

9 Secrets to BULLETPROOF Your Presentations

*A Special Report
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When you give a presentation, you need to get your point across clearly, concisely, and powerfully. Whether you're a longtime speaker or are preparing to give a speech for the first time, your goal should be the same – to make your presentation absolutely bulletproof, so that you can confidently handle whatever comes your way when you're in front of your audience. Only then will you be able to focus on your message, deliver extreme value, and engage your audience.

Here are 9 secrets to create and deliver a bulletproof presentation that will help you knock it out the park every time you speak:

Bulletproof Rule #1

PREPARATION IS KEY!

Be the Expert. As the presenter, you are expected to be the expert in your field. Meet that expectation! Do the research, know your topic inside and out, and analyze your audience in advance so that you know WHO they are, WHAT they already know about your topic, and WHY they're attending your presentation. A connection with your audience can be built in advance, as long as you prepare for it!

Have a Backup Plan. Make a list of all the things that can go wrong, and make a backup plan in case any of them actually happen. You'll want to make sure that you arrive early so that you can set up before your audience arrives; bring an extra copy of your presentation on a memory key; bring an extra battery for your laptop and your wireless presenter; be ready to give your presentation without your slides in case the projector melts down five minutes before your presentation; make sure you've got some water nearby in case your mouth gets dry; etc. A backup plan is your best defense. Once everything is set up, you'll be able to relax, review your presentation, and greet members of your audience as they arrive. They will see you as cool, calm and collected – which is much better than hurried, stressed and unprepared.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: A prepared speaker looks – and IS – more confident, professional, and successful.

Bulletproof Rule #2

GET SERIOUS ABOUT SPEECH STRUCTURE

Structure is about always having an introduction, body and conclusion in your speech. But to create an even more engaging, captivating, powerful speech...you have to go deeper, and ALSO look at the issue or challenge that the audience is experience, your key premise or intention for the speech, focused points that back up the key premise, stories that add color, detail and connection, relevant examples, an effective recap, and a call to action...in addition to a strong introduction and conclusion.

A lot of work? Absolutely. But by doing this work, you'll no longer be just a "good enough" speaker, but you'll be an outstanding one.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: Until you get your structure right: It won't be clear. If it's not clear, your audience won't follow. And if your audience doesn't follow, there's no value. And if there's no value....what's the point?

Bulletproof Rule #3

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Top athletes do not get to the Olympics by swimming one lap, nor do professional speakers make five-figure paychecks because they're good at 'winging it.' There is no excuse for not rehearsing your presentation. Practice in front of a mirror, your friends and family, or your pet goldfish. Get feedback. Capture it on video or audio, and then watch or listen to it carefully. Stand up, move around, and rehearse the speech from start to finish – out loud – as if you were standing before

your audience. The very act of rehearsing your speech gives you the opportunity to hear what you're saying, allowing you to refine the language, enhance your stories or examples, go over transitions and key points in your presentation, and get a better sense of what content works and what doesn't. Run through your presentation as many times as required so that you are completely comfortable with the material.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: How you *think* you present and what the audience *actually* sees are often two very different things. Honest feedback, or capturing your talk on video are the two best ways to see yourself the way the audience sees you.

Bulletproof Rule #4

IT'S ALL ABOUT THEM

Show respect to your audience by making sure your presentation addresses *them* and *their* needs, and that it is not all about you. Take note, however, that this does NOT mean that you shouldn't talk about yourself. Telling stories – even about yourself – can be an effective way to engage your audience, as long as the story is meaningful and has a clear point that backs up your message. Beware of listing an endless stream of your successes, as this is a surefire way to turn off your audience. An information-rich presentation filled with relevant facts, stories and examples will go a lot farther in showcasing your expertise than listing your qualifications, credentials, and vast experience.

There are many other ways to connect with your audience. Tell stories. Ask questions. Use their names in presentations. Smile. Use humor. Look at them in the eye, and above all, be passionate about your subject and authentic in your delivery.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: Your audience is asking themselves "What's in it for me?" So make sure that the value is clear and evident.

Bulletproof Rule #5

YOUR SLIDES ARE NOT YOUR SPEECH

A huge mistake that many speakers tend to make is that they build their slides BEFORE they build their speech. Slides are a great way to illustrate your point by using images, videos and relevant information, but YOU'RE the star of the show, NOT your slides. First, determine the objective of your presentation, then build your speech structure and outline. After that, choose the key messages and material that will lead your audience to the solution that you're proposing.

