

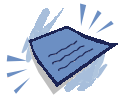


Presentation *Skills*



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Course Objectives

- To help you prepare and deliver more effective presentations.
- To show you how to select the most appropriate visual aids.
- To teach you how to build a well-structured presentation.
- To develop your skills in building rapport with your audience.



Preparation

It is a fact that the more prepared and practised you are, the better the chance of success! Here are some points that you should consider in preparation for your presentation.

- What is the objective of the presentation? What are you trying to achieve?
- What do you know about your audience? How much can you find out?
- Where will you deliver this presentation? How much do you know about the venue's size, seating arrangements, etc?
- How much time is available for your presentation? Look at the material you have in relation to the amount of time.
- Put your material into a logical order. Consider the main parts of your message and focus on the points you intend to close on.
- Do you intend to use visual aids? If so, what equipment will you need to project your images e.g. computer, overhead projector, video or a flipchart?
- Practise, Practise, Practise!



Structuring Your Presentation

All presentations should have a beginning, middle and an end.

- **Beginning:** Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em
- **Middle:** Tell 'em
- **End:** Tell 'em what you've told 'em

Beginning

A good opening is essential. This will help you establish a relationship with your audience, relax them and help you to gain their co-operation.

Try to make a clear statement about the objective of the presentation - avoid diving straight in. You need to let the audience settle down and tune into the speaker. The beginning is all about gaining your audience's attention.

Middle

Having gained their attention, it's now about building bridges to take the audience logically from one section to the next. Try to involve your audience. A presentation is a form of communication and the best form of communication is two-way.

End

Keep it short. A brief, well-delivered conclusion is much more effective. Summarise and pause, allowing for individual points to have an impact.

Key Point

More than anything else, the success of your presentation depends on your understanding the audience's point of view.



Activity 1

Prepare and then deliver a short 5-minute presentation to a colleague on your favourite pastime.

Consider

- Your preparation and structure
- Purpose and value to your intended audience
- Whether you are going to use any visual aids



Activity 1 - Review

How did it go?

You will probably find that you did not lack content for your presentation, as it was a subject with which you were entirely familiar.

As a matter of principle, you should ensure that you really do know all about the subject that you are delivering. That way you will feel more confident and you can concentrate on the delivery and the audience.



Considering Your Audience

Remember, no matter the quality and content of the presentation, people are affected by the **way** it is presented.

No two audiences are similar. You must be aware of this specific audience's needs. Respect them with a well prepared, well-organised and relevant presentation and they are likely to respond positively.

Your audience will forgive your initial nervousness because most of them are equally nervous when presenting.

Think of the Listener's Point of View

Each member of the audience has a thinking sequence like this:

1. I am important and want to be respected
2. Consider my needs - in my job, as a person
3. Will your ideas help me?
4. What are the facts?
5. What are the snags?
6. What shall I do?
7. I approve

Try to

- Structure your presentation around the listener's point of view.
- Gain their attention and retain interest.
- Convince them of the value of your presentation.
- Answer their objections confidently and deal with any doubts.
- Lead them to a conclusion in your favour.



Considering Your Audience

Be Aware of

- Your visual impact: your clothes, expressions and gestures.
- Your tone of voice: vary your pitch, as a constant tone will eventually turn off the audience.

Other Considerations

Not only does the human mind work through a certain structure, but also it is affected by what it sees and hears.

Visual Impact

The audience will react to their first sight of you. The way you are dressed, your facial expression and your gestures should be appropriate to the content of the presentation and their mood. An audience has greater confidence in a speaker who looks at them.

Hearing

Your tone of voice should match the occasion. Variety of pitch is more important in presentations than in ordinary conversation.

Success

Success depends, more than anything else, on understanding the listener's point of view and trying to meet it at all times.



Using Visual Aids

You will likely have heard the saying: *A picture is worth a 1,000 words.*

Visual aids can significantly increase and improve peoples' understanding of your presentation.

They are useful because they can:

- Save time
- Increase memory retention
- Generate and maintain attention
- Reinforce an idea
- Illustrate complex or detailed information, such as statistics

When Creating Visual Aids

- Be big and bold
- Be uncluttered
- Use only key words
- Use only to reinforce or add to the message, not to repeat it.
- Decide on the type of visual aid you want to use. Note that the type of aid used will depend on the size of audience, e.g. a flipchart or blackboard is really only useful with small groups.

