

Advice for speakers

A quick checklist for conference presenters and panelists



A conference talk can be transformational. You get recognition and a captive audience. But how do you make the opportunity work? Here is practical advice to help you stand out, make a great impression and achieve the results you want.

1. Make it Easy for Your Audience

This is your number one rule. A few big ideas well discussed work better than a fact-packed talk. The best talks are built around the questions the audience want answered.

2. Adopt the Language of Great Speakers

Start with powerful language. Active verbs, short words and short sentences are your building blocks for great conference communications.

When you add contrasts (*buy or sell*), triplets (*yesterday, today and tomorrow*) and puzzles (*So, what is the best strategy?*) you begin to use techniques that the most impressive speakers use.

Finally, the stories you tell will make your talk stand out. The brain remembers stories that are personal and illustrate the point you make.

3. Put Your Visual Aids to Work

Best practice today is to use only true Visual Aids – things that bring alive what you are saying. These might be photos, graphs, or a few simple words on the page. Your visual aids will only sometimes be the same as your handouts after the event.

Top advice includes: avoid lists and bullet points. Vary your font size and beware of too much detail. In summary, increase the information to ink ratio.

4. Polish Your Performance

A good talk then relies on good performance. The basics to get right every time include:

- Energy – speak a bit louder than usual
- Pauses – plenty of them
- Eye contact – as much steady contact as possible
- Smile – it signals that you are an expert
- Rehearsals – the best speakers are well rehearsed

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+44 (0)845 676 9766

Email info@benjaminball.com

5. Bring Panels to Life

Help your panel stand out by using some ideas from the political world.

- Have a strong viewpoint, disagree with others
- Put real energy into your performance
- Make everything you say useful for the audience

6. Use a Checklist

To know if your talk will get the impact you want, adopt a checklist. Score yourself against these 10 tests.

Objective: Have you clarified the purpose of your talk in one

Structure: Is your flow easy to follow?

Message: Have you a single simple message to get across?

Delivery: Do you look and sound excited, passionate,

Engagement: Do you make an impact within 30 seconds?

Visual Aids: Are they really visual aids?

StoryTelling: Have you used lots of examples and stories?

Take Away: What will they say about your talk?

Focus: Is it all about the audience rather than about you?

Practice: Have you practiced enough? Is it perfect?

YOUR TOTAL SCORE

/10

7. Transform Yourself

Be sure you make the right impact. To get the most from your conference attendance, call us. Use our team of presentation experts to polish your talk; review your visual aids and rehearse you before the event. Get it right first time.

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