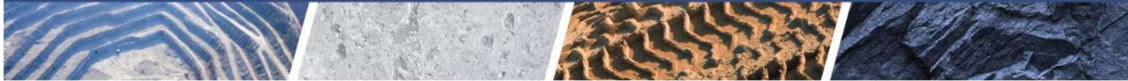




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## IQA Event Speaker Guide - Tips & Tricks

### Presenting with Confidence and Impact

#### Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to present at an Institute of Quarrying Australia event. Your expertise and insights are valuable to our community. This guide provides practical tips and proven techniques to help you deliver a confident, engaging presentation that resonates with your audience.

Whether you're addressing a room of 20 or 200 people, the principles in this guide will help you connect with your audience, manage presentation nerves, and leave a lasting impression.

All speakers must also familiarise themselves with and comply with the IQA Speaker Code of Conduct, which outlines professional and ethical standards for all presenters at IQA events,

### Section 1: Preparation – The Foundation of Confidence

#### Know Your Material Thoroughly

The single most effective way to build confidence is through thorough preparation. The more you know your content, the more secure you'll feel delivering it.

- **Understand your audience:** Tailor your presentation to the interests, knowledge level, and needs of the IQA members and guests attending. Consider their experience level, professional backgrounds, and what they hope to learn from your talk[1].
- **Structure your content clearly:** Organize your material into a logical flow with a clear introduction, 3–5 main points, and a strong conclusion[2].
- **Practice multiple times:** Rehearse your presentation at least 3–5 times. Practice in front of a mirror, record yourself, or present to a trusted colleague. This helps you iron out delivery issues and build familiarity with your material[1].

## Plan Your Delivery

Decide how you'll deliver your content:

- **Use bullet points rather than scripts:** Memorizing word-for-word can sound stilted and robotic. Instead, develop clear bullet points or speaking notes that remind you of key ideas[2].
- **Time your presentation:** Rehearse with a timer. Aim to finish within the allocated time slot with a few minutes to spare for questions and natural pauses[3].
- **Prepare for challenges:** Anticipate potential issues such as technical difficulties, audience interruptions, or losing your place. Having contingency plans reduces anxiety and keeps you composed[1].

## Know Your Opening and Closing

These are the most important moments—they set the tone and are what audiences remember most[2].

- **Craft a strong opening (first 90 seconds):** Start with a hook that captures attention: a thought-provoking question, a relevant statistic, a brief personal anecdote, or a surprising statement related to your topic[3].
- **Plan a memorable closing:** Summarize your key points, reinforce the main message, end with a call to action, or conclude with an inspiring thought that ties back to your opening[3].

## Section 2: Managing Nervousness and Building Confidence

### Reframe Your Nervous Energy

Nervousness is normal - even experienced speakers feel it. The key is channeling that energy into enthusiasm and engagement[1].

- **Remember your message matters more than perfection:** Shift your focus from your own performance to the value of what you're sharing. What message are you trying to convey? How can your words make a positive impact on your audience?[1]
- **Visualize success:** Before you present, picture yourself speaking clearly and confidently, with the audience engaged and receptive. Visualization reduces anxiety and primes your mind for success[1].
- **Use positive self-talk:** Replace anxious thoughts ("I'm nervous," "What if I mess up?") with affirmations like "I've prepared well," "I have something valuable to share," and "The audience wants me to succeed"[1].

## Physical Techniques to Calm Nerves

- **Breathe deeply and slowly:** Before you begin, take several slow, controlled breaths (inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 6). This calms your nervous system and clears your mind[1].
- **Use the champion stance:** Position one foot slightly in front of the other, place your weight on your back foot, hold your head up, drop your shoulders back, and lean your torso slightly forward. This posture signals confidence to both your brain and your audience[2].
- **Arrive early:** Spend time in the presentation space before your talk. Familiarize yourself with the room, test the technology, and settle into the environment. This reduces uncertainty and builds confidence[1].

## Section 3: Stage Presence and Body Language

### Command the Room

Speaking is a physical activity. Your body language communicates as much as your words[2].

- **Take ownership of the space:** Recognize that you belong at the front of the room. Stand with purpose, move with intention, and make deliberate use of the available space[2].
- **Maintain an open posture:** Stand upright with your shoulders back. Avoid crossed arms, hands in pockets, or other closed-off positions that signal defensiveness or discomfort[2].
- **Eliminate nervous habits:** Be aware of fidgeting, pacing aimlessly, swaying, or playing with objects. Purposeful movement is fine; nervous repetition distracts your audience[2].

