5 CONFIDENCE-BUILDING TIPS FOR CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

With the excess of speakers at a conference, you need to ensure that your message stands out and that you make a true connection with your audience. Think like a master and take control of your own presentation by instituting these simple tips. Suddenly, you'll be delivering with more confidence and clarity, and your audience will find themselves more connected to — and persuaded by — your unique and important point of view.

1. **Look where you want the audience to look:** Think of your eyes as a guide for your audience; your audience will look where you look. If you want them to look at the slide, look at the slide. Conversely, do you want the audience to look at you? Then you need to be looking out at them. Fight the urge to look at or "speak to" your slides when the focus should be on you.

2. **Always repeat the question:** Even if you are 100% certain that the entire audience has heard the question loud and clear, chances are they have not. Always repeat the question to ensure that everyone in your audience has heard it. This is helpful not only to keep your listeners on the same page, but it also gives you a few seconds to gather your thoughts and clear up any possibility of answering a question that wasn't asked.

3. **Answer to all:** Applicable to an audience of two or two thousand. The person who needs the least amount of attention during the answer is the person who asked the question. You will lose the rest of the audience quickly if you are only speaking to the asker, especially if the answer is lengthy and specific to only that person.

4. **Use the space:** Get out from behind the lectern, step away from the table or get down off that podium! Tempting and comfortable as it may be you will connect with your audience more easily if they can see your body; you actually remove a physical "barrier" between you and your audience. When you avoid stepping out from behind your presentation set, your audience may perceive that you are hiding. Be powerful and take the stage!

5. **Wear a stand-out color:** The last thing you want to do at a big conference is blend in with the wallpaper! If possible, find out what color your backdrop/background is and wear a bold color that will stand out in contrast. Reality check: If your backdrop is black, and you wear black, you will just look like a floating head.