



**67 TIPS**  
**for**  
**PRESENTING**  
**LIKE A PRO**

Anne Miller



## About the Author

Anne Miller, Founder of Chiron Associates, Inc., is a leading presentations and sales speaker, seminar leader, and coach. She works with companies and executives around the world to help them present and sell ideas, services, and products worth millions of dollars. High profile organizations like Citigroup, Yahoo!, Meredith Corporation, and The UN hire Anne for her entertaining, challenging, and high pay-off programs. Anne is the author of numerous articles and books, including her latest, **Metaphorically Selling: How to Use the Magic of Metaphors to Sell, Persuade, & Explain Anything to Anyone**. She has appeared on several radio and TV shows including CNNfn and Bloomberg News Radio. Her motto for all programs: "Engage mind before mouth."

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## 67 TIPS for PRESENTING LIKE A PRO

*"The art of being a bore is to tell everything."* Voltaire

### FOR A DAZZLING DELIVERY

1. **Realize that how you see yourself affects your results.** "See" the presentation going well. As Muhammad Ali said, "To be a great champion, you must believe you are the best."
2. **Approach presenting as if it were a sport.** Expect to practice three-five times before performing.
3. **Control your jitters before a presentation.** Think positive. Do these exercises just prior to the event to loosen up. Hum to warm up your voice. Yawn an exaggerated yawn to open up all the throat muscles. Take deep breaths and exhale very slowly to calm yourself. Smile. Walk in. Take a moment to look around at the group. Begin.
4. **Think "conversation," not "presentation."** "Conversations" are easy. "Presentations" are scary. The change in your mindset will naturally relax you.
5. **Be inclusive rather than exclusive.** Say "In our discussion (or meeting, or conversation) this morning, we will be covering..." instead of "In my presentation." "My" puts the spotlight on you, increases your anxiety, and turns you into an unnatural, stiff "I will now become a boring, business person" presenter. It also puts the audience in a passive mood. The inclusive pronoun "our" together with the substitute word of your choice for "presentation" connects you and the audience together and sets the stage for a more dynamic experience for everyone.

- 6. Manage jitters with conversational eye contact.** Talk to one person until your voice naturally drops at the end of a thought, sentence, or phrase. Then, shift to another person. Talk to that person until your voice again comes to a similar natural pause or breathing space. This gives you control over your thinking and your breathing, which are the first things to go when you are nervous. Look away if you need to get your thought. Then return to the person you left.
- 7. Pause when your mind goes blank on a point.** If the thought does not spring back, acknowledge that you've lost it and continue. Inevitably, it returns.
- 8. Avoid wasting energy worrying that you will forget something.** Realize that something you omit in error will most likely come back to you as a question.
- 9. Number your pages if you are using any kind of notes, index cards, script, a combination of notes, or pictures of your slides.** You'll be glad you did if you drop them and have to get them back into order quickly,
- 10. Speak with authority.** Pause instead of saying non-words like "um." Do not end your sentences with a question in your voice. Do not "sinnng" your "worrds" as you speak. Record a part of your presentation to see where you may be guilty of these presentation pitfalls and work on correcting them.
- 11. Keep your energy level up.** A group responds to your conviction, passion, and enthusiasm. Low energy means an inattentive group. High energy keeps everyone alert. The extra energy you put into presenting is like the extra energy you put into playing a sport. When walking onto a sports field, or court, your energy

increases as soon as the ball is in play. The same is true in a group presentation. Increase your energy output as soon as you are in "presentation play."

## "LUCK" IS PREPARATION MEETING OPPORTUNITY

### 12. Do an audience analysis.

- Who will be there?
- What are their objectives?
- How sophisticated are they?
- What is the appropriate tone for this presentation?
- What is their business situation?
- How does your product, service, or idea solve their problems or add value to them?
- What information does your group need/want to know?
- What is the competitive situation?
- What objections, concerns will you have to address for this listener/group?
- What next step should they take if the meeting is a success?

- 13. Understand the role of preferred styles in decision-making.** People have a mix of information hot buttons that drive how they decide. The four buttons are a need to see the big picture, a need to feel good about the impact on people, a need to have all the facts add up, and a need to get to the bottom-line as soon as possible. Realize that everyone has all four inner hot buttons, but that most people have one or two that dominate.

