

Nailing That Big Presentation – Speaker Tips

You're getting ready for a main stage presentation to an important audience. You've put the time into crafting what you want to say and have some killer slides. Now, it's time to deliver. Feeling nervous? Relax! Try these final tips before taking the stage.



Arrive Prepared

Owning the room starts with owning the content. Owning the content starts with you.

- In the weeks before, write out your remarks or at least prepare a detailed outline on your own.
- Practice out loud for a minimum of one hour for every 20 minutes of presentation.
- Bake your script down to a simple outline with prompt points, data points and cues.
- Memorize the framework of the simple outline and the overall flow of your presentation.
- Carry a hard copy of your notes on cards (just in case) – one card for each outline point.



Rehearse On Stage

It's easy to rehearse too little. It's hard to rehearse too much.

- On-stage rehearsals should be, at minimum, the length of your presentation. Use the time to:
 - Walk through introductions, play-ons, videos, any props or stage action, and handoffs.
 - Step through your entire presentation.
 - Adjust the downstage confidence monitors to suit how you prefer to see your notes.
- A rehearsal is also for the technical crew running the show. Make sure they are on the same page!
- For more on this subject, see [Tips for Delivering a Great Business Speech](#) and [5 Things That Screw Up Main Stage Presenters](#).



Brush Off Stage Fright

Turn nervousness into sharpened senses and increased energy.

- Remember, your nervousness isn't as apparent to the audience as it is to you.
- Visualize yourself successful, and focus on the value of the material you're presenting.
- Memorize your opening; a solid start will give you the confidence to go all the way.
- Breathe deeply. If possible, get up and stretch before you go on stage.
- When speaking, look for familiar faces – or at least the friendliest.
- Take quick sips of water.



Connect Authentically

Talk directly to each person, not at the group.

- Be conversational. Use words that are natural to you and the audience. E-nun-ci-ate clearly.
- Talk directly to people, make eye contact and turn your attention around the room.
- Be animated and enthusiastic, and show your energy, conviction or passion for your topic.
- Vary your speed, pitch and volume. Use dramatic pauses to drive home key points.
- If using humorous stories, keep them short and space them out. Also, it's good to memorize these; definitely do not read them!



Make Smart Moves

Make every movement deliberate and purposeful.

- Stand still at the beginning of your speech; helps reduce nervous tendencies.
- After that, move deliberately. The larger the group, the more deliberate your movements.
- Avoid distracting gestures like hands in pockets. Let your words trigger your gestures.
- Center stage forward is the strongest position. Upstage left and right are weak positions.
- To direct attention away from you, gesture toward the screen or out into the audience.
- To drive a point home, move forward.

Teleprompter Tips

Sometimes a big presentation or speech needs a full script and teleprompter. Here are some tips for those situations:

- Meet with the teleprompter operator to adjust spacing between lines.
- Rehearse using the teleprompter on stage.
- Let the teleprompter operator know if you intend to ad-lib, and when.
- If using panels, turn your head and body from side to side to speak to different sections of the audience.
- Also bring a hard copy of your script in a binder – double-spaced in 14 point font.

