

# **Leo Advancement Sessions**

## ***Public Speaking***



### **Participant Manual**





## **Session Objectives**

*At the end of this session, participants will be able to:*

- Describe effective delivery skills for public speaking
- Identify key steps for writing a speech outline
- Develop a speech outline for a 3 – 4-minute speech
- Deliver an organized, 3 – 4-minute speech using effective delivery skills
- Recognize differences between presenting in-person and virtually (OPTIONAL)

## **Activity: Public Speaking Example**

Observe the public speaking example and take note of the behaviors and techniques you observe.

### **Small Group Discussion Questions:**

- What specific behaviors/techniques did you notice?
- Was the presenter effective in their delivery of the content? Why or why not?
- How does watching this demonstration help you with public speaking/effective delivery skills?

## Public Speaking: Delivery Tips

Research shows that **what** you say accounts for only 7% of the impact of your presentation. 93% of how people respond to you depends on **how** you are saying it.

There are many factors that affect your speaking performance. Some of them are presented below:

- Eyes - Movement and Contact
- Voice - Tone, Pace, and Expression
- Body - Movement and Posture
- Language - Appropriate for Audience
- Nervousness
- Dress and Appearance

### *Eye Movement and Contact*

Our eyes can draw the audience into our presentation, or they can make us appear nervous or disinterested. Here are some tips on how to use eye contact in our presentations:

Do	Why?
1. Look around the room slowly before you begin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will draw the group's attention.</li> </ul>
2. Begin your presentation by focusing on one individual for your first statement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will help to reduce your nervousness.</li> <li>• It will personalize your statement and further draw in the group to listen.</li> </ul>
3. Hold your eyes on one person until you have completed a thought throughout your presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides one-to-one communication with audience members.</li> <li>• Provides nonverbal response to your message.</li> <li>• Helps keep your rate of speech under control.</li> </ul>
4. Try to move your eyes to all parts of the room during your presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces audience pressure.</li> </ul>

Don't	Why?
1. "Scan" your eyes repeatedly or "dart" from place to place without purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will appear nervous</li> </ul>
2. Try to focus on each individual (unless the group is very small).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will interfere with your thinking and affect your word choice and expression.</li> </ul>
3. Stare at your notes or read from a page any more than is absolutely necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The audience will sense your message has no individual recipients -- only faces in a crowd.</li> </ul>

## Public Speaking: Delivery Tips (Continued)

### *Voice Usage*

The sound of a speaker's voice plays a large part in how well the message is received by the audience. Here are some tips on things you should and shouldn't do:

Do	Why?
1. Emphasize key words and phrases by varying the tone of your voice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Words and phrases have <b>impact</b> like highlighted text or bold print.</li></ul>
2. Pause frequently as you speak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reduces nervousness</li><li>Allows you to breathe so you can project your voice</li><li>Gives listeners time to digest your chunks of wisdom</li></ul>
3. Consider the size of the room and the number of people -- adjust your volume suitably.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Message is clouded when you are too loud and not received at all when you are too soft.</li></ul> <p><b>Exception: Lowering the volume can help gain control of a noisy group because peer pressure forces loud elements to be quiet.</b></p>
4. Speak at an appropriate rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Too fast = lose impact</li><li>Too slow = boring</li></ul>

Don't	Why?
1. Speak every word with the same tone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Importance of key points is missing.</li></ul>
2. Use non-words like "uh", "um."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Audience will infer that you are unsure of yourself.</li></ul>
3. Race through your presentation non-stop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The unnatural pace may imply that you are not sincere or disinterested in your listeners.</li></ul>

## Public Speaking: Delivery Tips (Continued)

### *Body Movement*

The gestures we use and the postures we take can be a result of nervousness or they can just be the way we usually talk. Body movement can be **good** or **bad**. The absence of gestures and movements can make a presentation very sterile and affect the message getting through for lack of listener interest, but sometimes we move in ways that distract the audience. Here are some guidelines to follow:

