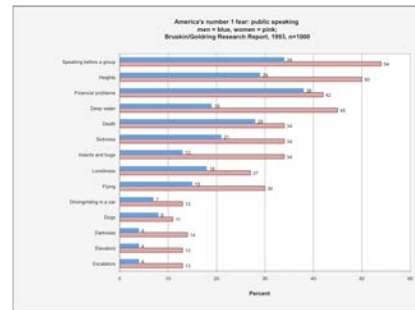## BEST PRACTICES PRESENTATIONS

11STEPS

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1) DON'T FEAR THE PODIUM

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1) DON'T FEAR THE PODIUM

Recognize that "anxiety" (generalized dread of the unknown) is virtually impossible to treat. You have to *convert* that anxiety to specific FEARS.

So: List your fears, then think/talk about how to address each one.

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1) DON'T FEAR THE PODIUM

For example: Fear of forgetting the speech is solved by practice & manuscript.

Fear of barfing/passing out is solved by a prudent combination of diet, proper rest, and realizing all the sympathy you would get.

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2) INTRODUCTIONS ARE EASY & IMPORTANT

A) Attention getting device:

   1) Question

   2) Startling statistic

   3) Quotation

   4) Story or Anecdote   (save jokes for more advanced skill)

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2) INTRODUCTIONS ARE EASY & IMPORTANT

B) Thesis Statement: This may be your claim: "You should invest in hiring a social media expert."

It also can be your purpose: "Today I will explain how you can become a better public speaker."

2) INTRODUCTIONS ARE EASY & IMPORTANT

C) Organizational Forecast:

This one most folks overlook. But you must recreate a chain of action or thought in your listeners.

At this stage, the simplest and most effective way of doing this is through *numbering your main points.*

3) STRUCTURE THE MAIN BODY

A) Follow your organizational forecast. Use numbers. "My first point" or "my first step," my second, my third, etc.

We call this "signposting."

3) STRUCTURE THE MAIN BODY

B) There are various ways of creating this structure:

1) Chronological (steps in order)

2) Thematic or Topical

3) Problem/Solution

4) Spatial or Geographic

C) Hostile Audience? Use 2-sided argument

4) USE THE SORT OF NOTES THAT WORK BEST FOR YOU

Cornell West v. Richard Rorty Anecdote

Do what works for you. Manuscript and Outline are most common approaches; you can also do a synthesis (like these notes).

The key is to avoid the obvious pitfalls: MS can be boring & lose eye contact; Outlines can lead to short-term memory failure.

SHOULD YOU HAVE CHATGPT HELP WRITE YOUR SPEECH?

Make sure you know what AI-assisted writing can & cannot do. It has significant limitations:

- **Fact-impaired**
- **Stylistically vanilla**
- ***Nuance* is not its middle name**

Having said that, it is not a bad way to brainstorm or produce a rough draft.

5) VISUAL OR AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

You do NOT have to use PowerPoint, etc. Don't use VAs unless there is a reason to do so, especially because you risk technological gaffes.

(If you do need a computer, be sure to get to location early to make sure it works. Carry your own Dongle.)

PRESENTATION SOFTWARE: BEST PRACTICES

Be aware of the difference between "Blackboard" approach and the "Assertion-Evidence" approach.

<u>Blackboard approach is what I use.</u>

Basically a way to save time compared to writing on a board.

BEST PRACTICES FOR BLACKBOARD APPROACH

Don't overcrowd the slides. Use 8 x 8 rule: 8 words a line, ≤ 8 lines.

Make sure they are easily read from the back of the room.

Keep the focus on your audience needs: Use "you" oriented language.

ASSERTION/EVIDENCE APPROACH

Assertion-Evidence approach is also known as the Billboard Approach:

Claim + Visual Image as Evidence/Illustration

This is what many "PPT is Dead" authors advocate.

In an assertion-evidence slide, the headline is a two-line sentence stating the main message of the slide

Supporting photograph, drawing, diagram, film, or graph—no bulleted lists

6) THE KEY TO ORAL DELIVERY IS VARIETY

- **To state the obvious, you need to be <u>loud</u> and speak <u>clearly</u> enough to be heard.**
- **What keeps interest is variation—a *dynamic* voice. VARY speed, volume, pitch, but this has to come naturally. Imagine yourself in an animated, excited conversation. That is the sort of energy you ideally want to convey.**

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT…

POWERPOINT: "REHEARSE WITH COACH" FUNCTION (WEB-BASED)
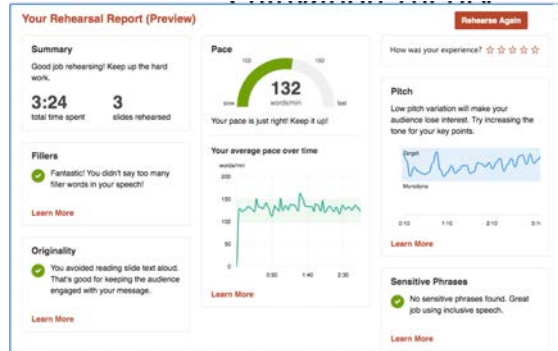
7) THE KEY TO NONVERBAL DELIVERY IS FOR IT NOT TO BE NOTICED!

Gestures & movement–yes, all of these are important, but there is not a single "correct" way to do these. It should feel and appear natural.

PRACTICE: You need a partner for feedback to adjust your nonverbal delivery, or yell out "louder" or "slower."

8) BODY STANCE

Learn the Power Stance!

Courtesy of Erik (HASH) Hersman (whiteafrican) on Flickr. Used under CC BY.

TAKING UP SPACE = POWER

8) BODY STANCE

"Power poses" potentially change your body chemistry. Takes just 2 minutes.

Some Studies = Increases testosterone & decreases cortisol levels.

Many Studies = Increases confidence, decreases stress response.

(Watch Professor Amy Cuddy's TED Talk if you want to learn more)

NO (FEET TOGETHER = SWAY)

YES: SHOULDER-WIDTH APART

9) EYE CONTACT

The appropriateness and performance of eye contact can vary culturally, but in U.S. culture eye contact is assumed to convey sincerity and honesty: "Look me in the eye and say that."

In smaller groups, 2 to 3 seconds, then move around. Larger groups obviously that is not possible.

(A quick "hack" on eye contact: Look at foreheads or slightly above the audience)

EYE CONTACT: SOURCE

See Lahle Wolfe, "How Eye Contact Can Help You Close a Sale" for a quick & easily-read source that describes eye contact norms in different cultures (US, Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East, & Latin America).

https://www.thebalancecareers.com/business-and-social-etiquette-how-to-make-eye-contact-3514819

10) CONCLUDE CONFIDENTLY

A) Review what you've said (circle back to intro)

B) In most cases, leave time for questions and never try to BS.

C) Q&A is *often* the part audiences find most interesting, engaging, and educational. Most folks prefer to talk than to listen. Save time accordingly.

11) PRACTICE

A) If using a Manuscript, practice and time your presentation.

See Teleprompter software, now inexpensively available, useful for live or online presentations.

You can even add annotations for pauses & emphasis.

11) PRACTICE

B) If speaking extemporaneously, don't over-rehearse as there is a tendency to edit (= shorter) or elaborate (= longer) with repeated practice.