Commonly used visual aids are: -

- Projected slides
- Overhead transparencies
- Videos
- Electronic slides created and presented on computer



Visual Aids Checklist

Visual aids can provide a structure for your presentation and act as cues for you to speak. They will also help the audience understand and remember content. Generally we remember **20% of what we hear** and **65% of what we hear *and* see**. Sometimes visuals may be the only way of understanding something.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Flipcharts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple, no power needed• Can be desk-top sized or larger for a group• Difficult to mask off a section at a time• Easy to prepare freehand on the spot• Audience can take notes• Useful for writing up points during the presentation for instant impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A problem if you can't write clearly• Can be clumsy to carry• Less professional and so have less impact than other visual aids
Overhead Projectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gives a large picture at a short distance• Masking and overlays can be used• Easy to switch from and to different visuals• Can be written on	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Care needed to avoid obstructing the view• Picture will be lessened unless screen is aligned• Requires a screen or white wall• Needs electric power• Bulb can fail



Visual Aids Checklist

	Advantages	Disadvantages
35mm slides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional impact• Facilities for remote control• Compact and portable• Facilitates sound• Can illustrate technical processes or equipment clearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bulb can fail• Can be distracting if left on• Needs a dark room• Needs electric power• Needs a screen or white wall• Tempts presenter to read from screen• Masking is not possible• Last minute changes difficult• Backtracking through every slide is tedious and distracting• Needs a tightly structured programme• Reliability problems with bulbs or slides jamming



Visual Aids Checklist

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Electronic slides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional impact• Facilitates for remote control• Facilitates animation and sound• Can illustrate technical subjects clearly• Easy to switch from and to different visuals• Can be written on with electronic pen (mouse)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer can fail• Needs a dark room• Needs electric power• Needs a screen or white wall• Tempts presenter to read from screen

Visibility

● Size

On a well-lit screen, letters need to be a least one-inch (2.5cm) high to be seen up to 25 feet (7.5m) away. Watch the audience's viewing angle (especially at the sides) and the screen should not be too high.

● Colour

Most legible is black on white, or white on black for special impact. Colour will reduce visibility marginally, but can achieve great impact, maintain interest, and focus attention. Colour is vital in differentiating between figures or curves on the graph. Avoid light pastel colours.



Effective Communication

It is important that your audience follows your presentation in a logical fashion. In addition, it's important that the content suits the style of the presenter so the presentation flows.

Professional presenters have used the following structure over the years.

It can be recognised by the acronym: **A.I.D.A.**

Attention

Interest

Desire

Action

Attention

Remember:

“You only get one chance to make a good first impression.”

At the start of your presentation you are trying to create a positive impression. You want to persuade the audience to sit up, take notice and get involved in your presentation. There are a number of methods you could use to help you to do this.

1. Involve the audience immediately, e.g. you could ask for a show of hands in answer to a question: *“How many of you have...?”*
2. Use an interesting or unusual statistic/quote, etc.

Interest

Use words, questions and audience participation to stimulate interest. Adjusting your tone of voice and using simple terms to explain any complicated aspects of your presentation will help make your message clearer.



Effective Communication

Desire

If your audience are going to *buy into* your presentation, they will have to understand the benefits you have outlined to them. In other words, to persuade them, use phrases which focus on them, e.g. "*What this means to you is...*"

Action

This means getting commitment and acceptance from the audience on the content of your presentation.



When Talking to Your Audience

- Start preparing your presentation well in advance.
- Identify why you are speaking and the result you want.
- Find out as much as you can about your audience, such as age and their current knowledge of the subject.
- Don't try to write the presentation in one sitting. Keep a notebook by you to jot down ideas as they come to you.
- Use audience orientation language - **KISS** - **Keep It Short and Simple**.
- Choose 2 or 3 points and illustrate them with examples. Too many points and your audience won't remember them.
- Keep a file of humorous notes and stories.
- Avoid using jargon, abbreviations and statistics. Where possible, use visual aids to present and reinforce numbers.
- Be precise. Avoid clichés.
- Write bullet points on a white card. Don't read a script - it will sound stilted and unnatural.
- Rehearse aloud several times: familiarity breeds confidence. Use a tape recorder or a friend to gain some feedback.
- Make your voice interesting by varying your pitch, volume and speed. Use pauses to help emphasise key points and avoid using filler words such as *um*, *you know* and *I mean*.
- Remember that nerves often make you speak high and fast, so practise speaking a little slower and deeper.
- Wear comfortable clothes and footwear.
- Empty your pockets so you are not tempted to play with the contents. Avoid putting your hands in your pockets and do not wear any distracting items, such as an outrageous tie or jewellery that catches the light.
- Make sure that your listeners can see your face and that your hair is not falling into your eyes.



