

This information is based on the article [“Twelve ways to engage your learning audience.”](#) by Kevin Eikenberry.

All presenters want an engaged, interested, fully attentive audience. For your message to be most effectively received, the audience must hear it. While there are many ways to gain and maintain your audience's attention during a presentation, getting them actively involved in the message is the best place to start. Here are 12 tactics to get your audiences more involved in your presentation and your message.

1 Ask questions designed to get a verbal response

Pick questions you know students can answer or have an opinion about. Getting the audience to respond verbally gets and keeps their attention focused on your message.

2 Ask for a show of hands in response to your questions

Ask a polling question about their opinions, experiences, or needs. Getting the audience to respond physically gets them moving and mentally involved as well.

3 Give them a mental picture

Use a verbal description to create an image of your situation or solution. Using the listeners' minds in this way builds attention and helps your message remain in their minds.

4 Ask them to create a mental picture

Activate their minds by getting them to think of a time, event, or example in their own life using the subject at hand. This makes your message tangible.

5 Give them time to talk to each other

Give them a minute to discuss a key point with a partner or to generate questions or concerns. Working with others, especially when they might not expect it, will refocus their attention and raise the understanding of your presentation points.

6 Give them a game or exercise

Pick something relevant and fun. Having fun helps people learn and understand.

7 Repeat a word or phrase

Every time you say a certain word or phrase, have your audience say or do something in response. This repetition combined with their involvement drives home key points effectively.

8 Have them talk back to you

If your key points are short and succinct (and they should always be), ask your audience to repeat those key points back to you.

9 Give them a "quiz"

Hesitate before key words in your sentences and encourage the group to fill in the missing word or phrase. This keeps them on their toes and helps them see how much they may already know about your topic.

10 Encourage their questions

Tell people up front that their questions are welcome any time during your presentation. And when they ask, be sure to answer. This helps them know that you are interested in them and their problems, not just in completing your presentation.


11 Let them select the order of the presentation

List topics you plan to present on a flip chart and have audience members vote on which one to cover next. Giving people some control over the presentation builds their support for and interest in the topics.

12 Give them a task

Start the presentation by giving people something to do during or at the conclusion of the presentation. By giving people a task—something to listen for or a challenge to think about—you increase their interest and lengthen their attention span.

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