

Are Your Presentations Boring? 7 Ways to Keep them Awake

Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP, www.arnoldsanow.com

When delivering presentation skills training programs, one of the first requests we get is, "Can you provide some tips and tools to polish our presentations so that they are less boring and everyone stays awake?"

The reality is the attention span of an adult is 8 seconds. Now, this does not mean that people won't listen to you, however if you don't get their attention and provide some punch, power, and pizzazz relatively quickly their minds will wander.

To stop putting your audience asleep and to alleviate the boredom factor, here are 7 strategies you can use ... NOW!

1. **Don't talk to your materials.** You must connect with the audience through good eye contact and having a conversation with them. The quickest way to lose them is to talk to your flip chart, slides, notes and videos.
2. **Monotone does not work.** If you are not excited about what you are talking about, no one else will be. To improve your energy and enthusiasm try this exercise. Before your next presentation take a newspaper or magazine article and highlight certain words in the article. Start reading the article in your normal voice. When you get to the highlighted words, yell them out. Repeat this at least 20 times. When you finish you will find that you will be more energized and as a result your audience will be too!
3. **Talk emotionally not just intellectually.** Have you ever listened to a speaker who just uses facts, figures and statistics? After a while it just blends in. To engage your audience, every 3 to 5 minutes there should be a story, anecdote, analogy, exercise, question or example. In other words, create a picture in the mind of the attendee. For example, a number of years ago, one speaker wanted to show how the deficit was getting out of control. Instead of just showing numbers, he showed a slide with dollar bills going around the world 3 times. The picture is memorable the facts would soon be lost.
4. **Prepare.** The best presenters prepare and practice their presentation so that it flows from one point to another. On the other hand the boring presenter talks a lot, but never gets to the point or makes it clear what he/she is talking about. It's so confusing that you tune out and focus on other things to do.

5. Move around. The boring presenter stands still and just moves their mouth. The engaging presenter makes it point to use appropriate gestures, moves around and avoids podiums when possible.

6. Interact - Boring presenters talk at you. The presenters who get the best reviews make their presentations interactive. They ask questions, encourage discussions, have exercises and look for feedback. In other words a good presentation is just a conversation with a give and take.

7. They have good slides - Boring presenters tend to fill up slides with lots of words and charts. Many times the font is so small and they are hard to read. The best slides have no more than 5 to 7 words and many times just have pictures. Remember people are coming to see you not the slides.

Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP (certified speaking professional) is a speaker, trainer, presentations coach and facilitator with over 2,500 presentations. He is the author of 6 books to include, "Present with Power, Punch and Pizzazz" and "Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere" www.arnoldsanow.com – speaker@arnoldsanow.com