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Keys to a Successful Virtual Presentation

Key #1: Preparing Your Virtual Presentation

Prior to your presentation:

- 1) **Taking the time to plan and implementing your ideas in an orderly, presentable manner is particularly important.** Once you have your topic and the plans for your presentation, the next steps will help you prepare to perform like a pro!
- 2) **Netiquette:** With new media platforms and social communication networks, a whole other language has been introduced to users. Netiquette includes the etiquette of a virtual presentation, correct way of using the internet and providing a presentation that is polished and professional.
- 3) **Prepare your Zoom or platform settings ahead of time.** Some changes can be made while you are giving the presentation but settings such as “break out rooms” or “polls” cannot be added once your zoom has begun. Make all the necessary selections in your platform settings including setting up your chat to avoid problems.
- 4) **Co-Host or Moderator:** Muting and Unmuting can be quite messy but it is easy if prior to the presentation controls are given to a co-host or moderator to mute participants, moderate the chat, keep track of time, and facilitate questions/discussions.

For your presentation:

- 1) **Find a private place to present.**
- 2) **Open up before you go onscreen** – Stand –Stretch- Breathe- Energize yourself and make exercises to your lips to get the best articulation.
- 3) **Clear your desktop.** We often leave many open documents on computer screen and when we start sharing our PowerPoint or any other document connected with this presentation, you may become confused to find the right document.

Also, share your screen and not your desktop. Most desktops contain private files and images. Keep these items protected by having your “to be shared items” open and ready to load into through the screen share button on Zoom.

- 4) **Set your camera to your eye level.** You can build a block from books or just use a shoebox to lift your laptop to the right height.
- 5) **Check the light.** Never sit with your window behind you! Your face cannot be seen. In case there is too much sunlight, use a blind at your window. You may switch on a small table lamp which balances the light well.
- 6) **Use a natural background** but hide chaos. Do not use artificial background images which may change the shape of your head.
- 7) **Dress for success** but avoid too much jewelry to distract the audience.
- 8) **Have a back-up plan** (e.g., access to the material in your email in case sharing the document on the screen does not work).
- 9) Stick a note on your computer screen that says, “LOOK HERE.” Your eyes may start wandering around if you become very enthusiastic expressing your ideas.
- 10) Record your presentation **for reviewing and for enhancement** or do a demo with a friend, DKG member, or family member on the platform you are using.

Key #2: Engage, Involve, Captivate

- 1) **Set yourself up for success.** You have rehearsed your presentation – so no worries, stay confident and self-assured, concentrate on the core message.
- 2) **Have a chat** while you are waiting for others to sign on. Europeans do not like small talk, but they are eager to ask questions! Why not?
- 3) Have participants or co-host/moderator **mute audio** when you start speaking. It avoids technical problems.
- 4) **Show your passion and connect to your audience**, guide your ideas from your heart to the listeners’ hearts.
- 5) **Smile and make eye contact** with your audience. Know your audience – they trust you to be the expert.
- 6) **Reel the listeners in** – engage your audience – **start with a short story** (I compare baking a cake and a virtual presentation starting with the idiom “Virtual presentation is a piece of cake when the cake is well prepared!”)
- 7) **Do not lecture!** The audience tunes out after 10 minutes to a passive mode, hopefully not falling asleep. Use pauses and modified voice tones to keep your audience engaged.
- 8) Occasionally **check how the audience is reacting to your words or if there is anybody out there** by asking questions and having them respond in the chat or in the session space. Give a time limit before asking for responses to questions.
- 9) **If possible, insert attractive visuals** which make information much easier to retain than plain text. Use your own photos, avoiding violating copyright.
- 10) **Reminder: Request a moderator to keep track of the “chat”** – the moderator must be a co-host. It is difficult for the presenter to follow the comments on chat when speaking.

Timing: Now that you have your presentation ready, you need to make **Time** your friend.

- 1) **Request a moderator and a timekeeper prior to the presentation** and agree on how she gives you a sign that the time is ending.

- 2) **Watch the clock yourself, if possible** – start on time and end promptly (or a bit earlier). Keeping track of time can be a challenge for the speaker.
- 3) **Bear in mind the time zones in DKG** when planning the presentation – be aware of the time of the audience. If you are hosting the Zoom session, be sure to send them the time for their zone. (For example, if you plan a presentation in the USA in the afternoon, it is midnight in Europe.)
- 4) **Practice makes you also the master of your timing.** With your first practice you may be too quick or you stumble too often. The more you practice, the more natural you become, and you also master the timing. Be sure to cover the important points and still allow time for questions/discussion.

Key #3: Expect the Unexpected!

- 1) The first thing to tell yourself when the unexpected glitch happens, **“Don’t panic! I can do this.”**
- 2) **Do not try to fix the technology while you are presenting.** It is good to have someone helping who might be able to address the problem while you are speaking. It is important to connect with the audience. They are still right in front of you, so don’t think of them as being miles away.
- 3) **Remember: You planned for success, didn’t you?**
 - Be proactive.
 - Be flexible.
 - Practice makes perfect.
- 4) **Practice** so you can give your presentation without your slides. Print out slides or have an outline of your presentation available.
- 5) And the last hint: **if you plan to record the presentation**, do not forget to push the button, and stop the recording when the presentation is over.

Key #4: Tech Tips – Keys to Successful Zooming

- 1) **Know the technology platforms you will be using.** The two most popular ones are Zoom and Microsoft Teams.
- 2) **It is important to have good lighting and a good web cam.** Test the technology before your session so you know it is working.
- 3) **Avoid Distractions.** Try to find as private a space as possible and you might want to let family members know you are on Zoom and perhaps, they could refrain from streaming videos as those use up bandwidth.
- 4) **Your space tells a story.** Some presenters choose a virtual background instead of their home or office. These backgrounds can interfere with bandwidth. Bring your audience into a real, live space.
- 5) **Remember you need permission before recording presentations.** If you are the presenter, please inform your host if you do not want to be recorded. And inform your audience if you are recording.
- 6) **One way of practicing your presentation** is to sign into Zoom and record yourself presenting which helps you get your timing down and to make any necessary changes.
- 7) **The Most Important Tip is to Have Fun!** Enjoy the time with your virtual audience as you share your culture. All you are lacking are the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of being there in person.

DKG members have many opportunities to speak in person and, now, virtually – including becoming an International Speakers Fund speaker. Being an ISF Speaker gives you an opportunity to learn about other cultures and education systems and to share your educational experiences, expertise, and culture of your country.