

SMART WORKPLACES BY HR TO GO, INC - OCTOBER 2005

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT - OUTSOURCE IT!

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How to Paint a Masterpiece

Painters use their brush to create a picture for the outside world. We do the same thing with the words we use. But painters generally work alone and don't have to worry about stage fright. When we stand in front of an audience to speak our nerves can interfere with our presentation. A little fear can be a good thing. But as one presenter has said: "The idea is to get all the butterflies in your stomach to all go in the same direction." Here are some suggestions to help you train those butterflies.

3 Things to Master

For any kind of public speaking, it is important that you know:

- Your audience
- Your subject
- Your presentation style.

1. Know Your Audience

You shouldn't give the same presentation to all groups. Before you start preparing your presentation, whether it's for a training program or another public speaking opportunity, find out all you can about your audience. Some questions to ask:

- Are they all employees or will there be family members too?
- What are their ages?
- Are they men, women or a mix?
- What, if any, are their common interests?
- Are they all members of the same organization or do they come from all over?

- Is it a small group of only 10 to 15 people or a large town meeting with several hundred people?

Once you determine who you'll be addressing, you can tailor your presentation and material to the group's characteristics and interests.

2. Know Your Subject

You will feel more relaxed during your presentation if you feel secure in your knowledge of the topic. Don't rely just on your notes. This is one recipe to use to prepare the material for presentations:

Step 1: Write out, by hand, what you're going to say - word-for-word.

Step 2: Type it into the computer, label it draft 1 and print it out.

Step 3: Next, read it over, out loud, crossing out anything that doesn't belong. If necessary, rewrite sections to make them sound better.

Step 4: Then type the changes into the computer, label it draft 2 and print it out again.

Step 5: Read it again, out loud, deleting and rewriting where necessary.

Step 6: Finally, type the changes into the computer and label it draft 3.

Why does this work? By writing the presentation out longhand, then typing and retyping it, and reading it out loud, more of your senses are involved in the process. The more of your senses that are involved, the more you get to know the material.

Next, try reading your draft presentation to your spouse, child or friend. If you're preparing for a big training program, deliver your draft presentation to a test audience from memory, without referring to any written material. Ask your test audience for feedback: Did they think that the presentation flowed? Did it have an introduction, a body and a close or conclusion?

The Importance of Style

Your presentation style affects how your audience reacts to your message. To improve your technique, you must first assess your current style. Do you know what kind of impression you present when you're in front of a group? If not, ask your test audience for their feedback or videotape your practice presentation.

Here are the questions you should ask:

- Are you properly dressed for the occasion?
- Do you make eye contact with the audience or are you looking at the floor or ceiling?
- What does your voice sound like? Is it easy to listen to or are you droning along, putting your audience to sleep?
- Do you change your vocal volume?
- Do you tell stories or just read from your notes?
- Are you stiff or relaxed?
- Do you use gestures? If so, do they seem natural?
- Do you move around the "stage"?

To become a better speaker/trainer/educator/presenter, you should listen to good speakers/trainers/educators/presenters. And practice often. One good way, is to find a Toastmasters club near you and get some practice. You could also practice that next training program on the Toastmaster audience before you present it to your employees at work.

With practice and the suggestions presented here, you too can be a Picasso and paint a verbal masterpiece.

Adopted from: Barry R. Weissman



Observe Kitchen Etiquette at the Office

Having a refrigerator in the workplace can help employees eat healthier throughout the workday and save money that would otherwise be spent eating out. But rules need to be set regarding its use so that there aren't problems with missing food or rotten leftovers.

Post the rules. Write up the rules and place them where everyone can see them. Include rules about cleaning as well as expectations about throwing away food.

Assemble a cleaning squad. Call for volunteers who can rotate the duty of regularly cleaning out the fridge. This will help prevent contamination and help ensure there is always room for people to store their meals.

Take out the trash. Each person who uses the fridge should participate in keeping it clean, even if there is an assigned group. Everyone should feel free to toss food that's shriveled, moldy or smells bad.

Let go of leftovers. Be realistic about storing food. If you won't eat it within a day or two, don't stash it in the office kitchen.

Label your food. Put your name and the date on all of your food. This practice can prevent food theft, reduce confusion if more than one person has the same item, and help people determine the age of items.

- Adapted from the Dallas Morning News

Fast Facts on Flammables

You should know where to find and how to use materials to clean up a flammable liquid spill safely. Never flush flammables into the sewer system because this can lead to an explosion when the vapors reach an ignition source.

You need to be aware of your company's procedures for cleaning clothing which has had a flammable liquid spilled on it. This clothing should never go into the general laundry because vapors from contaminated clothing can explode.

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