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FACT SHEET

PRESENTATION SKILLS – TOP 10 TIPS

We've all heard the saying "it's not what you say, it's the way you say it". It's so true! How many times have you listened to a 40 or 60 second pitch or presentation and got bored within 5 minutes? Equally, how often have you had to stand in front of a room full of people and deliver your own pitch or presentation and all you can do is shake with fear, your voice goes dry and your terrified of forgetting what you were going to say! Fear not! You can go from Terrified to Terrific by just following these 10 top tips.

- 1. Breathe, breathe, breathe!** Take a deep breath through your nose, hold for a few seconds then release slowly through your mouth. Repeat for at least 3 times. This will get oxygen to your brain and help you to calm down.
- 2. Stand Tall** – It might sound like a cliché but when you stand tall, with your shoulders back, your lungs are less scrunched so you get more air into them when you breathe, you'll look more confident and therefore will come across as more confident
- 3. Use your voice** – Don't be monotone when you speak. Change the tone of your voice to demonstrate something happy, sad, loud or quiet.
- 4. Use your face** – This isn't a cue to pull funny faces but it is your cue to use facial expressions to demonstrate the emotion you're trying to convey. For example, don't give a big grin when you're trying to convey something sad. It might seem obvious, but you'd be amazed how many people's faces freeze!
- 5. Eye contact** – When you're nervous, it's easy to just talk to one person in your audience. This is very disconcerting to that person and it's annoying to others in the room. Make sure you look around the room when you're talking. That said, keep it subtle otherwise you'll end up looking as if you're trying to cross a road with all that looking left and looking right!
- 6. Don't pace up and down** – We're not all Michael McIntyre on stage which is a good job or you'll be in danger of making your audience sea sick! Just slowly walk from one side of the stage/room to the other. Stop at each side of the room so your audience can focus on you and what you're saying. It's good to have a 'safe' point to return to such as the centre of the stage but don't stay there all the time.



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7. **Watch your audience** – If you are presenting to a smaller audience there is likely to be someone who fidgets or doesn't really want to be there. Look out for the signs of them being disengaged. Signs such as leg bobbing, swinging in their chair, chewing their pencil, looking out of the window, arm crossing, yawning, etc.

8. **Re-engage your audience** – If you spot someone giving the typical signs highlighted in point 7, don't be afraid to bring them back into the presentation or talk. Ask them for examples of when they felt this emotion, or ask them to share an experience of when they were given bad customer service (for example). There's nothing people like more than talking about themselves!

9. **Questions** – We all ask for questions and feedback at the end of every presentation. At some point, you will get a question you don't know the answer to. Don't be afraid to say that it's a great question and admit you've never been asked that before, so you will take it away and get back to them at a later date. If you do this, you **MUST** do them the courtesy of providing an answer within 24 hours or sooner if you can. Your audience will respect you more than if you were to just try and bluff your answer.

10. **Don't Panic. Enjoy yourself** – This is key to delivering an engaging presentation. Be yourself, you'll find you relax into the flow once you get going. If you forget to tell them something, don't worry. Your audience won't know you've missed something out. Inject your personality and some humour into the presentation; just be you. Remember, you can't please all of the people all of the time but I guarantee you'll have more compliments and positive feedback if you are you. Use any negative comments as constructive feedback; or just choose to ignore it and don't let it bother you.

Have fun and I look forward to seeing you deliver your pitch or presentation somewhere soon.