *To Instruct, or*
- *To Inspire*

Sometimes our presentations can be designed to do all three at once.

For instance; a sales presentation may:

- **Inform** - the client of our new product;
- **Instruct** - them on the benefits and differences between the new and the old product, *and*
- **Inspire** - them to purchase the new product

If we clearly understand the reason the presentation is being given, we can ensure that we design one to achieve the purpose.

More business presentations fail because they are not designed to achieve the required outcome

If you are fully aware of exactly what it is that your presentation is required to do it will ensure that you do not fall into this trap.

When you are asked to give the presentation you should be told what the expected outcome is to be. If you are not, then you should ask. If you don't, you risk missing the aim.

Sometimes you are given the company's prepared presentation, and if so you should check it carefully with the purpose clearly in mind.

Is the information arranged in a way which will enable you to achieve the aim?

If not, can you re-arrange it so that it gives you a much better chance to do so?

If you are starting from scratch, then you have the opportunity to create a specially designed presentation which is structured for one purpose only – and that is to achieve the required outcome.

Knowing the purpose of each presentation is essential for you to hit the target!

The People

Once you know the Purpose of the presentation, then your next consideration should be *The People*.

If there is to be a purpose, then that purpose should be measurable. We can easily decide if we have (or have not) achieved the purpose.

But what will motivate those, to whom we are going to present this marvellous presentation?

What motivates anyone to buy?

Because giving a presentation is an exercise in selling – we are :

- *Selling a product*
- *Selling an Idea*
- *Selling our Opinion, or even*
- *Selling our fitness for the job*

So if we are engaged in selling, we need to understand just what it is that motivates the people we hope will buy.

We will not know that if we do not know who we are presenting this to. Who are they? What do they do? What are their areas of expertise?

These are just a few of the questions that we need to ask if we are to understand

exactly how we can create an appeal to our audience, and of course, achieve the purpose.

There are some professions which by their very nature, prefer information presented to them in specific ways.

Chartered Accountants, for instance, often like to see the justification for the cost coming up early.

Engineers are usually very visual, they like to see how things connect, and if you can give graphic examples they are more willing to give the information credence.

Graphic Designers, being creative people, will usually be more interested in the benefits and outcomes than in the facts and figures.

When you know just who it is that you are giving your presentation to; and you know the purpose for giving it, you are in a good position to create something specifically designed to appeal to your target audience and therefore achieve the purpose.



The Place

Venues for presentations come in all shapes and sizes. And we can find ourselves giving our presentation in either the board room – or in a hall with 500 people.

However whatever the size, the questions remain the same.

Where am I speaking from? How many people are expected to be in my audience? What are their age groups? And most importantly; how long will I have to speak?

If we get the opportunity to visit the venue where we are to speak, then we should grab it. Having a good look around the venue will show us if there are any immediate problems we need to deal with.

For instance, are they supplying the data processor – or do we need to provide our own. Are the technologies compatible?

Where are the power sockets; do they have extension cords, or again will I need to bring my own.

Is there an official MC? Usually far more likely in a conference set up than in a board room.

But who is going to introduce you, and how

will it be done?

Where are the windows – do I need to darken the room?

How about – how long will it take to get there and where will I be able to park?

Then there's carrying the equipment to the venue; is it upstairs and if so is there a lift.

If we get a chance to visit we can get a real feel for the position of the speaking area and the layout of the place.

But even if this is not possible we should at least try to get some of these questions answered well before the date; and if at all possible – before we start designing our presentation.



The Room and the Layout will have a big effect on the style of your presentation

The Preparation

Now we have a clear understanding of what is the purpose of our presentation; who we will be talking to and where it is to be held.

We have just about all the information we need to start planning and preparing the presentation.

If we know precisely what we need to achieve, and the type of people we are talking to we should be able to make some decisions about what information we need to include.

And we can start to think about how we are going to present it.

All presentations have three main components...

- *The Opening*
- *The Body, and*
- *The Conclusion.*

The opening is where you create the interest in what you are about to say.

