

# Improving Presentation Skills

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**“Only 10% of life is  
what happens to you;  
90% is how you CHOOSE  
to react to it.”**

*-- Charles Swindol*

## Common Myths About Presenting

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- **If you have a good topic you don't need to be a good speaker**
- **Great presenters are born not made**
- **Great presenters don't get nervous**
- **If you're natural in front of people you can just "wing" your presentation**
- **If you're using PowerPoint you don't need to be a great presenter**

# Getting Past Anxiety and Fear

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**“If you want to develop courage, do the thing you fear and keep on doing it until you have a record of successful experiences behind you. That is the quickest and surest way yet discovered to conquer fear.”**

*--Dale Carnegie*

# The Basics for Your Presentation

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- Have a clear outline/purpose/agenda
- Have a clear opening, body, and conclusion
- Have a point and get to the point!
- **DO YOUR HOMEWORK**
  - *Know your audience*
  - *Know your material*
  - *Know your purpose*

# Presentation Guidelines

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**Any presentation or training program should include the following 4 basic elements:**

- 1) Preparation**
- 2) Presentation**
- 3) Application**
- 4) Evaluation**

# Preparation

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- **Know your topic and your audience**
- **Know your equipment**
- **Be on time and prepared to present!**
- **Prepare the mind of the learner**
- **Create enthusiasm (don't bum them out!)**

# ACID Test

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- **A** – Attract Attention
- **C** – Create Curiosity
- **I**– Invoke Interest
- **D**– Develop Desire

# Presentation

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- **Start with the known and progress to the unknown**
- **Present new ideas and information**
- **The manner in which you present is the most important aspect of the presentation (the delivery)**

# Application

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- **Ask questions of the audience**
- **Use a variety of question types**
  - **Rhetorical**
  - **Direct**
  - **Team**
- **Promote participation**
- **Use practical exercises where applicable**
- **Facilitate interactivity**

# Evaluation

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- **Use questions throughout presentation and in summary to ensure the audience understood the points of the presentation**
- **Use interactive exercises or discussion to evaluate information comprehension and retention**
- **Evaluation is not used in formal sense**
  - **Used more for interactivity, comprehension, and fun!**

# **Half-Brained Presentations and Communication**

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- **When talking about or presenting facts, statistics and information, you are only engaging half of the brain in the process**
- **The other half of the brain is ASLEEP!**

# Functions of the Left Brain

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- **Logic**
- **Organizing**
- **Counting**
- **Reasoning**
- **Analyzing**
- **Planning**

# Functions of the Right Brain

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- **Remembering**
- **Imagining**
- **Seeing the Big Picture**
- **Sensing**
- **Laughing**
- **Decision Making**

- **Use Metaphors, Similes, and Analogies**
- **Say “Picture This”**
- **Get People Laughing**
- **Don’t Lecture -Demonstrate**
- **Tell Stories**
- **Use Humor**

# Ways to Use Humor!

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- **Tell funny stories**
- **Tell RELEVANT jokes**
- **Use self-deprecating humor**
- **Use video clips / pictures / cartoons** *(more on this later)*

# Humor:

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- **Facilitates Communication**
- **Builds Relationships**
- **Reduces Stress**
- **Provides Perspective**
- **Energizes**
- **Enhances the immune system**
- **Serves as a natural pain killer**

# Laughter

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- **Laughter exercises muscles**
  - **abdominal, facial, neck, back, legs, diaphragm**
- **Laughing 100 times is the equivalent to**
  - **15 minutes on an exercise bike**
  - **10 minutes on a rowing machine**

# Presentation Aids

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- **An audience will retain an average of 10% of what you say from the podium**
- **Using visuals increases retention to 65%**
- **Providing a handout in addition to visuals further increases retention to 85%**

# Presentation Aids

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## Common Visual Aids Include:

### ➤ PowerPoint

- *See next section*

### ➤ Overheads

- *Keep font large and legible*
- *Keep clear of light*
- *Keep overheads focused and straight*
- *Turn off projector when side-tracking*