Do	Why?
1. Use hand gestures to emphasize key points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Words and phrases will stand out like highlighted text or bold print.</li></ul>
2. Use hand/arm/body gestures to depict a size or shape or a procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Physical representation can help create a picture in the listener's mind.</li></ul>
3. Balance your stance at the onset and throughout your presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Keeps you from slouching or shifting from side to side, which can distract attention from your message.</li></ul>
4. Complete gestures you start and let hands return to your sides between gestures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Keeps hand gestures natural.</li><li>Avoids hands becoming a distraction to the listener.</li></ul>
5. Move around during you presentation. Try to move toward the audience at the beginning and end of the speech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Movement changes the dynamics of the presentation.</li></ul>

Don't	Why?
1. Move your lower body or shift unless you have a reason.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Harder for listener to focus when you're a "moving target."</li></ul>
2. Be in constant motion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your movements will overshadow your words and become a distraction.</li></ul>
3. Handle or fondle pens, pointers, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You will appear nervous or lacking confidence.</li></ul>
4. Use the same gesture over and over.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The gesture loses meaning and becomes a distraction.</li></ul>

## Public Speaking: Delivery Tips (Continued)

### *Language*

Using language that is appropriate for the audience is an important attribute of a skilled speaker. Just like choosing an inappropriate **pace** for delivery using inappropriate words, phrases, terms, or expressions will also cause your message to be lost on the audience. Here are some things to consider as you think about your audience:

If	Then
1. You are concerned that the audience may be at a different educational level than you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't speak at your level -- tailor your delivery to make it comfortable and clear to the audience at their level.</li></ul>
2. The audience varies in experience and background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep it simple. Avoid using jargon or unfamiliar terms.</li></ul>
3. You are delivering information that may be new to your audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure you define every term that you feel might not be readily understood.</li></ul>
4. Your audience may contain members of a different cultural background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid figures of speech or expressions that listeners may not understand.</li></ul>
5. You can determine whether your learning environment is casual or "businesslike".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize a conversational or a formal style that best suits the situation.</li></ul>
6. You want to restate or emphasize something you have already said.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Go ahead, but omit saying, "As I said before..."</li></ul>
7. You want to say something.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Just say it, rather than stating, "What I am trying to say is...", or "What I am getting at is..."</li></ul>



## Public Speaking: Delivery Tips (Continued)

### *Dress and Appearance*

People typically form immediate and vivid emotional impressions of people during the first five seconds we see them. In the next five minutes of acquaintance that initial impression can be altered by approximately 50% either negatively or positively. So the first five seconds have a tremendous amount of influence. It communicates extensively to others how you feel about yourself. Here are some guidelines to follow:

Do	Why?
1. Be appropriate for the occasion, the setting, the culture, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would you be making a good impression if you wore a suit to a picnic?</li></ul>
2. Make sure that you are comfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you are not comfortable, you will not be at your best.</li></ul>
3. Pay attention to the small details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure clothes are neat</li><li>• Make sure shoes are polished</li><li>• Present yourself professionally</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The small details add up to create a polished package.</li></ul>

Don't	Why?
1. Wear distracting clothes or accessories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your audience might pay more attention to your accessories than your speech.</li></ul>
2. Wear bright red or patterns if you are going to be visually recorded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The images are often blurred and distracting.</li></ul>
3. Wear out-dated clothing or hair styles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Out-dated fashions often cause people to think that your ideas are also out of date.</li></ul>

# The Steps to Writing a Speech Outline

By John Zimmer ([Mannerofspeaking.org](http://Mannerofspeaking.org))

## Step 1 – Big Picture

Before you start writing your outline, it is important to step back and think about some big picture items. First, think about the three cornerstones to your speech: the speaker (you); your subject; and your audience. Now, think about the relationships between these three cornerstones and make some notes about each. For example:

- **Speaker – Subject:** What do you know about the subject? Why are you speaking about it? What expertise do you have? What insights can you share with the audience?
- **Audience – Subject:** What does the audience know about the subject? Do they like the subject? Do they not like it? How is the subject relevant for the audience?
- **Speaker – Audience:** What do you know about the people who will attend your speech? What do they know about you? Do you have any ongoing relationship with them?