It could be a good place to let everyone know just how relevant to them is your subject matter.

The Body is the nitty gritty of the information. It is here that you direct all your efforts to make it clear and logical

You need to be convincing.



The conclusion is the place to sum up your main arguments, your main points and to recap your important information.

But there is one more thing, you must do in the conclusion, and that is to ensure that your listeners know what you want them to do.

If you were hoping for a sale, then you should use the conclusion of your presentation to urge them to buy.

If you were trying to convince them that your ideas should be adopted, then you need to explain what benefits would accrue.

If you fail to complete this step, your audience could be amazed at your information, absolutely convinced of your arguments – but unsure of what to do now.

Do not let them leave without making absolutely sure they know how to act on the information you have provided

The Props

A picture is worth a thousand words!

... and sometimes it is exactly what is needed!

Presenters have a variety of aids that they can use to support and enhance their presentations.

However, there needs to be careful thought about which one is suitable for:

- *Achieving the aim*
- *The number of people, and*
- *The venue*

Each one of these considerations will affect the choice of visual aids you might wish to use.

Remembering the purpose of your presentation, which of the aids would help you achieve it?

If you are only presenting to a small number of people in a cramped board room, would PowerPoint really be the visual aid of choice?

When you arrive at your venue and find that the power is off and the Laptop isn't available – what are you going to do?

And if you mistakenly thought that your presentation was to just twenty people and you walk in a find 200 – do you think a

Flip Chart will work?

And if you do choose to use PowerPoint are you really familiar with all the quick hot

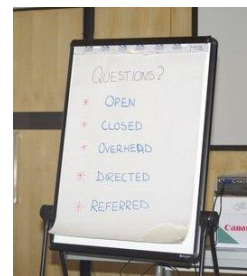
keys which can help you keep control of the presentation?

One thing some presenters forget is that the audience engages with a person not with an impersonal machine.

So whatever the aim of your presentation is, it will be you – the presenter - that should be in control.

PowerPoint; Flip Charts; White Boards and even OHPs are only support acts, they should never be so over the top to become the whole show.

Make sure that your visual prop is just that, a visual aid and never let it take over.



And finally, what will be your backup? It doesn't matter which you choose, you will need to ensure that you have a quick alternative visual aid that you can turn to if the main show breaks down.

The Practice

Now that we have created the basis for our presentation we need to practice.

Practice makes Perfect ...so we have been told; and unfortunately they were right.

If we practice our presentation using the visual aids that we have created, and if we ask others to sit in and give us feedback, we will be far more competent.

Getting feedback from others will show us where we may need improvement. We will discover what doesn't seem to work; and we will have an opportunity to find out what types of questions will be asked.

Often, our audience will use questions to clarify options; or to clear up issues they may not have fully grasped.

A good presenter prepares for the most obvious questions well before arriving at the venue.

And if you practice in front of friends or colleagues, you will find that they may have questions about areas that appear unclear.

Finding out well beforehand means that you can make appropriate changes. Then on the day you should find that it will all run smoothly and questions will be at a minimum.

Take the opportunity that practice also gives you as a chance to try out gestures and vocal variety to enhance your presentation.

Remember that people like to connect with other people and if you are enthusiastic about your subject, then they will be fired with your energy to respond to your message.

Practice every aspect of your presentation; including how you will approach the speaking area, and how you will leave it.

The conclusion of the whole presentation is vitally important, as often a lasting impression is created by the last thing we see and hear. So make it stand out for them, and they won't forget you or your message.

Practice creates familiarity which in turn increases confidence.



Practice those gestures to make them natural and effective

The Pressure

Our previous tip looked at practice to create a sense of self-confidence.

When we get nearer to the date of the presentation we can be overcome by what is technically known as :

Performance Anxiety!

You can call it 'Stage Fright' – or simply claim you are suffering from 'nerves' – but whatever you call it, it can be a real problem.

The first thing we need to understand is that we are merely experiencing the effects of an overabundance of hormones, among which is the major culprit – adrenaline.

