Top Tips for Presentations

 This is Susan Heaton-Wright. And I'm going to be talking about presentation skills. And I will be sharing some top tips with you, as well as answering some of the questions that I've been receiving in the last few days about this topic. So I'm not sure who is watching at this stage. But and I will remind people throughout this presentation, if you do have a question for me, please feel free to put it in the comments point. So let's get back to presentation skills. It's one of those things rather like public speaking, that people get, oh, my goodness, I've got to do a presentation or I've got to do a speech. And yet, there is a possibility that in every day business conversations you are already presenting. Now, if this could be an idea, it could be advice, sharing an opinion. But more formal presentations could be taking, doing more sort of communication related to sharing a particular opinion based on fact, or your own personal experiences, some information. So it might be that you have been on a training course, or a particular event or conference and you are feeding back you are presenting the information to your team. So that it will be of value to them could be advice, it could be that you are going to a client, or another department or even your own department, where you are providing advice based on your own experience and expertise. But it might also even be based on research that you've done. But also it could be pitching. It could be presenting facts, presenting your services, or presenting your products to a potential client. And it's still presenting isn't it. Also interviews, and that's something that I've just put down now, as I was preparing, because there are often at later stages of recruitment process, they ask you to do a presentation. So all of these are ways that you are can demonstrate your credibility, your knowledge, your confidence, and your competence. And so it's quite an important thing for you bit to be able to nail. But also, it's a great way for you to raise your credibility, and for people to know how awesome you are.

Now, for those people who don't know, my business is Superstar Communicator. And four years ago, I had trademarked I've been using it before my own methodology Superstar Communicator™, and I identified key skill areas that are essential for you to be able to be an effective spoken communicator, and in all business conversations, and this does include presentation skills. So I do have some top tips. I've got five top tips that I want to share with you before I answer questions. And the first and I will go through these and go into a little bit more detail. So with these presentations, we know the sorts of conversations, the sorts of places that you're going to do a presentation. So it might be that it's a formal presentation or something very informal within a meeting, where oh, Susan, could you give us some information about this from the event that you were at something as informal as that but it's still a presentation.

So my first tip is Is the purpose? Why are you presenting. And it's something that we often don't think of. It could be, as I've said before, that you are feeding back information from a particular event that you've attended, or even a meeting that you've attended with a client, and you are feeding back their feedback, and might be that there is a little bit of challenge with the work that you are doing as a company with the client, and feeding it back to your team, or the senior management or the leadership team is very, very useful. It could be that you have been asked to present a particular topic for an interview. And the purpose of this really, is for you to demonstrate your credibility, your knowledge, your

ability to come across in spoken communication, in a credible way, with presence and with confidence. Or it could be that you're actually pitching for business, we often forget that pitching for business can take can be a presentation process. So often, if we think of Dragon's Den, there is a presentation at the beginning that the entrepreneurs do when they are sharing some information about their company, their business. And then the dragons will ask specific questions, possibly related to cash flow projection, supply chains, those sorts of more practical things that you wouldn't necessarily include in a presentation. But you also need to think with purpose, what outcomes you want from it. Now, in the case of pitching, of course, you are wanting potential clients to book you as a business, you are wanting them to, to find out more about you and to be to identify other questions that they want to ask you so that they understand more about the business. If it is advice that you're giving, it could be that the outcomes are that as a result of that. A problem will be set will be though there will be a solution to a problem, given the advice that you give them. There's one other thing that I haven't mentioned, and that is report updates, because so often, if you're a project managing a project, it might be that every month you have to write a report for the leadership team, and in with that present, basically the executive summary to them so that they can ask you questions. So the outcomes, there might be that you can get advice from the leadership team who might see something that could could really help in the in the process of project management. But it is keeping people informed. So that's the first one, the purpose and thinking about what's in it for the audience. Why should they listen? And what do you want them to do? So it might be with a pitch, of course, you want them to ask questions, and you want them to sign your agreement, so you can work with them. If it's advice, it could be that, again, your presentation will direct people to ask more questions if they need that information, and from that act upon it.

