



MANAGE YOUR PRE-PRESENTATION ANXIETY



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If you don't get even a little "NERVOUS" before giving a presentation, you should really be worried. The adrenaline from presentation anxiety fuels you with the energy you need to be at your best as a presenter. Extreme anxiety may work against you by generating more energy than you can release effectively through communicating. Unspent energy rapidly converts to tension, fidget, dry mouth, tight throat and can completely disable the body (and mind also sometimes) of the presenter. Here are some techniques to help you to better manage your pre-presentation anxiety.

1. Prepare thoroughly - Leave nothing to chance. The best tool for managing your anxiety is good preparation. Start with a good plan. Your goal during the preparation process is to prepare so well that you feel comfortable and confident of your ability to deliver a successful presentation. Define a clear and specific outcome and find the best way to lead your audience to it. This means knowing how to effectively analyze your audience with the specific goals of your presentation in mind. From this process, you can create specific messages that will address their concerns to bring them to your goal. This will enable you to think positively about your presentation and carry that positive attitude into your actual presentation. Thorough preparation coupled with a large dose of a positive attitude is the best vaccine for preventing anxiety.

2. Rehearse the presentation - Rehearsal enables spontaneity by helping you internalize your message. Once you know what you're saying and have some "muscle memory" from saying it several times, you will be free to deliver the message more powerfully and with a closer connection to your audience. Best way is to rehearse in the actual space with the exact equipment and settings you will have at the actual event. In addition to the physical rehearsal, you can use specific visualization techniques to perform cognitive rehearsals. These will augment the impact of the physical rehearsal on your presentation just as a skier's visualization of a ski run improves race performance.

3. Arrive early - The best reason to arrive early is to avoid the stress associated with being late. Forget your fear of presenting, worrying about making it there on time, rushing around before a presentation, or starting before you've had time to adequately prepare the room or yourself--will produce enough anxiety to stress out the most calm presenter. If you need more proof that arriving early is anxiety reducing, then consider this. Most of the common problems that can occur before a presentation such as forgetting something, missing equipment, improper room set-up, technical problems, etc. can be cured with just a little more time. With a few extra minutes, you can take care of these issues and most importantly, stay RELAXED.

4. Warming up - Just prior to the presentation, warm up. Walk or stroll or stride or work out with little exercises at the venue or do something that gets your whole body moving (try to avoid doing this within eyeshot of the audience). It's also very important to specifically warm up the muscles of your voice. There are vocal and breathing exercises that can dramatically improve the power, tone, and feeling of your voice. Warming up your voice also serves to protect it. As most people have learned the hard way, speaking loudly without the proper vocal warm-ups and techniques can cause hoarseness or even permanent vocal damage.

5. Meet and Greet - Meet your audience informally before your presentation. Fear of the unknown is much greater than fear of the known. If you can look around the facility and perhaps chit chat with some of the audience members in advance of the presentation--you will naturally become more comfortable and relaxed. There is nothing more anxiety reducing than some friendly conversations with your audience before a presentation. Get to know your audience and then focus your energy on meeting your audience's needs and your nervousness will fade into the background—right where it belongs! Your goal is to get to the presentation early enough to get set up, meet and greet your audience.

6. Adjust to surroundings - The more adjusted to your environment you are, the more comfortable you'll feel. Make sure to spend some in the room where you will be delivering your presentation. If possible, practice with the microphone and lighting, make sure you understand the seating, and be aware of any distractions potentially posed by the venue (e.g., a noisy road outside).

7. Use Positive Visualization - When you imagine a positive outcome to a scenario in your mind, it's more likely to play out the way you envision. Instead of thinking "I'm going to be terrible out there" and visualizing yourself throwing up mid-presentation, imagine yourself getting tons of laughs while presenting with the enthusiasm. Positive thoughts can be incredibly effective--give them a shot.

8. Smile - Smiling increases endorphins, replacing anxiety with calm and making you feel good about your presentation. Smiling also exhibits confidence and enthusiasm to the crowd. Just don't overdue it--no one enjoys the maniacal clown look.

9. Drink Water - Dry mouth is a common result of anxiety. Prevent cottonmouth blues by staying hydrated and drinking plenty of water before your presentation (just don't forget to hit the bathroom before starting). Keep a bottle of water at arm's reach while presenting in case you get dry mouth while chatting up a storm.

10. Take Deep Breaths - At the moment you are about to begin your presentation, take one full deep "belly" breath. Focus your eyes on someone towards the back of the room. And begin! This should get you off to a great start.

When considering presentation anxiety, remember to separate how it feels from how it looks. Anxiety may feel bad, but it doesn't necessarily look bad to the audience. The truth is, most signs of anxiety aren't even noticeable to your audience.

And finally, remember that the audience isn't concentrating on your nervousness at all, they are focused on whether or not your presentation is going to meet their needs. To them, it is less about you and your nervousness, and more about THEM and their needs.

'Presentation that Works' is a regular feature published in this Newsletter that contains series of articles on Presentation Tips being contributed by CS Suryanarayana SV, Former Chairman (1996) – Hyderabad Chapter of ICSI and a veteran presenter of workshops and training sessions on Communication & Presentation Skills topics.

Appeal to Members Updation of Members Particulars on ICSI Portal

We wish to draw your kind attention to Regulation 3 of the Company Secretaries Regulations, 1982, according to which every member of the Institute is compulsorily required to communicate to the Institute any change of professional address within one month of such change.

Further the contravention of the same amounts to professional mis-conduct under clause (1) of part II Second Schedule read with section 21 and 22 of the Company Secretaries Act, 1980 which provides as under:-

A member of the Institute, whether in practice or not, shall be deemed to be guilty of professional misconduct, if he---

1. Contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or the regulations made thereunder or any guidelines issued by the Council;

In view of the above, we request you to update your address including email Ids and telephone numbers on www.icsi.edu to facilitate effective communication with you.