

## 6 ways to eliminate speaker's anxiety

THE NUMBER-ONE fear of most Americans, according to many studies, is public speaking. Yet it is an integral element of success in business.

Professional speaker, coach, author and Costco member Arnold Sanow ([www.arnoldsanow.com](http://www.arnoldsanow.com)) works with companies and individuals to improve their presentation and communication skills. He says, "To enhance your chances for success in business you must conquer this fear. People who speak well are perceived as smarter, more competent, trustworthy and knowledgeable. By improving your speaking ability you will win more oral proposals, close more sales, persuade and influence customers and investors, and motivate employees." He suggests these six guidelines:



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- ① **Join Toastmasters.** This international club focuses on helping people to curb their fears and boost their speaking ability. For more information, go to [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org).
- ② **Plan.** Ninety percent of a good presentation revolves around planning. To decrease your anxiety, know your audience, research your topic, prepare a good outline and then follow it.
- ③ **Meditate.** Use relaxation exercises, such as tensing up parts of the body and then relaxing them.
- ④ **Focus on a friendly face.** There is always at least one person who is smiling, looking at you or nodding in agreement. Keep your eyes on that person until you feel relaxed.
- ⑤ **Visualize a successful presentation.** Picture the opening, the body of the speech and the close. Picture everyone smiling, laughing at your humor, applauding at appropriate times and then coming up afterwards to tell you about the great job you did.
- ⑥ **Use your own style.** Be yourself. Many fears can be attributed to a speaker trying to adapt to a style that is not his or her own.

Sanow cites Walter Cronkite, who said, "It's natural to have butterflies; the secret is to get them to fly in formation." By following the formation above, your fears will be replaced with confidence. 📧