

Presentation Skills



WORKBOOK

PLEASE NOTE: This is an excerpt of the Workbook from the Training Materials, 'Presentation Skills' by Trainer Bubble. To view the full product training materials please purchase them from www.trainerbubble.com

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Learning Log

Section of session	Key learning point

Action Plan

Action	Priority	When by?

Problems & Fears with Presenting

In a survey carried out amongst experienced, middle and senior executives, designed to determine the things that they feared most, what do you think came out as number one?

Yes, you've guessed it, public speaking. Death was eighth! Astonishing, but true, most of us would rather die than stand up and present!

Think about the presentations you have made either at work or outside the work environment.

What are usually your biggest fears?	
What problems have you had (or felt you had)?	
What do you like about presenting?	
What do you dislike about presenting?	

Now think about the presentations you have attended.

Is there anything that defines an effective presentation for you? Who was the best presenter you have seen? Why?	
Now think of the worst experience. What makes an awful presentation? What are the common problems?	

Qualities of an Effective Presenter

Appearance

How you dress and if you are well-groomed are key factors with presenting. First impressions really count and sometimes your audience will not be able to get over them. As a minimum, you should dress to the standard of your audience and where possible exceed it.

Try to look as tidy as possible to. The worst thing you can do is give your audience a reason not to pay attention to what you are presenting. If they are trying to work out if the stain on your shirt is egg or mustard, then they're not going to be too concerned with next years sales projections!

Attitude

A good presenter will keep things simple. They know that the key to interest is involvement and they demonstrate this in a positive, motivational way. They don't use the opportunity to express how clever they are or belittle others and they always make it obvious that they are accountable and take ownership.

Good Eye Contact

Keeping eye contact with your audience ensures their involvement. This doesn't mean staring at one person until they weep with submission. It means scanning the room and engaging with individuals on a personal level. A good technique to use until you feel more confident with developing eye contact is the lighthouse technique. Here you 'sweep' the audience as if you are the light of a lighthouse. The added bonus of this is that you can spot who's taken the opportunity for a nap!

Confident Manner

Simply put, you must come across as an authority on the topic you are presenting; of course everyone will suffer from nerves to a certain degree. However, a good presenter will channel their nervous energy into the presentation and use it to add enthusiasm to their voice and actions. Movement, gestures, posture should all be taken boldly and demonstrate confidence.

The best way to reduce nerves? Know your topic!

Interesting Voice

There is nothing worse than a dull, monotone voice and usually this is the best way to switch an audience off immediately. Follow the 5 P's - Pace, pitch, power, projection and pauses.

Another point to note is not to be scared of silence. What may seem like an age to you on stage is really not that long to the audience. Some people tend to jabber on or use filler words (um, er, actually, you know etc.), if you feel this happening to you, pause and enjoy the silence...your audience will!

Knowledge

A good presenter has a good knowledge of the material delivered, but most of all they do not bluff. If you don't know the answer, admit it, and say you will get back to them. Nobody minds this, and it sure beats them finding out you were wrong later.

Most presentations should allow for questions and answers. How you deal with this is up to you, it could be at the end or throughout the session. Don't let questions throughout a session put you off your stride though! Just because you are knowledgeable on the topic, it doesn't mean that you can forget to listen, if people disagree then find points of agreement. Do not argue! Following on from this point, ensure you show respect, always be truthful and follow up any actions agreed

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is contagious, you must show a passion for your topic. Ensure you cover all of your objectives/key points and most of all...make it live!

Audience

A good presenter will think about their audience prior to the presentation. Consider their current knowledge and make it relevant to them. Add value to the audience and they will listen enthusiastically.

Where necessary, a good presenter deals with negativity, hecklers, disagreements and going off agenda. It can sometimes seem easier to ignore these issues. Do so at your peril. Always ensure that problems are dealt with in a relaxed, positive and upbeat way.

Where there are strong points of debate, use questioning/problem solving techniques. Put some pressure back on your audience to deal with questions. Just because you are at the front, does not mean nobody else has to think!

Planning a Presentation

When planning a presentation, the first thing you should consider is 'What do I want to achieve from this?' All too often we forget the key reasons that we have been asked to make a presentation in the first place. We get so caught up in 'How can I make it look good?' and 'What if they don't like me?' and forget that the true reason behind the presentation is usually to provide the audience with information that they did not know before we started!

To help you, there are several elements you should consider prior to every presentation. These are as follows:

- Why are you speaking?
- Who will be in the audience?
- How long do you have to speak?
- Clear objective
- Plan the content: introduction, middle, summary
- Prepare visual aids
- Prepare briefing notes
- Rehearse

The audience is the key part of any presentation. We should consider...

