

The logo for King's Venues, featuring the words "KING'S" and "VENUES" in a bold, white, sans-serif font stacked vertically within a red square.

# KING'S VENUES

## **How to engage with your audience – public speaking tips**

Whether you're a seasoned speaker or preparing for your first public appearance, there are always things you can do to increase engagement at your event. The expression 'Content is King', has been bandied around for years and is as relevant today as it's always been. But having the best content in the world means nothing if it's not delivered in a way that captivates your audience. Keep reading to get some great tips on how to maximise your impact.

### **Do a dry run**

Arrange with your venue to visit the room or space you'll be speaking in. Even if the AV equipment isn't set up you'll get a feel for the size of the place. Talk to the venue staff about any visuals you're going to be using so there are no surprises on the day. This rehearsal will help dispel any nerves and increase confidence, essential when speaking in public.

### **Build up buzz**

Reach out to your audience a few weeks before the event. Perhaps there's a topic you'd like them to research or think about, a questionnaire you could get them to participate in, maybe even an online discussion on social media you'd like to start... Think of a way to get your attendees fired up from the off. Anything you can do to warm up your audience before you start talking will help get them invested.

### **Seating**

Once you have an idea of numbers, block off all other seating in the room starting from the back row. A tighter crowd will increase intensity and encourage discussion, plus it'll also discourage people from taking a seat at the back and leaving early.

### **A leaning post**

Although you don't want to be reading out your presentation, it's always a good idea to take notes with you and to give yourself a lectern or similar to hold onto while you talk. You might feel comfortable walking across the stage or through the audience – this is a great way to keep your audience on their toes - but make sure you have a base. This gives you somewhere to return to if you lose track of your talk and something to hold onto if you suddenly forget what to do with your arms.

### **Interaction**

There's a reason we read stories to our children at bedtime – listening to someone talk is tiring! Whatever your subject matter you need to introduce an element of interaction into your seminar. You could break the room up into smaller groups to discuss various topics and report back with their conclusions, ask attendees to vote on issues with a show of hands, directly ask random members of

the audience questions... You should aim to keep people on their toes during your talk wondering what's coming next.

### **Visual and audio aids**

Wherever possible try to use pictures and sounds to liven up your speech. You don't have to go overboard with the theatrics, but a little bit of flair never goes amiss. Speak to your venue about screens to display images on and equipment to play music through.

### **Hands free**

If appropriate, insist your audience attends your talk notebook, laptop and mobile phone free. Promise to give handouts at the end so this doesn't make anyone nervous. Losing these seminar crutches might make your attendees feel a little vulnerable, but this is a good thing as they will have no distraction or excuse not to look at you and concentrate while you talk. Getting any sort of physical activity going during the presentation will enhance this commitment even further. Even a seemingly pointless 'seat swap' half way through will re-energise the room and stave off lecture room lethargy.

### **Follow-up**

Don't lose the momentum of a good event. Make sure you keep the conversations going through social media afterwards. Your attendees will also be interested in networking and this will help you all keep in touch – and hopefully rebooking for next year.

### **Speaking at a King's Venues event**

If you're booked in to speak at a King's Venues event, talk to a member of our Events Team about visiting the space to give your presentation a run-through. They'll also be happy to assist you with any queries you have regarding our audio visual facilities. You can reach us on 020 7848 1700.