Top Ten Tips for a Successful Presentation

1. Start planning early. It takes time to prepare a good presentation. Don’t wait until the last minute.

2. Use a timeline. Mark when you should have each step of your preparation done. Build in some time for problems that might arise.

3. Make sure you know how to use all equipment and visual aids. And be sure you check with the event coordinator to see if equipment is available or if you have to bring your own.

4. Practice, practice, practice! This can’t be stressed enough. The more you practice, the more at ease you will be when you give your presentation.

5. Get plenty of rest the night before you give your presentation. You won’t be able to give your best effort if you are tired.

6. Check all your material before you leave home. It’s no fun to arrive at a contest and find that one of your posters is missing or that one of your containers is leftover spaghetti and not the butter you thought it was.

7. Be careful what you eat and drink before you give your presentation. Eat light and don’t drink carbonated beverages. Take a bottle of water you can sip from to relieve a dry throat.

8. Arrive early. You’ll want time to check out the facilities and determine how you will set up without feeling rushed. At a contest, check in with the office or chair, but only talk to the judge when it your turn or appointment time.
9. Learn a stress-reducing routine. Try deep breathing or a quick, brisk exercise. Shake out your body and get loose. Relax your neck, shoulders, and facial muscles. Clench and unclench your hands.

10. Realize that it is normal to get nervous and have some butterflies before and during your presentation. Even experienced speakers do. A bit of nervousness can be a good thing. Being a bit “on edge” can give a spark to your performance and it shows that you care.