

# How To Achieve a Healthy Work Environment



A healthy work environment is important to your team and can be achieved fairly easily. It boosts productivity and happiness and increases employee retention. If you have not created a healthy workplace, then it is time to make that effort, especially in this tight market for talent. Learn what creates a healthy workplace and start making improvements for the future of your company.

## Offer Rewards and Incentives for Superior Performance

Rewarding employee performance is strategic. You must offer desirable incentives that fit the company's budget. If strategized correctly, rewards can lead to a more motivated and positive team.

There are many types of benefits that you can offer employees. This includes bonuses, gift cards, and event tickets. You may choose to reward an entire team or specific team member for achieving a goal.

See *20 Techniques for Acknowledging Your Employee's Good Work* for more ideas on rewards and incentives.

## Choose Stimulating Paint Colors

The workplace can have a big impact on attitude, and colors can profoundly affect productivity. Angela Wright is a world-renowned color psychologist. She

developed the scientifically tested color-affect system. According to Wright's research, the intensity of a color determines whether it is stimulating or soothing. More saturated colors are best for the office place.

Wright's theory states that blue is connected to the mind, green to balance, yellow to emotion, and red to body.

The most obvious answer to a productive work place would be blue. However, you might want to incorporate green trim to create balance.

## **Offer Stand-Up Desks**

Stand up desks have become part of many company's employee wellness programs. For example, Google provides standup desks for all employees. Facebook also has more than 250 employees using standup desks. Even I use a flexible desk to allow sitting or standing.

Research by Texas A&M Health Science Service Center concludes that employees in a call center are 46% more productive when using a standup desk.

### **Benefits of Standup Desk**

- Improves Focus
- Increases Energy
- Reduces Back Pain

## **Be Flexible on Timing**

Different people are more productive during various parts of the day. Some people perform better with a morning workout. Others get in early but need a 1.5 lunch break to renew their day. If your company's processes allow flexibility with timing, give it to your employees. It also helps attract people that may have a longer commute when hiring.

Allow a 2-hour window for morning arrival. You can also allow extended lunch breaks. Figure out what is right for the company and be as flexible as possible to your employee's lifestyles.

# Communication Skills

The ability to communicate effectively within a company is essential. The skill prevents misunderstandings, which leads to errors and missed deadlines.

In our digital age, companies often communicate over email, text, and phone. Do not underestimate the significance of meetings to prevent confusion.

## Tips to Communicate Well

- Practice Active Listening
- Use Strong Eye Contact
- Explain Tasks and Provide Detailed Handout or meeting agenda with time targets
- Speak in a Friendly Tone
- Be Open-Minded to Other Opinions
- Accept and Encourage Feedback

# Improve the Lighting

Studies show that office lighting can play a role in employee productivity.

“Effectively lit and attractive environments enhance your image, help you recruit and retain high-value employees, and increase the total value of your facility.”  
Philips Systems

To effectively light your office, incorporate natural light. If your workspace does not have windows then use broad spectrum lightbulbs. Broad spectrum produces the most similar affect as natural light.

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# How-To Receive a Raise at Work



At some point, you are going to want a raise at work. Maybe you have been contacted by recruiters for jobs that pay more, but you would like to stay if your current employer would give you a raise. It is important to know the appropriate procedures to asking for a raise. This could determine whether you receive the compensation you deserve.

The following tips can help you maximize your raise when it is time to ask:

## Show Your Value

The most essential part of receiving a pay raise is showing your added value to the company. Prepare a list of goals that you have accomplished before entering the meeting. Your employer wants to know why they should give you a raise. Demonstrate your value through performance evidence.

### Examples of Added Value

- Cost Saving Report
- Staff Development
- Important Projects Achieved
- Productivity Improvement
- Customer Service Reviews

# **Read Your Employee Handbook**

The employee handbook outlines when pay raises are granted. If your handbook states that pay raises are granted annually then you should not expect a meeting until the appropriate date. Some pay raises can vary based on performance. In that case, prepare a value report.

## **Talk About the Future**

Your employer will probably ask you about your plan for the future within the company. Have a plan of other projects and improvements that you would like to achieve. And if you've been contacted by recruiters about other jobs that pay more, tell your employer about the calls and ask them if you might be able to get a salary adjustment. But again, make sure you can show how you've added value.

