

By Jeff Cerny

Your chances of being tapped to deliver a formal presentation are much higher than they were just a few years ago. In fact, by some estimates, as many as one-fourth of the jobs in the United States will require employees to give a formal presentation in 2010.

Unfortunately, many presenters fall into certain habits that become barriers to communication. These habits are breakable, though -- and each has a good substitute to take its place. The positive replacements focus on making the content clear, relevant, and memorable. And they can turn an adequate presentation into one that's remarkable. Here's a summary of 10 bad habits you can break.

1 Stop: Being an information resource. Start: Being the funnel, filter, and guru.

Put away the teleprompter. Presenting is more than giving a speech. You're changing data into information, knowledge, and with a little luck, wisdom.

2 Stop: The train—there's no track. Start: With the end in mind.

Invest the amount of preparation time in your presentation that will make it a winning experience for you, like an athlete whose first goal is self-improvement.

3 Stop: Trusting the human ear. Start: Polishing your shoes.

Don't keep it simple; *make* it simple. Transform a complicated thought or process into something that is easy to see and appreciate.

4 Stop: Explaining your slides. Start: Illustrating your ideas.

The images you use will create lasting impressions if they connect with your words. We're a visual culture and need the combination of content and visual emphasis.

5 Don't: Focus on everything. Do: Build around a *unique value proposition* and an *unrefusable offer*.

The ability to define your message in terms of a UVP and UO is the central piece of making your presentation remarkable. Keep your other points ancillary to these two.

6 Don't: Talk to the wrong people. Do: Know thyself and thy audience.

Other than what topic you are presenting, the audience you are talking to is the second most important factor in what you say. Find out who they are.

7 Stop: Avoiding an argument. Start: Winning them over.

A remarkable presentation answers a question the audience has by providing a persuasive answer.

8 Don't: Overlook the details. Do: Go to market.

Attention to detail and making sure of the accuracy of what you present and how you present it is the linchpin to gaining credibility in the marketplace and with your audience. Sweat the small stuff.

9 Don't: Give your audience a debut performance. Do: Test-drive early and often.

Know your material backward and forward and don't let your final audience be the first ones to critique it.

10 Stop: Trusting them to draw their own conclusions. End: With step one.

Every remarkable presentation is in the end a sales presentation. You're selling your idea, your plan, your company, and yourself. The conclusion of the delivery is the beginning of the dialog.

The ideas in this article are drawn from the upcoming book *Creating a Remarkable Presentation by Overcoming Ten Breakable Habits*, published by CreateSpace and scheduled for release in January 2010. Full details are available at www.tenbreakablehabits.com or via e-mail at jeff@tenbreakablehabits.com or on twitter [@jeffcerny](https://twitter.com/jeffcerny).

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