

**ISC  
MEDICAL**

**PUBLIC  
SPEAKING**

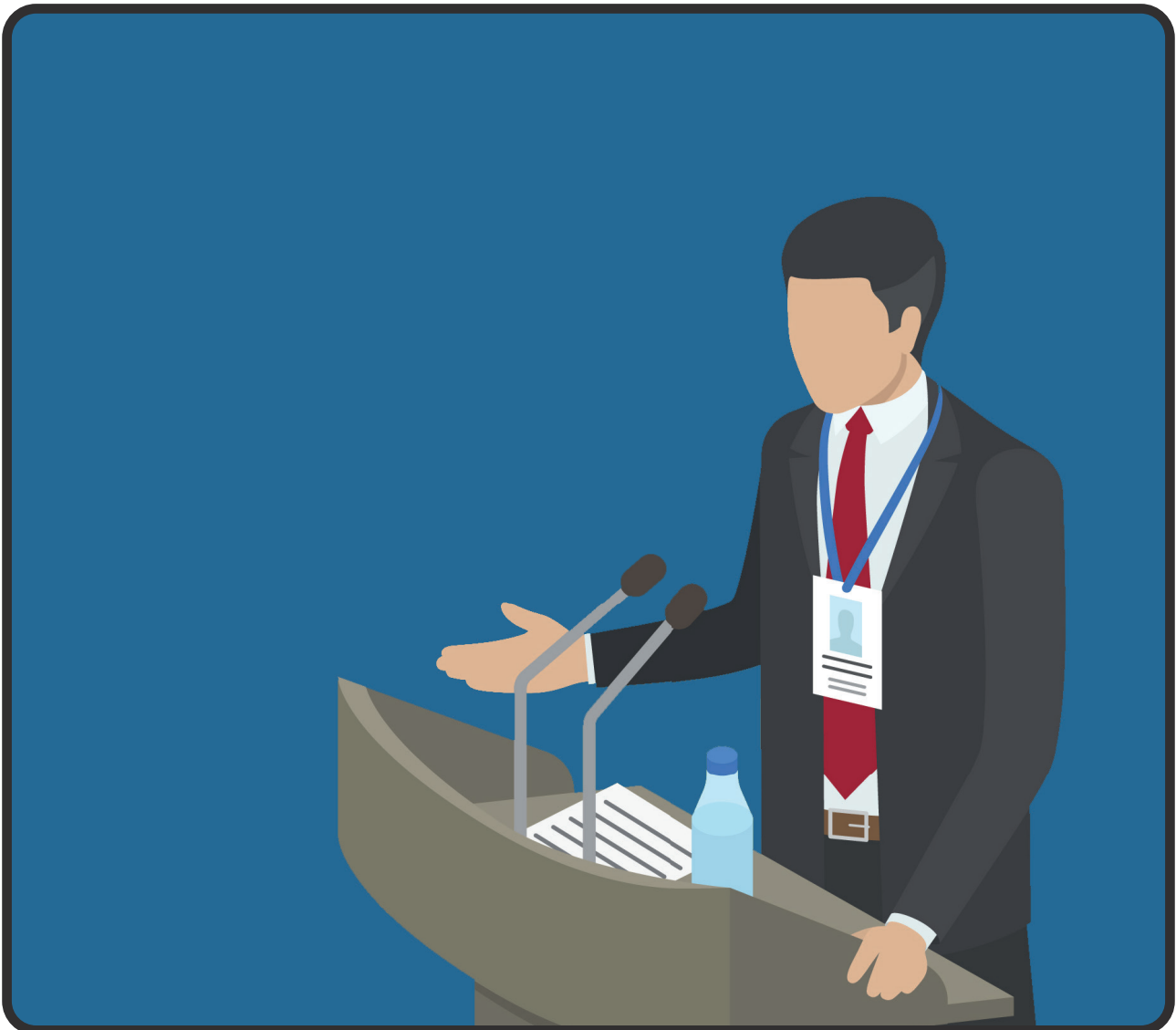


&

**ADVANCED  
PRESENTATION  
SKILLS**

## CPD CERTIFICATE

Your CPD certificate for this course will be given after the webinar.  
**CPD points must be declared under the self-assessment section of your portfolio.**



