

5 Tips for Attentive Audiences

Attention is the first step in learning

Presentations are designed to provide knowledge, build skills, and promote taking positive action. In order to get the most out of a presentation, participants need to attend to the presenter, the message, and one another. Without giving undivided attention, it is nearly impossible for participants to engage with the presentation, understand the message, or take action.

Achieve an attentive posture

Want to get the most out of a presentation? Set yourself up for success. Sit in a location that gives an unobstructed view of the presenter and visual aids. Sit up straight with feet on the floor, and head facing the podium or stage. Have a means for taking notes, by hand for the greatest retention. Make eye contact with the presenter, be responsive and provide nonverbal feedback.

Minimize distractions

Full attention cannot be achieved or maintained if multi-tasking occurs. Minimize distractions by putting away electronic devices, or at least turning off all notifications, silencing the phone, closing social media channels, and ignoring text messages. Avoid side conversations that can be distracting to the presenter or other participants. If possible, alert others to not disturb you.

Take note of expectations

What ground rules or expectations have been conveyed? Is the presentation expected to start on time? If so, show up before it begins. Will there be discussions or participant activities? Plan to fully engage, participate, and encourage others to as well. What are the guidelines for electronic devices? Go above and beyond to contribute to an attentive atmosphere.

Attention = Respect

An audience that gives full attention to a presenter and a presenter who is aware and attentive to an audience exhibit respect for one another. Attention and respect promote effective, free-flowing communication and optimize learning. Conversely, when an audience is disengaged, distracted, or disruptive, respect is lost and learning is minimized. Make full attention your goal.