

## Business Skills 360 – Tips for Successful Presentations 2

### Discussion Questions

1. What is the most difficult part of speaking in front of a group of people?
2. What different types of visual aids are commonly used in presentations?
3. When you give a presentation, do you usually stand in one place or move around?

### Vocabulary

**To sink in** - if a message or point "sinks in," it means the listener understands it completely; "Losing my job didn't really sink in until I got up on Monday morning and didn't have to put on a suit."

**To engage** - to attract or hold one's attention; "The speaker really engaged the audience by telling them of his amazing success as a salesman."

**Prop** - an object that helps you during a performance or presentation; "I like to use props in my presentations to keep the audience's attention."

**To know your stuff** - to understand a certain subject very well; "I often go to Jackie for advice about computers because she really knows her stuff."

**To get on someone's nerves** - to annoy or bother someone; "The new receptionist gets on everyone's nerves by talking too much and chewing gum loudly."

**To tune someone out** - to stop listening to someone, especially because you are bothered or bored; "The employees usually tuned their boss out when he started talking about his childhood."

**Input** - information, opinion, or viewpoint given to a person or process; "A good manager will ask his staff for input when drafting new policies."

**To move on** - to continue to the next topic; "After discussing the previous year, we moved on to talk about the next one."

**To illustrate a point** - to make an idea clear by using examples, pictures, or comparison; "Karl used Microsoft to illustrate his point about companies becoming too large and powerful."

**To work into** - to insert or use something within something else; "I always try to work a good joke into the introduction of a presentation."

**Short attention span** - if you have a short attention span, you can't focus on one thing for very long; "People with short attention spans appreciate short meetings and brief instructions."

**To wander** - to move around without a clear purpose; if your mind or attention wanders, it means you stop focusing on one thing; "At the end of a long work day, my mind sometimes wanders to the weekend."

**Body language** - the ideas or feelings you communicate with your body, gestures, and facial expressions; "During a job interview, you should make sure your body language shows confidence and interest."

**To scan** - to look over quickly; "Online shoppers may scan through thousands of web pages looking for just the right item."

**To shoot up** - to increase suddenly and a lot; "Apple's stock price shot up when they introduced the first iPhone."

**Universal** - true about everyone or in all places; "A lack of sleep seems universal among salespeople who earn a commission."

**To drone on** - to talk about something for a long time in a boring way; "The keynote speaker at the conference droned on for two hours about his successes."

**Dynamic** - constantly changing or very active; "Richard Branson is a very dynamic CEO who loves adventure and crazy stunts."

## **Transcript**

Hello and welcome back to Business Skills 360. I'm Tim Simmons, and I'm glad you could join me today for the second part in our series on effective presentations. Last week, we talked about keeping it short, simple, engaging, and real. Much of that happens in the preparation. Today, we're going to talk about what happens when you stand up in front of that audience and have to start speaking. Take a deep breath...

Your first goal should be to make a connection with each and every listener. That connection is the pathway along which your message travels. If you have a good connection, there's a good chance your message will **sink in**.

To make this connection, you have to do two things: you need to control the audience's attention and you need to **engage** their minds. Remember that: control and engage. And to do these two things, you have three tools: your voice, your **props** such as PowerPoint - and your body or movement.

Let's start with your voice. It needs to be confident and clear. Show everyone that you **know your stuff**. Speak slowly and steadily. And remember that silence can be your friend. You need to pause sometimes to give people a chance to think. If you fill every space with your voice, you might start to **get on people's nerves**, and the words won't carry any power. Try very hard not to use "ums" and "ahs" when you're thinking. Think silently, choose your words carefully, and deliver them confidently. Otherwise, people will **tune you out**.

When you speak, you should invite people into your presentation by asking for **input**. That means using questions. Ask easy ones so that people don't have to think too much. Some of your questions can be open, to the entire audience. Some of them can be directed at specific people. Don't **move on** until you get an answer. As soon as people start contributing by answering questions, their engagement goes up. They feel like they are *participants*, not just *listeners*.

