

Eight Rules to Live By:

- **RULE #1: First impressions are CRUCIAL.** The opening minute of any new interaction creates an impression that is difficult to change.
- **RULE #2: First impressions are a SKILL.** Just like any other skill, you can become a master of the first impression by focusing in on it.
- **RULE #3: It's all about the Audience.** If you find yourself talking too much about your weekend, family or job, then you're not listening enough.
- **RULE #4: Names are IMPORTANT.** When meeting someone for the first time, get their name right. Be fanatical when pronouncing unusual names.
- **RULE #5: Practice a friendly GREETING.** Your smile, handshake and eye contact must all be top quality. Never smarmy.
- **RULE #6: Put likability in CONTEXT.** Your first impression will be a result of likeability, competence and preparedness. Pay attention to all three.
- **RULE #7: Focus on what's POSITIVE.** Whatever the temptation, avoid criticizing anyone, even a competitor. It's a turn-off.
- **RULE #8: Attitude is EVERYTHING.** Memorable people are genuinely interested, enthusiastic, and eager to help. You can't fake it, so really feel it.

Geoffrey James' Top Ten Reasons your Presentation Stinks

REASON #10: It is all data, no story!

- *Diagnosis:* You presented scads of information without any context or meaning.
- *Why you did it:* You wrongly assumed a presentation was the same thing as a lecture.
- *What resulted:* The audience pulled out their Blackberries when you clicked your fifth slide.
- *How to fix it:* Make your presentation tell a story, ideally with the audience as the heroes.

REASON #9: Your slides are too fancy!

- *Diagnosis:* You filled your slides with special effects and visual jim-cracks.
- *Why you did it:* You were afraid that the audience would find you boring.
- *What resulted:* Your audience watched the pretty pictures and missed what you were saying.
- *How to fix it:* Use the minimum visuals that you need to tell the story.

REASON #8: Your slide background is too busy!

- *Diagnosis:* You used a background template that was busy and obtrusive.
- *Why you did it:* You wrongly thought it would make your slides look more "professional."
- *What resulted:* Your audience got headaches trying to see what was actually on each slide.
- *How to fix it:* Use a simple, single color background. Always.

REASON #7: Your fonts are unreadable!

- *Diagnosis:* You used fonts that were too fancy or too small or both.
 - *Why you did it:* The fonts looked great on your computer; the projector... not so much.
 - *What resulted:* The audience squinted and peered, and then gave up. Blackberry time!
 - *How to fix it:* Use large fonts in simple faces (like Ariel); avoid **boldface**, *italics* and UPPERCASE.
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