

Communication Guru™

Your resource to becoming a confident, credible communicator



High Anxiety . . .

Does making a presentation put you on the fritz?

The fate of your next presentation depends on how **prepared** you are. Talk with any businessperson about making presentations, and you'll hear stories tinged with self-doubt and high anxiety. You'll hear about the stomachs that quiver, the palms that sweat, and the hearts that race.

Good planning and preparation can change all of that.

Know what you are getting into

Analyze the situation. Some of the questions you'll need to answer include:

- ✓ What is the objective of my presentation?
- ✓ Who will be in my audience; how many?
- ✓ What do my listeners know about the topic?
- ✓ What do they want to know about the topic?
- ✓ What type of room will I present in?
- ✓ Will I present from a podium or stage?
- ✓ What equipment will I need?
- ✓ What time of day will I make my presentation?
- ✓ For how long will I be expected to speak?
- ✓ What is the order of speakers?

State your objective and WIIFM

Think about your topic and purpose and create a clear objective that explains how your listeners will benefit. In other words, tell them the WIIFM (what's in it for me) as a result of investing time with you.

Use an agenda

Based on your objective, develop an agenda that meets your listeners' needs. Then present a clear and concise message drilled down into a few major points that will provide value for your audience. Be prepared to give your listeners examples of practical ways to apply your information. Follow your agenda throughout your talk to stay in control, always linking your major points back to your objective.

“You can control your “fritz factor” with good planning and preparation.”

Be enthusiastic in the opening

Many would-be-great speeches are destroyed because of a mediocre opening. Since audiences want you to succeed, spend the first minute or two connecting with them. Use an icebreaker that will warm up the audience and establish a connection. This can be as simple as introductions or asking the group a question. Let them know why your message is important to them. Make them feel comfortable by arriving early to greet them, shake hands, and make eye contact.

Encourage audience participation

Plan for ways to involve your audience. For instance, ask your listeners open-ended questions that invite input. When audience members participate they will:

- ✓ stay interested and enthused;
- ✓ remember more of your talk; and
- ✓ subscribe to your ideas.

Prepare and rehearse

He who fails to prepare, prepares to fritz out. Nothing beats good preparation combined with a trial run where you actually rehearse your presentation in real time.

Feeling some anxiety before a presentation is normal and good because it shows you care and you are human. But you can control your “fritz factor” with good planning and preparation. Once you have prepared, concentrate on your message and your natural passion will surface—putting the fritz factor out of commission.

Questions & Quandries . . .

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