### Eye Contact and Connection

Eye contact is one of the most powerful tools for building trust and engagement[2].

- **Make genuine eye contact with different audience members:** Look at individuals throughout the room, spending 3–5 seconds with each person. This makes each listener feel directly addressed and important[2].
- **In larger audiences:** Scan the room systematically—left side, center, right side—so everyone feels included[2].
- **Smile and show warmth:** A genuine smile conveys confidence, approachability, and enjoyment of your topic. Your facial expressions should be friendly and open[2].

### Use Purposeful Gestures

Gestures emphasize your message and maintain audience interest[2].

- **Use your hands to reinforce key points:** Appropriate hand gestures help clarify your message and make your presentation more dynamic[2].
- **Keep gestures natural and proportionate:** Large, exaggerated movements can distract; too few gestures may make you appear stiff or disengaged[2].
- **Vary your position occasionally:** Standing in one spot can feel monotonous. Move naturally to different areas of the presentation space to maintain audience interest, but avoid pacing nervously[2].

## Section 4: Vocal Delivery

### Speak with Confidence and Clarity

Your voice is a powerful tool. How you speak is as important as what you say[2].

- **Project your voice appropriately:** Speak loudly enough so everyone in the room can hear you comfortably without straining. Projection comes from your diaphragm, not just your throat[2].
- **Vary your tone and pace:** Avoid a monotone voice. Vary your inflection to emphasize key points and maintain interest. Slow down for important concepts, speed up for lighter material[3].
- **Use strategic pauses:** Pausing after important statements allows your audience time to absorb the information and demonstrates confidence. Silence is powerful[2].
- **Avoid filler words:** Minimise "um," "uh," "like," and "you know." When you feel the urge to use a filler word, pause instead—silence is preferable[2].

## Section 5: Audience Engagement Techniques

### Engage Every 7–10 Minutes

Attention naturally wanes after 7–10 minutes. Vary your engagement strategy throughout your presentation to maintain audience interest[3].

#### Engagement techniques you can use:

- **Ask genuine questions:** Pose questions that stimulate thought and interaction. Ask for a show of hands, invite volunteers to share experiences, or use think-pair-share (ask the audience to think, discuss with a neighbor, then share)[3].
- **Tell relevant stories and anecdotes:** Personal stories create emotional connection and make your content memorable. Share genuine experiences, challenges you've overcome, or lessons learned[3].
- **Share surprising statistics or insights:** Use relevant data or unexpected facts that capture attention and reinforce your message[3].

- **Invite audience participation:** Depending on your content, you might conduct a quick poll, ask small groups to discuss a question, or invite brief comments from the audience[3].
- **Use the volunteer spotlight approach:** Ask for volunteers to share experiences rather than putting individuals on the spot. This maintains psychological safety and respects people's comfort levels while encouraging participation. [3].
- **Incorporate multimedia strategically:** Show a relevant video clip, image, or diagram - but don't let slides dominate your presentation. You are the primary focus, not your slides[2].

### Tailor Engagement to Your Audience Size

#### For smaller audiences (20–50 people):

- Use more intimate storytelling and vulnerability
- Invite genuine dialogue and back-and-forth discussion
- Make eye contact with individuals and use their names when possible
- Ask more personalized questions about their specific experiences

#### For larger audiences (100+ people):

- Use broader, universal stories that resonate across diverse backgrounds
- Employ techniques like polls and shows of hands rather than individual responses
- Use larger gestures and more dynamic movement
- Simplify interactive elements and focus on collective participation

## Section 6: Working with Slides and Visual Aids

### Remember: You Are the Star, Not Your Slides

Slides support your message; they don't replace you[2].

- **Minimise text on slides:** Avoid reading from slides or projecting walls of text. Use slides to show visuals—images, diagrams, key terms—that complement your spoken words[2].
- **Use the "10-minute rule":** If using slides, change them every 10 minutes to maintain visual interest[3].
- **Keep slides simple and professional:** Use consistent formatting, large readable fonts, and high-quality visuals. Slides should enhance, not distract[2].
- **Consider turning off the screen:** Occasionally turn off the projector for a minute or two so the audience focuses entirely on you and your message. This demonstrates confidence and keeps attention high[3].