Once that's done, go ahead and create your slide deck, but keep it simple. Use plain backgrounds, interesting images, minimal animation, and a large font size.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: Build your structure – THEN build your simple, easy-to-follow, and engaging slides.

Bulletproof Rule #6

ADD HUMOR – EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT A COMEDIAN

Even if you're giving a presentation on income tax preparation, audiences always appreciate an opportunity to laugh. Laughing loosens a person up, making them more receptive to you and the points you have to make. Just a word, a phrase or a funny story can do a lot to help keep the audience interested and engaged. If you're not blessed with a fabulous sense of humor or impeccable comic timing, consider adding some funny images or cartoons to your presentation. And of course, don't forget to smile.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: "Being funny" and "telling jokes" are two very different things. Stay away from jokes unless you're 100% sure that they're hilarious.

Bulletproof Rule #7

DO YOU CARE ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE PRESENTING?

Are you passionate about what you're presenting? Are you at least interested in it? If you're not, chances are your audience won't be either. Your enthusiasm needs to grab your audience and make you worth watching. Audiences want to be engaged by what you're saying, and to do that, you'll need to share your enthusiasm, passion, and interest in the subject you are presenting. Make it a valuable experience for them and you will be rewarded as well.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: If you are not engaged or passionate about what you present, you might as well not even show up.

Bulletproof Rule #8

MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS

Eradicate all accessories that make noise when you move. For men, this means taking all keys and loose change out of your pocket. For women, choose jewelry and other accessories carefully. Do not wear large earrings that take emphasis away from your face, or keep sunglasses on your head. If your hair tends to fall in front of your face, tie or clip it back instead of flipping it away every 2 minutes.

Keep your hands free as much as possible. Don't hold a pen, your notes, or anything else that could distract the audience and take the attention away from you.

Bulletproof Secret Recap: You want your audience to focus on YOU and your message. Not the sparkly, shiny, or noisy things around you.

Bulletproof Rule #9

DON'T GO OVER TIME. EVER.

Going over your allotted time is unprofessional and disrespectful to your audience. If 300 people are in a room and you speak for a half hour, you are taking up 150 hours of their time. Do not take a minute more than what you're allotted, even if the audience is enjoying your presentation, and even if you ask them if you can go a little longer and they agree. There will inevitably be one or more individuals who have made other plans after your presentation, and it's not fair to them to have to reschedule their plans or miss the rest of your presentation because you went over time. Honor everyone in your audience by respecting their time.

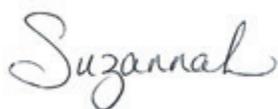
If your speaking time is cut because the organizer started late or the previous speaker went over time and you have some material left to cover, you're better off taking out entire sections than racing through the material. Then take the opportunity to see if you can 'continue the conversation' with your audience through a follow-up email, a future talk, or some other way. This way, you'll turn a momentary disadvantage into a long-term advantage!

Bulletproof Secret Recap: People love getting out early. We loved in when we were kids in school, and we still love it now. Ending only a few minutes early is all it takes to make everyone feel like they 'won.'

I hope you found that this report contained valuable information that will help you bulletproof your next presentation and be truly outstanding. I wrote it for the benefit of anyone who wants to create and deliver compelling presentations, engage their audiences and be seen as a leader. If you know someone who might benefit from this information, please feel free to forward it to them.

To schedule a free, no-obligation conversation, please call my office at (514) 247-1761, or send me an email at suzannah@suzannahbaum.com.

All the best,



ABOUT SUZANNAH



A presentation skills specialist, executive speech coach and speaker, Suzannah helps entrepreneurs, business professionals and experts unleash their ultimate speaking potential. With more than a decade of experience in the public speaking field, Suzannah teaches both new and experienced speakers how create and deliver powerful presentations with confidence, clarity and power, thereby allowing them to step out in front of audiences with confidence, build their careers and businesses, and stand out as the leader that they are.

Suzannah is also the creator of the *Create A Signature Speech That Sells* program, a one-of-a-kind speaker training program that shares her unique step-by-step formula for creating structured, engaging and compelling presentations.

Suzannah has been teaching public speaking at McGill University since 2005, has been featured on Global News, Breakfast TV Montreal, CJAD 800, and the Montreal Gazette, and is a regular contributor to the Huffington Post. She is on the executive board of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers and a member of the Global Speakers Federation.

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