

The logo for the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. At the top, the word "ROCHESTER" is written in a small, black, sans-serif font. Below it is a stylized, grey silhouette of a city skyline. The main title "Democrat and Chronicle" is written in a large, black, gothic-style serif font, with "Democrat" and "Chronicle" being significantly larger than the word "and" in between.

ROCHESTER Democrat and Chronicle

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Tips for an effective presentation

WOMEN AT WORK

Sally Ward

Top-notch communications skills are vital to professional success. Communications that are timely, direct and succinct will hit the mark with teams and customers alike.

When presenting, stick to a maximum of five main points. Begin with a conclusion and back it up with metrics and facts. Don't simply report. Offer a recommendation or suggest next steps.

Avoid using fillers such as "uh". Counteract speaker nerves by pausing and taking a deep breath before moving on to the next point.

Use gestures to emphasize, clarify, or direct. Gesturing, smiling, inclining your head forward all foster involvement with your audience. Nervous habits such as rocking and shifting are major distractions.

Make eye contact. Think of having a live conversation with several people. Focus on a few faces for five seconds, then make eye contact with another group. Continue to move your eyes around the room to include each member of the audience.

Speak clearly and audibly at a moderate pace. This is an important matter of consideration for your audience. Check at the outset to be sure everyone can hear, even in the back of the room.

Use PowerPoint as a tool, not a crutch. Never put all of your presentation on PowerPoint and read from it. Each screen should offer one point on which you can elaborate. Add graphics and pictures for interest.

Rehearse. Deliver your presentation several times to an empty room. Then give it in front of a mirror and study the effect of your hand gestures and body language. Do a dry run for someone who will give you honest feedback.

Practice until you can present confidently without reading word for word from a script.

Remember Franklin Roosevelt's Three Be's of presenting:
Be sincere. Be brief. Be seated.

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