

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION – CRITERIA

Lots of people fear the presentation process. Whether it's standing in front of a group or having your work subjected to scrutiny, most folks don't look forward to critiques. The best way to overcome fear of presentation is practice. At a minimum, consider practicing beforehand, in the mirror or for a roommate or friend. But the best practice is actually doing it. Look for opportunities to speak in front of a group and do it. After a few successes, you'll have the confidence you need to make every presentation a breeze.

Some guidelines for a good presentation:

- **Greet the audience.** Simple and short. Something funny helps put the audience at ease, but as a wise man once said, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Actually it was an advertisement for deodorant, but the thought still applies.
- **No excuses!** Many people start with a laundry list of why their project didn't turn out, and this totally undermines everything that follows. *You* know what went wrong, *you* know what is wrong with your project – let the audience *make their own judgments* first.
- Verbally **address the objectives** of the project
- Verbally **address the learning difficulties** of the project
- **Address the solutions** attempted and results.
- **Speak clearly and confidently.** Preparing your material in advance almost guarantees this. A single notecard works wonders.
- **Eye contact** strengthens your presentation immeasurably.
- **Dress professionally** if the presentation demands it -- and if you want to seem totally on the ball, dress professionally *at any presentation*. It will absolutely effect how people view your presentation on a subconscious level. This is like cheating, but it's good cheating.
- If someone points out a shortcoming with the project, don't take that as an invitation to run with that list of excuses you've got brewing in your head. That just sounds defensive, not professional. Agreeing with the person is good, but not required – provided you have a legitimate argument in your defense and not a snappy nasty comeback.
- The best way to be able to defend your work is to **know your work**. What is it about? Why did I make that choice? Only you can do this legwork, and it should happen early on. Don't make aesthetic choices retroactively: in other words, screwing up and saying "I meant to do that" is not a style.

Prepare!