

# Ten Do's and Don'ts for effective presentations

By Cheryl Donnison, director of Lumina Coaching Ltd

**1. Don't race.** Take your time and avoid speeding from bullet-point slide to bullet-point slide or people soon get bored.

**2. Do tell stories.** If you're using a PowerPoint presentation or overhead projection method, show an image of your subject matter and tell people what you learned while doing it. Illustrative stories help to bring your material to life.

**3. Don't apologise.** If something is out of order, or if something occurs to you as a mistake during the presentation, keep it to yourself. They'll never know.

**4. Do show pictures.** If you've got what you think is a good metaphor to explain your point, then don't be afraid to use it. Putting together words with appropriate and memorable pictures helps make your presentation much more powerful.

**5. Don't stand behind the lectern.** Move away from the podium and out from behind the 'presenters' table'. Keep your hands out of your pockets. Pace a little bit around the stage, timed with key points, saying one thing over here, and another over there – but don't leap around like a person possessed.

**6. Do build rapport.** Commiserating with the audience is fine. For example, you might say, "If it gets another 5 degrees colder in here, I'll be able to see my breath!"

**7. Don't play things down.** You've no need to mention the colour of your

presentation — just live with it. Keep it upbeat and if something goes wrong — eg. your microphone drops off your jacket — then don't worry. Pick it up, take your time and move on.

**8. Don't talk continually.** Throughout the entire presentation, make sure that when you say something important, leave a little gap, a small pause. Let it hang there for a few seconds.

**9. Do start strong.** Many presenters forget this. Just get going, and say something like: "Hi, I'm Sue. It's good to be here. Thanks for coming to my session. Today, we're going to talk about..." Make sure those are the first words you say out loud. There's no need for a joke — just start strong and confident and you'll move on at a good pace.

**10. Do end strong.** For example: "So that's why I believe celebrating achievement at all levels in school is absolutely essential (pause). I appreciate your attention today. Thanks very much." Then stand and wait. Everyone will clap, because you told them you were done. When they've finished clapping, ask if they have any questions. If nobody does, break the silence with a light comment like: "Well, I must have told you everything you need to know, then! I'll be around after if you think of anything. Thanks again." Then start packing away your stuff.

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