## **Be Prepared to Hear “No”**

There is always the chance that you will hear “no” in response to a salary increase. A “no” does not mean that you will not receive the raise at some point. Usually your employer will respond with improvement that they would like to see before providing the raise. Listen to their constructive criticism so you can receive the raise in the future. And if you have been getting calls from recruiters for other higher paying opportunities, getting a “No” on your request for a raise may indicate you may want to talk with these recruiters to see what your options are.

## **Timing is Everything**

Use common sense when you are asking for a raise. If you know the company is struggling financially, it is not time to ask for a raise. Instead, you should start searching for a job in a higher paying company.

You should also schedule the meeting at your employer's convenience. Send them an email requesting a meeting and be patient. You are more likely to receive the raise if your employer does not feel rushed.

# Dress the Part

Your first impression will set the tone for the meeting. There is a saying from career coaches that you should dress for the role you seek. In this case, if you want to be considered for a raise or promotion you should try to start dressing appropriately for that next level.

Take how you dress seriously, but since you are approaching your current employer you probably don't need to dress as you would for a formal interview. But make sure you look professional and be confident.

# Don't Compare Your Salary to Colleagues

It can be disappointing to find out that someone in the same job position has a higher salary. However, a number of items factor into their pay scale.

*Has your colleague been with the company longer than you?*

*Did your colleague have more job experience upon entering the position?*

*Does your colleague have more education than you?*

Do not tell your employer that you are being treated unfairly. Focus on why you deserve the raise to be taken seriously. In fact, letting your employer know you know how much your colleagues are making can create more problems for you than it can solve. Best to stay away from bringing this up.

Asking for a raise can be awkward. Go into the meeting prepared and confident for your best opportunity of receiving a raise. As a Specialty Quality and Regulatory Recruiter, I help job candidates negotiate and maximize their pay rate upon entering the position. A well planned conversation with your employer about your salary can help you determine if you have a future with the company, or if it's time to consider a change.

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# How-To Reset a Bad Work Day



We all have bad days at work. Sometimes, our bad days initiate from a missed deadline, late arrival, or office politics. You could also have just woken up cranky.

Before you get too discouraged, know that you can reset any bad day. The following five tips can help you reset your day.

## Communicate with Person that You Have Had Problems

Poor communication is a frequent reason for stress. Miscommunication can lead to confusion and anxiety. If your stress is related to another coworker, start by confronting them with your issue. The issue might not be as bad as you think and by getting some resolution or understanding to the problem you decrease the stress.

Emails work if your stress is regarding clarifying a project. For greater problems, you should consider a one-on-one meeting where you use polite language and encourage feedback. A group meeting could be necessary for more serious conflicts.

## Finish Your Priority Tasks

When we have stacks of work, we often forget to prioritize. Unfortunately, when we do not prioritize, we can miss deadlines and turn in insufficient work. Prioritizing is essential to decrease work related stress and improve focus.

To reset a stressful work day, make a list of all the tasks that you need to complete. Figure out what needs to be completed immediately. To avoid this problem again, prioritize your tasks at the beginning of the week. You can keep track on Google Calendar or iCal.

## **Get Some Vitamin D**

Vitamin D, or the “happy vitamin”, is essential to improving mood. The essential vitamin can be obtained from the sun. An estimated one billion people in the United States are Vitamin D deficient. If you work in a cloudy climate or have long office hours, you probably do not receive the vitamin D that your body needs.

To reset a bad work day, go on a walk outside during your lunch break. “Approximately five-to-30 minutes of sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at least twice a week to the face, arms, legs, or back without sunscreen” is sufficient, according to the National Institutes of Health’s vitamin D fact sheet. You should always wear sunscreen if you are in the sun for a prolonged period of time.

A vitamin D supplement can also help severe deficiencies.

## **Listen to Music**

Next time you are in a bad mood at work, put on headphones and listen to your favorite song. Music arouses emotions and stimulates your mind.

Valerie N. Stratton, PhD, and Annette H. Zalanowski, of Penn State University, Altoona, studied college student’s responses to music when studying. The students kept a two-week music listening diary that included their moods.