# Presentation Aids

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## ➤ Slides

- *Keep presentation short since room has to be darkened*
- *Keep slides up-to-date*
- *Keep slides focused*

## ➤ Videos /VCR's

- *Keep video presentations under 10 minutes*
- *Facilitate discussion time*

# Presentation Aids

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- **Presentation Boards/Flip Charts**
  - *Keep handwriting legible*
  
- **Hand Outs**
  - *Keep presentable and professional*
  
- **Props**
  - *Keep props relevant to the topic*

# Using PowerPoint

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- **Know how to use the equipment**
- **Ensure proper room lighting**
- **Breaking it up (longer presentations need fills of props, stories, humor, etc.)**
- **Be prepared for equipment failure**

**“Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken...”**

# PowerPoint

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## ➤ **Backgrounds**

- **Light in color**
- **Not too busy or distracting**

## ➤ **Sounds**

- **Minimal use for a specific point or effect**
- **Should be an enhancement, not a distraction**

# PowerPoint

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## **Guidelines to follow when using PowerPoint**

### ➤ **Backgrounds**

- **Light in color**
- **Not too busy or distracting**

### ➤ **Sounds**

- **Minimal use for a specific point or effect**
- **Should be an enhancement, not a distraction**

# PowerPoint

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➤ **Minimum font size: 20 pt**

• 14 pt

• 18 pt

• **32 pt**

• 20 pt

• 24 pt

• **40 pt**

➤ **Bring text up as you address it**

➤ **Make general points with verbal supportive information**

➤ **Avoid using paragraphs of information**

# Fire Safety

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20 pt

## Fire Prevention is Imperative!

**Many people do not realize the importance of preventative measures for fire safety. It is usually not until someone has experienced tragedy or disaster that they will prepare. There are some ways to prevent or have safety measures in place in the event of a fire:**

- Keep the weeds around your house trimmed to reduce the risk of fire, especially in the summertime.
- Do not store gasoline or other flammable substances in your garage or home.
- Do not smoke in bed or risk falling asleep while smoking.
- Avoid using kerosene lamps or candles when you lose your electricity. Have a supply of flashlights or battery operated lamps on hand instead.
- Keep a fire alarm installed in home and test it frequently for operation.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your home and make sure everyone knows where it is and how to use it.

# Fire Safety

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28 pt

## Fire Prevention Techniques

- **Minimize Weeds**
- **Avoid Storing Flammable Substances**
- **Avoid Smoking Risks**

# Fire Safety

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28 pt

## Fire Prevention Techniques

- **Use Battery Operated Power Supplies**
- **Maintain a Fire Alarm**
- **Maintain a Fire Extinguisher**

# **Tips for Long Training Sessions**

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- **Break every 60-90 minutes**
- **Incorporate participation**
- **Allow for application**
- **Facilitate discussion**
- **Break up the material**
- **Be aware of “sleep mode”  
after lunch**
- **Lighten up**
- **End a little early**

# The Delivery

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**People respond more to what they see than  
the words they hear**

**How you look, express  
yourself and deliver your  
speech will dictate how the  
audience receives the  
information you are trying  
to convey**

# The Power of Association

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Whether you realize it or not, your presentation begins with the power of association

- **Your Appearance**
  - *How you Dress*
- **Your Body Language**
  - *Posture*
  - *Movement*
- **Your Tone of Voice**
  - *Apathetic*
  - *Monotone*

# Proof Your Presentations!

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➤ **Your Handouts**

➤ **Your PowerPoint Slides**

➤ **Your Words**

- *Proper Use*
- *Connotation*

## Spelling: Most Common Mistake

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### Why it's hard to catch spelling errors

According to research at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be at the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without a problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole.

