

8 Things That **MAKE** or **BREAK** A Virtual Presentation



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Your future is more digital than it ever was. The exponential growth of technology has impacted every aspect of how we live and do business.

One big example: virtual presentations. While virtual meetings are not a new phenomenon, their frequency has increased drastically, largely driven by Covid-19. While the same principles of effective combination apply, the way you apply those principles has changed dramatically.



You will need to be good at virtual presentations to stay even. You will need to be extraordinary at virtual presentations to outpace your competition.

What follows are eight of the most important factors for your success in communicating digitally. Whatever your role, learning how to give a successful virtual presentation is a deal maker or a deal-breaker. Your ability to get the results you desire means becoming a digital presentation virtuoso.

#1 Platform

We define a platform as the technology you use. Sometimes that platform—Zoom, GoToMeeting, MicrosoftTeam—is determined for you. If that is the case, always familiarize yourself with that platform and take an online tutorial in advance. Learn at

least the basics of what you need to know to meet expectations when using that platform.

We suggest you truly master the platform you use most frequently. Be good at several but masterful at one. Proficiency is important, but mastery will set you apart.

#2 Presence

Your presence is how you come across to your digital audience. It includes appearance, demeanor, and energy. Have you heard someone refer to another person's "vibe?" They were probably talking about a combination of these things but ultimately how that person comes across to others.

Authenticity is important, but that doesn't mean being yourself. The best authenticity is about being your best self and making sure that the best aspects of your personality and abilities shine through. That is the essence of digital presence, and the first deal maker/breaker (platform) affects that.

Few people like watching themselves, but we suggest you review every major online presentation you make. Your presence predisposes people to like you, respect you, and want to listen to you. Lack of it achieves just the opposite.

#3 Performance

This is the essence of what and how you communicate virtually. Are you confident or hesitant? Are you prepared or perplexed? Performance is the third P we believe here at Virtual Presentations Institute to complete your virtual effectiveness.

This is where in-person and virtual presentations intersect. Your performance is primarily determined by your preparation and practice. A pro never "wings it," although some people are so prepared and practice that it looks effortless. There are many things you don't control, but how well you prepare (determining your objectives, crafting your message, and perfecting your platform technology skills) and practice (rehearsals and run-throughs are two things you completely control).

#4 Message

Stephen Covey famously said, “Begin with the end in mind.” Years later, Simon Sinek wrote his bestselling book, “Start with Why.” Both are powerful truths about how to craft your message.

Clarify the purpose of the virtual event and your participation in it. Unclear objectives create unclear results at best and no results at worst. What is it you want people to think and feel during your presentation? Both are important. Then what do you want them to do as a result. Most great presentations end with a call to action.

Invest the time necessary to create a powerful message, or these other elements will benefit you little.

#5 Graphics

Is it essential to use graphics? Usually, unless the presentation is very short or very personal (i.e., you want to create an intimate, heartfelt relationship with your audience). But bad graphics can be worse than no graphics at all.

Bad graphics undermine a great message. How? By distracting, being hard to read, and/or visually unappealing, just to name three ways. Clean, concise, and clear are the operative guidelines to any text you use. Graphics that support your message by illustrating your primary ideas are required for a great virtual presentation.

#6 Engagement

Many think participation is limited or even impossible in a digital presentation. It isn't. Asking people to answer yes/no questions or provide short answers in the chatbox is an easy way to get people involved. Polls are relatively easy and effective if designed well, and there is an exercise you can do as a group (depending on size) or in breakout rooms.

Engagement and interaction holds the attention of those you're presenting to and enhances retention. While not necessarily more difficult in the digital domain, the techniques you use are very different. Learn how to engage virtually.

#7 Variety

Variety in what? Everything: your speaking speed/pace, inflection, engagement techniques, questions, polls, and even your energy. When you present like everything is important, the truly important things get buried.

At the same time, monotone teachers or speakers are off-putting, and so are monotone digital presentations. Analyze your presentation not only for message and graphics but a variety that will keep your audience engaged and interested.

#8 Fun

This might not be the most important thing—the first seven can kill the appeal of a presenter even if he or she is having fun—but it is essential for an enjoyable presentation, for both you and your audience. People almost always learn better when they are having fun, and you set the tone for fun or forgettable presentation.

These are the major deal makers or deal-breakers. Using all eight to become an extraordinary virtual presenter is simple but not easy. You'll need to apply yourself to addressing and learning these skills.

But extraordinary results always take a little extra effort.

Want to make sure you look and sound great on all your virtual meetings? Get the industry standard training and certification to become a [Certified Virtual Presenter](#).