

How to Deliver More Effective Interactive Presentations (Part II)

By Joe Tabers, CSP

Editor's Note: - In Part I of this article, Joe addressed the importance of 1. Planning for success with your audience, and 2. Talking with not at them. In the continuation of this article, Joe addresses two more ways for you to help make your presentation more alive, relevant, and memorable.

Presentation Tip #3: Involve your audience.

Adults learn new information best by seeing, hearing and doing at the same time. As you prepare, *ask yourself: How can I make or reinforce this key point or concept? How can I make this point come alive or be better remembered?*

One of the most effective means to involve people in their own learning is to ask your audience helpful questions. For example, you might ask, *"By show of hands, how many of you contributed the maximum amount to your 401k last year?"* or, *"What would you say is your greatest challenge when it comes to saving for retirement?"*

Relating your content to them with examples of similar life situations of a friend, client or relative is another effective method of involving your audience. People love to hear stories about other people! Tradition and history have been passed down through parables and stories throughout the centuries. Stories engage the imagination by combining visualization, hearing and emotions to markedly increase participant retention.

Another effective way of involving your audience is to ask for volunteers or to demonstrate steps to take when solving a specific problem.

Presentation Tip #4: Challenge your audience.

Along the way, and especially at the end of a section, ask your audience questions like: **What would you need to do in order to make this work for you? What might happen if you don't apply this in your life? What is the benefit to you of taking action with this information? What should be your first step in applying this? Etc.**

By asking questions, and expectedly waiting to get answers, you easily turn a passive learning experience into an interactive one. In this way, participants begin thinking through or imagining how they will apply the information once the presentation is over. This very process can help retention (since key information will be repeated) and increase motivation to take action.

One final tip: Require your audience to record personalized questions/action steps on a separate sheet of paper during key points of your presentation/program. These points should tie back into the desired outcomes you identified as you prepared for your presentation and that you shared up front as your presentation goals. Again, what do you want your audience to be thinking or doing differently as a result of your presentation?

So the next time you or someone at your company has the privilege of sharing technical or financial knowledge and experience with an audience, practice utilizing these four solid presentation tips. When you use these steps, you help your audience enjoy the education process, retain important information, and increase their motivation to take action.

And what of the applause? When they applaud now it won't be to just be polite, or because they're relieved it's over, but rather to truly thank you for your help and concern with their technical knowledge, decision making options, or their finances and their futures!

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