Adrenaline floods the body when we are facing a stressful situation; and it harks back to the days when we came in contact with a woolly mammoth (a potential food source).

We were faced with the dilemma – do we stay and hope to kill it; and thereby eat for a month or two. Or do we take to our heels and run for it. Either way, our body needed some extra 'oomph' for the Fight or Flight!

This was provided for by the release of the adrenaline – it provided the body with the 'oomph' it needed; and it also provided us with some side effects that we still feel

when faced with stressful activities even today.

Because a body needing to Fight or to take Flight could use some extra help, the brain also decided to divert the blood flow somewhat.

So it took the supply from the stomach and the peripherals and directed it to those muscles we need to stand up and fight or run away and be safe.

It is the side effects of these body changes that we experience when facing our stressful situation of delivering a brilliant presentation.

But there is a glimmer of hope in all of this. Remember your very first date? Remember how that felt? Very reminiscent of how you are feeling right now about this presentation!

Adrenaline merely creates the physical response. We are the one that puts the name to the feeling.

On our first date we called it 'Excited Anticipation' – before our presentation we call it 'Nervous Apprehension'.

So – here's a hint: change the name and change the expectation

It is now officially - **“Excitement”**

The Performance

So the day has dawned – and you have taken note of the suggestions here:

Therefore you arrive at the venue early, and because you were able to visit it in your preparation phase, you are familiar with the parking problems and the fact that the lift is on the other side of the building.

All these little things that would have created extra stress you can now take in your stride.

You have arrived in plenty of time to check that all your equipment is working properly and you have provided yourself with a back up haven't you?

Once you have set up your equipment and tested it, you can concentrate on getting that adrenaline under your control – remember; this is **exciting!**

If you are holding a presentation in a company's boardroom, be alert to welcome and introduce yourself to each member as they arrive.

Repeat their name in your greeting so that you will remember it. If you have done your homework properly you will have a good idea of who is the actual decision maker – take note of them.

If, on the other hand, you are presenting to a large group in a conference situation

it is a good move to get out and meet as many of your audience as you can.

Ask them what they hope to get out of your presentation; find out why they are there – and then use the information in your presentation.

If you can, use the person's name... '*As Janet was saying just before this presentation...*' This is a winning ploy, with immediate engagement.

During the presentation, (which should now be so familiar thanks to your practice) make sure that you engage all your audience.

Do that by looking at them. If you do you will find that they are probably smiling at you.

No-one is here to watch you fail – they all want you to succeed; and they are remarkably forgiving of minor mistakes.

So make your performance and your presentation immediately engaging to your listeners.



The Playback

It's over!!

Time to hit the bar.... and I don't blame you.

If you have prepared and practised your presentation as we have suggested then you should have given a really effective presentation.

And if you have enthused your audience with your energy, you will be left a little drained, but satisfied.

But there is one other thing to be done about this presentation you have just given – and that is to mentally re-run it and discover what really went well; and what probably could be improved.

Giving one presentation is rarely the end of it; and there will be others looming up in your future.

Therefore, we need to make each of our presentations a learning exercise as well. So we need to make some realistic assessments of how we did.

We might be able to be analytic enough to do this alone; but we are also our worst critic. We need to know, not just what went wrong and how can we fix it; but we should also be aware of what our strengths are, and how we can build on them.

This means that perhaps someone

else should also be involved in the playback in order to give some positive feedback.

If the performance was videotaped, by hook or crook get hold of a copy and try to view it dispassionately.

Unfortunately, again you will probably absolutely hate watching yourself; so get that best friend to do it and to give you realistic feedback.

When you have worked out your strengths, knowing that effective presenters work to their strengths, you should do the same.

And when considering what did not work quite so well, decide if it was something you could have planned for, or if it was something completely unexpected.

Then decide what you could have done, and what you intend to do in the future.

Nothing is ever a failure, unless we fail to learn, and every presentation gives us an opportunity to learn and grow.

