

Globe Smarts for Effective Virtual Presentations

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Communicating with any team via teleconference or web session is challenging. When the team is spread across the globe, your task as a presenter requires real ‘globe smarts.’ Do not overlook the importance of adapting your message and slides to the audience conferencing into your call. Here are 10 quick tips.

1. **Simple is better!** Use basic language, without slang or jargon. Recently, I made the mistake of not reviewing my slide deck for language that a global audience might find unclear. One slide was titled with an expression most Americans would understand, ‘Don’t be a Sour Puss.’ As I explained the expression to the international audience, someone commented, “That sounds awful.” Not only did the slide create a distraction, but it took people off task.
2. **Create descriptive titles.** All slides need titles that make the point of the slide obvious. Global listeners will depend on titles. Complicated slides will frustrate and annoy.
3. **Go visual.** Add pictures or graphics to your slides. A visual representation of your idea is effective to help people grasp the point of your slide.
4. **Send a preview.** When possible, send your slides to the audience a day early with a reminder of the agenda. Reviewing the overall content of your slide deck before the meeting will aid comprehension. Additionally, people with English as a second language often read English better than they speak it.
5. **Amplify your energy!** A dynamic speaker captivates the audience with an energetic and enthusiastic voice. A virtual audience can’t see your body language. Remember to breathe deeply to encourage extra volume.
6. **Speak slowly, particularly as you begin.** It allows listeners to adjust to your accent and the pronunciation of your words. Make sure your thoughts come to a definite end. Do not string ideas together with ‘and.’ If you speak quickly, the audience will miss much of what you are saying.
7. **Sound check.** Be sure to ask, “Can everyone hear me well?” When possible, use a headset to alleviate potential issues with people hearing you and to facilitate movement.
8. **Smooth transitions.** Provide context for the listener when transitioning to the next point. “Slide 5 will display our results for the third quarter. I want to discuss what is in red.” Virtual participants will access slides at different rates of connectivity. Refer to the slide number to ensure everyone has the same view on display.
9. **Pause often to check in with your audience.** “Now let me take a moment to ask for your thoughts on my proposal. What is the potential benefit for our team members in China?” Regular pauses allow listeners time to digest your ideas and share beneficial feedback.
10. **Ask open-ended questions, to engage the virtual audience.** ‘Yes or No’ questions limit interaction. Do not expect your global audience to interrupt you with a question. In some cultures, it is considered rude to interrupt.

With more businesses operating in the global environment, effective virtual communication skills is key to your personal and professional success. Small adjustments in what you say and how you say it, have tremendous impact in building business relationships. Applying ‘globe smarts’ will help teams operate face-to-face in a virtual environment!

Continued on page 2

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