## 10% DISCOUNT ON ALL FUTURE ISC COURSES

This includes:

- All interview courses
- Assertiveness and influencing
- Leadership and management
- Public speaking
- Advanced communication skills
- Coaching and mentoring
- Teach the teacher

Use the code **ISC10PCXCLT** on the checkout page to get your 10% discount

# Table of contents



1.	Course aims and objectives .....	1
2.	Your objectives for the course .....	2
3.	What makes a great public speaker? .....	3
4.	The 6 steps to preparing a presentation .....	4
5.	Define your Purpose .....	5
6.	Connecting with your audience .....	6
7.	Audience behaviours .....	8
8.	A toolkit for developing and selecting ideas .....	13
9.	Designing the structure .....	18
10.	Handling questions .....	22
11.	Building confidence .....	25
12.	Maximising your ability to communicate .....	27
13.	Understanding your visual image .....	28
14.	Effective voice in presentations .....	30
15.	The words you use .....	31
16.	Visual aids .....	33
17.	Effective rehearsal .....	36
18.	Using presentation notes .....	38
19.	When things go wrong .....	39
20.	Review sheet .....	41
21.	Recommended reading .....	42

# 1. Course aims and objectives

This workbook has been designed to be used both during and after participation of the online ISC Public Speaking and Advanced Presentation Skills course to aid delegates learning and provide more in-depth theory.

It provides an introduction to key elements of public speaking and introduces delegates to tools and techniques required to prepare and deliver effective presentations.

By the end of the training you will be able to:

- Project your voice and optimise its potential as a communication tool
- Develop and write structured and engaging presentations
- Adapt your style to the audience
- Use nervous energy to your advantage
- Engage your audience
- Handle questions confidently
- Speak with confidence in large presentations and intimidating meetings
- Use props and images to create more interesting speeches
- Deal with difficult audiences
- Develop a positive attitude to speaking in public

Many people become very anxious and even fearful at the thought of having to speak in public. Presentation phobia and anxiety can hinder people's professional lives.

Most people attending this course are likely to feel nervous and under pressure. The ability to deliver a presentation is a key skill. Presentations can vary—briefing colleagues, speaking at team meetings or presenting proposals. Successful presenters speak clearly and confidently to small and large groups, to known and unknown audiences. You can learn to give dynamic and effective presentations, no matter how inexperienced or nervous you feel.

Being able to give effective presentations, both formal and informal, establishes credibility among those listening and provides increased visibility within the organisation.



## 2. Your objectives for the course

List below the objectives you would like to achieve from this course:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

# 3. What makes a great public speaker?

- List below your ideas for what makes a great public speaker both in terms of content/structure of the presentation and the skills/behaviour of the presenter.

There is probably no such thing as a perfect presentation. However, it is safe to say that the listener always knows when they have heard a good presentation.

**Here are a few characteristics that generally contribute to a good presentation:**

- A knowledgeable speaker.
- Kept simple.
- Absence of jargon.
- Audience understood the aims of the presentation.
- Clear indication provided of the structure of the presentation so that the audience are always clear about its direction.
- Time used effectively, not rushed or wasted, presentation kept within the time limits or within the realms of concentration spans, i.e. within 20 - 30 minutes.
- Confident, clear delivery.
- Held audience's attention.
- Eye contact maintained.
- Appropriate support material, such as slides and handouts, used.
- Clear summary provided, redirecting audience's attention to the aims stated at the beginning.

Successful presentations are based upon thorough and systematic preparation. Knowing your subject backwards is not enough although it is clearly a big help.

# 4. The 6 steps to preparing a presentation

By systematically working through the following Six Stage Plan you can ensure that your preparation is thorough.

**Stage 1: Define your purpose**

**Stage 2: Define your audience**

**Stage 3: Develop and select ideas**

**Stage 4: Design the structure**

**Stage 5: Prepare notes and visual support material**

**Stage 6: Prepare yourself**

We will look at each of these stages in more detail.

**Notes**

# 5. Define your purpose

Getting started is often the trickiest part of a presentation, and as a result, it is often easy to wade into designing slides, and collecting data before you have a crystal-clear idea of what your talk is all about.

