

ICES Midyear Meeting 2006
“Demonstrations Dos and Don’ts”
by Susan O’Boyle–Jacobson

Why did you enjoy a certain demo more than another one? With the information provided below you may find a few helpful pointers and questions to ask yourself or do that might make your demo more interesting next time.

- ◆ Topic – would it be of interest to audience or are you the only one excited about a certain technique
- ◆ Don’t try to show too much, there may be opportunities to show other options at another time. If you try to include too much, it just becomes overwhelming to both you and the audience
- ◆ BE PREPARED – have a brief one page “cheat sheet” indicating what step is next, it may even include where you need to be a certain time in the demo. If demo starts at 10:00 am, you might have in your notes, “The fondant needs to be on the cake by 10:00 am” so you keep on track and cover everything
- ◆ Make a list of needed items and check it over a couple of times to make sure that you have all you need
- ◆ Decide if you are bringing everything or it will be provided by host of demo. Keep in mind that you are familiar with your own equipment and usually better off bringing your own when possible
- ◆ If there is something that you forget and can’t get it from another source, try to skip that portion instead of saying, “If I had some fondant I’d show you how to.....”
- ◆ Have a handout that allows those in the audience to have a synopsis to refer to later. Please don’t just read your handout
- ◆ Ask to have the handout to be passed out before demo starts, it adds confusion if sheets are being passed around the room while you are talking
- ◆ Speak clearly and loud enough for everyone to hear. If this is a problem ask for a microphone when possible
- ◆ While demonstrating something like wedding cake set up and you are icing the cakes, talk the entire time, this is an opportunity to mention the

types of cakes you use or something else that might be helpful to the group. That of course would be more difficult if you talk with your hands

- ◆ Add humor, you want to be taken seriously, but it puts the audience at ease if you add a couple of funny lines or experiences. With that said, don't be a stand up comedian, they are there to learn not just hear a joke
- ◆ Know your equipment, if you are using a tip #32, tell them what tip you are using. If you have a certain tool that you like, let them know where they obtain it. Try to avoid using materials that the attendees can not purchase, i.e. "I got this cutter 25 years ago and it is no longer available"
- ◆ If you don't have the tools available to sell, let them know where they can get it. It is helpful to include that as part of the handout, "The quilting mat, product #7506, is available from Earlene Moore at"
- ◆ Please don't leave out information, saying, "Well you can learn more about this in my book" or "You have to buy my DVD"
- ◆ Decide if you are going to allow questions or if they are to wait until the end. There is debate about this, they might forget the question or you are not clear on your directions. However, the questions may drag out for a long time, allowing less time for the actual demonstration. They could write down their questions and ask at the end of the demo
- ◆ When working with a camera hold the subject to allow the camera personnel to focus on the subject
- ◆ When doing small delicate work, have the audience come around you (if possible)
- ◆ Don't spend the whole time talking about how good you are!!!! Or that you just had a new grandchild. People are there to learn the subject matter, not your personal information. Showing how well or fast you can pipe a rose if it isn't part of the demo is merely showing off (in my opinion)
- ◆ With that said, ask to be introduced, and just give a brief bio, this gives you credibility as a demonstrator
- ◆ Observe and take notes of demos you attend, you should always be aware of what works and what doesn't work as you watch someone else
- ◆ If an assistant is needed be sure to ask. Usually those who help get a better chance to see what you are doing so they are more than happy to help

Susan