The purpose of this step is to get you to step back from the detail and think “big picture” about your speaking engagement.

## Step 2 – Objective

What is your objective for the speech? What do you want people to do when you have finished speaking?

People often tell me that they just want the audience to know something. The most powerful speeches are the ones that move people to action. If you can get people to take some concrete action, you will have made an impact. When thinking about what you want the audience to do, be specific. For example, do you want them to increase your department’s budget or invest in your start-up or exercise three times a week? Write out your objective as follows:

“At the end of the speech, the audience will \_\_\_\_\_.”

### Step 3 – Message

A speech should have a message, something that holds it together. The French call this *le fil rouge* – the red thread – that runs through the entirety of the speech. People often try to pack in several messages but being too informative is not good; the result is often confusing for those listening. Of course, your message can have different parts, but it should have a single, unifying message.

Write the message of your speech in a single sentence. It must be a grammatically correct sentence, not a series of points. When you can condense your speech into a single sentence, the message will be clear in your mind. If you cannot, you need to spend more time thinking about the message. As Albert Einstein said, if you can't explain something simply, you don't understand it well enough.

When developing your speech outline, use the message as a gauge for everything that goes into the speech. As you develop your speech, as you think about adding a slide, a statistic, a chart, a graph, etc., ask yourself whether it supports the key message. If it does, it can stay. If it doesn't, leave it out.

### Step 4 – Relevance

A speech is never about the speaker or their product or company. It is always about the audience. When speakers put the audience first, that's when great things happen. Now that you have your message, list the reasons why your audience should care about your message. How is your message relevant to them?

You need at least one reason. If you can't think of any, you have a problem. Either you are giving the wrong speech, or you are speaking to the wrong audience. Go back to step 3 and reconsider your message in light of steps 1 and 2. Keep doing this until you can list one or more reasons why people should care about what you are saying.

## **Step 5 – Structure**

Every speech needs structure in order to have an impact. There are three basic parts to every speech: the opening; the body; and the conclusion. For the purpose of this article, I will discuss them in that order. However, when working on your speech outline, I recommend starting with the body, then working on the opening and finally the conclusion.

### **Opening**

Your opening is the introduction to your speech. You get one chance to make a good first impression, so you want your opening to be strong. Preparation is key. A strong opening has two parts.

#### **1. Hook**

People's attention is at its highest at the beginning of your speech, so you want to capitalize on it. Speakers who begin in a mundane fashion – “Good morning everyone. I'm happy to be here. My name is So-and-So and today we are going to talk about X” – often miss the opportunity to hook their audience's attention.

There's no rule that says you have to begin with “Good morning” or something similar. There is no rule that introducing yourself has to be the first thing you do. And as for being happy, don't say it. Show it in your smile and enthusiasm.

You can hook your audience's attention from the outset in different ways. For example:

- Ask a rhetorical question
- Ask people to imagine something or recall a time in their lives when something happened
- Make a bold statement
- Tell an interesting fact
- Recite a quote
- Tell a story

Whatever you choose, be sure that it relates to the topic of your speech. For your speech outline, write down how you will immediately grab the audience's attention.

## 2. Signpost

Once you have hooked them, you need to let people know where you are going with your speech. Otherwise, the audience will get frustrated. Have you ever been in the audience and wondered: Where is he going with this? What is her point? Like I said, it's frustrating. You need to signpost your speech. It doesn't take much but is a big help for your audience. It is a simple, informative statement of what the speech is about.

For example: "Today I want to share with you three reasons why we should open an office in southeast Asia: lower taxation; a skilled workforce; and market proximity." Clearly, there is more to know about the proposal, but the sentence is a clear signpost to the audience as to what the speech will be about.

## Body

The body of your speech is where you develop your message in detail. This part represents the bulk of your speech, so you need to give it some thought.

