



# The Top 5 Commandments for Successful Presentations

# Introduction

In the Mel Brooks comedy “History of the World Part I,” Moses (Brooks) comes down from the top of Mount Sinai (or Horeb depending on your biblical reference of choice) carrying three very heavy stone tablets. *“Oh hear me! The Lord has given me unto you these 15...crash... 10 commandments!”* It’s a very funny moment and indicative of a presenter who knows how to keep the ball rolling, particularly when addressing an audience.

While Brooks used this classic shtick to get a laugh, his point is well taken and highly applicable to anyone who finds themselves – by choice or by force – in the position of setting up a business presentation for a new product, service or for their organization itself. So then let’s take a look at what may be considered the top 5 Commandments of Successful Presentations. Yes, five, not 15.

Workable tips for just about anywhere people need to communicate thoughts, ideas, concepts to another individual or group and when you want your points to be heard, duplicated and remembered.

One-on-One Sales Calls

Industry Conferences, Trade Shows

Corporate Meetings, Events

Employee Orientation Sessions

# Know Your Targets

Whether you're doing a webinar, addressing a large audience, or you intend to meet with a couple of decision makers over a conference table, you need to be well focused on your intention and purpose that the presentation itself becomes nothing more than a comfortable add on to yourself. Many presenters get wrapped around the axle on slide building that they forget to be the experts they are on the very topic on which they are presenting.

So before you even open that program called PowerPoint, take a good look at what you want to communicate and gain from your time with the audience. Ask yourself what is the purpose of this presentation? What do you want your viewer to understand and ultimately appreciate? If you want to close that big deal, then write that down as your purpose. If you want your audience to recognize you as being better than their current vendor, then it's entirely appropriate to assign seniority to that goal. Having these or any other worthy objectives in mind will focus your thought and streamline your efforts as you sit down to set up your presentation.



# It's Not Just the Deck

The best presentations are the ones that put the author at stage front, completely ready, willing and able to speak TO and WITH his audience. Surrendering yourself as a servant to your slide deck minimizes your position as the well-polished authority of the subject and puts your attention on your computer screen and not on the eyes of your audience like a good communicator does.

The best presenters are the ones who use slides merely to back up or reinforce a series of thoughts, sound bytes or data points worthy of attention. Try to get the mindset that you would be able to make this presentation completely without the slides; armed with only a single-page handout and your sweet and sultry voice. If you're not sure how that happens, get some coaching.





# Don't Hide Behind The Podium

Nothing good comes from being an immobile presenter who – unknowingly – puts the podium or laptop screen between himself and his audience. It creates a barrier between yourself and your audience that remains fixed throughout the duration of your presentation and again dilutes your position as a confident authority who can be entrusted with the secrets of the customer's pain points.

You don't have to be as animated as a stand-up comedian or a floor gymnast. You simply need to have the confidence to simply BE in the room, comfortable enough to move about the space to ensure you are making eye contact with your audience and can be seen, heard and understood. Podium possums get polite applause, but they don't often get remembered for what they said.

III.

# Honor Your Brand

Whether you know it or not, your company has a brand; an identifying mark or characteristic common to the products of your business. Graphic designers go through great pains to establish colors, type faces and other elements in order to create a palette that lets people know who your company is whenever they see your logo, website, promo, business card, proposal or presentation.

So whenever we see a product manager or regional sales manager go off and download a free template that bears no resemblance whatsoever to their organization's brand, we want to slap the back of their hand and take away their PowerPoint privileges. There's nothing wrong with being creative in your presentation; in fact creativity Whether you know it or not, your company has a brand; an identifying mark or characteristic common to the products of your business. Graphic designers go through great pains to establish colors, type faces and other elements in order to create a palette that lets people know who your company is whenever they see your logo, website, promo, business card, proposal or presentation. manager go off and download a free template that should be used in abundance as long as it doesn't diminish clarity. Just don't confuse your audience with a presentation that looks like it is coming from another organization.

# IV.

Presentations should support and complement the other design elements that contribute to your brand, and if you are not sure you even



# Brevity is Good

Whether you use the typical slide deck in your presentation or you've got another tool in mind for your next performance, remember this vital piece of advice: don't make your audience read and don't read to your audience. The best newscasters you see on television appear to be telling you what's going on in the world tonight; they don't appear to be reading to you. That takes a bit of training in front of a teleprompter, yet it creates the desired effect.

You as the viewer actually feel as if your favorite weatherman not only knows his info cold, but that he is genuinely interested in delivering the data to you. So it should be with your presentations. If you build a slide with a full paragraph of body copy on it, I challenge you to be able to read it from 10 feet away and not feel the urge to do something else like balancing a pencil on your nose or checking your phone for text messages. Keep your on-screen bullet points brief, simple and straightforward, then rely on your own knowledge and confidence to expand on them to the point of full understanding on the part of your audience.



# Contact Us For Help

Prosperity Plus Management Consulting, Inc. consultants are experienced professionals in operations, administration and marketing communications. Let us help you make your presenters and your presentations as sharp as they deserve to be, so you can influence your target audience the way you want to.

Reach us today for a conversation about your next presentation, before it becomes a missed opportunity for you to stand apart from the norm and be heard, seen and remembered.

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