



Don Schlimme Future Leader Award
Recognizing aspiring leaders under 35



**Interview and
Presentation Tips**



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Interview Tips

Preparation

The judges will ask you questions about your knowledge of the industry, knowledge of your company's business, leadership skills, and communication skills. The best way to prepare for the interview is "trial by fire." The more experiences and practice sessions you have prior to the actual interview, the more relaxed and natural the interview will be. To prepare for the interview, you, your supervisor, your mentor, and anyone else who knows your work life well, should brainstorm as many questions as possible that the judges may ask.

Dress and Timeliness

Be on time and be enthusiastic about your participation – this is a big deal! We recommend showing up 10 minutes early for your interview; just in case things are running ahead of schedule. Professional business attire is your best choice.

Body Language

- Your voice should be enthusiastic, yet calm. Be aware of how fast you are talking as well as your volume.
- Make eye contact with each of the judges equally.
- Posture is important; an upright posture, slightly leaning forward, indicates interest; leaning back in your chair make you appear too relaxed or lazy.
- Be aware of any bad habits you have such as cracking your knuckles, chewing on your fingernails, or using a lot of filler words such as "well" or "uh" in your speech pattern. Eliminate them from your interview.

Relax and Have Fun

If you are nervous about interviewing, relax. Most people feel this way. Remember, you know more about you, your work experience, and your leadership experience than anyone else. Be calm, confident, and share what you know!

Presentation Tips

Content

Below is a general outline you can use for the content of your presentation. Feel free to be creative with it! Remember to keep to the general rule of introduction, body, and conclusion.

- **Introduction**
 - Who you are, who you work for, and what you do.
 - Share a bit of yourself with the audience – what makes you tick?
 - Idea: Open with a story about your first day in the industry
- **Body**
 - Why are you interested in this industry?
 - What is your vision for the future of the industry?
 - As a young professional, what excites you about the industry?
 - How can we attract other young professionals into the industry?
 - What would winning this award mean to you?
- **Conclusion**
 - Summarize your main points
 - Provide the audience with a take-home message – inspire them to get excited about the industry too!

Presentation

1. **Know your material.** If you're not familiar with your material, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary.
2. **Use facial expression and hand gestures purposefully.** Utilizing facial expressions and hand gestures purposefully can add a great deal of character to your speech. Also, make eye contact with the audience.
3. **Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Imaging yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
4. **Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They don't want you to fail.
5. **Concentrate on the message – not the medium.** Focus your attention away from your anxiety and outwardly toward your message and your audience. Your nervousness will dissipate.
6. **Don't apologize.** If you mention your nervousness or apologize for anything onstage, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they didn't notice. Keep silent.
7. **Relax.** Again, people want you to succeed!