

## **MAKE IT SIZZLE!**

### **10 Tips to Spice Up Your Presentations**

If you had to sit through 1,000 hours a year listening to others present information either in person or over the phone, what would you possibly remember? What information would you retain? (The average corporate employee *does* sit through 700-1,000 hours a year in meetings and presentations!)

“Sizzle” is anything that makes a presentation interesting or memorable. Sizzle can be interaction or a fantastic story that ties into the point being made. Sizzle can be a cool demo that engages and peaks interest. Without “Sizzle” your presentation is just another 30 or 40 minutes in the sea of 1,000 hours of FIZZLE!

1. Go through each slide (if you are using PowerPoint or other presentation software) and ask yourself, “What’s my point here?” Why do I need this slide? Does it “aid” my presentation or is it just more boring text that I will read? Get rid of unnecessary slides; they make people sleepy!
2. Bring in more real life examples. Ask yourself, “What does this remind me of?” Come up with an analogy or an example that will help your audience connect to the point you are trying to make.
3. Get interaction instead of spoon-feeding your audience everything. There are times when you have a list of five or ten items you need your audience to know. Instead of telling them the five or ten things, ask them to tell you some of them. See what they know and fill in the blanks. The more interaction you have, the more engaged your audience will be and amazingly, the more they will remember.
4. Use natural humor. That doesn’t mean tell jokes. Jokes aren’t always funny and they don’t always translate across different cultures. Humor is all around you. Look at what people are stressed about. Look at the past mistakes you have made—share the humor in what you have learned. Be careful not to poke fun at someone else unless they truly can laugh with you.
5. Make great visuals! Get rid of the boring, overused Microsoft clipart and insert some fun and fresh photos. Use pictures of team members inserted into a magazine cover mock-up, create a book cover that is a parody of Chicken Soup for the “whatever your audience is” soul. Get creative and make them SIZZLE!
6. Maximize your vocal tone. So many presentations are now done over the phone, and yet those are the worst presentations to sit through if the speaker is monotone. Without body language and other visual stimuli, you have got to engage with your voice. Practice projecting your voice louder than you feel is comfortable during a

- practice session. Change your pitch and your pace to keep it interesting. This is not easy for someone who spends their day using their “inside voice” so you will need to develop some new muscles.
7. Use the space you have. The room is your stage and you need to use every inch of it to keep your audience engaged. Don’t stand behind a podium or laptop table. Before you begin, imagine different “stations” that you will move to during your presentation to connect with people. This also helps to prevent pacing when nervous.
  8. Use the names of people in your audience. “As Bob said…” or “Kelly’s team was just talking about this.” This is especially important in a virtual setting, since the only time people really listen is when they hear their name being called. If you are asking a question, don’t throw the name at the end. “What do you think… Bob?” That’s when we hear, “Oh, I’m sorry, can you repeat that question?”
  9. Make your point and keep it brief. There is nothing more “SIZZLIN’” than a presentation that ends on time or a few minutes early! (See our website for tips on timing your presentation down to the minute→ [www.achievethepinnacle.com](http://www.achievethepinnacle.com))
  10. Lastly, be prepared to switch gears completely or even pitch the entire presentation if you see your audience “checking out”. There are times I see the presenter notice the audience becoming disengaged but they keep going. It’s as if they love their own material so much that they don’t care if no one is listening, they will plow through and get it over with. If you see that you have lost your audience, black out your slides and say something like, “Let me find out from you what you want to know about this” or “Let’s get some questions or a discussion going around this problem…”

Just remember, if your presentation isn’t SIZZLIN’ it just might be FIZZLIN’.

Check out our article on virtual presentations, “You Can’t See Their Eyes Roll” or get PowerPoint tips for the pro. @ [www.achievethepinnacle.com](http://www.achievethepinnacle.com)

© 2007 Gina Schreck is the president of Pinnacle Achievement and she is on a mission to rid the world of BORING presentations. If you would like more information or coaching for yourself or your teams on making Presentations That Sizzle, contact Gina Schreck at [Gina@AchieveWithPinnacle.com](mailto:Gina@AchieveWithPinnacle.com) or call 1-877-978-0887. But please, please, QUIT PUTTING PEOPLE TO SLEEP!