

# Eight Secrets for Impeccable Presentations

by Alessandra Cimatti

<http://www.slidecoaching.com>

Making and listening to tons of presentations through the years, I have noticed that there are still many speakers that do not plan their delivery properly. As Cameron Francis says, *“If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail.”* I have taken note of the major mistakes I have seen people make (I have made a few myself in the past!) and share them with you in this report to get you on your way to an impeccable delivery.

## 1. Screen Saver

What is a screen saver? It’s a feature that is activated on many personal computers to turn off the display or display a user-defined picture/animation after a period of inactivity. This was important with early CRT displays and Plasma screens in order to prevent phosphor burn-in, but is not really needed in current laptop screens. Still many people have the feature active on their laptops without knowing it.

It’s important to turn off the screen saver on the pc that will run the presentation. This will avoid the screen saver image/program from being projected to the audience when you don’t touch the keyboard or move the mouse for a while, causing a distraction. I have seen speakers that continue their presentation even though the projected image has changed to a black screen or their screen saver image, not realizing this is happened.

How do you turn off the screen saver?

- Windows Vista: right-click on the screen background and choose Customize / screen saver and select (None); click Apply, click OK.
- Windows XP: right-click your desktop, and then click Properties. In the Display Properties dialog box, click the Screen Saver tab. Click the Screen saver drop-down box, and select (None); click on Apply, click OK.
- Mac: Choose Apple menu > System Preferences and click on the Desktop & Screen Saver icon in the Personal section; Click the Screen Saver button, then adjust the “Start screen saver” slider on the bottom all the way to the right selecting “Never”.

## 2. Power

Identify the power outlet nearest to your laptop and make sure it draws power. Plug-in your laptop and check that the Energy Savings settings on the pc don’t activate standby/hibernate modes when the pc is powered. If you are presenting on batteries, also make sure this is not activated.

## 3. Instant Messaging

Exit from all instant messaging and VoIP applications (such as Skype) on the pc that will run the presentation. You don’t want to receive sudden messages or calls from friends and other contacts

during your show.

## 4. Presentation Remote

Use a remote presentation control so you don't have to keep returning to your pc to advance to the next slide. Test the reach of the remote control walking around the room so you know how far you can go without losing the signal. A fresh battery in the remote will guarantee the best distance. Keep in mind that controlling a presentation using a remote control is not equivalent to moving the mouse or touching the keyboard, so you will still need to disable your screen saver. I use a Kensington remote. Its small size has sometimes given the impression that the slides advance automatically, as people don't notice that I have it in the palm of my hand.

## 5. Projector

Check the projector system to make sure it is in focus, aligned, and at the right distance from the screen. If using a portable system, make sure the connecting cable does not get in the way. Get familiar with the projector's remote control. Check to see the best resolution it supports for the slides you are projecting. If possible, position your laptop to allow you to glance at its display to see what's being projected (make sure you know how to set the laptop so that you get projection on both screens). Ask a technician for support if you are unsure on anything.

## 6. Audio

If you need audio support, maybe because you are showing a video clip, check how the AV system works, which cables to plug into which jacks on the laptop, and how to adjust the volume in the room. If you will use a microphone, make sure you test it in advance.

## 7. Internet

If you need internet access during your presentation, ask in advance to make sure it can be provided. Some locations require static IP addresses to be assigned in advance, others require internet Proxy server addresses/ports, and in some cases certain websites and internet applications could be blocked by a firewall. Test all websites in advance to make sure they can be reached. Have a backup plan in case Internet access fails or some sites fail to load. A possible solution can be to do a screen recording and play it back in case of internet failure.

## 8. Readability

Check the font sizes and colors for readability. Setup your pc and connect it to the projector. Adjust the lights and window shades/curtains the way you want them during your performance. Then go to the last row of chairs and advance the slides in presentation mode, to check the readability (and the spelling!). Sometimes things look great on a pc screen but this may not be the case with all projectors and lighting conditions.

## How to use this checklist

Print this checklist and carry a copy in your laptop case. When you get to the presentation venue, preferably some time before you are due to present, take it out and go through all the items.

If you found it useful, pass it on to friends and colleagues, or share using Twitter button below:



If you found this useful, you may also like to read the blog on my web site:

<http://www.slidecoaching.com/blog>

If you received this checklist from a friend and want to sign-up for my mailing list, go to this page:

<http://eepurl.com/dpwz>

For personal slide coaching, training and other services visit:

<http://www.slidecoaching.com>

or e-mail me at [info@slidecoaching.com](mailto:info@slidecoaching.com) .