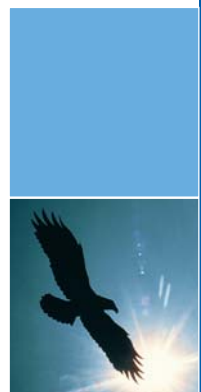


CHAPTER 23

PRESENTATIONS

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1 INTRODUCTION

Making presentations is an important way of getting your message across. It can also be a nerve-wracking experience, which can easily go wrong! There are some excellent tips and advice that can help with the process and these are summarised briefly below. A professional training course can also be a real investment in terms of experience and building confidence.

2 PLANNING A PRESENTATION

When planning a presentation, the following items need to be considered:

- Your purpose
- Your audience (and how best to reach them)
- The length of the talk
- The key issues to cover
- The talk structure (beginning, body and conclusion)
- Use of audio-visual equipment
- Whether questions will be taken and, if so, in which format.

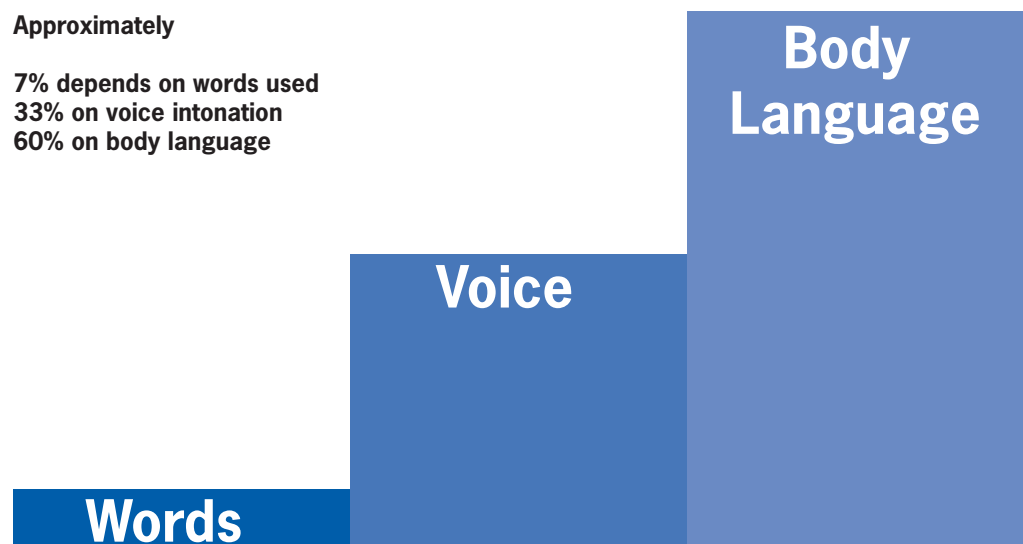
Talk structure: prepare your speech

- Define your purpose **WHY?**
- Know your audience **WHO?**
- Select content and structure **WHAT?**
- Ensure your speech has a clear introduction, middle and conclusion.

Remember the importance of body language:

Approximately

7% depends on words used
33% on voice intonation
60% on body language



The opening should grab the audience's attention.

The body of the talk should provide the substance and facts. It must have a clear structure, which the audience can follow. It helps to set out the main points that will be covered in advance.

The conclusion should be powerful and memorable. End with a BANG!

Restrict the amount covered. You will always take longer than you think! Simpler and focused messages are always more effective. The audience will remember startling ideas, images, stories or facts.

Make sure you have examples, stories, illustrations, slides, video clips, analogies, demonstrations and statistics. If you are given a long time for the talk, break it up into short sections.

Answering questions: This is an important part of the presentation. Questions can be used to correct misconceptions and move the audience towards your viewpoint. You can relax and act more informally in question sessions, developing a rapport with the audience. It helps to consider the audience and anticipate likely questions and your response.

Where a question is unclear, it helps to repeat your understanding of the question before answering. This ensures the audience is aware of the question and guards against misunderstandings.

3

GIVING A PRESENTATION

a) Voice and Communication

Voice projection: It is important to speak clearly and to project your voice. Vary your voice and speak with enthusiasm and conviction. This will make your presentation much more interesting. Don't talk in a monotone.

Language: Avoid the use of abbreviations, jargon, technical or complex language. Simple, expressive speech is more effective.

Humour is generally good to increase interest and build rapport with the audience, but be sure that it is used appropriately.

Statistics: The use of statistics can be effective if they are used sparingly and for impact. Too many statistics can be boring!

Listen and observe: Communication is a two-way process. Good listening is as active a process as speaking.

Discipline: If problems arise, remain polite. Be gently assertive, smile and keep your composure.

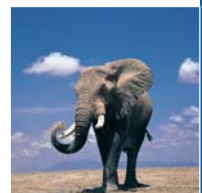
Respect: Be aware of any cultural differences, foreign speech and names, dialects, regional accents etc. Remain polite and respectful, even if your audience appears antagonistic. If you resort to anger, attack or put-downs, you will alienate and lose your audience. Respect other viewpoints, but continue to press your own.

People are offended by derogatory remarks relating to race, creed, sex, age or colour. Take care to avoid these. Also, be aware of your audience and avoid anything that may offend them.

b) Body Language

If you come across as a warm, sincere and dedicated person who has time for the views of your audience, you will come across well. Other suggestions include:

Eye contact helps to build up a relationship. Switch eye contact between people in different parts of the room. Use an eyebrow flash to acknowledge people together with a smile.