The findings of the study concluded that students were more optimistic, joyful, friendly, and calm after listening to music. Every positive mood, except mood, was elevated according to their study.

## **Smile**

“Fake it until you make it!” We hear that phrase in business often. However, faking a smile can also improve your mood, reduce stress, and lower heart rate.

When you are stressed at work, force a smile on your face. You may feel strange at first but smiling activates areas of the brain associated with reward and triggers release of neurotransmitter dopamine, which is released when happy.

Everyone has bad work days. However, you can make small changes to improve your mood and boost productivity. Try these tips to reset your bad work day.

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## How-To Not Land the Job



You have revamped your resume, applied for hundreds of positions, and you still do not have a job. What gives?

The problem could be your interview skills. There are a variety of nonverbal and verbal cues that can immediately turn off potential employers. As a recruiter, I have seen highly experienced candidates ruin their chance of getting a job with inappropriate social cues. It's important to know what these traits are because they can be very easy to avoid.

## Answering Phone Calls or Texts

Most of us are hooked onto our smartphones. We rarely leave the house without them. While this is appropriate during our personal time, it is not acceptable to text or answer a call during an interview. The employer could feel as though the interview is not a priority. Therefore, the job is not important to you. Turn your cell phone on silent before entering the interview.

# Timeliness

We are all late occasionally. However, do not be late for an interview! If you are late for an interview then chances are that you could be seen as being late to meetings or on projects.

Tardiness can be recoverable. Call as soon as you realize that you are going to be late. Take an extra minute to compose yourself and apologize when you get to the interview.

# Confidence

The feeling of sitting across from a hiring manager can make your heart race. Nevertheless, to get the job, we need to collect ourselves and act confidently. If you panic during an interview then you will probably never land the position.

Confidence is an essential quality that many candidates fail to exude. Even if you do not feel cool, calm, and collected, there are a few ways to make you appear that way.

- Take Deep Breathes
- Sit Still
- Make Eye Contact
- Slow Your Speech and don't ramble
- Think Positively
- Don't speak negatively of current or former employers/bosses

# Interview Attire

Leave the jeans behind when you are dressing for an interview. The first impression you make will be by your attire. Dress in a way that is professionally appropriate.

## Attire for Interview

- For men: A suit- matching jacket and pants, dress shirt, tie and formal

shoes (shined)

- For women: A pant suit or mid-length skirt, or dress and formal shoes
- Avoid loud colors and strong perfumes or colognes
- Clothes should be clean and wrinkle-free
- Hair should be neat, clean, and conservative

This is the proper attire for the first interview. Your second interview should still be professional but may be more relaxed depending on the company and position.

## Cursing

Cursing is risky move during an interview. Some people do not mind the occasional curse word but for others, cursing is a deal breaker. Be safe and do not curse during your interview.

As you prepare for interviews, keep in mind that you are showcasing how you will act with co-workers in the office. Present yourself professionally for the best chance to get the job.

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## Risks Great Business Leaders Must Take in Order to Succeed



Good leaders are often reliable and hard workers. However, what makes a good leader become great is their ability to take risks.

Risks can be a scary word to many of us. When we take a risk, we could lose something valuable. Great leaders see opportunity in failure and potential from the learning experience. If you want to be a great business leader, you will have to take risks at some point.

Learn some of the most common risks every great business leader faces:

## **Risk Failing**

We all risk failing when we try something new, but failing is not always a bad thing. Your efforts are the key to success. Successful business leaders can view failure as learning process.

**Failure accomplishes two very important objectives:**

1. We are willing to embrace risking failure by doing something risky. You can't be successful unless you try!
2. We discover the proper expectation mentally. Plan for the best but prepare for the worst. This allows the opportunity for recovery and another attempt.

## **Risk Admitting that You Don't Know**

We are conditioned to have quick and confident answers. Unfortunately, if we are always providing an answer, we will never have the opportunity to learn from other perspectives.

For business leaders, the risk of saying "I don't know" can be the opportunity to engage a team. Use the opportunity to gather new ideas with group discussions and brain storming sessions.

