

HINTS & TIPS ON GIVING DYNAMIC PRESENTATIONS

Communication Skills – Eye Contact & Gestures

LOOK AT THEM!

Seems a pretty logical action when you're giving a presentation? But how many times have you been to a presentation and the presenter either looks at the screen all the time or their notes? Anywhere but their audience! If they look at their audience they may get some negative feedback so it's much safer if they don't.

Excuse me, but your audience has probably given up some valuable time and not only do they want to hear something interesting but they would really appreciate being looked at - at least some of the time!

EYE CONTACT is a very powerful part of **COMMUNICATION**.

You **MUST** look at your audience. Keep the eyes moving, random but even. Make sure you contact **EVERYONE**. The back row. The front row. The middle. And don't forget the wings, especially in a large hall.

BUT, don't linger on that friendly face! You'll make them feel uncomfortable and everyone else

will be checking their deodorant to see why they've been left out!

When you make **EYE CONTACT**, you have the opportunity to make your message "felt". Your audience will feel you are there for them. You will increase their retention levels and get your **MESSAGE** across.

And guess what? When you look at them, they will send "Messages" back to you. If you're not getting your message across they will have puzzled looks on their faces. Use the opportunity to re-express your message in a different way. When you ask a question to verify your message was understood, you'd be able to receive those nods of their heads (or vigorous shaking if you're not getting there! – but at least you will know and be able to do something about it.). Stand there facing the screen and well they all might just get up and walk out!

NOW add to your **EYE CONTACT** with **GESTURES** and you add one of the most **POWERFUL** skills to your presentation.

Your **GESTURES** must be natural. You can use your face, arms hands and your body. No, I don't mean throw yourself at them! Blend your expressions and **GESTURES** with

your words and you add the visual element to those words. A word or a phrase can be increased in its value or importance by adding a hand **GESTURE** or facial expression. Try it! Move the arms as well and the "size" of your message is elevated.

But making those **GESTURES** look natural is easier said than done. When you first start your Presentation, those appendages on the end of your shoulders just don't know what to do. Do they go behind you, at the side or in front of you?

And if you're feeling nervous, guess what? Those arms and hands will tell everyone you're nervous! If you're at a podium, you've got a friend. Just **LIGHTLY** hold the sides until you get into the swing of the Presentation and you will find your gestures come naturally then. If not, then try one hand in your pocket and the other arm bent slightly upward – imagine you're standing there having a conversation with someone. Only by practicing will you find the most comfortable.

BUT please don't fold your arms or put your hands on your hips. That's all part of body language and will be covered in another WebHints™.

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