Start your preparation by:

1. **Identifying the context of your presentation** for example, your audience are expected to deliver more for less
2. **Acknowledging the role of the audience**, for example, your audience are looking for solutions
3. **Highlighting a specific problem that the audience faces**, for example if the audience does nothing, they will be forced to cut services
4. **Affirming what you want**, for example you want them to making better use of their resources
5. **Focus them on what they need to do to get to where they want to go to**, for example make better use of the resources available to support the efficient running of your area.

This is the purpose of your presentation and should be action oriented, positive and concise.

- **Define the purpose for your presentation – what do you want the audience to take away?**



# 6. Connecting with your audience

The success of most presentations is judged on how the audience responds. You may think you did a great job, but unless your audience agrees with you, that may not be the case.

A presentation is memorable when you feel like the presenter is speaking directly to you. If you tailor your presentation to your audience, you will increase your chances of getting the message across to them. Every member of your audience has expectations, motivations, goals and hopes. When you address their goals and concerns, they feel like you are talking directly to them.

There are seven questions that help you to understand your audience:

- 1. What are they like?** Connecting with your audience means understanding them on a personal level. Take a walk in their shoes and describe what their life looks like each day. Get to know the characteristics of your audience, such as age and gender, educational and cultural background, jobs and positions, and the audience size. Find out what your audience already knows about the subject. Then find out what they think about the subject. Finally, determine what they need to know about the subject.
- 2. Why are they here?** What do they think they're going to get out of this presentation? Why did they come to hear you? Are they willing participants or mandatory attendees? Discover what concerns the audience members have and tailor your message to address these concerns. Concerns might stem from organisational needs, personal needs, expectations and audience culture.
- 3. What keeps them up at night?** Everyone has a fear, a pain point, a thorn in the side. Let your audience know that you empathies - and offer a solution.
- 4. How can you solve their problem?** What's in it for the audience? How are you going to make their lives better?
- 5. What do you want them to do? Answer the question "so what?"** - and make sure there's clear action for your audience to take.
- 6. How can you best reach them?** People vary in how they receive information. This can include the setup of the room to the availability of materials after the presentation. Give the audience what they want, how they want it.
- 7. How might they resist?** What will keep them from adopting your message and carrying out your call to action? Try to anticipate how the audience will react to your message. The reaction may be positive, negative, or neutral. Anticipate likely objections and be prepared to respond to them.

- **Work your way through the 7 questions, using a typical audience for you**

# 7. Audience behaviours

Nearly 50 years of research has revealed that people operate with four distinct ways of interaction, or Social Styles.

- **Make notes on the four characteristics - what you see, hear and how you feel?**
- **What do you need to consider for each style when presenting?**

- **Drivers:** Driver style people want to know the estimated outcome of each option. They are willing to accept risks but want to move quickly and have the final say.
- **Amiable:** Amiable style people are people-oriented and care more about close relationships than results or influence. They usually appear warm, friendly and cooperative.
- **Analytical:** Analytical style people value facts above all, and may appear uncommunicative, cool and independent.
- **Expressive:** Expressive style people are motivated by recognition, approval and prestige. They tend to appear communicative and approachable, often sharing their feelings and thoughts.

# Checklist for influencing Drivers

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be clear, specific and to the point</li><li>• Stick to business</li><li>• Come prepared with all requirements, objectives, support material in a well organised package</li><li>• Present the facts logically; plan your presentation efficiently</li><li>• Ask specific (preferably "what") questions</li><li>• Provide alternatives and choices for making their own decisions</li><li>• Provide facts and figures about probability of success or effectiveness of options</li><li>• If you disagree, take issue with facts, not the person</li><li>• If you agree, support results, not the person</li><li>• Motivate and persuade by referring to objectives and results</li><li>• After talking business, depart graciously</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ramble on, or waste their time</li><li>• Try to build personal relationships</li><li>• Forget or lose things; don't be disorganised or messy; don't confuse or distract their mind from business</li><li>• Leave loopholes or cloudy issues</li><li>• Come with a ready-made decision and don't make it for them</li><li>• Let disagreements reflect on them personally</li><li>• If you agree, don't reinforce with "I'm with you"</li><li>• Try to convince by "personal" means</li><li>• Direct or order</li><li>• Waste their time by reviewing what you have done once you have finished</li></ul>

