

Zen and the Art of Presenting in Public

Excerpted and adapted from *Architect's Essentials of Presentation Skills*, by David Greusel, AIA
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SUMMARY

Author David Greusel, AIA, presents effective presentation skills as "The 10 Commandments of Presentation."

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

Greusel divides his text into 10 chapters, which he dubs "The 10 Commandments of Presentation":

1. **Show up.** Enhance the physical quality of your presentations with your body language, stage presence, and appropriate movement.
2. **What's my motivation?** Understand the goal of your presentation so that you may learn how to use that goal to enliven every statement, visual image, and action request in your presentation.
3. **Know your lines.** To deliver successful and compelling presentations, you must prepare and understand the distinction between preparing and rehearsing. Two keys to winning presentations are: mastery of the topic and the paradox of practicing.
4. **Find your light.** Look at the physical environment in which a presentation is to occur, prepare the space, and prepare to be seen and heard in it.
5. **Face out.** To connect with your audience, keep these five elements alive in your presentation: energy, empathy, engagement, enthusiasm, and entertainment.
6. **Keep going.** Deal with obstacles and breakdowns in a presentation head-on, especially when your options are limited.
7. **Project.** Make yourself heard in different presentation venues.
8. **Be in the moment.** Learn how to focus, concentrate, and maintain appropriate intensity during your presentation.
9. **Remember your props.** Consider the pluses and minuses of using different types of visual aids to supplement your presentation.

10. **Know when to get off.** Learn key techniques to mastering the elements of pace, timing, stage management, and the management of multiple presenters.

BE IN THE MOMENT

Greusel peppers *Presentation Skills* with sidebars that highlight tips, warnings, reminders, and rules for effective presentation delivery. Here are a few examples:

- **Tips:** Plan for as many predictable obstacles as possible.
- **Warnings:** Architects often become so enamored with their own drawings that they end up talking to the drawings instead of to the audience.
- **Reminders:** If the audience can't see you, they can't hear you either.
- **Rules of thumb:** One of the biggest obstacles to enthusiasm is tension felt by the presenter.

A good deal of solid, practical information is packed into every page. Arguably, however, some information is a tad more abstract, albeit equally critical—and then some—in the "Be in the Moment" chapter. In the author's words:

"In the moment" is a phrase you hear in connection with performing arts, psychology, and occasionally with sport, usually in the form of a counterpart phrase, "in the zone." It refers to a level of focus and concentration that most people, in their everyday lives seldom aspire to or attain. But being in the moment is absolutely critical to delivering a successful presentation and accomplishing your objective. It requires you to devote 100 percent of your resources—physical, emotional, mental—to the task at hand, which is presenting. It's not enough to call it commitment, because commitment can be expressed in a variety of ways. A person who spends ninety hours a week at work is said to be committed, but how much of that time does he or she spend surfing the Internet or passing the

time with coworkers? Being in the moment is a different level of commitment, the total commitment of self to a task or activity . . .

Part of being in the moment is the recognition that every design professional wears many hats and plays many roles, of which being a design professional is only one. We are not as single-minded as our résumés and our performance reviews would have us (and others) believe. We are enormously complex creatures with amazing abilities to think about more than one thing at a time. There is nothing wrong with having more than one thing going on in your head most of the time—don't most of the people in your office listen to music while they design? The only time it is wrong to be multitasking is when you are presenting . . .

There are two main obstacles to being in the moment: the past and the future. The moment, of course, is right now, and being in the moment means bringing your full personality to bear on the activity taking place this second, whether you are speaking or not.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Architect's Essentials of Presentation Skills by David Greusel, AIA, is fourth in the "Architect's Essential Series" on best practice skills. Developed by John Wiley & Sons, in partnership with the AIA, the first three books in the series deal with; ownership transition, cost management, and contract negotiation.



This book will help you coach yourself through various public speaking situations in which you may not have a natural aptitude, comfort, or professional training. You'll learn the keys to success for delivering winning presentations to an audience of thousands, a five-person client meeting, or a one-on-one conversation with the boss. Greusel, a principal of HOK Sport + Venue + Event in Kansas City, Mo., consistently rates as one of the favorite presenters at AIA conventions.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

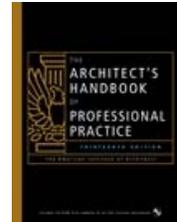
The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic

- 03.01.03 Five Basic Presentation Formats
- 03.01.04 The Five Es of Effective Presentation Delivery

For More Information on This Topic

See also "Seeking the Project," by Howard J. Wolff, *The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 7, page 155.

See also the 14th edition of the *Handbook*, which can be ordered from the AIA Bookstore by calling 800-242-3837 (option 4) or by email at bookstore@aia.org.



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Keywords

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