

10 Deadly Sins

. . . that cause students to walk out, express dissatisfaction and in other ways torpedo your presentation and teaching efforts.

1. Appearing Unprepared

This does not mean that you actually are unprepared. It simply means that it appears that way. For example, not being able to locate a transparency, dropping your notes so they get out of sequence, and not knowing what comes next unless you absolutely have your notes in front of you, or not knowing what comments(s) to make about the next point on your transparency or slide.

These are appearances. It doesn't mean that you haven't prepared and it doesn't mean that you don't know your material. But since you appear unprepared, it also appears that you're not qualified to be presenting your materials.

2. The Improper Handling of Questions

This means things like putting off questions, perhaps abruptly, with something like, "I'll be covering that in a little while if you can wait until then." Or, combining questions, "Those two questions are somewhat similar so I'll just answer them as one question," remembering that very few people ever feel that their question is similar to someone else's.

3. Apologizing for Yourself or the Organization

4. Unfamiliar with Knowable Information

For example, not knowing the names of the key members of the organization (the president, Board members, the Director of Financial Aid). Not knowing which office or person handles vocational education programs; if we have a men's basketball team; whom to talk to about college transfer.

5. Unprofessional Use of Audiovisual Equipment

This includes things like knowing how to make the VCR work, or having poorly prepared transparencies.

6. Seeming To Be Off Schedule

This doesn't mean that you actually are off schedule, it just may look that way. For example, in your introduction you may have indicated that there are 6 things that you are going to cover in class. Make sure you "walk your talk" or explain why you did not.

To keep from seeming off schedule, you need to be very careful to tell people where you're going and how long it's going to take to get there so they realize you actually are on schedule.

7. Not Involving the Participants

The more you can involve people in the learning process, the more effective the learning is going to be.

8. Not Establishing Personal Rapport

Personal rapport can be developed through eye contact throughout your presentation, and simply by making yourself available to people, being available at breaks, at lunch, before and after class sessions.

9. Appearing Disorganized

Not previewing/presenting/reviewing. This is a new way of saying, “Tell them what you’re going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you’ve told them.” We appear disorganized when we don’t properly introduce things, when we don’t properly wrap up a presentation, and when we don’t make an orderly transition into the next part of our presentation.

10. Not Starting Off Quickly in Establishing an Image

It is true that at the beginning of most presentations, people need some time to get focused. People need some time to get going themselves. But it makes it much more difficult when the person teaching the class also needs to take that time to get focused and get going.

We want to emphasize that we get started quickly

- We’re organized
- We have an illustration, that we make contact with the group
- We involve the group
- We involve them through questions

We use these things to quickly take command so that we know who we are, where we are going, and that it is going to be exciting for students and fun for them along the way.