The next tools are your props and visual aids. That could mean PowerPoint slides. It could also mean a whiteboard, a flipchart, a wall chart, or anything else that people look at that is not *you* but is part of your presentation. The most important thing is that you *use* these aids. Don't just let people look at the slides. They should help you **illustrate your points**. Don't put up a graph and not explain it. It should be **worked into** your presentation.

These aids are useful, not just for giving information, but for keeping attention moving. Humans – and not just children – have **short attention spans**. They can't concentrate on one thing for long. So you have to work with that, and *take* their attention somewhere else before it *wanders* somewhere else. Move people's attention back and forth between you, your aids, other listeners, a handheld prop, back to you... and so on.

Now, your body, and what you do with it, is also important. I'm talking about **body language** and movement. Let's start up top with the face. Firstly, make eye contact. Don't just quickly **scan** the faces in the room. Look directly at an individual when you're making an important point. That person will respond with his or her attention, and the connection will last. That person's engagement in your presentation will **shoot up**. Try to do this with every individual in the room at some point. Okay... your face also includes your mouth. And what are you going to do with that? You're going to smile. Sure, you've heard it before, but it's easy to forget once you get nervous. The smile is **universal**. It has unique power to create a connection with someone. Just think about your interactions with others today. Which people smiled? What was the interaction like? I think you'll see what I mean.

Using your body also means using movement. Do *not* stand in one place and **drone on** about your topic. Move around the room. Use the left side, the right side, and even the back of the room. This will help you control people's attention. You must be **dynamic**. Remember that humans become quickly bored with something that doesn't change. You can sit down, stand up, lean over a desk, or lean against a wall. Just don't do one thing all the time. You are controlling their attention by moving it around. People will follow you with their eyes as you walk to the back of the room, then you can throw their attention back to your PowerPoint at the front of the room.

Right. We've looked at how you can use your voice, your props, and your body to control people's attention and engage their minds. It takes practice, but if you've got a presentation that is short, simple, engaging, and real, then it's a lot easier to do this.

That's all for today. If you'd like to test yourself on what we've just covered, have a look at the **[myBEonline.com](http://myBEonline.com)** website. There you'll find a quiz about today's show as well as a complete transcript. Thanks for listening, and see you again soon.

## Review

1. According to Tim, what should your first goal as a speaker be?
  - A To illustrate your ideas with charts, pictures, and other visual aids
  - B To speak confidently and clearly
  - C To make a connection with every person in the audience
  - D To make your presentation interesting
  
2. A good presenter learns to \_\_\_\_\_ people's attention and \_\_\_\_\_ their minds.
  
3. Tim talks about three tools you use in your presentation. What are they?
  - A Your words, your smile, and your PowerPoint slides
  - B Your voice, your outline, and your movement
  - C Your ideas, your words, and your body
  - D Your voice, your props, and your body
  
4. What does Tim say happens when people are required to answer questions during your presentation?
  - A The amount of silence is reduced.
  - B People feel more like participants than listeners.
  - C People can focus for longer.
  - D Your ideas become much clearer.
  
5. Why does Tim talk about people's short attention spans?
  - A To explain why we have to keep people's attention moving with props.
  - B To emphasize how hard it is to give a good presentation.
  - C To show why PowerPoint is useless.
  - D To explain why we must speak clearly and confidently.
  
6. Which of the following does Tim say we should do with our body and movement? (Choose all that apply)
  - A Focus on one area of the room
  - B Smile
  - C Look at the back wall if you're nervous
  - D Scan people's faces
  - E Look right at someone when making a point
  - F Stand in one place
  - G Move around the room

## Review Answers

1. According to Tim, what should your first goal as a speaker be?  
**C To make a connection with every person in the audience.**
2. A good presenter learns to **control** people's attention and **engage** their minds.
3. Tim talks about three tools you use in your presentation. What are they?  
**D your voice, your props, and your body**
4. What does Tim say happens when people are required to answer questions during your presentation?  
**B People feel more like participants than listeners.**
5. Why does Tim talk about people's short attention spans?  
**A To explain why we have to keep people's attention moving with props.**
6. Which of the following does Tim say we should do with our body and movement? (Choose all that apply)  
**B Smile**  
**E Look right at someone when making a point**  
**G Move around the room**

## Online Practice

Click the "Launch" button to open the **online practice:**

