

Breathing under water

Tips to improve presentation skills

Success is directly proportionate to the ability to influence others. In order to influence others, you not only need to be knowledgeable on your field of study but also need to share that knowledge effectively. Whether you are delivering speech before your employees, colleagues, or board members; whether you are presenting your ideas in a business meeting or whether you are delivering elevator pitch before the investors or whether you are presenting your product or service before your potential customers, the ability to present the information accurately, clearly and as intended, is a vital life skill and something that should not be overlooked at all. Unless you have great presentation skills, you can't really express yourself to the fullest. Developing your presentation skills can help all aspects of your life, from your professional life to social gatherings and everything in between.

Prepare the topic and get in-depth knowledge

You should ideally know the topic of your presentation inside and out. This will give you enormous amount of confidence and will help you to be spontaneous during the question and answer session. Also, try to list down possible questions that the audience might ask and get the answers beforehand. Few years back, one of the President candidates in America got embarrassed in a live TV show during the election campaign when he

couldn't answer the question 'What made you stand for President Election?' So, identify the most common questions and prepare yourself accordingly.

Practice a lot

The key is to practice the delivery over and over again. Steve JOBS used to practice hundred times before his presentation and we all know how amazing his presentations were. Never try to memorize your speech. Try to pronounce your words correctly. Your audience will judge your competency through your vocabulary. If you aren't sure of how to say a word, better not to use it.

Get a clear idea of the audience

Know your audience and pay attention to them. You should know the level and category of your audience before you prepare your presentation material. This will help you knowing the content of your presentation. Before you start your presentation, you should make sure your audience is comfortable. Rearrange the seats or ask them to come forward or adjust the projector or sound system if there is any problem with any of these.

Employ your voice and pace in best possible way

Your speed of speech shouldn't be too fast or too slow. 150 words per minute is pretty much standard, anything less than 120 words or beyond 180 words per minute should be treated as too



slow or too fast respectively. You can just record your speech for two minutes on you mobile or PC and count the average words you used per minute. Voice modulation is another area that you need to master. Raise or lower your pitch according to the need. Also don't forget to breathe. Sometimes stop for 3 to 5 seconds to get back the attention from the audience.

Make eye contact

You should never just speak to your slides. Making enough eye contact is what makes your presentation come alive. Otherwise it is just another same old boring set of slides filled with clumsy details. Also remember 10/20/30 rule for power point slides. This rule means, prepare 10 slides for 20 minute presentation and use minimum font size to be 30. Your slides need to be attractive and not too clumsy or inarticulate. You should always have a backup plan in case you

find projector or your pen drive or the PC is not working. Always keep a printed copy of your slides for the worst case scenario.

Have a positive body language

You need to make your whole body talk. Your gestures with your hands and face, body movement, smiling face and eye contacts are very important. Use smaller gestures for individuals and small groups. The gestures should get larger if the group increases in size.

You shouldn't just stand still and keep your body stiff. Be relaxed, try to walk around and use the space and get connected to the audience.

Grasp the audience attention through a great start

Best way to start a presentation is to tell a story that is relevant to the topic. You can also start with a question or a quotation or with a joke. A good joke can loosen up your audience and make them more receptive to you as a person as well as to your message. Ending of your presentation can be done in several ways. You can use the power of your speech and inspire them to apply the things they've learnt from the speech. You can also end with a success story. It's always better to appreciate the audience for their endurance and conclude the presentation with a big thanks to them.

If you can follow these seven tips, you can surely become a great presenter over a certain period. I have been delivering speeches for several years now and I'm still learning new techniques. So, it's a never ending learning process. Being a good presenter will always give you an extra edge. It's never too late to work on your presentation skills.

The writer is a motivational speaker & Corporate Coach. He's one of the co-founders of optiMA HR Solutions.

M MURSHED HAIDER

Medication to motivation

Motivation is one of the key elements to attain a successful life. It cannot be attained through any magical spells or secret medicine. Let it be work, home or education – we all need that extra factor to oil our brain machines.

Incentives are also an important factor that bosses need to keep in mind in order to get the best from their employees. So what does it take to keep someone motivated or how does a person like to be motivated at work?

