or more timed rehearsals, offering comments at the end. These comments should be in the form of constructive, not destructive, criticism. And the presenters should not forget to rehearse questions and answers. If presenters have the answers to the toughest questions worked out, they will enter the presentation with more confidence.

Delivering the Presentation

Style alone never sells a job. However, presenters' physical skills do have a profound effect on their message. Presenters communicate a great deal about themselves and their abilities with verbal skills and physical skills (including body language), and your interactions with tools and visuals communicates a great deal about you and your abilities.

Presenters can benefit from close attention to verbalization. Speakers must be seen as experts; they should avoid words like "I think," "perhaps," or "maybe." If they sound insecure or unsure, why should clients believe them? They should also be conversational, and should avoid talking like an interior designer or architect, in technical terms and flowery descriptions. They should also be candid, to demonstrate that they are aware of the client's concerns and conflicts. Actual delivery is important as well. Presenters should speak slowly—much more slowly than their normal rate of speech. They should talk loudly enough so the people in the back of the room can hear them. (Speakers always sound louder to themselves than they do to their audience.) If they increase volume their inflection and energy will increase too. Voice, pacing, tone, and volume should generally match the words presenters are speaking. Presenters should *not* rely on notes; notes serve only to diminish the design professional's aura of expertise.

Body language can provide additional—potentially negative—information. Speakers should not fold their arms—that is considered a hostile and aggressive move. Similarly, they should not put their hands in their pockets—that telegraphs nervousness and distracts the audience, especially if the speakers have change in their pockets. Clasping the hands is another way of saying "What shall I do now?" and presenters should avoid that gesture and other types of fidgeting.

Presenters can also use their bodies to create an immediate, positive impression. They should move quickly and with enthusiasm as they approach the

stage/lectern/front of the room. Their gestures should be about the same as their gestures when they are having a normal conversation with friends. If their gestures feel fake, they will look fake. Presenters should alternate between body movement and no movement at all, and underscore their words with their facial expressions. For the best effect on the audience, body positioning is important. Presenters should always face the audience; they should never turn their back or talk to the projection screen. Normally, presenters (and their shoulders) should be at a 45° angle to the room. This positioning establishes a nonthreatening stance and opens the presenter's body to the screen when it is necessary to gesture or move.

To get the message across, presenters need to make visual connections with the audience. They should establish eye contact with one person for the duration of a sentence, or while they explain a concept. Presenters should not feel that they have to look at every audience member at any given moment; if they try to maintain too much eye contact around the room, their eyes will be all over the place, and they will look frantic. They should simply look at one person at a time. This "connected" approach will allow speakers to really see someone, and to get some visual feedback. When presenters are not speaking, they should pay attention to the speaker, in order to focus the attention of the audience.

Presenters can work not only with their physical cues but also with their dress to make clients feel comfortable. They should dress appropriately, considering the client. Presenters will benefit if they find out what the majority of the audience is likely to wear, and dress just a bit nicer. By all means, presenters should wear comfortable clothes. If speakers are pulling at their drawers or wincing because their shoes are too tight, they will be distracted (as will their audience). Designers should not hesitate to use "color psychology" to their advantage. Dark colors project authority, power, and control. Bright colors get attention.

To make these physical considerations work in the context of the whole presentation, the presenters should set the room up in advance. They can mark the light switches they intend to use. They should know the location of electrical outlets. If possible, presenters can arrange the seating in a semicircle to focus and contain the energy of the audience. Throughout the presentation, the presenters should keep the lights on. Bright lights increase the energy in the room and make the audience and the speakers more alert.