- **Practice with your technology:** Test all audiovisual equipment beforehand. Know how to advance slides, adjust volume, and handle technical issues gracefully[3].

## Section 7: The Opening and Closing

### Create a Strong Opening (First 90 Seconds)

Your opening sets the tone for your entire presentation[2].

#### Ways to capture attention:

- **Start with a compelling question:** "Have you ever considered...?" or "What if I told you...?"[3]
- **Share a surprising statistic:** "Did you know that...?"[3]
- **Tell a brief, relevant personal story:** A short anecdote that relates to your topic[3]
- **Make a bold or thought-provoking statement:** Something that challenges conventional thinking[3]
- **Acknowledge your audience:** Thank them for their time, acknowledge their expertise, or reference something specific about the IQA community[3]

After your hook, clearly state what you'll be covering and why it matters to them[3].

### Deliver a Memorable Closing

Your closing is what audiences remember longest[2].

#### Effective closing techniques:

- **Summarize your key takeaways:** Briefly recap the 3–5 main points you've covered[2]
- **Reinforce your main message:** Leave the audience with one clear, actionable idea they can take away[2]
- **End with inspiration or impact:** Conclude with a thought-provoking statement, a call to action, or a vision for the future[2]
- **Thank your audience:** Express genuine appreciation for their attention and engagement[3]
- **Invite questions:** Open the floor for questions in a warm, inviting way: "I'd love to hear your thoughts. What questions do you have?"[3]

#### Avoid weak endings like:

- Simply saying "That's it" or "I'm done"
- Trailing off or appearing uncertain
- Introducing entirely new information

- Going significantly over time
- Leaving the audience without a clear sense of closure

## Section 8: Handling Questions and Interaction

### Set Expectations for Questions

- **Let the audience know upfront:** At the beginning of your talk, tell the audience whether you prefer questions during or after your presentation[3].
- **Welcome questions warmly:** Your tone should convey that you genuinely value their input[3].

### Responding to Questions

- **Listen fully before responding:** Let the questioner finish completely before you answer. Take a moment to think before speaking[1].
- **Repeat or rephrase the question:** This ensures the entire audience understands what was asked and gives you time to formulate a thoughtful answer[3].
- **Stay positive and calm:** Even challenging questions are opportunities to clarify and demonstrate expertise. Respond with respect and professionalism[1].
- **Be honest if you don't know:** It's perfectly acceptable to say "That's a great question. I don't have the answer right now, but I'll find out and get back to you." Provide a contact method and follow through[3].
- **Keep answers concise:** Provide a clear, focused answer without unnecessary elaboration[3].

## Section 9: Final Tips and Key Takeaways

### Before Your Presentation

- ✓ Know your content and practice multiple times
- ✓ Test all technology well in advance
- ✓ Arrive early to familiarize yourself with the room
- ✓ Use breathing and visualization techniques to manage nerves
- ✓ Adopt the champion stance to project confidence
- ✓ Prepare your opening and closing word-for-word

### During Your Presentation

- ✓ Make eye contact with your audience
- ✓ Use purposeful body language and open posture ✓ Vary your vocal tone, pace, and volume

- ✓ Engage your audience every 7–10 minutes with questions, stories, or interactions
- ✓ Use pauses strategically to reinforce key points
- ✓ Smile and show genuine enthusiasm for your topic
- ✓ Stay focused on your message, not on your performance
- ✓ Remain flexible and adapt to audience reactions

## Remember

**Confidence comes from preparation.** The more you prepare, practice, and visualize success, the more confident you'll feel when you step up to present.

**Your passion for your topic is contagious.** When you demonstrate genuine enthusiasm and care about your message, your audience will be engaged and receptive.

**Authenticity beats perfection.** Your audience doesn't expect a flawless performance. They appreciate genuine, authentic communication delivered by someone who knows their material and cares about their understanding.

## References

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[2] CBS. (2026). Presentation skills: 16 tips for effective presentations. Retrieved from <https://www.cbs.de/en/blog/15-effective-presentation-tips-to-improve-presentation-skills>

[3] Moxie Institute. (2025). How to engage an audience: Proven techniques for any size. Retrieved from <https://www.moxieinstitute.com/how-to-engage-audience-any-size/>

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*This guide was prepared for the Institute of Quarrying Australia to support our speakers and ensure consistently excellent presentations at IQA events.*