

Presentation Tips for Success

Lynn Hamilton, Karen Connors, and Stefano Grazioli

All presenters

- **Practice, practice, practice.**
Accept critiques and compliments from team members and act on them
- **Wear business attire.**
- **Work to create a unified visual presence as a team.**
Creating a unified visual presence may require adjusting your physical sitting or standing location, configuration, camera angle, or chair height.
- **Pay attention to your posture.**
Sit/stand with your shoulders squared but relaxed. No hands in your pockets.
- **Be aware of the audience while pointing at something.**
It is fine to gesture on occasion, but if you are attempting to describe something with your hands, make sure your gesture can be seen by both in-person and remote audiences.
- **Check whether everybody can see/hear well**
if the ceiling mics are not sufficient, there will be dedicated podium microphone in the classroom for in-person. For remote presenters, use your MSMIT-issued headsets. Repeat/rephrase a question or response in a louder voice
- **Determine who will manage slide transitions.**
Usually it is better to have a single person who knows the presentation well and does not need to be told “next” or similar. If presenting in-person, you may choose to have individuals managing their own transitions.
- **Do not read from cue cards.**
Reading from a script diminishes the impact of your remarks. This is true when presenting in person, and it remains true when presenting remotely. The audience can easily tell by your vocal cadence and by the direction of your gaze.
- **Use a natural, yet enthusiastic vocal style.**
You may need to practice sounding energetic. It’s easy to have a flat, bored-sounding voice when speaking online, especially when you’re sitting. Keep in mind that your audience members may well have distractions. Use your voice to keep their attention
- **Remember who you are roleplaying.**
You are employees of CarMax, and so is the audience. Refer to CarMax as “we at CarMax” or similar. When describing work done always use “we” (the team).

- **Manage the question and answer segment of the presentation.**
How will you determine who will answer a question? In what ways will you signal to one another who will respond to a question? When answering, do not “pile-up” on an answer by having multiple team members respond because it wastes time and makes the team seem less unified. Trust and enable all teammates to respond to questions.
- **Stay engaged when you aren’t speaking.**
Try to keep your eye contact focused on the camera when presenting remotely and on both in-person and remote audiences when your team members speak. Avoid looking away from the presenter or audience and try to make sure your facial expression conveys interest and engagement.

Remote presenters

Technology malfunctions

In case of host or participant technology malfunctions that will make it impossible to communicate via Zoom, we will communicate via a dedicated WhatsApp chat that you may [join by clicking this link](#).

Virtual etiquette

Virtual classroom etiquette is described in the Mod 1 syllabus appendix. You are encouraged to review those if you are joining remotely.

- **Set your environment to avoid interruptions and distractions**
- **Select a professional background**
If you decide to use a screen background, consider if it is appropriate to the occasion and audience. An outer space scene or waving palm trees might not convey the image you intend. Also, having the same background behind each team member can create a sense of unity and identification.
- **Test the technology in advance.**
Make sure you know how to avoid sound issues. These can happen if multiple mics or speakers are live.
- **Have back-up plans in place.**
What will you do if you lose sound or power? If you lose video/slides? A connection to one of your speakers? Consider how to keep the show going if something goes awry. Redundancy can help.
- **Adjust your camera angle.**
Team members should be about the same distance from their cameras and seated at about the same height from the audience’s perspective. Position team members’ eyes at about the same height. This looks more professional and allows the audience to look from speaker to speaker without adjusting their perception, which may reduce screen fatigue.
- **Record a practice run**
Record one or more practice presentations to note the visual and sound impact of your presentation. Even a short trial run of ten minutes or so involving all speakers can help you diagnose ways to improve your presentation’s visual impact.

In-person presenters

- **Maintain social distance.**
Consider how you will position yourself on stage during the presentation and the Q&A
- **Coordinate transitions between speakers including remote presenters.**
Think about the physical and technical components of moving from one speaker to another.
- **Choose a simple, solid-colored mask.**
Professional attire includes your mask

Be patient, supportive, and generous with each other.
We are all in this together!