

Speaker Training

For people used to presenting to an in-person audience, speaking to a 100% virtual audience can be challenging. You can't make eye contact with your audience or read body language. You're looking directly at the small circle that's the lens of your webcam. You may wonder if anyone can even hear you.

As the virtual event host, spend one-on-one time with each speaker to train them on the virtual event platform and teach them how to best present to a virtual audience.

Embrace and understand the nature of LIVE.

- Do not strive for perfection.
- "Keep it real" to better connect with your audience.
- Avoid reading your slides to your audience.

Being nervous isn't always a bad thing.

Plain and simple, your nervousness shows that you are human. This is a good thing! We have a tendency to feel blasé about things we don't see the value of doing. It is good to put care and effort into being in front of the camera.

You are the expert.

You were asked to be a presenter because you have important, valuable information to share with others. You know the material better than anyone else, so use that fact to boost your confidence.



Be your authentic self.

Let your authenticity shine through. Be expressive and energetic. Nervous laughter shows that you are real. If you bumble a word, don't make the "Oh no!" face or interrupt your flow. Just keep going. Chances are, your audience didn't even notice.



Practice makes perfect.

Practicing multiple times allows you to be able to make better eye contact with the camera (the audience) and gives you confidence when it's your turn to take the stage. Be sure to conduct a "dress rehearsal" prior to the event to ensure your speakers are comfortable with the content and technology.

Framing: Centered and less head room.

When most people sit down in front of a webcam, they position themselves so their head is in the middle of the screen, which creates too much empty space above your head. In industry speak, there's too much head room. This will make you look small and insignificant.

Use too little headroom and it will look like your head is stuck to the top of the screen. The solution? Raise your laptop or tablet so that your eyes can peer directly into the webcam. In other words, your device should be at a height such that your webcam is directly in your line of sight.

Lighting is important.

The only thing worse than an unflattering camera angle is not being able to see someone's face at all. This can happen when a window or bright light is behind you—you become backlit. If possible, position your computer so you're facing a window to take advantage of the natural light coming in.

If there's no window or it's dark outside, you need to turn on some lights. Overhead lights are better than none, but this kind of lighting isn't always flattering. A better solution, if you're at home, is to set a lamp on either side of your computer to provide a soft, even light.

Simplify the background.

Messy closets. Cluttered bookshelves. Laundry on the couch. Find a different location with fewer objects behind you. You want people to focus on you, so keep the background as simple and uncluttered as possible.

If you're using a laptop, you have a lot of flexibility to move around and experiment with different locations. Choose a clean, bright wall. Avoid bookshelves or walls with a lot of paintings or posters. Close any doors that might be in the background.

Choose appropriate attire.

When you are on camera, what you wear matters as much as the content you are presenting. The camera reacts differently to certain colors and patterns.



What to Wear:

- **Blues/cooler tones.** Blue and other cool color tones enhance presenters on camera.
- **Tie long hair back.** Hair can interfere with microphones and cause unwanted noises.
- **Contact lenses.** If possible, avoid glasses because they can cause glare. If contacts aren't an option, make sure to adjust your lighting.
- **Makeup.** Foundation helps men and women avoid looking too shiny or washed out.





What Not to Wear:

- **Small patterns.** Patterns (e.g., polka dots) can create interference with the camera, known as a Moire effect that creates ripples on the screen.
- **Busy, colored patterns.** Large patterns with lots of colors can be distracting for viewers and distract audience members from your presentation.
- **High contrast colors (white, black, mixed).** High contrast between colors can make it difficult for the webcam to get the right tone.
- **Scarves.** Same as hair, scarves can cause interference with the microphone.
- **Dangling earrings and shiny jewelry.** These accessories can reflect your room's lighting to create a glare. The resulting glare will distract viewers and make it hard for them to see you clearly.

