



Speaker *focus*

The Heart of Your Presentation: Seven Questions to Ask About Your Audience

This is the first in a series of emails for CWEA's 2014 Annual Meeting presenters. These emails will help you prepare and present successfully.

It's About Them

When trying to connect with others during a presentation, you need to remember that it's not all about you. It's really about them--your audience.

What's at the heart of your presentation? Your audience.

Place your audience at the center of your action. Make them feel as if the presentation is addressing them personally.

You Are The Mentor

Instead of showing up to present with an expert-it's all about me-attitude, walk in with a humble "it's all about them" attitude. Your role is not to be the guru hero. You should be the mentor, the voice helping your audience get unstuck in their journey.

Your audience will actually do all the heavy lifting to help you reach your objectives. Remember, the success of your presentation depends upon them. If they don't engage and believe in your message, you are the one who loses.

When you view your role as the mentor, you will do whatever is necessary to help your audience reach the reward.

While you may be the most knowledgeable person in the room, how you wield that knowledge drives your success as a presenter.

Seven Questions To Ask

Before developing your presentation, it's important to ask questions about your audience.

- Who are they?
- What are their needs?
- How can you address those needs?

Thinking about the audience will ensure you are placing their needs first because, ultimately, they came to see what you can do for them.



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1. What are they like?

What's the makeup of your audience? What age and level of experience does your audience have? What type of audience are you trying to attract? Now prepare your presentation with them in mind.

2. Why are they here?

Your audience came to your presentation for a variety of goals. Research shows that the top two reasons people attend a conference is for education and to network. Your audience may also be there to get the latest breakthroughs and research or for credit.

3. What keeps them up at night?

Craft your presentation with the thought of solving your audience's fear, pain point or thorn. Focus on the solution, not the details of your research and demographics. You can give the details of your research in handouts, your syllabus or online. Focus instead on "How will your presentation help your audience sleep better at night?"

4. How can you solve their problem?

Adults are problem-centric, not data driven. How can your presentation help solve their problems? What's in it for them? If you're providing a technical presentation, focus on the top areas that most people wrestle with or find difficult. Don't try to cover everything in one presentation.

5. What do you want them to do?

Start your presentation with "So what? Why this information should be important to them."

Then focus on what you want them to do with that information. Make sure there's clear action for your audience to take.

6. How might they resist?

What will keep them from adopting your message or call to action?

7. How can you best reach them?

You can best reach your audience with the information resonates with them. People are meaning-driven. They must be able to connect your information with their practice and lives.

Vary the delivery methods you use to reach your audience. Avoid slides full of text and data. Incorporate pictures, videos and allegory. Use stories to provide a hook. Allow them to discuss it.

Your Presentation Is A Tool

Presentations can be powerful tools that persuade people to change their thinking or actions. If you focus on your audience first and adopt the role of a mentor, you are more likely to succeed.