# Spelling

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*The spell check is four your revue,  
and as soon as a miss steak is made  
that yew kin knot sea, it nose bee fore  
two long, and is rare lea ever wrong!*

**There were 14 errors in that ONE sentence!**

***DO NOT RELY ON MS WORD SPELL  
CHECK OR GRAMMAR CHECK!***

# **How to Annoy Your Audience**

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**If you really want to annoy your audience...**

- Engage in these common gestures:**
  - Hands in pocket/change**
  - Pacing/not moving**
  - Scratching head, nose, etc.**
  - Fidgeting, clicking pens, etc.**
  - Cracking knuckles**

# **Ways to Annoy Your Audience**

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- **Keep saying “uh,” “um,” and “ah”**
- **Speak monotone or apathetic**
- **Have a weak and apologetic introduction**
- **Be unfamiliar with your technical equipment**

# More Ways to Annoy

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## Your Audience

- **Don't repeat audience questions**
- **Take yourself too seriously**
- **Constantly look at your watch**
- **Don't give any breaks**
- **Chew gum**
- **Avoid all eye contact**

## **More Ways to Annoy Your Audience**

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- **Be completely unorganized**
- **Talk down to your audience or over their heads**
- **Play with your glasses**
- **Be overly self-conscious**
- **Say "in closing" and then  
drag on!**
- **Go over your time limit**
- **Misuse the microphone**

# The Unusuals...

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- **Clicking your dentures while talking**
- **Spitting on audience while talking**
- **Clipping nails while speaking**
- **Having “white stuff” in the corner of your mouth**
- **Dangling a string of spit between lips**
- **Cleaning wax out of ear with a key**
- **Chest hair creeping out of top of shirt**
- **Pulling out a wedgie**

## Tips for Your Panel Interview

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### At the Interview

- ▲ **SMILE!**
- ▲ **Give a good, firm handshake**
- ▲ **Sit and ground yourself!**
- ▲ **No fidgeting!**
- ▲ **No ahs ums, uhs**
- ▲ **Use a strong tone of voice**
- ▲ **Show some PASSION for the promotion!**
- ▲ **Your body language is EVERYTHING – people respond more to what they see than what they hear!**

# Tips for Your Panel Interview

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## Answering Questions

- ▲ **LISTEN, THINK, RESPOND**
- ▲ **Come out answering the question, then explain**
- ▲ **Keep your answers to 1-2 minutes**
- ▲ **Have a prepared opening (how has your education, training, and experience prepared you for the position of...?)**
- ▲ **Keep your answers organized**
- ▲ **Don't forget the question!**
- ▲ **Don't BS your way through an answer**

# Tips for Your Panel Interview

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## Answering Questions

- ▲ **Don't talk in circles**
- ▲ **Make good eye contact**
- ▲ **Don't keep asking to have the question repeated**
- ▲ **Don't talk about your nervousness**
- ▲ **A smile will cover much of your nervousness**
- ▲ **Understand the main issues**
- ▲ **Have a strong close to your answer (come back to the question)**

## **What Raters Look for in a Panel Interview**

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- **Listens to all of the question**
- **Actually answers the question!**
- **Stays on track and organized in answering the question**
- **Demonstrates a friendly disposition**
- **Shows a love and passion for the job**
- **Speaks clearly and audibly**
- **Maintains good eye contact with all of the raters**
- **Uses proper body language and gestures**
- **Demonstrates a concern for customer service**

## **What Raters Look for in a Panel Interview**

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- **Understands the values and goals of the dept. and how it relates to the position**
- **Stays calm and controlled**
- **Demonstrates command presence and confidence (balanced with humility)**
- **Is able to articulate leadership philosophy/style**
- **Uses time effectively for interview**
- **Stays succinct yet thorough in answers**
- **Shows an ability to see the “big picture” (how things affect the crew, dept., city, public, etc.)**

## **What Raters Look for in a Panel Interview**

- **Is able to offer viable solutions where appropriate**
- **Shows a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the job**
- **Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of emergency procedures**
- **Understands the specific issues currently facing his/her dept.**
- **Understands the general issues facing the fire service**
- **Is able to develop multiple solutions or courses of action when necessary**

**For a comprehensive list of what raters look for and what people get rated down for in panel interviews, log on to:**

**[www.FirePresentations.com/Raters1.pdf](http://www.FirePresentations.com/Raters1.pdf)**