When Talking to Your Audience

- Think of everyone in the audience as a friend who wants you to be successful.
- Walk slowly to the speaking spot. Look at the audience (all of them), smile and take a couple of deep breaths before you begin.
- Maintain eye contact with everyone and avoid looking at the most senior or friendly person in the audience.
- Look happy. Take a moment to remember that the audience is more interested in *what you have to say* than in *you*.



Delivery of Your Presentation

Here is some advice to help you in the delivery of your presentation. Consider adding points to this list once you have had more experience in delivering presentations.

- Use pauses to give the audience time to digest what you are saying. A 4 second pause to a speaker can seem like an eternity; however, to the audience it's only 4 seconds.
- Use *active* language and *paint a picture* of what you are saying. Use audience-orientated words and phrases that fit your subject and make your subject come alive.
- If you want to use notes, write them in large text so you can read them clearly. The audience will not mind you taking a moment to look at your next point. The pause will be effective and will give the audience a moment to reflect. However, make sure you lift your head and look at the audience before continuing to speak.

You may also find it helpful to mark notes for points where a visual aid is available in colour.

- It may be useful to state at the start of your presentation how you want to handle questions. You may prefer people to ask questions as you deliver your presentation, or you may prefer to handle questions at the end. Telling the audience at the beginning will enable you to control the format of your presentation.

When Handling Questions:

- Listen carefully to the entire question.
- Repeat it as you understand it. This makes sure everyone else has heard it too.
- Check with the questioner that you have understood the question correctly. "*So, what you are saying is...*" There is no point spending time answering a question that was not asked.
- Answer the questions as best you can. Field to the group if practical/desirable.
- Confirm that the questioner is happy with the answer.



Delivery of Your Presentation

- Avoid hostile words and phrases that give the wrong impression, e.g. *"Do you understand?"* or *"I thought I'd already said that..."* in response to questions.
- Remember **C.O.I.K.** (**C**lear **O**nly **I**f **K**nown). If you are using words that are new to your audience, say them slowly and distinctly and don't be afraid to repeat them. And where appropriate, make sure you explain their meaning.

Apply the same rules to names, dates, statistics, etc.
- Don't be humorous too soon; it usually doesn't work too well unless the audience is tuned in and your timing and delivery are impeccable. When you're planning to be funny, have something to follow with immediately just in case you're not. If they laugh at something you thought was serious, try and look pleased.
- If you dry up halfway, summarise what you have said so far. This will give you time to catch up with yourself again.
- Avoid the gratuitous apology - *"I'm not too sure of the figures, but..."*. The gratuitous apology merely alerts people to things that are going wrong and could be improved. Certainly apologise when they know something is wrong, but don't alert them to what's wrong if they don't already know.
- Maintain eye contact with the whole audience. Don't embarrass one person by looking at them all the time.

Avoid drawing attention to flies on the roof or the clock at the back of the hall that only you can see.
- Avoid word fillers and pet phrases such as *"er"*, *"uhm"*, *"yeh?"*, *"you know?"*, etc as this can be very distracting for your audience. Replace these with a breath. If you are prone to this, it may take some practise to eradicate this bad habit.
- Watch out for distracting mannerisms with glasses, notes, pens, etc. Empty your pockets and remove items you may be inclined to fidget with.
- Speak clearly to the end of every sentence. If they can't hear you they can't listen.



Delivery of Your Presentation

- Be aware of your stance and gestures. Don't be too rigid in your posture. You want to feel you can move to express yourself, adding a little life to your delivery.
- Vary the speed of your presentation. If you are naturally a slow speaker, speed up some passages. If you are a fast speaker, slow down to add emphasis and impact to sections.
- Vary your pitch by letting the voice rise and fall. Select parts of the presentation that will suit a contrast in pace - examples, stories and situations are ideal. Use these to add elements of drama.
- Be aware that not all communication is verbal. For example, standing behind a rostrum sets a particular climate for the presentation. If you want informality or questions from the audience, it may not be enough to merely say so. You may also have to set a tone - by movement, by a more relaxed manner, by sitting on the edge of the table for a moment, even by asking them questions, suggesting to the audience that they can participate if they wish.
- Have a checklist and review it before the talk: Visual aids; props; is someone going to introduce you or thank you afterwards? ; is there a Chairman? etc.
- Remember to breathe. In preparation for your presentation, practise this exercise: inhale slowly for 10 seconds and then hold your breath for 5 seconds. Exhale slowly for 10 seconds.

Now place your fingers firmly below your ribs. Inhale deeply until you feel the inflation, and then exhale slowly.

Combine this chest and midriff expansion into a deep and quiet breathing operation.

- Even the most experienced of speakers can feel tense and nervous beforehand. There is nothing wrong with being nervous so long as it does not destroy delivery. Nerves can be controlled and masked - breathing and pace help enormously - but nerves usually mean, in good speakers, that they attach importance to what they intend to say.



