



ATA Client Outreach Kit

Skills Module

Preparing your presentation

You've scored a speaking invitation – great! Now what?

Put as much time as you can into drafting and practicing your presentation, especially if this is your first outing. The more familiar you are with your material, the more confidence and impact you'll have—and good preparation is the single best way to manage your nerves. Here are some tips.

Focus on your audience

- Find out as much as possible about the members of your audience in advance. One good way to do this is to call the organizer and find out who's coming.
- If your talk is part of a series, try to attend a prior presentation by someone else, regardless of the topic; it will give you a better feel for the venue, the audience and how to handle questions.
- Identify the language combination(s), specific document types, legal requirements, etc., that will be of interest to your target audience, and make these your focus.
- Think about the contribution you can realistically make to their business. Tell a success story about a translation or interpreting client of similar size or in similar circumstances, and show how quality translation or interpreting led to specific results—the client was able to acquire new business, settle a lawsuit, fix a technical problem, or communicate successfully with a supplier.
- Find local or industry-specific examples that illustrate the cost of poor translation and the benefits of buying and using good translations. You can get tips on choosing examples. Go to www.atanet.org/client_outreach/skill_using_examples_effectively.pdf.

Position yourself as an expert.

- Customize the Client Outreach presentation by weaving in real-life examples from your own work and relevant success stories from your own experience. This is by far the most effective way to demonstrate your expertise—much better than a laundry list of qualifications or achievements. Go to www.atanet.org/client_outreach/download_main.php.
- When you show samples of your own work, be sure to get client permission as needed.
- If you can make your examples funny, so much the better, but be sure not to ridicule clients or other linguists—or encourage "dumb foreigner" stereotypes.

Practice, practice, practice.

- Find out exactly how much time you have and rehearse your presentation with a timer to be sure that you stay within it. Few things are more frustrating—for both speaker and listener—than running out of time before you get to the good stuff, and event organizers are more

likely to invite you back if you can meet your limit. The delivery rate for most speakers is about 125 words per minute.

- Get comfortable with using your slides and know where they fall in your remarks.
- Practice your presentation with your family, your significant other, a colleague, or a friend, and ask for feedback.

Case the joint.

- Know when and where the presentation will take place: the exact time and the address, building and room number, and how to get there. Get contact info and a cell phone number for your on-site coordinator and keep it handy.
- Check with organizers to see what equipment is available.
- Get to the venue at least 20 minutes ahead of time to get the feel of the place and the audience, especially if you have never been there before.
- Check the microphone and other audiovisual equipment and identify the people who can help if you run into trouble with it.
- Have a print-out of your slides and comments ready so that you can stay on track even if your projector doesn't.
- Number paper slides or note cards so that they can be easily reassembled if dropped.

Expect the unexpected.

- Create back-up slides for use "just in case" and to illustrate answers to frequently asked questions.
- Have a print-out of your slides and comments ready so that you can stay on track even if your projector doesn't.
- Number paper slides or note cards so that they can be easily reassembled if dropped.