

Are Your Poor Presentation Skills Costing You Money

Mike Aoki

Imagine two people applying for a promotion. Both are equally qualified. But, the first person is a great public speaker. They have taken courses on public speaking. They have given presentations at staff meetings. They learned how to think quickly on their feet. The second person is an average presenter, at best.

Which person will get the promotion?

More importantly, would you rather be the great speaker who gets the promotion and more money? Or, the one who misses out due to their poor speaking skills?

So, how do you improve your public speaking skills?

The first step is to [attend a presentations skills workshop](#). But, going to a presentation skills course is like going to the gym ONCE. In other words, a one-time workout will not make a long-term change. To make a permanent difference, you need to practice your new skills after the workshop.

Here is how to practice your speaking skills:

1) Find opportunities to use your presentation skills:

Join Toastmasters if you need an environment to practice. I was a member of Toastmasters for several years. It helped me develop my skills. I also enjoyed interacting with other business people in a fun environment. Their web site is at <http://www.toastmasters.org>

You can also practice by volunteering for community groups or to speak at public schools. They are always looking for people to talk about career and life issues. You can contact your local school board for more information.

2) Ask for feedback:

Get a friend or co-worker to observe your speech. Ask them, "What did you like about my speech?" and "What would you suggest I do differently during my NEXT presentation?"

Notice you are asking for suggestions for your NEXT presentation. If you ask, "What is wrong with this presentation?" you are likely to get demoralizing

feedback. By asking what to do differently for the next one, you will get constructive feedback about how to improve.

3) Videotape yourself giving a speech:

I know watching yourself on tape is not the easiest thing in the world. (After all, I swear I look taller and younger in real life!) But, watching yourself on video is the best way to observe your voice, gestures, and interaction with the audience.

4) Get a professional coach:

Everyone needs a mentor. They can spot details you would otherwise miss. For example, an executive hired me as a their [speech coach](#). During his speech, I noticed he was only making eye contact with the right side of the room. People sitting on the left side of the room felt ignored. So, I taught him how to make eye contact with all parts of the room.

5) Reward yourself for good behavior:

There is an old adage: "What gets rewarded, gets repeated." We are too tough on ourselves - especially with public speaking. Public speaking is the number one fear for most people. So, you deserve a pat on the back just for attempting a presentation! Treat yourself to your favorite dessert or go for a nice walk as a reward for practicing your new speaking skills.

It takes weeks to ingrain a new habit. During that time, slip-ups and growing pains can occur. Be patient. Silence that nagging inner voice that expects you to be perfect. Motivational speaker Les Brown has a great saying, "Anything worth doing well, is worth doing poorly at first."

So, rehearse your new presentation skills. Practice your skills so next time, YOU are the great speaker who gets the promotion and the raise!

http://www.reflectivekeynotes.com/presentation_skills_money.htm