## **Risk Losing Everything**

Whether you have been in business for forty years or one, every company makes financial risks to get ahead. Sometimes, the choice can be a plunge. However, a successful business leader continues to take smart risks from the knowledge of

previous learning experiences.

## **Risk of Stepping into Unfamiliar Territory**

Stepping into unfamiliar territory starts from day one of opening a business. You will continue to expand your boundaries as your business expands.

Stepping into unfamiliar territory could include providing a new product or service, opening a branch office, or hiring a team. We must make changes or our company will remain stagnant.

## **Risking Being Misunderstood**

Thinking outside of the box can cause people to question your sanity! As a business leader, your character will be questioned at some point. After all, your decisions are possibly affecting the future of the company. Nevertheless, stick to what you think is right. You did not become a leader by being just like everyone else.

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## **How-To Keep Employees Engaged With Their Work**



Every empowered team has one thing in common – they are engaged with their work. Achieving engaged employees may seem simple. Unfortunately, only 32

percent of workers are engaged in their jobs. As a business owner, this is a frightening statistic! We want employees that are passionate about their careers.

As a recruiter, I seek candidates that enjoy their career field. However, after I find the employee, it's up to the business leader to keep them happy. Learn six tricks to keeping your employees happy at work.

## **Be Transparent**

Transparency should be core in a company's values. It develops trust and productivity within the organization.

To be transparent, make important information available. This does not mean that you should broadcast your company's finances. Instead, create charts on the progress of meeting company goals.

You can also trust employees to make decisions. This may seem scary at first. After all, you are loosening the reins when an employee starts making decisions. However, they will become more invested in company operations and will learn to take ownership of their projects.

## **Take Responsibility for Mistakes**

Nobody wants to take blame for something that was not their fault. It will be very difficult for you to maintain the respect of others if you do not take responsibility for your actions.

Apologize when you know that your decision was not best for the company. Your employees will appreciate your honesty and you will gain their respect.

## **Make Training Available**

Employees who are enthusiastic to learn are some of the best additions to your team. Make sure training is available to help their skills develop. This could be webinars, online courses, mentoring, or job shadowing. These passionate employees can potentially be your managers and directors. By providing training and learning options you increase the chance they will want to stay on your team.

# **Allow Individuality in Dress Code**

Suit and tie attire are a thing of the past for most jobs. Allow your employees individuality in their clothing -within reason. You can provide guidelines for what is appropriate such as no t-shirts, jeans or sandals. However, small changes that allow self-expression can make employees feel more engaged in their job position.

# **Thank Employees for Good Work**

Everyone likes to know that they are appreciated. Acknowledge your employees hard work. For large projects, you may choose to reward an employee with a gift certificate, bonus, or extra vacation time.

See [20 Techniques for Acknowledging Your Employee's Good Work](#) for ideas on thanking employees for their good work.

# **Provide Flexibility on Hours**

Different employees are more productive different hours of the day. If your office allows the flexibility, provide your employees with a two-hour window for coming to work. For example, your employees must start work between 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM. They can leave from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM. This flexibility works for employees that workout in the morning or drop their kids off at school. It can also attract potential employees that have a long commute or have to deal with a lot of traffic that might not otherwise consider your company for employment.

Take the time to build a company with engaged employees. You may find that you have a decreased turnover rate, increased productivity, and you have a team that is easier to manage. Not to mention, you will build a healthier, happier working environment.

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# 10 Mistakes Successful People Never Make Twice



We all make mistakes. When a mistake occurs, we have two options:

1. Blame someone else and continue with the same behavior.
2. Learn from our mistake to make more productive choices in the future.

Successful people choose option two. You must use your mistakes as an opportunity for growth in order to meet your business goals. Of course, you can also apply these suggestions if you think of your career as a business as well.

It's important to realize that you are not alone in making mistakes. The following are 10 common mistakes that successful business owners seldom make again:

## Let Other People Bring Them Down

Successful people will always have “haters”. These are the people that are jealous, doubtful, or just do not like you. It is easy to be discouraged when someone is constantly questioning your decisions. To be successful, you cannot let “haters” bring you down. Be confident in your abilities.

