



Pocket Guide to Presentation Skills

Got a big presentation coming up? Make it memorable with these tips from the Duarte Method™, a proven approach to persuasive and empathetic communication used by the world's best speakers. You'll learn how to build a presentation that's worthy of a standing ovation...

Strategy

Understand your audience

Know your audience

Understand your audience's background, interests, and expectations so you can tailor your content to resonate with them.



Use the [Audience Needs Map](#) to overcome obstacles that might keep listeners from wanting to adopt your ideas.

Define your Big Idea™

Make your central message clear by defining your unique point of view on the topic and what's at stake if the audience does (or doesn't) adopt your idea.

Plan their journey

Define how you want your audience to be transformed. What are they currently thinking and feeling? Then plan what you need to say, show and do to move them.

Structure your content

Organize your presentation into a logical sequence to make your content easy to understand and remember.

Add supporting points

Use relevant data and examples to back up your main points and make your argument more convincing.

Story

Craft interesting content

Start with a hook

Grab your audience's attention with a compelling opening that makes them want to hear more. (Hint: It's not "I'm excited to talk about...")

Tell a story

Make your topic more relatable and accessible by sharing an anecdote, analogy, or personal story.



Need an example? Check out [this blog post](#) to see how story structure plays out in some of the world's most famous speeches.

Contrast opposing ideas

Add dramatic tension by comparing opposing ideas—problem versus solution, present versus future, what is versus what could be.

Provide a call to action

Encourage your audience to take the next step by closing out your presentation with a clear call to action.

End with the new bliss

Paint a picture of how much better their world will be when they adopt your ideas. Keep in mind: people will always remember the last thing you said more than what was in the beginning or middle.

Visuals

Amplify key messages

Use images

Reinforce key messages with graphics like photos, diagrams, or charts that help your audience "see" what you're saying.

Keep it simple

Pare down your content to just one idea per slide to avoid information overload.

Space it out

Don't fill every inch of the slide; leave open space around your content and visuals to make your slides look less cluttered and increase readability.

Be consistent

Use consistent visual elements (colors, fonts, grids) to create a coherent look and reinforce your brand.

Test your visuals

Check to be sure your slides will be readable to everyone in the audience (whether you're presenting in a room or online). Run them through an accessibility checker, too.



Do your slides pass [The Glance Test™](#)? Make sure your audience can discern the meaning of your visuals in three seconds or less.

Delivery

Hone your presence

Practice your delivery

Rehearse your presentation multiple times so you know your material well, which will make you feel more comfortable and confident.



Listen to this [pre-presentation meditation](#) to calm your nerves and mind.

Mind your body language

Choose your gestures and movements intentionally to reinforce your words. Maintain strong eye contact with the audience.

Speak clearly

Enunciate your words and speak at an appropriate volume to ensure everyone can hear and understand your words.

Pause for impact

Use pauses strategically to emphasize key points and allow your audience time to process information.

Be passionate

Show enthusiasm and passion for your topic to keep your audience engaged and interested.

A successful presentation requires preparation, practice, and passion. By following these tips, you'll be well on your way to delivering a presentation that engages, informs, and inspires your audience.

Whether you prefer to learn at your own pace or join a cohort of other people in a live workshop, [presentation skills](#) training will give you a solid foundation of knowledge plus plenty of opportunities to practice effective presentation techniques.