Improving Your Delivery Style

The best style is *your* style. Don't try to be something you're not. However, paying attention to the following points can improve your style.

Pace

- If you are too brisk, people may feel that they are being hustled and prevented from making comments.
- If you are too relaxed, they may feel that you are wasting their time.
- With a planned structure you will be more confident and should find it easier to control the pace - but unobtrusively.

Clarity

- Introduce each new topic - don't leave people guessing what you are talking about.
- Use simple language - avoid jargon, avoid long or difficult words that may trip you up. Short sentences with suitable pauses are easier on the audience.
- Make use of visual aids to support your delivery, especially when talking figures.

Variety

- Introducing topics - for variety, try introducing a subject by asking a question.
- Change of pace - a deliberate change can be used for dramatic effect, e.g. a very deliberate statement of a significant point.
- Change of pitch - higher or lower pitching of your voice can emphasise certain words or points.
- Use of lively words - a sprinkling of vivid or exciting words can help. Avoid a dull monotone.



Improving Your Delivery Style

Tone

- Partly determined by the type of meeting and the size of the audience, but you can affect it!
- If you appear relaxed, your audience will relax.
- If you appear formal, that will set the tone of the presentation. A degree of formality may be necessary to lend a more serious tone to your presentation and to pay respect to the audience.



Activity 2

Think of a recent presentation you attended. Write below what you liked about it.

In the space below, write what you did not like about the presentation.

What would you have done to improve it?



Asking and Answering Questions

You should make your audience aware at the outset of when you plan to take any questions they may have. This can be:

- anytime during the presentation
- after a section, e.g. a natural break
- at the end

When Answering Questions

- Be accurate with your response and ensure that the questioner is satisfied.
- Be honest. If you don't know the answer, admit it rather than waffle. Advise the questioner that you will try to find the answer and get back to him/her.

Asking Questions

Questions are useful to:

- ensure the audience's understanding of your presentation
- confirm commitment to your proposals
- increase your audience's attention span
- regain their attention



When Closing Your Presentation

The middle of your presentation is where you will have explained your ideas in detail. You will find, however, that regardless of how interesting the middle section is, it can be the part that is least remembered, or where attention begins to stray. For this reason, it is vital that you have a *quality ending*. This is your opportunity to pull the threads together and use all your presentation skills to leave the audience on a high or positive note. They should be impressed, convinced and eager to act in your favour.

Suggested Sequence

- Refer back to the theme - focusing on the audience's needs.
- Summarise the points you have made.
- If you have a plan of action, state it in a logical way - be specific and avoid generalities.
- Don't be afraid to ask for a commitment - people will expect you to draw something positive from your presentation.

Direct Request *Can I take it that you will put this into action?*

Command *Take my advice. Adopt this plan and we'll show results within a month.*

Alternatives *Do you prefer to start with part of the plan now, or implement it in full in 2 months time?*

Summary *You wanted an action plan that took into account points A, B and C. Taking account of these, plus points D and E, we clearly now have a plan that will work.*



Final Checklist

Reminders

The content of your presentation should follow a logical progression right through from your opening theme. Read through the presentation and ask:

- Is the presentation audience-orientated?
- How many times did you use **you** and **your** instead of **I** and **my**.
- Did you follow the model?

Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em

Tell 'em

Tell 'em what you've told 'em



Mistakes to Avoid

- Not checking your visual aids before starting your presentation.
- Not preparing a proper structure.
- Not telling your audience what you are going to speak about and how long you expect it to take. Be careful not to run over the agreed time span.
- Not understanding the needs of your audience.
- Using too many visual aids.
- Not ending on a positive note.



Activity 3

How are you going to...?

1. Keep your group interested and entertained

2. Involve your group as much as possible



Activity 4 - Review

Dealing with Nerves

Here are some ways you can deal with nerves:

- Make sure you're properly prepared
- Practise your first 10 minutes to perfection
- Breathe deeply and walk about
- Practise positive self-talk and visualisation
- Look the part
- Don't change your usual routine, and get a good night's sleep

Summary

The structure of your presentation should be well thought through. The beginning is where you need to catch your audience's attention. The middle is where you can expand on your thoughts and ideas but it is the end, which needs to be positive, that gains your audience's commitment.

As the best presenters will tell you, it's practise that will improve your technique. The more prepared you are for your presentation and the more you are in tune with your audience, the more successful your presentations will become.

Remember:

**"Tell 'em what you are going to tell 'em,
Tell 'em,
Then tell 'em what you've told 'em"**