## Make Emotionally Driven Decisions

The most logical thinker can be ruled by their emotions. Unfortunately, emotionally based decisions can be detrimental in business. We often make emotionally based decisions from a disgruntle in a partnership or upset client. When emotions are high, take a moment to pause and rethink your decision.

*How will this affect your business?*

*Will you regret this decision in a month?*

## **Focus on the Short Term**

If we focus on the short term, we will only achieve short term results. Create a plan on how you want to see your business in 5, 10, and 20 years. Work toward achieving your long-term goals.

## **Repeat Decisions that Previously Failed**

A failed approach usually does not succeed the second time. When you fall short, take a step back, evaluate why, and change your approach. A successful business leader alters what is not working for the company.

## **Fail to Document Important Information**

Paperwork is almost everyone's least favorite task. However, you will be happy you were thorough at tax season or when a customer requests a prior contract.

### **Important Information to Document**

- Revenue
- Expenses
- Contracts
- Customer comments/complaints (or performance evaluations)

## **Let Fear Dictate Their Decisions**

Fear can make or break a business. Successful business leaders do not let fear hold them back. One way to approach this is to ask yourself, "If I had no fear of failure, what would I do?"

You will have to step outside of your comfort zone to get ahead. Often, the decision may turn to failure. Consider your failure as a learning experience and keep trying.

*"I have not failed. I have just found 9,999 ways that do not work." -Thomas Edison*

## **Underestimate Physical Fitness**

Physical fitness is for more than getting a nice beach body. Working out and eating right has a direct correlation on your energy level. Optimizing your energy and productivity is essential for leadership.

## **Chase Other People's Dreams**

Seeing other people succeed can be a motivator to reach your own goals. However, you must determine exactly what your goals are in order to be happy with your career. Someone else's goals may come at a higher price than you are willing to pay. Determine what your dream is and what you are willing to do to achieve it.

## **Stretch Themselves Too Thin**

At some point, we will all take on more than we can handle. Unfortunately, we are not machines and have a limit. Our work will start to decrease in quality and we can miss deadlines.

Be realistic with yourself. How much is too much? A successful business person knows their limits. Prioritize and don't be afraid to say No to things that will distract you or that you know you don't have time to help with.

## **Stop Believing in Themselves**

You are your biggest cheerleader. If you do not believe in yourself, how do you expect anyone else to?

Boost your confidence with these tricks:

- Identify and ease self-doubt
- Stop listening to people who bring you down
- Recall your successes
- Trust and love yourself

- Give yourself permission to try and try again
- Consider each failure as new knowledge gained of what NOT to do next time

Success is a marathon! You have to be consistent to meet your goals. Avoid these ten mistakes to build your business leadership skills.

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## 5 Methods to Avoid Fatigue in the Office



Our best efforts can easily crumble when we are tired at work. It's important to find remedies that make us more energized throughout the day. A clear head can work more efficiently. Discover what routines are right for you and include them in your daily routine. You may find some of the following tricks helpful for you:

### Brief Office Exercises

The average American spends 13.9 hours per day sitting. The number of hours can increase if you have an office job. Sitting all day has many disastrous side effects, including fatigue and loss of concentration.

The best option to beat sitting all day is a stand-up desk. If you cannot purchase a

stand-up desk than you can always perform office exercises. Taking a walk is one of the best ways to clear your head and regain focus.

### **Office Exercises:**

- Brief Walk
- Squats Behind Office Chair
- Calf Raises
- Push-Ups Against Desk or Wall
- Tricep Dip

## **Snack on Healthy Foods**

There is nothing wrong with treating yourself to an unhealthy snack occasionally. However, your body craves nutritious foods. Eating unhealthy often is going to leave you tired for your daily tasks.

Replace the chips with carrots and hummus when you get a craving. Your body will feel more replenished to stay energized to get your work done.

### **Healthy Snacks at Work**

- Carrots and Hummus
- Baked Corn Chips and Salsa
- Almonds
- Plain Oatmeal Packets
- Dried Fruit
- Low Sodium Jerky

## **Drink Water**

Dehydration can leave you drained and fatigued. Drink enough water that your urine is light colored and you do not feel thirsty. Try to go to the water cooler three or four times a day. That will also help you get a small dose of exercise that regains your focus.

