

Handy tips for presenting with confidence

Here are some handy tips to help you to feel at ease, engage with your audience and enjoy your speaking opportunities.

Finding the right speaking gig

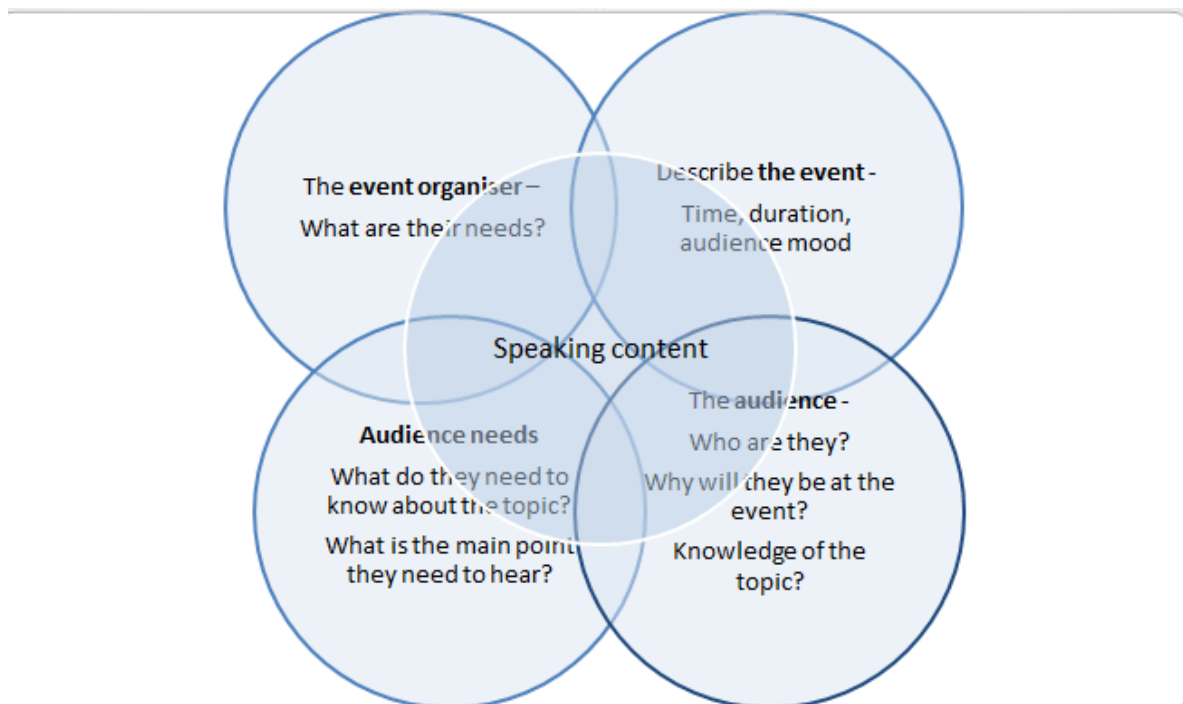
To be able to engage with an audience, it is important that you feel at ease with your speaking topic, the audience, and have sufficient time to prepare for your presentation. Allow at least 3 - 4 weeks preparation time.

Some questions to ask the event organiser:

- What content do I focus on?
- Who is the audience?
- Who else is speaking?
- Who is the chair for the event?
- Why is the event being held
- Venue room & facilities.

Tailoring your content

To deliver a good presentation, you need to tailor your speaking content to suit the audience, and the needs of the event organizer.



Shaping your presentation

A handy structure for your presentation is:

Pre introduction / Introduction / Main body / Summary / Conclusion.

Like an essay or report structure, it leads you into a talk, allows an opportunity to expand on some points, and then wrap up each point you are making.

Audiences always like practical content and examples, so add some stories or anecdotes to add some richness to your presentation, and clarity to your key points.

Preparing for speaking

The following tips will help you to connect and engage with your audience, and deliver your well prepared presentation with poise and confidence.

Rehearse your presentation:

- Time your presentation, to make sure it's not too long for the time allocated.
- Rehearse your presentation at a moderate pace.
- Don't hide behind your speech notes & memorise your opening lines.

Pre-presentation:

- Arrive early to familiarise yourself with the room and technology.
- Engage warmly with your audience as they arrive.
- Plan for predictable distractions, such as texting, late comers, and noisy rooms.

Engaging with your audience

Stand in front of your audience with confidence:

- Take a moment to feel at ease in front of your audience.
- Start to connect with your audience through eye contact.
- Never apologise before you start.

Your presentation is a conversation with an audience:

- Hold your notes in one hand – it helps you to feel at ease.
- Use your other hand, for natural gesture to emphasise points in your talk.
- Remember to smile.

Use a strong, clear voice:

- Speak loudly, clearly and at a moderated pace
- For key points in your talk, put in a pause – before, and after – the key point.
- Pause, as you move from one key section of your talk, to the next.

Keep doing it

Put yourself forward to present to groups that will benefit from your knowledge and experience, and take opportunities that come your way to speak to an audience.

Heather Carine is an Australian based business researcher, speaker and writer on research tips. In 2012, Heather was honoured to receive the Pam Wegmann International Award from AIIP.