



## Elements of Professional Presentations

Remember the Most important elements of a presentation are what your audience SEE and HEAR. You will recognise the elements below from the recent showcase you attended!

### WHAT YOU SEE

\* **Eyes**

\* **Hands**

\* **Stance**

### WHAT YOU HEAR

\* **Volume**

\* **Inflection**

\* **Pace**

\* **Non-words**

In this short article we will revisit what you experienced at the Showcase, as we strongly believe practice, practice, practice will help you retain the skills you acquired.

So we will focus on three areas

- Eye Control
- Energy
- Presentation Structure

We hope you find the article useful, and remember – try to present as often as possible, why not volunteer (yes volunteer!) to make a few presentations? Thanks for your time. Enjoy!

Best Wishes/ Laith



## Eye-Control

Nervous about speaking in front of a group? The movement of your eyes controls the visual input goes to your brain. When you look at an audience, your instinct is to move your eyes rapidly to take all you can. You try to see everyone at once. This type of complex stimulus increases the nervousness that is normally part of presenting.

**You scan the room and see too much at once**



**You feel nervous**



**You go blank!**

## WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

**Control your eyes**



**Control input to your brain**



**Slow down**



**Control your thoughts**



**Eye-Control**, simply stated, means to look at and talk to one person at a time.

\* Remember: One 'thought' to One person, break eye contact (say nothing) connect with the next pair of eyes, then carry on; one thought to one person.

By making eye contact with one person and delivering one thought to that person, you avoid overloading your brain with visual input.

**Eye-Control** is mastered in three easy steps.

1. Lock eyes with one person before speaking
2. Deliver a complete thought to that person
3. Pause and breathe before you move to the next person to deliver the next thought.

## **Practice Eye-Control**

Tell a friend or a colleague about a hobby or personal interest you have or describe what you do in your free time.

Always use Eye-Control particularly in a group situation



## Project Energy through Voice and Gestures

Your audience receives your message through the combined impact of how you look, how you sound, and what you say. Facial expression, gestures, eye movement, volume, vocal tones combine with your words to send a message to your audience.

You must maintain an appropriately high level of energy and enthusiasm using all these channels to keep an audience's attention.

You must also make sure that none of your signals undermines your message. Displaying low energy may cause you to look like you don't care about, or don't believe in, what you are presenting – which undermines your credibility.

If you release energy, that energy makes itself felt in your audience.

## How You Look

Have you ever seen a presenter... ...shifting from one leg to the other?

...move around or pace?

...lock hands or put them in

Pockets?

...fiddle with pens, paper, Glasses?

How does this impact the viewer?



### **To project physical energy:**

- Plant your feet in a balanced stance.
- Describe or emphasize what you mean with your hands.
- Hands should be used above the waist.
- Gesture from the shoulder, not the elbow.
- Use one-handed gestures.
- Always use an open palm.
- Let your hands fall to your sides after using them.

### **How You Sound**

Have you ever...      ...strained to hear the speaker?  
   ...missed the ends of sentences?  
   ...listened to a monotone voice?

How does this impact the listener? Not positively! So, to raise your vocal energy and enthusiasm;

- Breathe from the diaphragm.
- Increase your volume.
- Use inflection / tonality (variations in vocal tone).
- Pause to breathe, so you can project your voice.
- Mean what you say with conviction



## Practice 'Energy'

At the your next opportunity; tell a personal or professional story to a group of friends / colleague that you enjoy telling about yourself. Make sure it has 'action' in it (use gestures as you would normally) preferable standing up!

Of course – keep using your Eye-Control skills, and project your energy and enthusiasm through your **voice** and **gestures**.

Use the space you have around you to make *appropriate* size gestures when you speak.

## 7 Critical Elements for 'Eye Control' and 'Energy'

- Your physical presentation is as important as your content.
- Eye-Control reduces nervousness, allows you to think on your feet and lets you read the audience.
- Lock eyes with one person.
- Deliver a complete thought to that person.
- Pause, breathe, and move to the next set of eyes.
- Use volume and inflection to project energy with your voice.
- Balance your stance and demonstrate what you are saying with gestures that are:



- One-handed, so you don't close off your body
- Made with an open palm
- From the shoulder, not the elbow

## Presentation 'Structure'

Have you ever been in an audience, listening to a speaker, and thought to yourself "What are they getting at?"

What about the times you've had to deliver a presentation, either formal or informal? Have you sat down in front of the computer, hands poised over the keyboard, and wondered "How do I begin?", "What material should I include?" or "How should I structure my information?"

The answers to those questions depend on the **purpose** of your presentation and the audience you're addressing. Answering those questions is how you structure a presentation. That structure creates the impact that determines your credibility, how the audience views what you have to say, and, most importantly, how effectively you are getting them to do or know what you want them to.

## Define the Purpose of Your Presentation

How many times have you listened to a presentation in frustration, wondering "What is the point?" If *you* don't know the purpose of your presentation, how can you expect an audience to follow your train of thought, let alone digest the information?

What are you trying to achieve? Are you after a specific result? Do you want your audience to do or know something? Are you trying to persuade or simply inform? Asking yourself what outcome you desire will help you organize and create a logical flow to your whole presentation.

And once you've determined your purpose, you should constantly be checking as you develop your thoughts to make sure you're sticking to that purpose.



Sometimes you may find that you have more than one purpose for your presentation. But one should always be the major purpose; try not to lose sight of your purpose during your planning.

## **Possible purposes for a presentation:**

- Inform
- Motivate
- Persuade
- Influence
- Generate buy-in or consensus
- Build a team
- Educate
- Offer a recommendation
- Generate emotion
- Entertain

The majority of business presentations are delivered to persuade. It could be persuasion to buy, to do something, to change an opinion, to get agreement, to create a belief in something.



Even what might be considered informative presentation has overtones of persuasion. You might be presenting the monthly numbers, but still want to “persuade” people to understand their importance.

In business presentations, entertainment or the display of emotion usually support the primary goal of persuading or informing.

And all presentations should” connect” with the audience. Most often that connection is made in the opening remarks, which we will pay special attention to in this section of the program.

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How to contact ImpactSkills Training about the next Presentation Showcase

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