- 14. Consider the listener's preferred style, in particular, when presenting to one or two people.** Knowing your listeners' style shapes the type and amount of information you will bring, the examples you will use, the visuals you will need, and the time you will have to tell your story. You will find it easier to get agreement with people by skewing your content to their preferred styles.
- 15. Satisfy the "Facts" people.** They respond well to data and benefits that include words like "systematic, monitored, researched, tested, logical, value." While you may not present all your data, bring back-up material in case they ask for it.
- 16. Please the "Relationship" people.** Do this by stressing "collaborations, feelings, teamwork, loyalty, and ease of use." They particularly like to know that others have used or done what you are recommending.
- 17. Make the "Big Picture" people happy.** They like what is "new, different, provocative, synergistic, multi-dimensional." They respond to word pictures using rich evocative language.
- 18. Speak the "Bottom-line" people's language.** Their sense of time is "Now!" Keep your presentations short. Talk in bullet points and pepper your language with phrases like "bottom-line, the key point here is..., and net, net..."
- 19. Realize the truth of the saying that "God is in the details."** Consider these key elements for a well-planned group presentation:
- What kind of meeting room will you be in?
  - What audio/visuals will be most appropriate?
  - Who should come with you?

- How long will you have?
  - What's the best format for discussion?
  - When will it be best to take questions?
  - What material will you leave behind?
  - Who is taking care of the logistics?
  - Can you get into the room early to set up?
  - Do you have extra cables, bulbs, pens, and extension cords for your equipment?
- 20. Plan your team presentations.** Plan who will open, who will handle which sections of the presentation, and who will conclude and summarize.
- 21. Rehearse the presentation.** That includes introductions, transitions, and questions. Identify how one team member will build on the other's comments or interrupt. Let the listener see an organization or team that has its act together.
- SET THE STAGE**
- 22. Open with the benefit to your listeners.** "Good morning. Our goal this morning is to help you increase sales." "The purpose of our meeting is to get you up to speed as quickly as possible on the new software." "We will be looking at a way to increase talent retention by as much as twenty-five percent." Hit listeners' primary interest in your opening.
- 23. Get early agreement on your assumptions.** It is a good idea in one-on-one and small group meetings to follow with your understanding of the listener's situation. Then, ask, "Is that right?" or "Has anything changed since we spoke?" or "Do you all agree?"

- 24. Get this feedback before you continue since your entire presentation is based on these assumptions.** Stop and question to get a revised picture of his situation if your listener says you're wrong. A slight pause and look to the group for silent nodding confirmation is sufficient in a larger group where it may be inappropriate to ask for an actual response.
- 25. Give people your key message in the introduction.** "In a nutshell, this program will do a..., b..., and c... and save us \$X over two years." "Bottom-line, we are recommending you leverage the success you have had thus far with our firm and make us your sole supplier." "The key thing to understand about this strategy is that it will increase our options with a minimum amount of risk." "The highlights of our research showed a..., b..., and c... which means we need to re-consider our original timeline."
- 26. Include a written agenda in a lengthy presentation.** You can simply state the specific topics you will cover with them if your presentation is only ten to fifteen minutes. An effective transition line to the agenda is "Specifically, we will cover..."
- 27. Set the procedure for questions.** Tell your audience how and when you will handle questions in a group presentation. "Please hold your questions and I'll be glad to take them at the end." or, "As we go through this, ask your questions at any time." Tell them what to do and most of them will take the direction.
- 28. Feature what you fear.** If you worry that you will not be able to answer all questions, say, "As we go through this material, if there is something I cannot answer, I will be happy to get back to you." When you are stumped a bit later you can easily say, "I'll get back to you on

- that." Your audience will accept your response because you prepped them for it.
- 29. Acknowledge the "diverse points of view in the room" when facing a hornet's nest of different opinions.** Suggest that "in the interest of time," people should feel free to ask questions of fact as "we go through the information" and then "we can open the room for discussion." When someone violates this ground rule, you say, "Yes, that is something we agreed to discuss at the end and we certainly will." Break eye contact and continue with your presentation (unless it is the President of the firm, in which case, deal with whatever she has raised at that moment).
- 30. Transition smoothly into your information.** "Let's begin with..." "So, what was our methodology?" "To understand how we got here, let's take a step back to..."