## Notes

# Checklist for influencing Amiables

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start, however briefly, with a personal comment. Break the ice</li><li>• Show sincere interest in them as people; find areas of common involvement; be candid and open</li><li>• Patiently draw out personal goals and work with them to help achieve these goals – listen, be responsive</li><li>• Present your case softly, non-threateningly</li><li>• Ask “how?” questions to draw their opinions</li><li>• Watch carefully for possible areas of early disagreement or dissatisfaction</li><li>• If you disagree, look for hurt feelings, personal reasons</li><li>• Be casual, informal</li><li>• Define clearly (preferably in writing) individual contributions</li><li>• Provide guarantees that their decision will minimise risks; give assurances that provide them with benefits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rush headlong into business or the agenda</li><li>• Stick coldly or harshly to business; on the other hand, don't lose sight of goals by being too personal</li><li>• Force them to respond quickly to your objectives; don't say “Here's how I see it”.</li><li>• Be domineering or demanding; don't threaten with position power</li><li>• Debate about facts and figures</li><li>• Manipulate or bully them into agreeing because they probably won't fight back</li><li>• Be abrupt and rapid</li><li>• Be vague, don't offer options and probabilities</li><li>• Offer assurances and guarantees you can't fulfil</li><li>• Patronise or demean them by using subtlety or bullying tactics</li><li>• Keep deciding for them or they'll lose initiative</li></ul>

**Notes**

# Checklist for influencing Analyticals

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare your case in advance</li><li>• Approach them in a straightforward, direct way; stick to business</li><li>• Support their principles, use a thoughtful approach; build your credibility by listing pros and cons to any suggestions</li><li>• Take your time, but be persistent</li><li>• Draw up a scheduled approach to implementing action with step by step timetable; assure them that there won't be surprises</li><li>• If you agree, follow through</li><li>• If you disagree, make an organised presentation of your position</li><li>• Provide solid, tangible, practical evidence</li><li>• Minimise risk by providing guarantees over a period of time</li><li>• When appropriate, give them time to be thorough</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be disorganised or messy</li><li>• Be giddy, casual, informal, loud</li><li>• Rush the decision-making process</li><li>• Be vague about what is expected of either of you; don't fail to follow through</li><li>• Dilly dally</li><li>• Leave things to chance or luck</li><li>• Provide special personal incentives</li><li>• Threaten, sweet-talk, coax, whimper</li><li>• Use testimonies of others or unreliable sources; don't be haphazard</li><li>• Use someone's opinion as evidence</li><li>• Push too hard or be unrealistic with deadlines</li></ul>

## Notes

# Checklist for influencing Expressives

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan interaction that supports</li><li>• Leave time for relating, socialising</li><li>• Talk about people and their goals; opinions they find stimulating</li><li>• Ask for their opinions/ideas regarding people</li><li>• Provide ideas for implementing action</li><li>• Use enough time to be stimulating, fun loving, fast moving</li><li>• Provide testimonials from people they see as important, prominent</li><li>• Offer special immediate and extra incentives for their willingness to take risks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legislate or muffle</li><li>• Be cold or tight-lipped</li><li>• Drive on to facts and figures, alternatives, abstractions</li><li>• Leave decisions hanging in the air</li><li>• Waste time trying to be impersonal, judgemental, task-orientated</li><li>• "Dream" with them too much or you'll lose time</li><li>• Kid around too much or "stick to the agenda" too much</li><li>• Talk down to them</li><li>• Be rigid</li></ul>

**Notes**

# 8. A tool kit for developing and selecting ideas

## The 4MAT system

The 4MAT system allows you to meet learning styles of your audience. It's an easy structure you can incorporate into all of your presentations which allows you to keep your audience engaged and make your communication more effective.

It comes from a study of learning styles by Bernice McCarthy. She noticed that people with different learning styles learnt by asking particular questions.

- **Why?** Some people asked Why? Why are we doing this, why should I participate?
- **What?** Some people wanted facts – they wanted information – and asked the 'What' question. What are we going to do? What's happening? What's this for? What do the experts think? What do I need to know?
- **How?** Others were interested in asking 'How?' How does this happen? How does this work?
- **What If?** The last group wanted to explore future consequences, and asked What If? What would happen if I did this? What would happen if I did it that way?

