

# 10 Tips to Sharpen Your Presentation Skills



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Here's something to think about before your next client presentation: Your ideas are only as good as they're understood. And how well they're understood is only as good as how well you present them.

Ideas are the core of your business; however, even great ideas seldom sell themselves. Of course I'm not insinuating that outstanding presentation skills can be mastered overnight, nor in a few instant tips. But it is possible to summarize and master what account executives, sales representatives and freelancers say are the ten most important presentation factors.

**1. BE CONFIDENT.** If you were not highly regarded by the client, you would not have been asked to give the presentation in the first place. Remember you have already shown them that you are capable. The presentation is merely a way to share your knowledge. The ideas that you show do not have to be perfect, because they will probably need to be modified to fit the needs of each individual client.

**2. BE PREPARED.** Presentations are not "one-size fits all". Review the clients input and objectives. Then organize your presentation in way that best fits their needs. Anticipate what questions, comments or objections your client may have and be ready with answers.

**3. KEEP YOUR FOCUS.** Take and keep to the initiative. Begin and close your presentation on your schedule. Since it's your presentation, you'll need to set the pace and keep it on track. The more you do so, the more professional your work will appear, and the easier your ideas will be accepted.

**4. BE COOPERATIVE.** Being confident and focused does not mean arrogance. Defend strongly what is crucial, but don't battle over the insignificant. Client satisfaction is key to a successful business and will usually require a compromise or two.

**5. BE CLEAR.** Always have an outline of what you are going to say. Be particularly careful not to use “jargon” during your presentation. Language designed just for your industry is meaningless to your client and could have a negative effect.

**6. BE HAPPY.** How do you expect your clients to be enthusiastic about your service or product, when you aren’t? Don’t be phony, but don’t be too laid back. Be excited about how your ideas will solve a problem or create an opportunity.

**7. BE A TRUE LEADER.** A strong direction with only one or two ways to implement your idea is all your client wants to see. Too many concepts, choices and alternatives will only serve to confuse them.

When a client is confused it’s harder for them to make a decision in your favor.

**8. BE PROFESSIONAL.** In any proficient presentation of ideas, what you like isn’t important. Concentrate on how your ideas will satisfy the client’s intentions.

**9. REMEMBER THE DETAILS.** Whether the product is pink or green is probably insignificant to you. Same goes with the content of your service. But some clients focus on such details. Be sure to explain everything that is different than their final purchase result.

**10. BE BRIEF.** Your presentation should be long enough to be significant and short enough to absorb. 30 minutes to 60 minutes. This will give you time to set the stage, unveil the concept, answer questions and accept input.

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