### 1. Gather content

You need content for your speech. Often, you can talk about many points in support of your message. Write them all down. Don't edit your ideas yet. Write down everything that you could talk about, no matter how insignificant. Try to condense each idea into a word or short phrase. When you have finished, your preparation should leave you with a sheet full of ideas. You are now ready for the next step.

### 2. Choose the most important points

Leonardo da Vinci said that simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. Too often, speakers fail to hit the mark because they try to cover too much information. People can only remember so much. The more you add, the harder it will be for them to remember. Removing information will actually help them.

Of course, the number of points you cover will depend on how much time you have. You can cover more topics in a 20-minute speech than you can in a 5-minute speech.

Still, don't try to talk about everything. What are the main points? Pick what is most important for this audience on this occasion and focus on that. You can always tell the audience that there is more to know, but you are only going to focus on a few ideas. I know that leaving material out can be difficult, but you have to do it. Think for a moment about the complexity of the projects on which you are currently working. If you were asked to give a 20-minute speech on any one of those projects, I'd bet that you could only cover a fraction of the detail related to it.

### 3. Order the points

Once you know the ideas you are going to discuss, you need to order them in a logical manner that supports your message. Depending on what you are talking about, you have different options. Here are five possible ways to order your content:

- **Chronological** (for example, the history of a company or product)
- **Sequential** (for example, a process or business plan)
- **Climax** (when trying to persuade the audience to do something: points arranged from least important to the most important, thus building to a climax)
- **Headline** (also when trying to persuade the audience to do something, but here, the points arranged from the most important to the least important)
- **Pros and Cons** (when considering options)

### 4. Add supporting detail

Now that the ideas are in the right order, you want to add supporting detail for each one. Your ideas need to be supported if they are to be convincing. Examples of supporting detail include data, charts and graphs, stories, quotes, authoritative sources, visuals, metaphors, demonstrations and more. A good speech will have a variety of supporting material. That is why this part of the process take a fair bit of preparation.

For each of your main points, list the things that you will use to support that point. If you are going to use slides as part of the speech, you can even sketch out a rough idea as to what each slide will contain.

### 5. Transitions

Transitions in a speech do not make up a large part of a speech, but they are important. Too often, the different points in a speech blend into each other like the compartments on a train. This makes in more challenging for the audience to follow.

It is important to leave enough space between two ideas so that the audience understands that you are moving onto a new point. Just as you need to signpost what your speech is about in the opening; you also need to signal when you are moving on to a new point in your speech. A transition can be a simple statement. For example, “The next point is...” or “Another reason in support is...” or “Now that we’ve discussed X, let’s look at Y...”. Any of these will suffice. But a simple statement will allow the audience to shift gears mentally and get ready for the next idea.

On your speech outline, make a note about how each section of the body links to the following section.

## Conclusion

You want to finish on a strong note. Too many people waste their conclusions with a weak “Thank you” and exit the stage. You have to resist that urge and maximize your conclusion. You can plan for it in your speech outline. Plan how you will transition from the final point in the body of your speech to the conclusion. It should send a clear signal to the audience that you are nearing the end.

### 1. Link to opening

Most people think of a speech as something that is linear, but I like to think of it as something that is circular. In other words, you link your conclusion to your opening. For example, if you began with a story, you could finish the story; if you began with a quote, you could come back to the quote; if you told an interesting fact, you could reiterate it and perhaps add another interesting fact. In your speech outline, write down how you might link your conclusion to your opening.

### 2. Repeat and summarize message

Repeating your message as a simple statement will reinforce it in the mind of your audience. Succinctly summarize the different points in support, in the same order in which you presented them in the body of your speech.

### 3. Call to action

As discussed in step 2 (objective), the most powerful speeches are the ones that move the audience to take some kind of action. Now is the time to leave the audience with your call to action. If your call to action is a big one, have a simple first step that they can take. Studies show that if you can get people to take a small step towards a larger goal, the chances of them reaching that goal are greatly increased.

