



Reading your audience

Watch your audience by checking their body language.

When people are engaged, they:

- Sit up
- Lean forward and face you
- Make eye contact
- Take notes

When not engaged, participants:

- Have a puzzled look
- May be frowning
- Might ask their neighbor questions
- Start using their mobile devices

How to re-engage an audience

- Ask the audience a question
- Make a point or tell a story—raise and vary your voice
- Ask someone in the audience to share their experience relating to what you are covering
- Consider asking everyone to stand up and ask questions while they stretch—acknowledge that this portion of the material may not be the most exciting but they will need this to move on to the next topic and then move ahead to the next section
- Give out treats, such as candy
- Give the audience a break, if possible

How to handle disruptive questions

- Acknowledge you don't know the answer
- Invite the participant to write out his or her question and you will find the answer and reply by email
- Invite the participant to send their question via email
- Ask the participant if they can wait until the break to talk about their specific question(s)
- Many times, summarizing the question/input is helpful to let the person know they were heard
- Offer a "thank you" for the input and point out that you need to move on if the event is to finish on time but you would be happy to discuss their concern after the session

What to do if people start leaving early

- Many times this signals that participants may simply need a break. You could:
- Offer a five-minute break, asking the audience to get up and stretch, or provide an activity
- Ignore the few people who choose to leave early
- Walk around the room while presenting
- Ask them to wait, letting the audience know you are almost done or near a break