Future City Teams: 10 Ways to Make Your Presentation Great

1. Look Them in the Eye
Give your judges direct eye contact; scan their faces. This shows confidence and an interest in them as people. Don’t be afraid of them! You can even go up to them and greet them and shake their hands!

2. Say it clearly
Enunciate your words; in other words don’t mumble or roll words together. Clear talking is easy to understand and makes you sound intelligent. Mumbled or slurred words make you seem uncertain and are hard to hear.

3. Talk TO them; not AT them
Don’t sound and look like you are performing as if in a play. Talk to them about your city as if you are explaining it to a friend or adult you know. Instead of memorizing your presentation word for word, write an outline of notes and practice saying it. This will make it sound conversational and direct and if you make a mistake in wording, it will be ok because you aren’t stuck with only one way of saying something. Most nervousness is caused by people who make a mistake when they do not say it exactly the way they memorized it.

4. Talk to the Judges, not the visual aid.
Stand next to your visual aid, point to it (maybe get a pointer or a pinpoint light to point to things on the poster and model) and face the judges as you speak. Think of a weather forecaster on TV.

5. Pronounce Words Correctly
There is nothing that will make you lose credibility faster than a mispronounced word.

6. Expect a Mistake; Don’t Lose Your Cool
No one is perfect; most people make a verbal mistake when they speak. It’s not the mistake that is important but how you respond. Don’t fall apart, get upset, or ask to start over. Don’t draw attention to a mistake. Just keep going and do the best you can. If you are asked a question that stumps you then either look to your team members to answer, admit you aren’t sure or do the best you can in answering with a reasonable guess. Don’t let it throw you off balance. Most nervousness happens when someone expects to be perfect and falls apart at one little mistake.

7. Give Sources for your Information
You can increase how your judges feel about your knowledge by explaining clearly and providing the resources for where you found some of your information. Tell your judges the name, date, and author of a book or the name, date of a magazine where you may have learned about plastics, for example, if it fits in with a part of your presentation.

8. Share the Stage
The judges will be looking at how well your team cooperates in answering the questions and doing the presentation. Don’t be a hog! Step in when it will help the team, but let the other team members talk also. Just keep thinking...TEAM, TEAM, TEAM!

9. Check the Handbook for clues and keep it organized!!
Your handbook tells you what the judge’s will be looking for so check it out and make sure you can rate yourself well. Keep organized and follow a format or order when you speak that is more than just a list of things in your model. Group ideas together with common themes/topics judges are looking for like education in your city, transportation in your city, industry in your city, etc. Highlight what you will talk about BEFORE you talk about it and then provide a simple SUMMARY after you talk about it...they will remember all that good information!

10. Practice Out Loud
Don’t just talk about what you will say or put it on paper. Practice it from the beginning to the end as you stand near your model, using your visual aid. Don’t be afraid to stand next to your model, not hide behind it. Stand on the side of it and don’t put a barrier between you and the judges. Practice as if you made it into the finals. Have someone listen to your presentation and rate you the way the judges will evaluate you. Have you ever heard the old saying, “Practice Makes Perfect”? It is true!

Most importantly....have a good time and let the judge’s see your excitement and enthusiasm for your city. If YOU think it is great, then they will too!

Good Luck!