## Final Thoughts

When you give a speech, it is your job to get the audience across the metaphorical bridge that separates them from your idea. How do you do that? It all starts with preparation and a good speech outline. How do you write a speech outline? One step at a time.

## Speech Topics

In part 2 of this session you will deliver a 3–4-minute speech to a small group of your peers on a topic of your choice. Circle the topic you feel you are most knowledgeable about.

1. Teenagers/young adults should join a Leo club.  
**Audience:** prospective members
2. Community businesses should support/partner with their local Leo club.  
**Audience:** Chamber of Commerce members in your town
3. There are many long-term benefits/advantages of being a Leo.  
**Audience:** Current members during orientation



## **Detailed Speech Outline**

(See pages 7-12 for details on each of the following steps)

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Step 1 – Big Picture**

**Speaker – Subject:** What do you know about the subject? Why are you speaking about it? What expertise do you have? What insights can you share with the audience?

**Audience – Subject:** What does the audience know about the subject? Do they like the subject? Do they not like it? How is the subject relevant for the audience?

**Speaker – Audience:** What do you know about the people who will attend your speech? What do they know about you? Do you have any ongoing relationship with them?

## **Step 2 – Objective**

At the end of the speech, the audience will:

## **Step 3 – Message**

Write the message of your speech in a single sentence. It must be a grammatically correct sentence, not a series of points.

## **Step 4 – Relevance**

List the reasons why your audience should care about your message. How is your message relevant to them? You need at least one reason.

## **Step 5 – Structure** (Start with the body, then work on the opening and conclusion.)

### **BODY**

#### **Gather content**

Write down EVERYTHING that you could talk about, no matter how insignificant. Write them all down. Don't edit your ideas yet. Try to condense each idea into a word or short phrase.

### **Choose the most important points**

What are the main points? Pick what is most important for this audience on this occasion and focus on that. Remember your speech is only 3-5 minutes, so 3-4 points may be sufficient.

### **Order the points**

Once you know the ideas you are going to discuss, you need to order them in a logical manner that supports your message.

### **Add supporting detail and transitions**

Now that the ideas are in the right order, you want to add supporting detail for each one. Aim for 2-3 supporting details. It is also important to leave enough space between ideas so that the audience understands that you are moving onto a new point.

#### **Point #1:**

Supporting Details:

Supporting Details:

Supporting Details:

Transition:

#### **Point #2:**

Supporting Details:

Supporting Details:

Supporting Details:

Transition:

**Point #3 (Optional):**

Supporting Details:

Supporting Details:

Supporting Details:

Transition:

**OPENING**

**Hook**

People's attention is at its highest at the beginning of your speech, so you want to capitalize on it.

What's your hook?

## **Signpost**

Once you have hooked them, you need to let people know where you are going with your speech. It is a simple, informative statement of what the speech is about.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Link to opening**

Transition to the conclusion by linking your conclusion back to your opening.

**Repeat and summarize message**

Repeat your message as a simple statement reinforcing it in the mind of your audience.

**Call to action**

Leave your audience with your call to action.



	Condensed Speech Outline
<b>Opening</b> Hook  Signpost	
<b>Body</b> 2-3 points 2-3 subpoints	<b>Main Point #1:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Transition:</b></li></ul> <b>Main Point #2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Transition:</b></li></ul> <b>Main Point #3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Supporting Point:</b></li><li>• <b>Transition:</b></li></ul>

<b>Conclusion</b>  Link to opening  Repeat and summarize message  Call to action	
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## **Speaking Notes**

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## Speech Evaluation Checklist

NAME OF SPEAKER: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the items that you observe.