"Evaluation," says Anik Syed, Pran Food and Beverages Ltd. "I need to feel that my work and I have been personally valued and what I do makes impact on the mission." He says it's important to have a leader who is organized, unbiased and prefers to communicate with his employees. It can be a personal meeting, email or a hand written letter. Extroversive people feel more motivated when their bosses discuss assignments openly and give them the scope for opinions and adjustments. They like public recognition and appraisals.

"In media business, it's not only about the company's profit; it's also about one's personal success too. If I'm working harder than everyone else, I need to be rewarded in intrinsic manner." says Adnan Rahman, who works for Apple Box. He likes when he gets a share of the profit and not just his regular salary. Hard-drivers are independent thinkers. If they agree with whoever they are working for, they'll be highly motivated. They will go that extra mile to give their best knowing that their reward is well promised.

"You know what I like at work? Free goodies! At the telecom company, I get a free phone connection, health benefits and occasional bonuses. I like how there is something to look forward to every now and then." spills Anika Masud, an employee of Grameen Phone. That being said, there is no out of the box approach to motivating your people. It is a simple give or take scenario.

However, what triggers one group of employees may not always work well for others. What bosses need to understand that an employee's thinking and behavioral preferences are different from each other. If the right key is found, bosses can maximize the employees' enthusiasm and get a more efficient work force.

"All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy. At our office we make sure that once a year we do something for ourselves and our consumers to unwind and relax. We have company picnics with colleagues and families, recreational trips abroad for the younger employees and week-long concerts under our banner. It is not only an unconventional way to form good relationships with our customers; it is proven that such grand token of appreciation keeps everyone, including our investors, stay motivated and more inclined to good will and hard work." explains Shubho Hasib, currently working for British American Tobacco. Music and food is a good way to reach out to people.

Food is a direct pathway to anyone's heart (other than money) – that's what has been deduced after questioning most working people. Flexible lunch hours or snacks available in the office kitchen keep the workers from getting restless or feeling fatigue. A lot of companies are affiliated with restaurants and cafes and provide discount vouchers for their hard-working and eminent employees.

Special privileges, discounts, coupons – all scream out happiness for hungry people. On a personal level –

appraisals, evaluation and the opportunity to voice opinions during a project or the mere chance to let the employees feel they belong to the organization and it matters more to them than freebies.

Last but not the least, what keeps a work force in control is their leader. A good boss should know how to interact with all kinds of employees. He should have an ambience around the office and that should show others how focused and confident he is. Non-communicative bosses let their carelessness get to others and the laziness slips under the work radar. Employees don't feel it is worth putting their effort when they see their boss has a tendency to slack.

So bosses and employees stay focused, get rewarded. Try to increase your personal and professional efficiency because laziness pays off now but hard work pays off later! You never know what comes in that envelope – either a bonus or a warning- and you'll not know unless you know what you have been up to.

TANISHAA ARMAN



CAREER NEWS

Airtel Bangladesh launches Young Leader program 2013

Dhaka, November 21, 2013: Airtel Bangladesh Limited, one of the fastest growing mobile service providers in the country, has announced the commencement of its flagship management trainee program titled 'Young Leader' (YL) for the year 2013.

The coveted YL program at Airtel identifies top talent from premier business schools to groom them into future business leaders. The Young Leaders are provided with periodic leadership inputs and an accelerated career track, mentoring them every step of the way. The company started this young leader hunt in 2011 and selected 3 young leaders. In 2012 the YL selection process was even more rigorous and out of 13,280 applicants only 7 were selected.

Airtel will soon go to top universities in the country in order to showcase YL program to final semester students and fresh graduates. Airtel officials will meet students face to face to address any query regarding YL program and will provide insights about working at Airtel. This year the company is expecting to attract more number of potential talents by encouraging fresh MBA graduates to apply even if they have no work experience at all. The company aims to visit all the leading universities soon.

CONNECT TO NEXT STEP

Take your next step to connect to us. Email us if you have an interesting story to share related to career. Tell us if it has been a bumpy ride for your career or the exact opposite. Like us on facebook to stay updated. Mail us if you have any suggestions, feedback, and ideas.



facebook.com/
thedailystar.nextstep
Email: nextstep@thedailystar.net

Download the
PDF version
from our
website.

GREEN DELTA
INSURANCE
marches with time



Our Subsidiaries:

GREEN DELTA
Capital Limited

GREEN DELTA
Securities Limited