

Appendix I

Checklists

BEFORE THE EVENT: GENERAL PREPARATION

- Learn any helpful audience background information, and adjust the tone of your presentation accordingly (are they tired, burdened by deadlines, etc.).
- Even if you discard it later, script your opening, closing, and big ideas (and for the rest of your presentation, create good notes).
- Fully rehearse your presentation at least three to four times, and do so under the same conditions as the real presentation (out loud, standing up, etc.).
- In rehearsal, spend more time on the critical moments of your presentation: the opening, closing, insights, transitions, and humor. (Use your script, then discard it when you know it.)
- For high-stakes presentations: audio-record your rehearsal and listen, then correct.
- Write your timestamps in your notes (so you know where you need to be at all points in time).
- Design and employ imaginative and muscular language as often as possible.
- Eliminate overused language and clichés, and find alternative ways to express overused phrases.
- For your important points, find and use an appropriate rhetorical device to enhance the point.
- Ensure you have extra copies of the handout with you.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Audience Issues:** Determine the percentage of ESL attendees who will be at your presentation. Modify it if more than 20 percent are ESL, and a) be prepared to slow down to 70–80 percent of your normal speed; b) simplify your language; and c) ensure that references are clear and culturally unbound. (Avoid idioms like “At the plate,” and “On deck.”)

BEFORE THE EVENT: OPTIMIZING THE VENUE

- Arrive at least an hour early.
- Identify any distractions in or near the room (noises like vacuuming, etc.), and do all you can to remove or adjust them.
- Keep the room cool. Locate the temperature controls and make sure they are set to a comfortable temperature.
- Check your screen lighting and visibility from all angles and seats of the room, and adjust if necessary. Ideally, present from the longest wall in the room, but make sure that natural light is not behind you.
- If you have access to natural light, use it.
- Make sure seating isn't cramped, and ensure that all the chairs are front-facing.
- Pre-test ALL technology, and carry all current adapters for your laptop and any other electronic devices you have.
- Back up your presentation in the event that your laptop fails, and have the backup available to you.
- Be prepared to present without technology by using your handout.

DELIVERY FUNDAMENTALS: THE OPENING

- Walk off your nerves in the few minutes prior to presenting.
- Quietly rehearse your opening multiple times shortly before taking the stage.
- Where appropriate, issue a "two-minute" warning to the audience before you begin.
- Distribute the handout *before* your presentation.
- Where appropriate, have someone else introduce you, and have the introduction focus on the audience's problem. Don't use a bio.
- If you're nervous, keep your hands engaged with something during the opening (in your pocket, holding notes, resting on the podium, etc.).
- Open with a gracious authority in your tone.
- Set the rules for phones, email, and breaks at the beginning of the session. Reassure people that they will have ample time to deal with email and communications.

DELIVERY FUNDAMENTALS: MECHANICS

- Make sure you're as rested as possible. Protect your energy level by getting sufficient sleep, doing light exercise ahead of the presentation, and avoiding eating large meals.
- Before you get up to speak, visualize yourself being lively, witty, and sparkling.
- Speak conversationally. Just be yourself.
- Be conscious of your speaking speed. In general, don't speak too quickly, and in the case of important points, slow down to emphasize them.
- For eye contact, look at your audience like you would look at someone in a regular conversation.
- For body language, be normal and be expressive.
- Don't turn your back on the audience. If referencing the screen, turn sideways.
- Match your physicality to the content and tone of the message. If you're making a more serious point, be still and quiet. For a more upbeat point, be lively and energetic.
- Point people clearly to where you are in the handout at all times.
- Be aware of the audience's reactions to your remarks. If you are sensing any disagreement or skepticism, address it with a question. Don't ignore it.
- Plan enough discussion time and don't go over.
- Answer questions in the moment rather than asking that they be held to the end.
- Fully listen to questions before responding.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.

THE 3 PILLARS OF PRESENCE

Authority

- Use an authoritative tone, but be polite and gracious throughout.
- Manage the time. Know your schedule and adhere to it. Gently call people back from breaks.
- Manage the distractions (plates don't need to be cleared this minute, leaf-blowing doesn't need to happen now).
- Manage the people. Explain the rules of engagement for a productive session. Prevent participants from dominating the conversation, and draw in quieter participants.

Directiveness

- Know the main conclusions of your presentation and deliver them clearly to the audience.
- Stand your ground. Politely defend the points you believe in.
- Don't be overly forceful in your defense. The audience has the right to disagree with you.

Self-Disclosure

- Avoid being too closed off (robotic) or too open (raw).
- Be human and honest. Share personal perspectives (as appropriate) after rapport has been built.
- Validate audience contributions that are of a personal nature (sharing a hope, fear, or concern).



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