### Organization

#### Opening

- ☐ Hooked the audience (examples, facts, story, question)
- ☐ Stated message and used signpost

#### Body

- ☐ Presented main points to support message
- ☐ Provided supporting points to validate main points

#### Conclusion

- ☐ Connected back to the opening
- ☐ Restated or rephrased message
- ☐ Provided something to remember, think about, or act upon

### Visual, Vocal, Verbal

#### Eye Movement

- ☐ Looked around room at beginning
- ☐ Began by focusing on one individual
- ☐ Held eyes on one person when completing a thought
- ☐ Moved eyes to all parts of room during presentation

#### Voice Usage

- ☐ Varied tone to emphasize key words and phrases
- ☐ Paused frequently
- ☐ Adjusted volume to room size
- ☐ Spoke at appropriate rate

#### Body Movement

- ☐ Used hand gestures to emphasize key points
- ☐ Used hand/arm/body gestures to depict size or shape
- ☐ Balanced stance throughout presentation
- ☐ Completed gestures/ let hands return to sides between gestures

#### Language

- ☐ Spoke at appropriate level for audience
- ☐ Defined terms that may not be understood
- ☐ Avoided figures of presentation that may not be understood
- ☐ Utilized proper style for audience (formal or casual)

### Comments:



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- ☐ Utilized proper style for audience (formal or casual)

### Comments:



## ***Speech Evaluation Checklist***

**NAME OF SPEAKER:** \_\_\_\_\_

Check the items that you observe.

### **Organization**

#### **Opening**

- ☐ Hooked the audience (examples, facts, story, question)
- ☐ Stated message and used signpost

#### **Body**

- ☐ Presented main points to support message
- ☐ Provided supporting points to validate main points

#### **Conclusion**

- ☐ Connected back to the opening
- ☐ Restated or rephrased message
- ☐ Provided something to remember, think about, or act upon

### **Visual, Vocal, Verbal**

#### **Eye Movement**

- ☐ Looked around room at beginning
- ☐ Began by focusing on one individual
- ☐ Held eyes on one person when completing a thought
- ☐ Moved eyes to all parts of room during presentation

#### **Voice Usage**

- ☐ Varied tone to emphasize key words and phrases
- ☐ Paused frequently
- ☐ Adjusted volume to room size
- ☐ Spoke at appropriate rate

#### **Body Movement**

- ☐ Used hand gestures to emphasize key points
- ☐ Used hand/arm/body gestures to depict size or shape
- ☐ Balanced stance throughout presentation
- ☐ Completed gestures/ let hands return to sides between gestures

#### **Language**

- ☐ Spoke at appropriate level for audience
- ☐ Defined terms that may not be understood
- ☐ Avoided figures of presentation that may not be understood
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### **Comments:**



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### **Comments:**





## **Activity: Virtual Versus In-person Presenting**

**(Some facilitators may choose not to do this activity as it is OPTIONAL.)**

As a group, quickly brainstorm ways virtual presenting differs from in-person presenting. Think about what considerations you need to make when presenting virtually. Write down all ideas below.

## Tips for Virtual Presenting, with Video Examples

UPDATED NOVEMBER 08, 2022 - DOM BARNARD - 6 MIN READ

Online Article : <https://virtualspeech.com/blog/tips-virtual-presenting>

There has been an unprecedented rise in flexible working practices, with remote working becoming the norm for millions of people around the world. Businesses have adopted this approach to cater for not only the global workforce, but also staff who wish to maintain social distancing recommendations.

As online presentations become part of everyday working life, Zoom has established itself as the leading software, but other platforms have also seen massive growth, such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and Webex.

Presenting virtually is a very different experience to presenting in-person. This article explores tips to ensure you communicate effectively through these virtual presentations.

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/5RqIvdZO5mA>

### 1. Dial-in before the meeting starts

Dial into your call ahead of time. You should have enough time to set everything up and be able to greet everyone in a relaxed manner as they dial-in. Beware that you may need a few extra minutes to set up your microphone or camera correctly. If you are hosting the meeting, consider having the first slide of your presentation up on the screen with the topic visible, to reassure people that they have dialed into the correct meeting.

### 2. Prepare your technology

Ensure your laptop or computer is plugged in or fully charged - the last thing you want is to run out of power mid-way through your presentation (you wouldn't be the first person this has happened to).

