

Presentation tips

In order to present a forum well, there are certain things every presenter should keep in mind. Read over the following suggestions to make your forum go smoothly and to insure that your audience is paying attention.

Tip #1: Appearance

First things first. Before you even begin your presentation, make sure you are put together. It is hard to take someone seriously if they are presenting a forum and they look as if they have just rolled out of bed. A good suggestion is to make sure you are at least in *business-casual dress* (nice pants and a shirt, no T-shirt and jeans).

Tip #2: Practice

As the old saying goes, practice makes perfect. Read over the information to be presented in this forum, and make sure you fully understand it. If not, ask! Remember, you are the expert in this forum and your audience will ask questions. Be fluid in your speech. A good idea is to watch yourself in a mirror, practice in front of friends and/or record yourself. Use the notes provided, but don't read them verbatim. Also make sure you know your time frame. Practice running through your forum in the time allotted to be sure you get it all in.

Tip #3: Be prepared

Make sure you have all of the props, examples or items that you will need before your forum starts. Have the copies already made, the projector ready to go; things like that. You don't want to waste your audience's time because you aren't prepared. Also make sure you are aware of about how many people will be attending your forum. This information is helpful so you can know about how many copies you will need, how many chairs to put out, if you will need a microphone, etc.

Tip #4: Involve your audience

Imagine if you were sitting in the audience; would you be bored? Come up with ways to involve them in your forum. Ask questions, ask them about their experiences, play a trivia game—all of these things can be used at the beginning, middle or end of your forum to make this informative and fun for the members attending.

Tip #5: Hold your audience's attention-

Keep them interested. If they look like they are fading, do something about it! Have them get up and stretch, play some music, ask them some questions—don't loose them! You may want to think about giving out little prizes for people who answer your questions, like candy, pencils, Key Club paraphernalia, etc.

Tip #6: Handouts

Give your audience handouts and fliers. You can use the ones provided or make up your own. Handouts and fliers are a great way for your audience to literally take what they have learned back to their clubs. There is one challenge, often your audience will either leave or throw away their fliers as soon as they walk out the door. Give them an incentive for keeping them at least until they leave the room.

Tip #7: Watch your time

Make sure you are always within time limits so you can get everything in. Either wear a watch or have a clock that is visible. Running out of time or running over time is bothersome to your audience. That often that is the one thing they remember about your forum: it was too long or you didn't get everything covered.

Tip #8: Be professional

You are in charge of your forum, so act like it. Be organized and in control of what's going on. Know the day's schedule and have everything ready to go. You want to give a good impression not only for yourself, but also for your district and Key Club International. Don't eat or chew gum during your presentation; it is distracting. Be sure to have some kind of nametag on to identify yourself.

Tip #9: Go with the flow

Some things will happen during your forum that can't be helped, so just go with it. The schedule may change, you may not have what you need, the computer may not be working, etc., but all you can do is go with the flow. Sometimes something can go wrong, and your audience won't even know. If you forgot the fliers, don't tell them; that lets them know you screwed up, so just don't worry about it at that point. Know where to go and who to ask if something does go wrong. Be prepared to answer questions and to have pauses while you're going over the information. Some things can't be helped, and if you keep a cool head, no one will even notice!