

What Do Great Presenters Do That Good Presenters Don't?



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Have you ever wondered what makes a “great” presenter stand out more than a “good” presenter? Many of us have probably sat through a presentation or two that was just horrible and made us wish we were somewhere else. What are those “little things” that the great presenters always do better to connect with their audiences? Below Lenny Laskowski discusses the 7 things that presenters should do to go from good to great.

1 – GREAT SPEAKERS SHARE REAL PERSONAL STORIES THAT HELP THEIR AUDIENCES CONNECT WITH THE MESSAGE

People love listening to personal stories based on the experience of the speaker, especially stories which they can directly relate to. Great speakers use their own personal stories – taken from their years of experience. All of us have stories we can use during our presentations but we do not realize it. I keep a book that I started years ago where I write down things that have happened to me, happened to my kids, my

wife, my friends, neighbors, people I have worked for, clients, and things that happened during my speaking events.

I have been collecting and using stories for over 25 years and continue to use and tell some of the stories that happened to me more than 20 years ago as well as stories that happened to me just last month. You may not know what stories you can use, where to use them and when they will be the perfect story for the moment, but the important thing is to write them down. When you have time, sit down and try and record all the details you can remember. When did things happen, who was there, what was going on, why were you there and any other details you can remember – the more detail the better. Next you need to think about how you will tell these stories to other people. What will you say, who will be in the story, what details are you willing to add to the story to make the story come alive.

Regardless of what story or stories you decide to use, you need to develop, prepare and practice telling your stories so they create interest or the effect you want it give. Many people, ask me, “Do we really need to use stories? I always respond to this question by saying, “If you want to get paid you do!” Professional speakers, learn to become good storytellers and use stories all the time.

The more you practice telling your stories the better they begin to sound and the easier they become to tell. During my typical 4 day Train the Trainer program, I probably share 6 to 10 stories over the course. The stories I use may not always be the same stories; it depends on the program and what prompts my thought process at the moment. Great speakers do this all the time and put a lot of thought into the stories and how they can use these stories to not only connect with the audience, but how to use this story to make a point. It is key that you use stories to make a point and help the audience relate more easily to your message.

2 – GREAT SPEAKERS TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR AUDIENCE BEFORE THEY SPEAK TO THEM

Great speakers tailor or customize their stories **to fit the specific audience** by doing their homework and learn as much about their audience before their presentations. They then tailor their stories to their audiences; therefore creating a better connection with them. Getting to know as much about my audience before any of my presentations is key and I always take the time to do this as part of my preparation. During my workshops and programs, I show people how I use the word **A.U.D.I.E.N.C.E.** to determine what they could learn about their audience. Below is some general guidance using this acronym:

Analysis – Who are they? How many will be there?

Understanding – What is their knowledge of the subject?

Demographics – What is their age, sex, educational background?

Interest – Why are they there? Who asked them to be there?

Environment – Can they see? Where will I stand? Can they all see the visuals and hear me?

Needs – What are their needs? What are your needs as the speaker?

Customized – What specific needs should you address to make it feel like this speech has been made just for them?

Expectations – What do they expect to learn or hear from you?

I will often have clients fill out a pre-program survey which includes specific questions that fit into each of these eight categories and ask the client or audience to tell me what they want. Essentially ask them what they need and give it to them.

3 – GREAT SPEAKERS ALWAYS PROVIDE SOMETHING OF VALUE FOR THEIR AUDIENCES

There is nothing better than to make your audience feel they did not waste their time listening to you. Great speakers always make their audiences feel they received value from having attended. By using the A.U.D.I.E.N.C.E. analysis technique I described

above, you will go that extra mile to make sure you provide the best program for your audience and bring them more value to your presentations. And it will show that you have. By customizing your presentation to each audience, you make each audience feel you are specifically talking to them and addressing their needs.

Audiences like a speaker who provides them with tools, techniques and wisdom they can use immediately. I often use this quote in my programs which sums this up in one statement,

No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care

4 – GREAT SPEAKERS DO NOT TAKE SHORTCUTS – DO NOT “WING IT”

There are no shortcuts for preparing for your ‘best’ talk or presentation. You owe it to each of your audiences to deliver your best presentation. Your audience wants to feel special and feel that you care enough about them to deliver a presentation tailored specifically for them. I have been speaking professionally for over 25 years and have delivered over 2700 programs to clients all over the world and still put in as much effort and preparation for every program I provide. I owe every audience I speak to the best program I can provide and this can only be done by putting in the work and not cutting any corners.

5 – GREAT SPEAKERS GREET PEOPLE BEFORE THE PRESENTATION BEGINS

Do not feel so proud that you’re not willing to politely shake hands and **greet people as they arrive**. People love the opportunity to meet and actually shake hands with the

speaker. Some speakers are so aloof and feel too important to even bother to casually speak with anyone from their audience before or even after their presentation.

I always arrive early, make sure my setting and venue is all setup before anyone else shows up and this allows me to greet people as they arrive. Great speakers are approachable and your audience will always appreciate it.

6 – GREAT SPEAKERS SPEAK WITH ENERGY AND PASSION FOR THEIR TOPIC

Great speakers exhibit charisma and “engage” the audience right from the start. They are passionate, confident, enthusiastic, captivating but also comfortable and authentic. One of the key attributes audiences want is to listen and watch a speaker who is dynamic, energetic and speaks with passion. When you are passionate and excited about your topic, your audience cannot help but become excited too. If you can engage your audience at the same time, that is even better.

7 – GREAT SPEAKERS DO NOT SAY ANY “AHS” OR “UHMS” OR OTHER TYPE OF FILLER WORDS WHEN THEY SPEAK

They have learned to totally eliminate the use of filler words during their presentation. Many good speakers still have a few, but great speakers have none. When I was a young kid growing up I used to have a severe stutter and was always made fun of by my friends. Most of us, even in professional settings use a lot of filler words and we, as a society, have come to accept these verbal annoyances. I worked very hard to totally eliminate the use of filler words when I speak not just during my presentations but during my every day conversation. I no longer use any filler words and I often am hired to work with executives just to help them eliminate their filler words. A speaker or presenter who does not use filler words automatically sounds more professional.

If you truly want to be a great presenter, you need to work on all seven of these areas and you will greatly improve how you sound and soon you too will also become a great presenter.