Test out your microphone and camera before you start to make sure they are working:

- Test your webcam and position
- Test your microphone

Raise your computer so that you are looking slightly up at your screen (you may have to put your computer on some books to get the right height). This is much more flattering than having the camera below you looking up at you.

### **3. Dress appropriately**

This is one that people often overlook - just because you are home doesn't mean you are not at work. Dress as you would in the office, not only will this create a good impression, but you'll feel more confident as well. If in doubt, err on the side of the professional - you want people to focus on your message, not your clothes.

### **4. Professional surroundings and background**

Eliminate any distractions - turn off any devices that could interrupt you, such as alarms on your phone, and tell anyone else in the house that you are about to start a video meeting.

Good lighting will make a huge difference to your appearance and make you look much more professional:

"Shadows, dark patches, and uneven lighting obscure facial expression. In the absence of body language, people on video calls rely on facial expressions for complete meaning. Lighting can make or mar your message."

Check what is in the background of your camera shot, ideally keep things plain and neutral. Another option is to use a virtual background. These can usually be set up using your video conferencing software.

### **5. Manage your audience**

If it's your presentation, decide how you would like to manage the participants / audience. For example, are you happy to take questions as you go along, or would you rather wait and have a Q&A session at the end? How will you field questions? Via a chat feature or verbally?

Practice muting and unmuting participant microphones. Set out the ground rules at the beginning so that everyone is clear.

### **6. Eye contact with the camera**

This is a simple tip that can make all the difference to how you are perceived by the audience. Make sure that throughout your presentation you periodically look at the camera. Try to relax your face and smile. This gives the impression that you are looking into the eyes of the participants and helps to keep them engaged during the virtual presentation.

Video: <https://youtu.be/1SbmBGiZhOc>

*This video demonstrates how important eye contact is during a virtual or video-based presentation. Watch the different executives (including CEO Reed Hastings) talk and think about which one comes across the best on camera and why.*

## **7. Know your slides**

Most presentations include some visuals to complement what you are talking about. Traditionally Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides and Apple Keynote have been the go-to tools. Whatever software you decide to use, make sure you know how to use the features on it.

Software to help you create presentation visuals:

- Envato Elements
- Visme
- Canva

Prepare yourself, so you know how to navigate through your slides and share your screen. Generally, try to keep your slides light on text, as you don't want to overload people with information. It's usually better to expand and elaborate on the slides verbally.

## **8. Practice your virtual presentation**

Practice your presentation with a virtual presentation simulator, so that you're better prepared.

Video: [https://youtu.be/Eet8ur7L\\_BQ](https://youtu.be/Eet8ur7L_BQ)

## **9. Keep everyone engaged**

Before you start, try to find out who will be on the call. During your virtual presentation you can then ask them specific questions, addressing individuals by name.

There are also other tools that you can use, such as giving control of the screen to a participant, so that they can share a document with the group, if necessary. Beyond this, you can use videos, infographics and even host quizzes, polls or surveys.

## **10. Be enthusiastic**

Remember that sounding confident and happy to be there is the key to success. Your participants will note your mood from your voice, so get into the right frame of mind before you start. As you speak, try to alter the speed and tone of your voice so that you avoid sounding monotonous.

## **11. Body language**

Body language helps keep participants engaged. Move your camera away from you a little so that everyone can see your hand gestures.

Many regular tips about body language can be applied to the virtual environment. For example, eye contact can be achieved by looking into the camera (see tip 5). Try pausing and adding a small, subtle nod after you finish making a point. This will add emphasis to what you are saying.

If you are standing up, do not lock your knees as this can look very rigid. You can lightly clasp your hands when you are not making hand gestures, this will help to not distract your audience.

## **12. Timing**

Time your presentation beforehand, so you know roughly how long it will take you. Make sure you have just the right amount of content for your time slot and factor in time for any questions. You don't want to run out of things to say or stay on the call too long either.

Less is more - try not to include too much information, as it is better to stick to a few key messages. The beginning and end of your presentation need to be strong as that is what people will remember the most. You should be clear on your aims at the start and recap everything at the end.