We can build answers to the 4MAT question categories into our presentations to ensure we meet the needs of all of our audience.

**What can you include in your presentation to engage your audience?**



## 5 Key ideas to make your ideas stick

1. Pattern Interrupts
2. Rule of 3
3. Stories, anecdotes, fables
4. Ask a question
5. Analogies, Metaphors, Similes

### 1. Pattern interrupts

There are hundreds of things we do each day, without even thinking about them. These automated habits rule much of our life. Whether it is the route you drive to work, where you sit to watch TV, or how you respond when someone compliments you; it is mostly automated habit.

The automation of these habits is economical for us; if things happen automatically, they happen without thinking, which frees our minds to think about other things, make other decisions and much more.

However, **too much text induced PowerPoint**, too much of the same delivery method and **too much talking from a teacher** can have the same effect, lulling us into sleep, freeing our minds to wander, making retention challenging.

**A pattern interrupt** or Novelty recognition, originally a marketing strategy, is **doing something different or new that stands out**. The human brain loves novelty. An unfamiliar, unusual, or unexpected element in a presentation or teaching session intrigues the audience, jolts them out of their preconceived notions, and quickly gives them a new way of looking at the world.

According to Martha Burns, a professor at North Western who believes neuroscience is helping educators become better teachers, **new and exciting ways of giving information releases dopamine levels of your students which means they retain more information**.

Seth Godin is a popular blogger and marketer who has made a career out of delivering smart ideas differently. He told the TED audience in February 2003 that in a society with too many choices and too little time our natural inclination is to ignore most of it. The parable he talks about is you're driving down the road and you see a cow, and you keep driving because you've seen cows before. Cows are invisible. Cows are boring. Who's going to pull over and say – oh look, a cow. Nobody. But if the cow was purple, you'd notice it for a while. If all cows were purple, you'd get bored with this too. Delivering the same tired information in the same boring way as everyone else won't get you noticed – you've got to do something different.

There are lots of ways to apply Pattern Interrupt which include Stories, Props, Pictures, Quotes, Questions, Analogies, Videos, Using your audience, FLIP chart, Music, Quizzes, Humour, Body language, Activities, Forum Theatre, Skits, Simulations, Statistics, Case Studies, Slides, Demonstrations and Games.

## Ted Talks

TED is a non-profit organisation devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages. They are a great source of creative ideas for teaching. Often a strong emphasis on story telling, minimal and striking visuals and lots of pattern interrupts. They are all in the public domain. Some of our favourite TED Talks mentioned in the course are;

- Hans Rosling – Novel ways of presenting statistics
- Elliot Kraine – The mystery of chronic pain
- David J P Phillips – The Magical Science of story telling
- Amy Cuddy – Your body Language shapes who you are

## 2. Rule of 3

What's so magical about the number three?

It's no accident that the number three is pervasive throughout some of our greatest stories, fairy tales, and myths. It's also no coincidence that some of the most famous quotes throughout history are structured in three parts, nor is it surprising that the Rule of Three also works wonders in the world of comedy.

It all comes down to the way we humans process information. We have become proficient at pattern recognition by necessity, and three is the smallest number of elements required to create a pattern.

This combination of pattern and brevity results in memorable content, so if you want something to stick, put it in a sequence of three. For example – 3 objectives, 3 key ideas per slide, 3 key take home points, 3 stages to a skill.

## 3. Stories, anecdotes, fables

Academics and marketers alike have found that our brains are hardwired to process and store information in the form of stories. So, when we hear that "once upon a time" there was a certain character in such and such place, our minds are immediately transported to this imaginary scene.

In fact, according to professional speaker Akash Karia, stories are irresistible to the human mind because they activate our imaginations and so we have no choice but to follow the mental movies created in our heads. As a result, they are used by many TED presenters who are some of the most inspirational speakers in the world.

## 4. Ask a question

Audience connection is the key characteristic that distinguishes a memorable presenter from an average one. Are audience members participating with the speaker, or simply listening to the speaker? Questions provide a great way to foster engagement. Questions are two-way: You ask, and your audience responds.

