

## **Humor-ize Your Next Presentation and Hit Your Message Out of the Park**

When the last time was you heard a humorous speaker? Remember the last boring speaker? Which one do you remember more? Exactly! Humor is a powerful, influential speaking tool. Here are five easy steps to work humor into your next presentation.

### **Step 1: Relax and Have Fun**

Visualize success—your audience wants you to succeed. Your audience isn't there to see you fail. No one ever says to himself or herself, "hey, I hope this next speaker is painfully boring." If they do, tell them you're not an accountant. Okay, even accountants can be funny – sometimes!

### **Step 2: Check Your Attitude**

A critical factor in your success is your attitude. Go in expecting to be great. What about mistakes? Actually, mistakes are the best opportunities for using humor. Seize the moment. For example, stumble over a word? A simple, "hey, these lips are rented!" can have your audience cheering because you handled a tough situation with humor.

### **Step 3: Remember to Smile**

Your audience decides pretty quickly whether or not they think you will be interesting to listen to. Convey your approachability at the beginning in order to establish the right tone. An easy smile and laugh relaxes your audience. They'll say to themselves, "this speaker looks like fun!" This will give you a boost going in. Don't forget to smile occasionally during your presentation.

### **Step 4: Use Stories**

Tell a relevant story using passion. Your authenticity will connect you to your audience in a way that jokes do not. Need ideas for stories? Try these:

- Personal moments of failure and success and lessons learned
- Funny things that have happened relevant to your topic
- Embarrassing moments. These connect you to your audience. Your audience will laugh to themselves, "hey, that happened to me, too!"

### **Step 5: Be Yourself and Allow for Spontaneity!**

This is perhaps the single most important ingredient to using humor in your speaking. Never *try* to be funny - let it flow naturally. If someone knocks something over or a cell phone rings, have fun with it. Announce, "hey, that's my pizza!" Your audience will appreciate your spontaneous ability to laugh at the situation. Life happens; go with it.

There are 33 million meetings every day in the U.S. Try using these simple steps to add humor to your next presentation. You'll have fun and so will your audience. More importantly, they'll remember YOU! And after all, isn't that the point?!

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Kathy Klotz-Guest, MA, MBA combines 13+ years' of strategic marketing with a background in sketch comedy to help clients create powerful print and verbal communications that get results!