

Presentation skills rule

How to be a grand leader and convince people with gripping performances

by Prof. Lothar Seiwert, PhD

Leadership has been something of an omnipresent topic in the media over the last few years.

The literature about the "human factor" fills whole shelves: How to communicate smoothly in challenging interpersonal situations, how to motivate employees and colleagues, how to develop people to their limits and maybe beyond...the range of relevant subjects is enormous.

But one aspect of leadership, which seems to be hard to find in abundance is: A great leader has to have great presentation skills and has to have the ability to "fill" a stage – and to "rock" his audience.

Simple. isn't it? If you can do this, if you can really inspire and enthrall people, things like motivating or convincing them would really go without saying. Maybe I do not need to tell you that – because you as ToastMasters are already working hard in this area. Have you ever thought about using your presentations skills as an instrument for leadership? Probably not or not in the first place, right?

The real questions are: Is there a "trick"? If yes, then what is it? How to use skillful presentations for convincing and sympathetic leadership? Here is a three-step scheme that will turn your performances into great leadership-instruments:

Always do your homework properly

People (and first of all audiences)

have a sixth sense: They do feel when you are absent, not perfectly prepared, or when you have not outlined your presentation especially for them. A good presentation picks the audience up where it stands and takes them all the way to the intended goal. First things first! Research your target audience!

It is what you say, but even more how you say it

Language, tonality, the pitch of your voice: These things can make make or break your presentation.. Your language should be full of bristling metaphors, easy-to-visualize imagery, and, once again, related to your target audience. Your voice should be strong, well-balanced, but not monotonous, and your tonality confident, but not narcissistic.

Try to please the eye

Power point slides or interesting videos are state-of-the-art in any good presentation. Beware. Less is more, especially when it comes to technology. "Death by PowerPoint" has meanwhile become a well-known phenomenon; Too much technology can turn the best presentations into something, bland, useless, and de-motivating. Be an eye-catcher! Be well-dressed. Use well-measured gestures and use carefully considered movements to become the centre of attention.



Prof. Lothar Seiwert, PhD, CSP, is the current president of the German Speakers Association and the initiator of the GSA University. The GSA University is a widely recognized course of studies in collaboration with the Steinbeis-Hochschule, Berlin, and enables the participants after a year of seminars and studies and a demanding exam to acquire a certificate as a "Professional Speaker". Studies start each year in October; exams and the festive presentation of certificates will be held each year at the GSA Convention in September the following year. For more information, please visit www.gsa-university.org.

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