But only if you 'Play it Back'



The Paragon

If you have taken note of some of the hints and ideas in this book, you should be able to give a presentation that actually achieves what is required.

That is success.

And when you become successful at something, people start to notice.

And they want you to do it again ... and again ... and again!

Each presentation is different though, and each one has its own purpose and a specific and measurable outcome that it is designed to achieve.

If you always keep that outcome in mind then you will indeed be a paragon.

There can be brilliant presentations that create excitement and amazement. The presenter can be assured and confident and the PowerPoint whizzes in and out like a carnival.

But if, at the end of it all, the real purpose for giving the presentation is not achieved – then despite all the huff and puff – the presentation was a failure.

Much better, that we aim for quiet competence, that engages our audience in what we want them to do – and achieves

our purpose at the end of it.

Professional speakers, who seek to delight, to inspire and even to entertain, are expected to excite and amaze.

Business people creating and designing presentations for work are expected to achieve the purpose.

If you start off with these 10 Tips in mind you will be able to do just that.

And if you can do that each time that you get up to give your presentation you will be in demand.

Take every opportunity to develop your skills, and learn from everyone you can.

Watch how others do it – ask yourself if you can identify what is working for them. Could it work for you? Not always - but it might be worth experimenting.

Giving effective presentations never stops at the end of the last one. It is only the beginning of the next one.

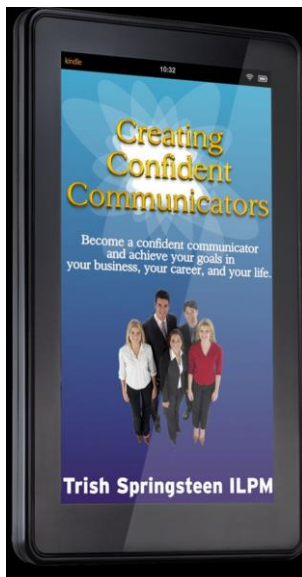
So good luck with your next one, may it be the first of many successful presentations that you give.





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Here you will find everything you need to know about creating confident communication to achieve your goals in your business, your career and your life.



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5 Stars A complete guide to communicating effectively and with integrity

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I liked the fact that this is NOT a huge book. The information is easy to digest because it's written in an engaging and interesting manner. The content is really cleverly laid out which makes navigating around the book easy. In short, this is a smart, simple but powerful "how to" communication guide for anyone who wants to pack a punch in regard to influential presentations. Also, I like the way the author uses research to really bring to life the cost of ineffective communication. Lastly, the methods the author recommends are relatively easy to remember because of her use of acronyms and other memory enhancing techniques.

Written by an international authority on Public Speaking and Presenting, this book takes you through how gaining confidence in speaking will help you gain confidence in communicating; how to create confidence; how to create concise impromptu responses; why it is important to always know what your goal is in communicating, presenting and speaking; the value of body language in connecting with your audience and why vocal techniques are a powerful tool in communicating, plus strategies on presenting and communicating.

Go on-line at go on line at Amazon <http://amzn.to/1pc1Nji>

and order your copy today

About the Author



Trish Springsteen - Trish is Australia's Leading Expert in Empowering Introverts, a multi-international award winning mentor, speaker, international bestselling author and host of Get Known Be Seen WebTV. Trish is passionate about creating confident communicators and is the co-founder and owner of Trischel, a company dedicated to bringing communication and effective speaking skills to individuals, businesses and organisations. Trish is a member of Women's Network of Australia, Business and Professional Women (BPW), Motivational Speakers Australia and Women Speakers Association. Trish has spoken on national and international stages and she has written and presented a variety of training packages for industry bodies and private companies.

She has a BBus (Health Administration); holds Cert IV in Training & Assessment and is an Accredited Extended Disc Practitioner. Trish is experienced in leadership, management communication, business skills and is a highly sought after Personal Communication Mentor, Coach and Speaker.

Trish is the author, co-author and contributing author to fourteen books and is featured in Motivational Speakers of Australia.

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