So the second thing is, what are you going to say the content. Now in with the superstar communicator™ methodology, we have a whole section on content, how to structure it with a good beginning with a good ending with some key points, so that people will be able to keep listening. Now when we know we are on a virtual platform here, and we have to work even harder to maintain the concentration of the audience. And there are structures that I teach people to use so that they can still engage with the audience. But there are some ways that you can make a presentation interesting rather than just I'm sharing a load of facts where people's minds are gonna wander in the best will in the world.

So the third one is practice the practical performance side. Again, it's one of those things, you need to ask, how long is the presentation going to be? Could it be that you they want you to do five minutes presenting some information on how a project is, is progressing? Or that you have a five minute pitch? And then there's 10 minutes where the investors ask you lots of questions. You need to make that very, very clear. Also, who's how long it who, sorry? Who you're going to be speaking to the location, is it going to be online? Is it going to be face to face? If it is going to be face to face? Which room? Can you see the room beforehand, so that you can settle rather than walking in and never having seen it before? These things could really, really help you. Some, that is an important part of the presentation process. Number four is welcome questions from other people, however, that there are some people that love to have questions throughout the presentation, then that's fine. That's absolutely up to individuals. In my case, I direct people to say, I'd love to have questions. But if we could have them at the end, do the presentation first. Because I could get lost down the rabbit hole of questions and forget the main purpose of the presentation. And also, if you've got a limited amount of time, there can be a real challenge. getting it all done, if you've been interrupted many times. So it's up to you to manage that.

However, a number of my clients are really worried about questions. And I would say that if you've done a good job with presenting, it demonstrates that they have been listening and they want more information. What I didn't say with the content with a presentation is that you shouldn't go into too much detail too much depth, because you can lose your audience. So if you keep everything at what I call a headline level, and not go into that detail, it means that if people need that more more information, they will ask it if they don't need it, they won't bother. Again, if you're not able to answer a question. It's absolutely okay. Particularly if it's something that is very, very specific, you don't want to make an error with an answer. And it is far better to say Could I take your details, and I will get that information to you. But don't see questions as being something that is there to trick you. They are there to enhance the experience of the audience. And finally, I would say practice. It's weird, because we all get a little bit nervous, I was a little bit nervous before I started this, it's perfectly normal. And when you are presenting particularly to particular audiences, senior leadership, you could get quite nervous. But the more you know what you're going to say, and the more familiar you are with what you're going to say, the calmer you will be when you start. So I would say practice. Now what do I mean by practice. So once you know what you're going to say, perhaps if you've got some slides as well, you run through it, I have been known to walk in the local woods and go through the content, reminding myself of what I'm going to say and the structure and the the flow so that I'm really familiar with it. It then makes you look more confident and competent. So if you've got any questions at all, please don't forget to post them in the comments. But I do have some questions here that I will answer. So the first one is about getting nervous. I get nervous. Do you have any tips for managing nerves? I actually have a whole team Walk on managing your fear and showing up with confidence. And that I'm it's one of those talks that I'm actually reproducing as an online course that people will be able to access. So let me know if you would like more information on that. Or I am able to deliver that as a workshop face to face a speech or a virtual workshop. So if you're interested, do let me know if if you'd like me to do this within your organisation, there are many, many things that we can talk about, I'm getting nervous. In the first instance, I would say, really know what you're going to say. Because if you aren't familiar with what you're going to say, or you're, you haven't really worked it out beforehand, you've thought about everything looking lovely with the slides, but you've not spent much attention on the content, it's going to make you nervous. So that's the first thing, make sure you really know what you're talking about that the whole content, what you're going to say. Secondly, I would say, practice, so you're very, very familiar with it. In in with the talk, there are a number of techniques that I use, but one of them is be there really early, then you're not worried that you are going to be late, you can then spend time relaxing, going through in your mind what you're going to say and to move forward. But as I say it loads more things that I could include with that. Another one is, my audience always looks bored or distracted. What am I doing wrong? Okay, so you haven't been gone into many details about what they're demonstrating. It's quite interesting. But things might be picked people picking up their phones, or, you know, doing emails on their phones, or looking bored or their body language is quite closed. Okay? So it might be that the content that you're doing is not resonating with the audience that isn't it isn't of particular interest to them. Or maybe you're going into far too much detail. And people's mind switch off and they start thinking about their shopping lists, or what they're going to do at the weekend, who they need to email, those sorts of things. So go back to your content, and think about, is this really something that the audience will be interested in? Or is have I gone into too much detail? Also, it might be worthwhile asking the organisers if you are in this situation, if they've recorded it and for you to honestly, watch yourself in in the video afterwards? Is your voice interesting to listen to? are you