### TO EXCITE, EXPLAIN, PERSUADE!

- 31. Tell and sell.** People do not buy features. They buy what the features of your product, services, or ideas give them. They want to know the "so what's?" of your explanations or claims.
- Weak:** "This program can be delivered in over 23 cities." (So what?)
- Better:** "This program can be delivered in over 23 cities. Since your staff is scattered across the U.S., this means you get tremendous flexibility in scheduling and savings in travel." (Yes!)
- 32. Guarantee yourself that you're always presenting benefits.** Do this by shifting the selling weight back to the buyer with a benefit every time you give an explanation or make a claim about your products or services.

**Examples:**

(Claim) “We have...” (benefit shift) “so you get...”

(Claim) “This can do...” (benefit shift) “so you save...”

(Explanation) “Our process works like this...”  
(benefit shift) “which means you’ll reduce your...by ...percent”

- 33. Sell with stories.** Stories are as old as the cave man. Listeners like hearing success stories. They want to know you’ve seen their problems before and have solved them successfully. They relate to other firms or people whose names they recognize and respect. Sprinkle your selling points with tales of success.
- 34. Use analogies.** Drive your point home with a memorable analogy. An analogy is a powerful way to explain a particularly complex point. For example, “Just because they are experienced, salespeople shouldn’t think they are beyond pre-call preparation checklists. It’s like jumbo jet airline pilots. We accept that they know how to fly, but, we wouldn’t want to be in a plane with them if they skipped the cockpit checklist.”
- 35. Add impact to your numbers.** Compare: “Our publication is read by one million people.” to “Our publication is read by one million people - that’s ten Super Bowls of potential buyers for your product!” Take your key numbers and translate them into easily visualized, more meaningful concrete terms.
- 36. Use testimonials.** “Business Week listed us as one of its ten best companies to work for.” “Jason Lowell, CFO of XYZ company was initially skeptical, but later said that this was the best system he had ever used.” Testimonials add credibility to your claims.

- 37. Reinforce key points.** Repeat the actual words or the spirit of your selling point after you present a block of facts or lengthy explanation. Read the following with--and without--the last reinforcing sentence to hear the difference. “The tips in this booklet will help you get what you want from any group. The tips are practical and they work. They cover all aspects of presenting as well as tips on often overlooked but critical aspects of a presentation. **Bottom-line, ‘67 Tips for Presenting Like a Pro’ is a good investment.**”
- 38. Confirm agreement with your listener.** After you make a major point, check back rather than assume that your listener has accepted what you said. “Does this make sense?” “Are we on track here?” “To what extent can you see yourself using this?”
- 39. Involve listeners in various ways in your presentation.** Remember the proverb: “I tell you and you forget. I show you and you remember. I involve you and you understand.” People understand best when they are involved.
- 40. Realize that involvement can be small actions.** Ask listeners to imagine a situation. Have them choose an item from a list they would like you to talk about. Suggest they estimate something. Invite them to turn to each other and discuss something. Offer a rhetorical question which mentally involves them because they want to hear the answer.
- 41. Spotlight important points, facts, or benefits.** “If you remember nothing else about this..., remember...” “Let me repeat that...” Highlighting key points makes it easy for listeners to remember them.

**42. Compare with the competition professionally.**

It is generally a bad idea to “knock” the competition if you are in a sales situation. It is far smarter to bias your buyer’s purchasing criteria towards your product or service.

**Weak:** “Our product is much better than competitor A’s. Their breakdown, delivery, and service records are awful.”

**Better:** “Be sure to check out breakdown, delivery, and service records as you review vendors. These things can cost you a fortune in down time. Not all companies are equal in those areas. Ours has an admirable record. In fact, that’s why clients renew with us regularly.”

You can bet the client will check those factors out with your competitors for himself.

**43. Turn “I-Strain” into “You-Turns.”** The listener, not the speaker, is always the center of a presentation.

**Weak:** “I think X is a great idea. I think you’re just going to love it. I want to show you...”

**Better:** “You’ll find this is a really good idea. Executives love the way it works. (Listeners identify with other buyers.) Take a look at this.”

Be enthusiastic about your offering or ideas, but keep your pronouns listener-centric.

**44. Be succinct.** More is not necessarily better. The Gettysburg address only has 272 words.

**Weak:** “So, we were very pleased with the results that we got last year, since it was a tough year and no one really expected to do that well. The economy was off. Our industry was off. My biggest account was down 30%. It was bad.”

