DOES PRESENTING GIVE YOU THE
Hee Bee Gee Bees?

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I read somewhere that giving presentations is one of the top stress factors for people; it's certainly a task that many people go out of their way to avoid. Whether it's a live presentation or a webcast, it's easy for anxiety to set in if you're worried about the material (content), the setting, the audience, the technology (think system crashing), and a host of other factors.

I can't promise to relieve the sweaty palms, dry throat, or racing heartbeat, but by following the five steps and tips in our "How to Effectively Present at Webcasts" presentation, you can become a better presenter.

FIVE STEPS:

1. Define the audience. Who are you targeting with your presentation content? Ask yourself these questions:
  » What role does the intended audience have? Are they C-level executives, managers, or potential users?
  » If this is an external audience, what type (industry) and size is the company? The audience's needs and interests can be vastly different if they're a small manufacturer versus a large non-profit.
  » Do you know what stage of the sales cycle they're in? Are they just starting their search for solutions such as yours or are they ready to purchase?
  » Are you casting a big net or a small net? "Big net" means many (somewhat unqualified) attendees while a "small net" means fewer in attendance but (hopefully) better qualified.

2. Establish objectives. Before you expend the time – and the money – on a webcast, clearly define your objectives. Are you:
  » Trying to generate demand/new prospects for your solutions?
  » Are you launching a new product (ISV or your IP) to your customers? To prospects?
  » Is this intended to be a product training session (internal or external)?
  » Put a stake in the ground in terms of numbers. Do you want 100 attendees or 20 qualified leads? The answer will impact the way you drive demand to the presentation in terms of the lists, the messaging, and the content.

3. Create content to engage the audience. I realize that it's easy to say but hard to deduce what the audience truly wants from you. However, put yourself in their shoes (you've attended enough webcasts to know what you like and dislike about them).
  » Put on your thinking cap and come up with a creative title. Using numbers can be effective; for example, "3 Tips for Creating an Outstanding Lead Generating Website".
  » Be relevant to your audience. If they're salespeople, then "Sales Messaging That Closes the Deal" could be a compelling title.
  » Think interactive. Even when you can't see the audience, use polls, video, audio, or live demos to engage their imagination.

4. Deliver with confidence. First impressions are important, especially during webcasts when the attendees can't see you. And just because they can't see you, don't wear your PJs and bunny slippers to the webcast. You project confidence when you appear confident and ready to take on the world.

» "Be Prepared" is the motto of the Boy Scouts and should be yours as well. Practice – and time – your presentation so you know exactly how long each slide/bullet point will take.

» Sound interesting. Okay, we can't all be "the world's most interesting man" as featured in the Dos Equis beer commercials, but we can be excited, passionate, and/or enthusiastic about our topic.

» Connect with the audience by imagining a person (preferably someone you know with a friendly face) in the audience. It helps calm the nerves!

5. Gather feedback. Asking for feedback – as uncomfortable as it might be – is an important step in growing your expertise as a presenter.

» Poll attendees, asking them to rate the content and your presentation skills on a scale of 1 to 5. You should also ask a colleague to attend and critique you with the goal of improving your delivery. (Remove the "ahs" and "ums", the hesitation, the confusion.)

» Attend webcasts – jot down your likes and dislikes so you can incorporate them into your next presentation.

» Practice by volunteering to present internally. If the hee bee gee bees are getting to you now, even after reading this article, presenting to your teams, your siblings, or your friends will help you overcome the nerves.

There's no substitute for practice and experience, but download the presentation at www.thepartnermarketinggroup.com/greenhouse-marketing-ideas/dig-deeper and use the steps to create your own "not-boring-audience-centric-well-attended-smoothly-delivered" webcasts.

The Partner Marketing Group is a marketing consulting firm dedicated to creating and implementing successful marketing solutions for their clients such as Microsoft Partners and ISVs. Contact Cheryl@ThePartnerMarketingGroup.com if you need assistance creating a marketing plan and/or marketing campaign. (But they won't promise to present in your place!)

Presentation Tips

» No dairy products before your presentation (they leave a film in your mouth).

» Nail the opening! If you open your presentation smoothly in a well-rehearsed manner, it sets the stage for a successful event – and calms the nerves.

» Who says webcasts have to be an hour? Shorten it to 30 minutes and your attendance numbers might rise!

» Seed some questions. You've probably noticed that no one wants to ask the first question. So "seed" a colleague with a couple of questions. Or if you're using the chat function in your meeting software, "pretend" to answer a question or two to get the ball rolling.