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**Video And Meeting Presentation Tips For Newbies**

**By Brien Lee**

I'm an A-V Geek, and for thirty years, I've sweated the big and small stuff as a producer of

meetings, conferences, and sales rallies. During that time I have developed a checklist of five special "secrets" I use to insure that the meeting media will go right. Go right? You see, the customer has paid big bucks for the video or multimedia piece that will help the crowd shake off the cobwebs (or hangovers) and get focused on the goals, spirit and business of the meeting. I want my client to love the video, and the only way the client will love it is if the audience loves it.

Well, you can bring in Christopher Walken floating on air, and if the room isn't right, the audience will be distracted and that major piece of genius the client contracted will be snoozed through, ignored, or poo-poo'd for reasons that have nothing to do with the quality of the media.

It's all in the room. It's a group experience, and just like in a movie theater, many things come together to make the experience right.

Tip One: Let the video be seen.

You have to create a theatrical experience. Using a TV Monitor, or even a large computer monitor for audiences over 5 or 10 people is folly.

Video projectors are cheap to rent or buy, and they help create the movie theater experience audiences expect. Remember, some people in the audience may have better home theaters than the environment you create.

The hotel's a-v tech can help, or your staff a-v squad member can lend a hand. Screens beginning at 4x6 feet work for crowds if up to 25 people; after that, you'll be looking at 6x8, or for much larger crowds, 12x16' or larger (much larger than that and you're not reading this article, anyway.)

Tip Two: The sound should be as "BIG" as the video.

## Video And Meeting Presentation Tips For Newbies

This is true even if your meeting is just a sales call between you and a prospect in a closet-sized office. Sound is your secret weapon. Words should be understood, music should be felt, and emotions should be driven— just like in the movies. Bring along those portable speakers, or in a larger meeting, rent a really good stereo sound system to make sure your audience is enveloped in the words and music you or your producer created.

Tip Three: Control the lights.

Imagine a movie theater where they leave the lights on. Pretty weird, right? Now think about your meeting. To maximize the impact of your media, you need the picture to be seen, and your audience to feel comfortable reacting to what's on the screen. There's no room for a person to feel self-conscious about laughing, applauding, or even crying. Only in the anonymity of the darkened room will they truly react to your message and internalize its meaning. Shutter the windows. Turn off florescent lights (they're a real meeting killer). Slowly fade the room lights as the video begins.

Tip Four: Rehearse.

Run through the technical aspects of what we've discussed. Know when the video is supposed to roll, when the PowerPoint is supposed to be played, and practice switching, dimming the lights, adjusting the sound (both in volume and EQ), and switching between the inputs if necessary. You don't want to be stumbling instead of speaking, and if you're behind the scenes, you don't want the speaker calling you out for being asleep at the switch (you'd be nasty too if you were left hanging there with nothing to say or do while the a-v guy is farting around with the media in the back of the room.)

Tip Five: Use the Letterman effect.

In short, chill the room. David Letterman runs his studio at 60 degrees. It keeps him and his audience sharp. I'm not saying keep it that cold, but if you have more than 50 people, you have an audience that is a walking furnace. Body Heat is real, and many bodies mean a warm room. While the room may seem comfortable to you at 7:00 am, at 8:00 am attendees may be sweltering, because you didn't anticipate how the room would warm. A warm room means sleepy viewers. Sleepy viewers don't applaud, will not retain your message, won't get excited or enthused, or may not even keep their eyes open. When you walk in the room, feel the room. Is it slightly chilly to you? Good. Is it quite comfortable? Bad. And don't wait until it gets too hot. When you need to lower the temperature, the hotel contact will be no where to be found, and even when they do grace you with their presence, it will take a good hour to "chill" the room. The walls retain heat. So do people.

I know these tips will work, since I discovered them by real life experience. I've seen great media play poorly because the shades were open and the room was warm. I've been yelled at by the presenter. I've fumbled around in the back while Mr. Rome burned.

But once I adopted these five basics, things began going my way. The videos were the same, but suddenly, people were applauding.

That's what I call cheap insurance.

Brien Lee is a veteran of the meeting and multimedia industries, having founded and led three companies over thirty years in the development and use of the latest techniques and most innovative creative approaches in video and multimedia for customers like Walgreens, Johnson Controls, AT&T, and others.

<http://www.videostory.com>

### **Presenting with a Partner**

**By Mike Faber**

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There are times when you'll share "the stage" with a business or personal partner. Perhaps one of you has a better grasp of technical or other aspects of your subject. Perhaps you are quite good at facilitating questions from the audience, or recording input on a flip chart for later use. However you choose to share presenting duties, resist the temptation to "just wing it." While sometimes these situations are impromptu, even five minutes to prepare will aid both your presentation and the audience. Here are some steps to insure that all members of a presentation group get the chance to show their best work.

1. Pinpoint why you're sharing the presentation duties. This should include a brief summation of the specific talents and knowledge that each presenter adds to make for a better audience experience.
2. Agree on how much time you'll need for the entire presentation.
3. Specify who will be doing what, and the time allotted for each segment. This sounds simple but skipping this step can sink the whole ship! You will want to know who is responsible for the introduction of your topic, introduction of speakers, body of the presentation, Q&A, summary and wrap-up. If you have supporting data, slides or handouts assign a person to manage distribution of that information.

Record your task and segment assignments and keep them handy as a reference during the presentation. Make sure you have a back-up plan in case you need to make changes at the last minute. Years ago, I presented a leadership development class to a group of 20 professionals. The final video case study was a real tearjerker, a plant manager who poured his heart and soul into his work and his employees. He literally cried on camera as he spoke of his devotion to his work force. With a riveting introduction, I popped the videotape into the machine...and saw a blank screen! It turned out that last video segment had been deleted from the presentation! My back-up plan was not well prepared, and I ended up acting out the final video as though I were on stage. My audience was amused, though probably not impressed or educated! Since that "surprise", I've made a habit of double-checking my resources and material beforehand, and outlining for myself what I'll do in the event that things don't go according to plan. In the case of my missing video, I should have had a brief summary of the video's key message handy, so that I could encourage group discussion to bring out the learning points.

Mike Faber is a professional coach, helping people improve their sales and public-speaking skills. Mike has 25 years of experience as a television and radio broadcaster, and spent the last 17 years in financial services sales. At the end of 2004, Mike left a large San Francisco-based investment firm, to start his own coaching practice.



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