**Better:** “Last year’s results were an

unexpected but welcome surprise for everyone.”

**45. Keep a lively narrative flow.** Smooth transitions give a presentation its rhythm and its story. Key transition words and phrases include:

- “Not only are you getting...but you’re also saving...”
- “In addition...”
- “Moreover...”
- “You’ll save..., but what about...?”
- “Here’s another advantage of this system...”
- “And the story gets even better when you consider...”

**46. Use mini-summaries.** Periodically repeat previous key points before going into the next point. “So, the process is a proven one, the results have beaten the averages. Now, how do we work together?” Make it easy for your listeners to follow your story line.**47. Vary your media.** If possible and appropriate, move from a PowerPoint to a whiteboard or flip-chart to draw something in real time and then return to your screen. Mix a sales sheet with a product demonstration. Show a video. Mixing media holds attention, allows more conversational spontaneity, and creates more involvement for listeners.**48. Add the creative touch.** Suppose you’re selling financial services to a group of prospective clients. You could open your presentation with: “Mae West once said, ‘I’ve been rich and I’ve been poor and, honey, rich is better.’ (pause) Today, we’re going to look at three strategies to help make you richer.”

**49. Vary your creative approaches.** You can begin by sharing a startling fact; use props; turn your presentation into a game; or ask a provocative question.

**50. Have a strategy for handling a tough question.** It's often difficult to respond immediately to hostile or complex questions. Give yourself time to think and, if necessary, to neutralize any "hot" language by paraphrasing, repeating, or acknowledging the question. Examples:

Q: "How do you explain the fiasco your firm was involved in at XYZ Company?"

A: (Paraphrase) "With regard to the incident at XYZ..." (then answer).

Q: "Why are you recommending the 341 line over the 456 line?"

A: (Repeat) "Why the 341 line over the 456? Because..."

Q: "How will we pay for the extra costs of this installation?"

A: (Acknowledge) "We were particularly sensitive to the costs involved in this process. Basically, we've arranged for....."

**51. Get underneath emotional questions.** Acknowledge the feeling and probe for clarity before you answer when a questioner is angry, scared, or skeptical. "Clearly you feel strongly about this. May I ask why?" "I can hear the deep concern you have. What leads you to think this won't work?" Listeners cannot hear your answer if they are filled with emotion.

**52. Do a reality check.** Be alert to signs of impatience in small meetings. These signs include checking watches, looking out the window, shifting in chairs, or eyes glazing over.

**53. Respond to what you see.** "Gentlemen, are we on track here?" "Jill, are we discussing what you want to discuss?" There's no point in having a discussion if your listener is not present in both body and spirit. Ask "What would be most useful for you to know about this...?" if you have gotten off track.

## WORKING WITH VISUALS

**54. Keep visuals simple, clear, easy to read, and as eye-catching as possible.** Otherwise you risk death by PowerPoint. Use pictures, graphs, charts, and dot points, with very few words. People tune out when you overload them with words.

**55. Use limited amounts of special effects.** You have gone overboard on the visual side of your presentation when people only remember the "wow" of your visual effects and none of the message.

**56. Be aware of the placement of your toes when presenting at an overhead screen.** You will wind up reading the screen and losing your audience when your toes are pointed at the screen. You can glance at the screen to pick up your thoughts and yet still be able to turn and speak directly to the audience when pointing your toes catty-corner or 45 degrees toward the audience. "Where go your toes, so goes your nose."

**57. A script is a tool not a master.** Mark any script you may use with places to stop and tell a story or give examples. This breaks any tendency to read and lets you engage conversationally directly with your audience.

**MOVE EASILY TO NEXT STEPS**

- 58. Signal you're at the end.** Say "In summary..." or "In conclusion..." This gets people ready to move to next steps.
- 59. Restate in one short sentence the original premise of the meeting.** Examples: "We began by saying you need to cut your costs." "You are deeply concerned about the erratic performance of your current portfolio." "This is a very exciting time in the development of your company as it plans to go public." Doing this reconnects you to their original needs.
- 60. Summarize your message with the Rule of Three.** Three is a magic number. There's a rhythm to it. We say: XYZ; ABC; red, white, and blue; Tom, Dick and Harry; bacon, lettuce, and tomato. It's easy to remember three things. Leave people with three highlights to remember about your presentation. They will feel they understood everything you said and will recall your selling points as easily as 1-2-3.
- 61. Restate the value of your key message.** "...and this will help us cut costs by up to twenty-five percent." "...all of which will ease the volatility of your portfolio." "...which will help you meet your objectives." This concluding statement puts them in a positive frame of mind and makes it easy to move to next steps.
- 62. Close.** A close is any action step that advances your relationship with the listener to the next stage. That might include a request for an actual order, an agreement to a second meeting, an appointment for a meeting with other decision-makers, permission to do a needs analysis, or agreement to attend a demonstration or a plant tour. Always have a next step to which the listener can say, "Yes."

