

Envirothon Special Topic Question - Presentation Tips

Tips from Erika Hill, Public Relations Director for NE Assoc. of Resources Districts and Former TV Anchor/Reporter

- Consider wearing the same pants as your other team members. Kakis, black pants, or blue jeans, etc. so you all look like a unified team.
- Keep hands out of pockets. While someone else is presenting in your group, you can fold your hands together in front of you or behind you (it looks better if all teammates fold hands the same way), stand up straight and be enthusiastic. The judges want to see that you want to be there and are excited to show them your plan!
- Point to and incorporate posters when necessary (show action). If you are talking, don't be afraid to use your hands and point to your display or posters. You can also have another presenter pointing to the poster if you'd like to help the judges follow your plan. This can also show all presenters are engaged during the entire presentation.
- Make posters simple. It's better to have more posters with simple messages, than one poster with all messaging crammed on it. Don't forget people love visuals and color and pictures too. Make sure the judges who will be sitting 10 feet away or more, can read every word on the poster. The judges want to see creativity. Don't be afraid to cut up the poster in a certain shape that's relevant, or maybe you want to hide the answers and reveal them as you present your findings? Also, for many, presenting is nerve-racking. Sometimes staying busy helps calm the nerves.
- Look up when presenting – look at the judges or at the wall right above the judges' heads if it's too nerve-racking to look at the judges. SMILE!!!
- If you are excited about presenting, it will come out in your voice. People love listening to an energetic voice more than someone talking flat (Think of radio DJ's – their voices are always energetic so you don't switch to another radio station). Project your voice towards the judges so they can hear you or consider stepping closer to the judges if you don't believe your voice will carry.
- If you have male and female students on your team, consider mixing them up when presenting. Make sure all presenters talk an equal amount of time.
- If you mess up during your presentation, don't acknowledge it or stop your presentation mid-way through. Just keep going no matter what – like it was planned all along. Many times, people won't even realize you made a mistake if you pretend like nothing happened. Be careful of saying the word "sorry" too much during your presentation if you do make a little mistake.
- Don't be afraid to show you support each team member. Once you're done with your section in the presentation, consider saying, "Now Bob will talk about ____." Then Bob should consider

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acknowledging when the other team member is done speaking and say "Thank you Sally" and then move on to talk about their part of the presentation. ***This is typically for advanced speakers, but it never hurts to get into the habit now! This shows a beginning and end to each person's presentation points they're trying to make and transitions to the next point to be made with a different presenter. It also shows respect for each other. This takes practice.

- When it's your turn to speak, consider stepping out in front of your other team members and then step back in line when you're done.
- Don't be afraid to move around the room. If you want to be creative... BE CREATIVE. If you don't think the judges can see your poster, you can have a team member bring it a little closer to them while you're talking.
- Consider using simple marketing tools. For example, do you have a catchy title? Play on words? Inspiring quotes that are relative? Positive visuals? Pictures? Go for it! Be creative!!! No idea is stupid!
- Think of this special topic presentation as exactly what it is... A PRESENTATION. The judges don't only want to hear your plan, but they want to be entertained too. They want to be convinced your team's plan is the best one out there.
- To help you feel more comfortable during your presentation, practice in front of a mirror. It might feel weird the first couple of times you do it. But once you get into a flow, you'll realize if you can show yourself confidence in your subject, you can show anyone. It works!!!

Good Luck!

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