

THE LAST WORD ON...

Presenting yourself

AS STYLISTS AND SALON OWNERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BE MORE VISIBLE IN BUSINESS, PRESENTING SKILLS NEED TO CATCH UP, AND PREPARATION IS KEY...



THE BUSINESS WORLD has gone public. Today, social media requires you to shout about what you do and the values you represent. From webinars to Instagram, TikTok to YouTube, customers expect the businesses it engages with to be transparent about who they are.

Once the domain of polished public speakers, the burden now falls to business owners and independents to be high-profile ambassadors for their own brands... and potentially others too.

Presenting yourself eloquently, professionally and with a healthy helping of flair is no longer a nice-to-have, it's a must-have. For those feeling a little intimidated, now's the time to boost your confidence in your presenting skills.

Before you take to the stage - whether physical or virtual - preparation is key, argues Tom Bourlet, marketing head at events services firm Fizzbox. "Write up a script beforehand, but don't worry about following it perfectly, it can be bullet points. This helps you follow a set path and stops you waffling."

All presenters can get nervous - even seasoned pros. Before you host that stage presentation or go live on Instagram, mindset coach Dr Maurice Duffy has some crucial advice. "Just a few minutes of meditation can help calm nerves. Anchor your mind in the present moment. When we get nervous, we get caught up in negative thoughts about the future. Instead, focus on your physical sensations and surroundings. You can anchor yourself in the present by touching something physical, like a table."

Remember why you're presenting; it will help boost your confidence and steady jitters. "Be yourself," explains Maurice. "The audience wants to hear from you, not from a bad imitation. Speak clearly and vary your pitch, volume, and tone. Use pauses effectively to give the audience time to absorb your ideas."

For Wella technical educator Jamie Michael Doran, slipping up when presenting isn't an issue. "If you say something incorrect, who cares? It shows that you're human." When battling nerves on

stage he advises to crack a joke: "Those few seconds of laughter offer enough time to take a breath, gather your thoughts and feel grounded in the room."

For many presenters social media is their stage and, with attention spans short, being engaging is key, explains Vivienne Johns, founder of The Hairdressers Social Club. "Use visuals and interactive elements such as polls, including storytelling to keep them interested. Ask simple questions such as where people are based to get quick responses to fire up your comment section!"

Some feel very self-conscious having all eyes on them, whether that's hundreds in a large room or on the other side of their screen. Creative HEAD editorial director Amanda Nottage hosts everything from Instagram Lives and Zoom workshops to the Most Wanted and It List Awards. "I've taken a lesson from Beyoncé," she laughs. "She uses her on-stage alter ego, Sasha Fierce, and I do something similar, creating an alter ego with her own identity who 'clicks on' when it's go-time. It helps calm my nerves, because it's not really me up there."

A final piece of advice? Prepare for technical issues. "Make sure you have a back-up plan in case something goes wrong," says Vivienne. "I like to do some quick housekeeping at the beginning of my live presentation, to prepare the audience for what will happen if my stream cuts out."