Help!

Something’s Gone Wrong During My Oral Presentation!

If you’re in the middle of your presentation and things start to go horribly wrong, don’t panic! Here are some tips for getting back on track:

Technology

- **Know it well before you use it!** Make sure you are comfortable using any technology you will be using in your presentation.
- **Have a back-up copy** of any presentation materials with you in case of a problem.
- **Don’t use a network connection** to access any part of your presentation. Have the material downloaded and use it offline.
- **Make sure you have a hard copy of your presentation** to use in case of a total technology failure where you can’t use your computer. If you know it well enough (from all your rehearsing) you should be able to present the information without the slides.

Losing your place

- **Take a moment to breathe, refocus and find your spot.** Losing your place happens to many people. Your audience will be patient with you. It should only take seconds to find your place again and what seems like forever up there will feel like a shorter amount of time to your audience.
- **Number your cue cards** so you can quickly re-arrange them if you drop them. Better yet, attach them together with a metal ring, so that they stay together even if they fall.

Audience seems bored

- **Prepare visuals, thought-provoking ideas,** etc. to keep your audience engaged.
- **Ask the audience questions,** such as “Can everyone see this?” or “Have any of you experienced this issue?”
- **Use introductory phrases to grab their attention:** “This part is really important.” or “If you listen to only one thing I say today, remember this . . .”

Nerves!!!

- **Practice, practice, practice!** Everyone gets nervous. The best remedy for nerves is being overly prepared. Knowing your presentation thoroughly will make you appear confident even if you don’t feel confident.
- **Look at people’s shoulders or foreheads** if you find it nerve-wracking to make eye contact. It will appear as though you are making eye contact even when you aren’t.

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