We recommend using three types of questions throughout your presentation to get your audience's attention:

- **Rhetorical questions build intrigue.** Asking your audience, a question for effect (rather than one you expect them to actually answer) prompts them to think about the issue. Example: "Would you believe that companies are making robotic honeybees to pollinate crops in locales where bees are dying off?"
- **Polling questions make the audience part of your point.** When asking your audience to respond to your query, be sure to signal how you want them to do so (e.g., model raising your hand as you ask your question, or explain how the online poll works if you are virtually presenting) and comment briefly on the response you get (e.g., "Just as I expected, about 50% of you ... "). Example: "How many of you have ever been stung by a honeybee?"
- **"What if?" questions root your presentation in time.** Inquire about a possible future or the historical past; and as with rhetorical questions, you may not expect a literal response, but you definitely focus your audience's attention on the time period you're describing. Example: "What would it be like if all crops were pollinated by robo-honeybees?" Or, "Remember when modern science made it possible for genetically modified vegetables to yield more crops?"

A yes set is a series of questions that elicit a Yes, followed by a real question or request.

"Nice day today?" "Yeah... sure is!"

"I'm looking to book a table for my wife, can you help me?" "Sure can!"

"Her birthday is in 3 weeks; can you get me a table on that Saturday?" "Yep, you're in luck... we only have one left"

"Perfect and as it's a really special treat could you put us on the window balcony overlooking the river?"

"Err... Yes, I've done that too."

Robert Cialdini has done lots of research in the field of influence and persuasion; he found that the yes set works because of our built-in need to be consistent.

Therefore, if you can communicate with a person and have them consistently say yes, that's far more likely to them to say yes to increasingly challenging requests or questions.

## No Response Yes Set

The yes set is also effective even if the person you are communicated to isn't talking. The no response yes set is a pacing of a person's current experience to gain agreements with them internally for example, "You're probably wondering all the ways you may be able to implement this, by now it's clear that this process is quite easy to learn and very useful.

In a training environment it can be a useful technique to get your audience involved very quickly in a low risk way, build commonality with yourself and a group, help you gain confidence, build a strong need for the training and check current knowledge level (e.g. Show of hands or nod if you agree/have had this experience).

## 5. Analogies, metaphors, similes

These can help by tapping prior knowledge to make a connection between what people already understand through experience and what they have yet to discover. We do this naturally in conversation — for instance, “The news hit her like a freight train.” By comparing the situation to something people already know or can at least imagine, we convey its intensity and urgency. More often than not, metaphors offer a shortcut to understanding.

**Make notes on how you might include the above in your presentation**

### **Accuracy, brevity, clarity**

**Accuracy** - Make sure you check your data, facts, spelling, grammar etc. These small errors can be picked up very quickly and will undermine your presentation.

**Brevity** - Many people overexplain. To overcome this, think about all of the things you can talk about on a topic. Trim the less essential information and keep only the essential components. Less is more.

**Clarity** – Lead with a headline. Follow a logical order. Answer the question asked.

**Notes**

# 9. Designing the structure

A well-structured presentation should contain three parts:

- An engaging opening.
- A middle section that contains the main body of the presentation.
- A strong closing section.

A sound structure will allow your audience to find it easier to follow what you are saying and will increase your chances of delivering a memorable presentation.

## The Primacy and Recency Effect

The Primacy/Recency Effect is the observation that information presented at the beginning (Primacy) and end (Recency) tends to be retained better than information presented in the middle.

If you teach a new skill or new information over a 40-minute period, using the Primacy/Recency effect, you will have two “prime times” for learning and retaining information – the first twenty minutes and the last ten minutes. In between is a ten minute downtime.

In order for effective learning to take place, it is important to plan learning sessions to take advantage of both the Primacy and the Recency Effects. Use prime-time windows to teach new information and down-time for practice. The goal is retention and storage in our long-term memory.

As the lesson time lengthens, the percentage of down-time [when retentions at its lowest] increases faster than for the prime-times. When it comes to the length of the learning session, shorter (in general) is better. Varying the type of activity, the instructional method used for learning, or even the topic between peak periods is beneficial to learning.

Use the time at the beginning of learning to think about possible applications or “brainstorming”. Whatever ideas you come up with will be easier for you to remember. Whether they are applicable to what you need to learn or not. It is important to jump right into learning new material, mastering concepts and vocabulary, using the Primacy period effectively.

Apply the principle of Recency by reviewing frequently. Give students the opportunity to reinforce what they have learned by applying as soon as possible after the learning session.