Overt body language and mannerisms: Have an open posture and gestures. Do not be rigid, but do not fidget or gesticulate too much. Be relaxed and confident.

Stance: Stand upright, with a relaxed stance. Place your feet comfortably apart and arms hanging loosely by your side (when not in use).

Facial expression: Smile at the audience (when appropriate). Convey cheerful warmth to your audience.

Spatial distance: Try to get close to your audience, but not close enough to crowd them. Try to avoid barriers created by tables, lecterns and so on.

Silence: Do not be afraid of pausing. Space and time are sometimes needed for the audience to digest information and for impact.

Notes: It looks impressive when a speaker manages without notes, but not many people can do this successfully. If you are not one of the gifted few, use notes, but do not read your speech. This makes you look stilted and you lose eye contact. Key words written on cards are recommended; tie them together and number them, so you do not drop or lose them.

Dress: You should dress smartly and appropriately to give a professional impression. The general rule is to dress one level smarter than your audience.

c) Managing Nerves

It is normal to be nervous. Many great speakers and actors say that they are extremely anxious when they are about to perform. This anxiety can be very helpful in aiding concentration. It will often fade once you have started to talk.

There are a great number of tips that will help you to manage your anxiety. Here are a few:

Relax. Drink a little water, but do not risk alcohol, as this can be counter-productive.

Smile at your audience as they come in. Developing a rapport helps you to relax and encourages a sympathetic response.

Be prepared. Arrive in good time to check that all the equipment works and your notes are in place.

Expect things to go well and your audience to be friendly. Pretend you are confident, even if you do not feel it initially – you soon become confident!

Relaxation and breathing exercises can be very calming. Try taking slow, deep breaths.

Above all, there is no substitute for practice!



4 PRESENTATION AIDS

Audio-visual aids such as videos, slides, overhead projector transparencies and computer projectors (such as PowerPoint) can all improve a presentation.

The advantages of visual aids are numerous:

- They provide impact and a different activity to assist passive listening
- They can help illustrate complex information
- They can add variety
- They can provide useful and non-obtrusive prompts.

However, if badly used, they can be distracting and annoying! For example, do not be tempted to include too many words, or turn your back to the audience to read the screen. Do not use too many audio-visual aids in complex combinations – this has the potential for disaster!

You need to learn how to use aids. You also need to be prepared to manage without them in case there is a technical problem! Always arrive early to check that the venue has the equipment you need (in working order) and that the room will be sufficiently dark.

Don't forget that stories – which are easier to remember than facts – and props (such as models of farming systems), can also help to illustrate points effectively.

Videos can be a powerful medium, combining sight and sound; the sounds of animals can help to carry the full impact of cruelty. Videos should only be shown briefly during presentations, but are useful for breaking up presentations.

Slides are also very powerful. It is much easier to explain what it is like for animals in different systems with a picture on the screen.

You need to test the slides in advance to ensure that they are all the right way up. Different machines are loaded in different ways! Also, check that the projector is correctly focused.

Overhead projectors (OHPs) have less impact, but are most commonly available. You can even buy your own portable machine and take it with you. They are also useful back-ups to a PowerPoint presentation.

Keep OHPs simple and bold, using large type, few words and effective use of colour for impact. You can use a piece of paper to cover parts of the OHP and then reveal information bit by bit. You can also put pictures or cartoons into OHPs. As with other audio-visual equipment, check beforehand to make sure the projector is correctly focused.

PowerPoint is becoming ever more popular, for very good reasons. It can allow a variety of effects in one medium – notes, photos and video. However, they can lead to technological problems! Most screens (except video) can be printed onto OHP transparencies, as back-up.

You can take your presentation on a computer disk, or take your own laptop and link this up to the projector.



5

FURTHER RESOURCES

Websites**The Art of Communicating Effectively**

www.projectorsolution.com/effectivepresentations.asp?

Giving Presentations

www.jaycross.com/jayhoo/giving%20presentations.htm

Giving Presentations

<http://bmerc.berkeley.edu/courseware/cs160/spring99/Lectures/14-Presentations/sld001.htm>

Giving Presentations

www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/studserv/learningsupport//studyskills/presentations.html

Giving Presentations and Leading Discussions

www.earlham.edu/~peters/courses/leaddisc.htm

One Step Ahead: Giving Presentations

www.askoxford.com/betterwriting/osa/givingpresentations/

Public Speaking

www.uncommon-knowledge.co.uk/public_speaking.html

What Happened to My Slides: Giving Presentations at Conferences

www.cultivate-int.org/issue3/presentations/

Books**Giving Presentations**

Jo Billingham, Beatrice Baumgartner-Cohen

Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: 0198606818

Lend Me Your Ears: All You Need to Know About Making Speeches and Presentations

Max Atkinson

Publisher: Vermilion

ISBN: 0091894794

Presentations for Dummies

Malcolm Kushner

Publisher: John Wiley and Sons Inc

ISBN: 0764559559

Presenting Magically: Transforming Your Stage Presence with NLP

David Shephard, Tad James

Publisher: Crown House Publishing

ISBN: 1899836527