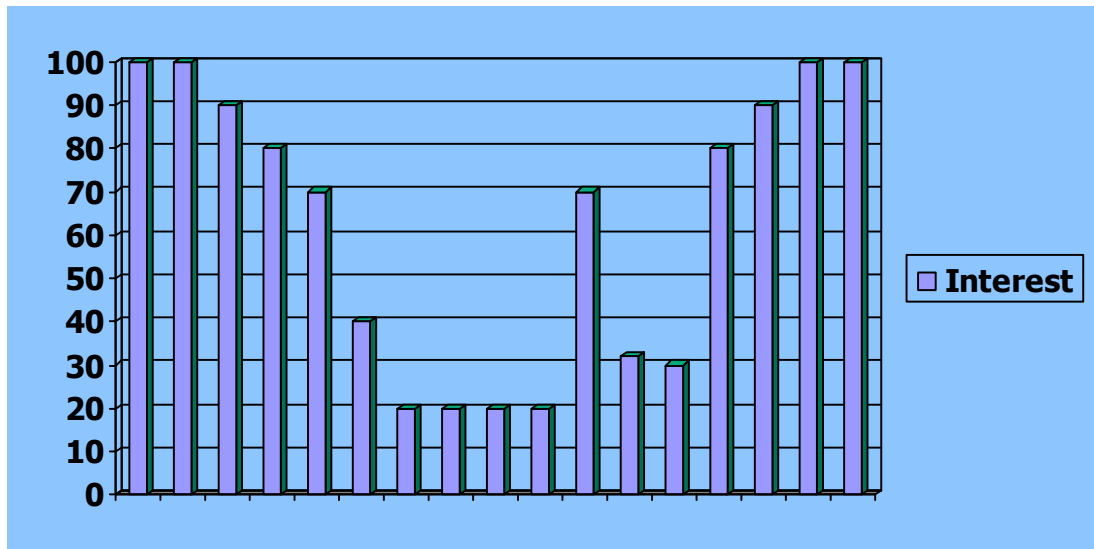
- What are they expecting to hear?
- What do they know already?
- Will they have strong opinions?
- Will it be clear why the subject should matter to them?
- Do I have support or opposition from particular people?

Preparation with the audience in mind

How many?	
What are their expectations?	
Are they willing to change or are they resistant?	
Do you have any supporters?	
Any particular 'problem' people?	
What objections will they raise?	
Do you have a good response to their objections?	
Better still, can you eliminate objections altogether. Do you understand their needs well enough to frame things in a way that brings them with you?	
What style of presentation or approach do they like?	
What else have they seen or experienced on this subject? Is it new ground for them?	
Are they all at the same level of knowledge?	

Structuring Your Presentation

In any presentation there is a beginning, middle and end. I'm sure you have had the experience of sitting through a presentation and feeling your mind wandering off. This chart demonstrates what goes on during a typical presentation.



This chart shows the attention span of an audience over 20 minutes. To conquer the fact that people pay most attention to the start and end of a presentation we use the old adage: 'Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them'. This way we ensure they hear the message at least once!

With this in mind, you should use the following structure as a guide.



Setting a Clear Objective

With every presentation, we have to ask one simple question, 'What is the point?'

If we don't ask this question then we can't really expect anyone to listen to our message. We must be sure of what we are trying to achieve from our presentation. Are we simply sharing information, or is there more to our message? In order to identify our objective, it is useful to ask ourselves some key questions.

Think about a presentation you may do in the future, or one that you have done in the past. Write down your reasons for doing it.

My objective:

What do you expect your audience to do differently as a result? How should they think, behave, act differently?

Opening Attention Grabbers

When you set out your objective to the audience at the start of your presentation it is useful to use an 'attention grabber'. This is a statement that will get people interested in your presentation from the off.

Rowan Atkinson the famous British comedian once started a presentation by saying. "Before I left home this morning, I said to myself, 'The last thing I want to do before I leave is forget my speech' and sure enough, the last thing I did before I left, was forget my speech."

As you can imagine, an opening like this would get everyone laughing and once you have received a laugh at the start of your presentation, it sure helps to relax!

The following methods can be used to grab attention at the start of a presentation.

- **Arresting statements** – This approach will ensure a reason to listen to you is created by capturing the audience interest e.g. "Very few organisations have tried this approach, I believe we can."
- **Facts** – Similar to the above; facts can have a major impact on an audience, particularly if they are shocking e.g. "We can save 10 hours a week of our people's time with a couple of admin changes."
- **Quotes** – People tend to like quotes and they can help ease you into a topic by enlightening the audience and perhaps raising a laugh, but make sure they're relevant and not inappropriate
- **Jokes** – As above; again, ensure they are appropriate
- **Rhetorical questions** – These allow you to gently ease into a presentation and provide a perfect 'set up' for you e.g. "Let me ask you, why would anyone want to change their marketing approach?"
- **Short anecdotes or stories** – People love a story and quite often storytellers! A well-developed story can hold an audience attention simply because of their desire to get to the end message! E.g. "I remember when I first started out as a presenter..."
- **A statement of your objectives** – A bit like the rhetorical question, you are setting yourself up to easily lead into your presentation. It sets a clear identification of what you will cover, so the audience is left in no doubt e.g. "I wanted to talk to you today in order to set out my vision for the future of..."

Visual Aids

Visual aids can be a great way of enhancing a presentation. Studies show that if you use more sensory involvement you will gain more interest and retention on the audience's part. What we know is that hearing is not a human's best form of receiving information, whereas seeing is.

Of the information that is remembered:

- **85%** is through seeing
- **11%** is through hearing
- **4%** is through the other senses

Researchers have found that:

- Only **10%** of presentation is remembered
- Increases to **50%** if visual aids are used
- **70%** if both visual aids and participation is used

As you can see, it can be really useful to use visual aids or even gain involvement from the people you are presenting to. Another reason this is valuable is that it can take pressure off you as presenter.

If you are using PowerPoint to present your topic you need to be careful how you present the slides. Putting too much information up can have a real negative impact on your message.

You must always make sure that any form of visual aid you use during a presentation is relevant and does not overshadow the message you are trying to get across.

There have been many fantastic presentations that do not use PowerPoint at all, in fact I know of several trainers who all but refuse to use it. There are many alternative methods for creating impact in a presentation.

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