## Opening

Your opening sets the tone for everything that follows. This is where you will grab the attention of the audience (think about a newspaper headline) and hook them in. Avoid beginning on a negative note. Do not apologise at the start of your presentation. Let the audience know that you are glad to be with them.

Your opening remarks matter. You have around 90 seconds at the beginning when you have the audience's full attention. After this time, you need to earn their attention and respect.

### **Introduce yourself properly**

Introduce yourself and tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them why you are telling it to them, why it is important and why it's you that's telling them. It gives you an opportunity to deliver the main message of your presentation and to establish a rapport immediately with your audience.

Tell the audience how long you will take and tell them when they can ask questions (if you are nervous about being thrown off track then it is okay to ask them to save their questions until the end). Clarify whether you expect the audience to take notes or whether you will provide handouts. Establish your leadership role i.e. your right to speak on the subject. Build a bridge from what went before into your presentation.

### **Provide the main point of the presentation**

State your main message in the opening remarks. Make sure the audience understands the purpose of the presentation and how it can benefit them.

### **Include an attention grabber**

Include an attention grabber (the hook) early on that will get the attention of the audience. It can be difficult to devise a suitable attention grabber when you start to write your opening. Sometimes, it is easier to write your entire presentation and then develop the attention grabber when all the other pieces are in place.

### **Use ABCD**

- Grab your **Audience's** attention through anecdotes, startling statistics or quotations
- Explain the **Benefits** by saying what's in it for them
- Give your **Credentials** and why are you giving the talk
- Provide **Direction** so that your audience knows when they can ask questions

### **Design your opening**

## Middle section

The middle section is where you provide more detail about your main message. You should aim to include around three points that support and reinforce the main message. You need to maintain the interest of your audience here, as you do not want them to get bored.

You also need to include transitions, which link your points and help you move smoothly from one to the next.

Break up the content so that no single item takes longer than a few minutes, and between each item try to inject something amusing, amazing, remarkable or spicy—a picture, a quote, a bit of audience interaction—anything to break it up and keep people attentive. (See section on pattern Interrupts for ideas)

### Design your middle section

Research suggests that people's attention wanes after 10 minutes or so. The best way to counter the attention slump is to add interest and variety to your presentation:

- Positions from standing to sitting (or vice versa), move around the 'stage' area, move into the audience
- Delivery tools for longer talks: You can incorporate a variety of tools including flipcharts, handouts, demonstrations, video and props
- Tense tune into the audience by varying your tense, for example, past experiences, future opportunities, current realities
- Focus swap the attention from you to them by asking a question, requesting a show of hands

# Closing

Follow these guidelines:

- Reiterate the main points of your presentation. Do not provide new information at this point, as it will confuse the audience.
- Give appropriate conclusions or recommendations. If you want the audience to do something after hearing your presentation, this is the time to ask them to do it.
- Leave the audience with a memorable impression. You can do this by ending with a quotation or inspiring thought, or by issuing a challenge to the audience. You could even tie the presentation to a current topic in the news.
- Thank the audience for their time. This is especially important if your presentation lasts more than 30 minutes.
- Make a smooth transition to the next phase. This lets the audience know what happens next. If you are holding a question and answer session, or if there is a quick break, tell the audience.
- Give a call to Action – What do the audience need to do next?

**Design your close**



# 10. Handling questions

While there is no such thing as a silly question, there are such things as silly answers! Not listening clearly enough, or not admitting that you do not know an answer, can lead to a serious roadblock.

There are steps you can take to prepare to effectively handle question and answer sessions and audience interaction. As a presenter, you want to inform the audience, not confuse them with incorrect, poorly planned or poorly delivered responses.

Questions often arise among your audience - and this is good (it shows they're listening!) But questions handled badly can ruin an otherwise excellent presentation. Because questions-and-answers are a part of your presentation, they require preparation ahead of time. And because they often come at the end, they can be the final impression you leave with your audience. So do them right.

## When to take questions

As a presenter, you can decide when to take questions from the audience. This may depend on the format of your presentation or your personal preference.

### When do you prefer to take questions?

- Before the presentation.
- During the presentation.
- After the presentation.

