

# VISIONSONE

## NEWSLETTER

### **FINANCE FOR NON-FINANCE MANAGERS**

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**May 28-29**

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### **DYNAMIC PRESENTATIONS™**

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## **5 TIPS FOR OVERCOMING PERFORMANCE ANXIETY**

### **Proper Preparation Produces Peak Performance**

This month, we shall explore 5 power tips used by top speakers for producing peak presentation performance, which I have personally field-tested during my regional humorous speech contest championship and professional speaking career.

#### **Get to know your audience in advance**

Stage fright is a misnomer. People are seldom afraid of being on an empty stage. What they fear are people whom they will be speaking to and what's their reaction. People tend to be more confident when they are presenting to a familiar rather than an unfamiliar audience. Always try to find out who you are speaking to. Knowing your audience demographics, profession and gender allow you to better profile them. This will help you to research in advance what their needs are and what they will resonate with. You can then look for and give examples that they can relate to. Knowing this will enable you to be more confident in what you are about to say -- as you know that it would likely be something that they will appreciate and understand.

#### **Anticipate their questions**

The other factor that affects the confidence of speakers is the fear of not being able to answer the questions of the audience. In addition to preparing your content for what you want to deliver, ensure you have prepared sufficiently for their questions. You could think in terms of what they might be opposing to your views or even what you would say specifically if you are unable to answer their questions.

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## Arrive early at the venue

Arrive with sufficient time to ensure that your equipment, gadgets and sound system are in working condition. Trying to solve an unexpected technical problem when the audience is filling up the room is a sure-fire way of increasing anxiety. Instead, once you have personally ensured that all equipment are in working order, you should focus on connecting with the people on arrival. This will shift you from self-focused induced anxiety and refocus your energy outwards to individual members of your audience. This would help you be more personal in your delivery as you will be speaking to friends you just met rather than complete strangers. Familiarity breeds confidence. If you are able to use their names in your examples in a positive way, you will be able to connect with them specifically and the rest of the audience at a deeper level.

## Know what you will say when you start

Knowing and rehearsing what you will say at the start of your presentation will enable you to start strong and confidently. It will save you from searching for the right words at a time when your anxiety is probably at its greatest. It could be a statement, a story or an interesting statistic that might get your audience to take notice. Project your voice as you say it, as it is important to get your audience's attention -- which is critical in boosting your confidence. You want it to start well.

## Separate yourself emotionally from the outcome

Paradoxically, the less we care about the outcome, the more we can separate ourselves emotionally from it and the more effective we will be able to deliver. The power of being present will allow us to focus on the process of the delivery and the awareness of the situation here and now. This focus will give us the ability to say what we truly mean, speak from our heart and to create a new reality for the audience through the power of our spoken word.

Try out these tips on your next presentation, and let me know how you go with them!



## About the author

James Leong, Chartered Accountant, is CEO of VisionsOne Consulting and Adjunct Associate Professor with National University of Singapore. He is also the Year 2000 Toastmasters International Pan South East Asia Humorous speech contest champion. His highly popular workshop, Finance for Non-finance Managers, coaches managers and executives on using financial numbers to drive their business better. James can be reached at [jamesleong@visions1.com.sg](mailto:jamesleong@visions1.com.sg).

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