mumbling? Are you speaking too fast? Or it's making it too difficult for the people to take on board what you're saying? Little bit of self credit, critique always helps to be honest in the privacy of your home. I hope that helps. So another question is, I am very technical, that the role that I have is very technical, and I am worried that I will lose my audience. Okay. So first of all, you need to know who your audience is. If you are talking to people who are technical like you in the same area, it could be that this could be of interest to them. But quite often, we are speaking to people who are not in the same discipline as us. And therefore we need to make it as easy as possible for them to understand us. If we go into too much technical detail. Our brains switch off because it's too much for us to take on board. So I mentioned earlier on to keep things at headline level. So don't go into too much detail and perhaps use illustrations or really easy case studies or examples to make it more accessible for your audience. I hope that's of help.

So the final question, and I don't have any questions here today, unless anybody wants to ask a question. Everyone keeps talking about stories in presentations. How do I do this? Well, that is for another time, the whole thing about stories. However, I would say that one again, rather like manage your fear, I do have a talk, and a workshop, a virtual workshop on storytelling, the the scientific background of it, how it's powerful, how we can use stories, in business, in presentations. And when we're introducing ourselves and our businesses, what I would say is that we can get the idea that we've got to tell a story. And it might not be relevant to the audience, they might think, well, you know, why is this person saying this, to me, it's not really relevant, and then they'll switch off. So you need to make sure that your story is relevant to the topic relevant to the audience. But also keep if in doubt, keep it short and sweet. Otherwise, people will switch off.

So I've got a question from Sarah, any suggestions? And how to recover? If it all goes wrong? Oh, do you know what, it's all gone wrong for everybody? Sarah, some time, we will need to meet up I can tell you some of the howlers that I've done both as a speaker in the past what I've seen from other people. And also when I was an opera singer, I mean, I had one situation when I went on stage as, as Lady Jane Seymour, and I sat down on this little throne, and it collapsed on me. And you know, and you've just got to pick yourself up. One thing I would say, Sarah, is that half a second or a second, where we think it's going on and on where we've forgotten what we're going to say or a slide won't move is miniscule to other people. They're not going necessarily going to notice unless you draw it to their attention. But also I was say, if there's a technical problem, there is I cannot emphasise enough that it's so important to do a technical run through beforehand. Because then you're familiar with the tech, I have been at conferences, where there have been technical issues if it happens. But there was one occasion where the same speaker was at a conference. And there was a technical problem. And I saw her a couple of years later on a virtual conference. And the same thing happened. She was oh, that sounds not working helped me. And it turned out that on both occasions, she was far too busy to attend the technical run throughs. So why are so few things from this era, one of them is, you know, check your tech, whether it is your clicker for slides, and your microphone working. If you're online, that you know how the platform works. And if you forget something for a moment, take a deep breath and then carry on trying not to get the audience to to know that you might have made a mistake. And also, what's the worst thing that can happen if you make a mistake, you jump to slides and one go apologise, go back. No one's going to die from that. But happy to chat private really with you about that. Are there any other questions? Okay, so I would say that this presentation skills is one of the workshops that superstar communicator delivers back in the room, a presentation skills for new graduates, for women in leadership, emerging leaders, all sorts also, we do this as a virtual workshop as a talk and I am just

about to launch our virtual presentation skills online course which will be available in the next 10 days. So I hope that that is really, really helpful for you. Thank you very much, Sarah. This will be available as a podcast. And so watch out for the superstar communicator podcast. It will be available there too. Thank you very much for watching. Take care You have been listening to the superstar communicator podcast. Don't forget to subscribe and review the podcast on iTunes and on apps. Please contact us if you want to discuss any topic could suggest a topic for us to include or a guest who could come on to the podcast, go to www.superstarcommunicator.com

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