

Delivery Checklist: Making a Great CLE Presentation!

OBA/CLE

Before the presentation

- Make an outline—speak from the outline, not from a written narrative. **DO NOT READ YOUR WRITTEN MATERIALS!**
 - Focus on the key points from your written materials.
 - Keep the outline simple—your materials should have details—no need to cover everything that is included in your materials—the presentation and materials should work together, and not be the same work product.
 - Don't cite authority in your presentation (interested folks can get cites in the written materials) unless you analyze a specific case, a statute, etc. For example, if language in an existing statute has been modified and you are discussing the language of the modification, you would obviously need to cite the statute.
- Prepare thoroughly—LIKE A TRIAL!
- Practice—like you would for an oral argument. Practice from the outline.
- Does your presentation have a theme?
 - If so, can you dress or use props consistent with the theme that could make your presentation more interesting? Ex. “Lassoing Recent Developments in Employment Law” Rope? A cowboy hat? Lasso lessons?
- Know where you are going and know how long it takes you to get there. Have the phone number of a seminar contact person on site.
- If possible, get a list of registrants to familiarize yourself with the audience.
 - What level of experience? (While the program design and the materials should have been done with a certain level of experience in mind, sometimes you attract registrants at varying levels of experience. Don't assume that people that you had in mind when you planned and prepared the program are the only ones that registered!)
 - Any wisdom in the audience that you can tap?
- Know where you are on the program and the time of the scheduled break before your presentation.

The day of the presentation

- Arrive early.
 - To confirm your AV is in place.
 - To test any equipment you are using for the presentation. Test on the break prior to your presentation.
 - To scope out the room.
 - Where is the podium? Will the sound system allow you to move from the podium? If so, how far away from the podium can you move?

If you have a lav microphone, any feedback problems in any part of the room?

If you are on a stage or risers, do you need to stay there to be seen? If not, can you move about

the room in all directions and still be seen?

If you have exhibits, are easels out and in the appropriate place?

To scope out the audience.

Who showed up? Any modification in perspective required?

Where are the registrants sitting, and how does it impact on the intensity (volume?) of your presentation?

How many are in attendance? How will this impact on questions? Are there so few in attendance that you can take questions as you go along, or should you reserve questions until the end of presentation?

Men!!!! Empty your pockets—no keys, change, pens to make noise and distract the audience.

Don't carry a pen to the podium because you do not want to inadvertently use the pen in gesturing.

The presentation

Breathe properly.

Speak in a conversational style. Control your speed. Don't orate or act like your audience is a hostile witness!!

If you can, speak at the lower end of your range. (This is especially true for women.)

Make sure you can be heard before you get too far into your presentation—whether it be your volume or a microphone problem. Make necessary adjustments at the beginning of your presentation.

Use plain language—don't pontificate.

Speak up!

Don't read!

Stand straight.

Maintain eye contact with the audience. (If this bothers you, look right above the heads of audience members.) Include the entire audience.

Gesture deliberately and not constantly. Gestures that are constant are only a manifestation of nervousness. Gestures should be deliberate and used to enhance the presentation. Don't gesture into the podium, but above the podium. If you cannot gesture comfortably, that is ok. You should rest your hands on the podium. (No white-knuckle death grips.)

Start strongly. Begin by identifying your objective in the presentation. Don't start softly and build up. Begin your presentation in a strong and confident manner. After all, isn't everything you're saying important?

Signpost. If you are going to make three points, say so. Then present the points (with the appropriate gestures): "First," "Second," "Last."

Conclude. Identify how you met your objective.

Questions

Listen carefully.

Repeat the question (for video and for clarity).

If you don't understand the question, ask for clarification.

Feel comfortable in pausing before you answer. Even pregnant pauses don't seem as long to the audience as to you.

Answer the question directly. "Yes," "no," or "maybe."

Don't bluff—if you don't know say so. Offer to find out the answer and be willing to communicate the answer to interested registrants.

Keep track of your time and END ON TIME. If you can't keep track of your time, ask a staff person to give you a signal to stop. You owe it to the registrants to keep the program on schedule.

HAVE FUN! AFTER YOU HAVE DONE YOUR PRESENTATION, ASK FOR A SUMMARY OF YOUR EVALUATIONS. LEARN FROM YOUR PEERS!