

Have a learning objective. Why are you speaking? What do you want to share? What will the audience learn from you? Know exactly what you want your audience to walk away with. Focus on only a few crucial themes to support your objective.

Know the needs of your audience. Design your session to match their needs and expectations. Know your material thoroughly, and deliver what you have to say in a logical sequence. Ensure your speech will be worth their time and attention.

Know the weak and strong points of your argument. Emphasize your strong points during your presentation, and be prepared to answer questions about the other side.

Simplify your speech. The fact is people simply can't absorb more than 5 to 7 key points, so most of the content of an ordinary 30-minute talk may leave the audience overloaded.

Begin and end on time. Plan on about two minutes per slide. End your presentation about 5 to 10 minutes earlier than the allotted time to allow time for questions during and after your talk. If you're sharing the stage with other speakers, be considerate and watch your time.

Break your session in to segments. If your session is 60 minutes, you may want to break it into three 15-minute sections and include structured interaction with your audience between key sections.

Avoid sales-oriented presentations. You can damage the relationship with your audience if you include statements designed to "sell," claim superiority over competitors or are misleading. Your attendees are there to learn, and you'll earn their respect if you provide them with strong, company neutral information.

Send them away with useful information. Your presentation slides don't convey the complete message. Create a helpful reference from your session with additional resources, a more detailed narrative of your presentation and other supporting information.

Practice! Rehearse your speech at home or where you can be at ease and comfortable: in front of a mirror, in the car, in an empty room. Repetition helps you become even more knowledgeable and allows you to continuously improve the content.