# Listen to Music

Listening to music at work is not for everyone. Some people say music is distracting. Others are more engaged with Beethoven plays in the background.

Before writing off music completely, bring your pair of headphones to work. Play a song with minimal lyrics to avoid distraction.

## Music for the Office

- Sounds of Nature
- White Noise
- Classic Music with No Lyrics

# Write with a Pen and Paper

Start thinking on paper. This technique might sound old school. However, you are glancing away from the computer screen which can be strenuous on your eyes.

Writing down your tasks is also an excellent productivity technique. You can visualize, adjust, and move your tasks.

Before resorting to caffeine every day, try these tricks! You may find an extra glass of water and a daily walk to be more powerful than your coffee.

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# 6 Tips to Keep Your Clients Happy



We can focus so much on getting new clients that we forget to keep our current clients happy. This is the quickest way to lose internal and external clients, and get a bad reputation for yourself.

Additionally, Forrest Research claims getting a new client costs five times more than retaining current customers. Don't forget to keep your clients happy if you want to have a profitable business.

Not sure how to keep your customers happy? Start learning with these six tips:

## **Own Your Mistakes**

We all make mistakes. Admit yours. Clients will be happier with a meaningful apology and honesty rather than trying to cover up your mistake. Usually your client is able to see your fault. They might not mention it but they could lose trust in your abilities if you try to just cover it up as an external influence or another person's decision.

## **Go Above and Beyond**

Everyone wants to feel special - including your clients! Do more than what your client asked for to make them feel appreciated. Offer specific tips, suggestions, and ideas. You will be seen as what the company genuinely needs in order to succeed.

## **Return Calls Promptly**

Time is money. Your unanswered questions could be preventing your clients from completing an urgent task. Return emails and calls within 24 hours or one hour if

possible.

## **Do Not Overpromise**

Overpromising and underdelivering can kill your business. Don't do it! Be realistic when you make contracts with customers. That way, you know you can meet their expectations with the opportunity to go above and beyond.

## **Add a Personal Touch**

Allow your clients to get to know you. This does not mean that you have to invite them to your wedding or child's piano recital. Instead, send them a handwritten Christmas card to show that you care.

## **Create a Valuable Product**

If you produce a poor product then eventually you will lose all of your clients. Invest in creating a reliable, high-quality product.

Retain your clients and you will not always have to be searching for new business! Eventually, your reputation will speak for itself.

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# **6 Tips to Becoming a Great Presenter**



At some point, business leaders are required to give a presentation. For many of us, public speaking can be terrifying. According to Statistic Brain, 74% of people suffer from anxiety during public speaking. As a business leader it is critical that you improve your public speaking abilities if you introduce or improve business processes.

The following are a few methods that can create more engaging presentations:

## **Do Not Read from Your Power Point**

If you plan to only read the Power Point then just email your employees a copy. The Power Point should only be an outline of your presentation. And try to limit the resources you refer to during your presentation to the PowerPoint outline. More sources will only distract and confuse you during the presentation. The more you practice and know the material you are presenting, the more relaxed you will be.

## **Use Engaging Body Language**

Make your employees feel like you are speaking to each of them individually with eye contact, smiling, and not turning your back away. Doing so, could make the presentation feel more like a conversation. Your employees will be more likely to ask questions at the end.

## **Tell Stories**

Your employees want to be able to relate to you. Rather than make them feel lectured, give them an example of when you went through a similar situation. Bonus points if you can make them laugh! Provide your employees with

information that is not listed to increase employee engagement.

## **Start Strong**

The beginning of the presentation sets the tone. Do you want your presentation to be light hearted? Make a joke! Is the presentation serious? Start with a statistic or story.

## **Focus on Your Audience's Needs**

Build your presentation for what you would like your audience to receive. If what you are saying does not contribute to the core message then do not say it.

## **Use Your Voice Effectively**

None of the other tips matter if you cannot master your presentation voice. Your audience must be able to hear you. This does not only require speaking louder. Annunciate your words and slow down your speech. Don't rush to get the information out. Try for a comfortable conversational pace.

Practicing your presentation techniques can have many benefits for your career. You can improve training methods, sales, and the efficiency of your company.

Relax... presentations do not have to be that bad!