- 63. Realize with a close that the listener is agreeing in all cases to do something at a specific time as a result of your meeting.** Simply say, "Going forward, this would be the next step." Then get agreement. "Can we set that up?" "Is that acceptable?" "When would you like to begin?"
- 64. Close with confidence.** "We would like to begin next week. Can you do that?" is stronger than, "Uh, so, uh, we think this is a good, uh, idea. And we were kind of hoping you could maybe start uh next week. Uh, is that uh okay?"
- 65. Re-cap quickly after any remaining questions.** People remember the last thing they hear. Let that last thing be your quick summary, not the answer to a minor question. "If there are no more questions, again, you are looking to reduce the volatility in your portfolio. Asset allocation does that and will meet your investment objectives. We look forward to meeting with your colleagues next Tuesday." Get as much in as you can, even if it is only the next step!
- 66. Consider an alternative close.** Do this instead of a formal summary and close when speaking to one to three people. Simply ask, "Of all the things you've heard this morning about X, what do you see as most useful to your situation?" Let them reflect on what they heard. You will see what penetrated, what didn't, and what remaining concerns they have. You can then proceed accordingly.
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- 67. Debrief your presentation.** Improve your performance the way sports and performing arts professionals do: look at a replay of your game/show. Use the checklist in this booklet to evaluate even your most successful presentations to continuously improve your own presentation game.

## PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist two ways:

1. Before your presentation to ensure you have thought of everything.
  2. After the presentation to debrief, check your effectiveness, and improve for your next presentation.
- \_\_\_ 1. I did an **audience analysis**.
- \_\_\_ 2. I **began** with my audience's objective and premises **before** presenting my major message.
- \_\_\_ 3. I **stated the main message clearly and crisply**.
- \_\_\_ 4. I **used** an agenda, if necessary
- \_\_\_ 5. I **established the procedure** for questions **before** getting into the details of my idea/message.
- \_\_\_ 6. I **gave the "so what?"** of all my points to my audience.
- \_\_\_ 7. I **made my information exciting, interesting and persuasive** with examples, analogies, stories, vivid numbers, and testimonials.
- \_\_\_ 8. I **personalized** my remarks and **involved** my audience in as many ways as possible during the presentation.
- \_\_\_ 9. I **said "you"** more and "I" less.
- \_\_\_ 10. I **differentiated** my points wherever possible.
- \_\_\_ 11. I **summarized** my points and **moved smoothly** to a specific next step.

- \_\_\_ 12. I **showed** visuals that were simple, graphic, colorful, with few words that kept my listeners' interest.
- \_\_\_ 13. I **spoke** with high energy, conviction, and enthusiasm.
- \_\_\_ 14. I **worked collaboratively** with my colleagues in planning and executing the presentation.
- \_\_\_ 15. I **was as sensitive as possible to the communication styles** of my audience

Things to do differently next time:

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## 10 Tips to Promote YOUR Business with this Booklet!

(Can be customized in content & design for you.)

1. Send this booklet to your clients at year-end thanking them for business.
2. Use this booklet as a “thank you” for a sales appointment.
3. Mail this booklet to your prospect list to stay in touch with them.
4. Include this booklet as part of a gift bag at off-site meetings.
5. Distribute this booklet to prospects at a trade show.
6. Give this booklet as an incentive for completing a questionnaire or survey, or signing up for an offer or subscription.
7. Include this booklet in a mailing of your invoices as a thank you.
8. Package this booklet with a product you sell as a “premium” or “added value.”
9. Deliver a copy of this booklet to the hands of the first “x” number of people to enter a drawing or come to your store, booth, or other location.
10. Provide copies of this booklet to people and organizations who can refer business to you.

**What are you waiting for?**

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## NOTES