**Here are some guidelines you should follow, regardless of when you choose to have your question and answer session.**

- Plan time for questions while preparing your presentation.
- Inform the audience of when you will be taking questions.
- Ensure that there is adequate time for questions and answers during the presentation.

While planning your presentation, ensure that you plan time for questions and answers. For example, if you have 50 minutes for your entire presentation, you may plan to use 40 minutes to deliver the content and 10 minutes to answer questions.

## Setting it up

Anticipate the most likely questions and have your answers ready. Know who in the audience might help you answer certain questions and alert them that you may ask for their help. Consider asking for help even if you don't need it. Say when you'll handle questions - as you go or at the end - as part of your 'Introduction'.

# Prepare for questions

When you ask for questions, you have to be ready for just about anything. It is true that you cannot be ready for everything, but you can prepare for most things by following a few guidelines.

Having the confidence to tackle most questions will give you the confidence to deal with more challenging questions.

While questions can be challenging, here are some steps you can follow to help you prepare for them:

- **Brainstorm:** To prepare for questions you must first brainstorm all of the possible questions and answers that you think the audience could ask. Try to put yourself in the audience's shoes—what might they be curious or confused about?
- **Write it down:** Write down the questions and answers from your brainstorming session. Use this list for future practice and review.
- **Practice:** Give your list of possible questions and answers to friends or colleagues, then have them ask you questions and give you feedback on your responses.

# Answering the questions

- Be prepared for silence – the audience is changing its role
- Repeat the question so that everyone knows what is being answered
- Answer as concisely as you can. Having answered the question, don't go on. But don't make it so short that it doesn't answer the question
- Make sure you involve all the audience
- When time is going fast say, 'just two more questions'
- If a question is not clear, rephrase it, e.g. 'Do I understand you to be asking...?'
- If a questioner is obviously not asking a question but is making a statement, wait patiently until they have finished. Then say, 'There's a great deal in what you say. Next question please.'
- Expect that there will be no right answer to a difficult question. Some questions will have a range of alternative answers. Affirm that this is OK.
- Offer to find out an answer to a difficult question. Get back to them later that day, the next day or the day after. You must then follow through as promised. Nothing will damage your credibility in the long run, more than not keeping your word.
- Welcome difficult questions. And don't try to divert the delegates back to the things you intended them to do next. Say something like "I'm glad you raised this. It is a key issue and well worth exploring now." A presentation which tackles difficult questions head on will be seen as much more useful than one which tries to skirt around problematic areas.
- For an off-the subject question (does not relate to the material in the presentation). You could car park this and agree to talk to them off line.
- For a limited-interest question (a question that is of interest to a few people, but not the majority of the audience). You could car park this and agree to talk to them off line.
- For a rambling and long-winded question (a question where the audience member asks you two or three questions in one breath). Clarify the question.

## Using ACE to handle questions

You can use the **ACE technique** when answering difficult questions, when audience members give you an opinion, when they disagree with you and when you want to empower your audience to think for themselves.

- **Acknowledge** the question (It can be helpful to repeat the question back so that other learners can hear the question and to check you have understood the question).
- **Clarify** the question (This involves asking a subsequent question to the questioner. Often people ask questions because they have an opinion already or there is some background to the question that would be useful to know to help frame your answer) This also buys you time to think. E.g. Tell me more. What makes you ask that? What examples do you have? Is this something you have experienced? Can you give me a little more context?
- **Execute** the answer (You could answer the question, refer to an expert, ask the audience, car park the question, research the question there and then).

**What questions might you/have you faced? How might you ACE these?**

# 11. Building confidence

Appearing confident is important because it gives you credibility as a speaker which means your audience trust what you are saying and can focus on the message without distraction.

**What makes you nervous when you are teaching formally?  
What strategies do you have for building confidence?**

## Ideas for building confidence

### **Imposter Syndrome**

This is an internal fear that you are somehow getting away with something, and it's only a matter of time before you get found out. A nagging sense that you are not quite good enough. Ways of overcoming this include accepting praise (It's not just people being nice), accepting that if you get your message across its good enough and you don't have to be perfect.

### **FEAR**

There are many popular acronyms for the word "fear" but our favourite is "False Expectations About Reality". It reminds us that many of our worries are about future events that will never come to pass. The advice is to differentiate between real and false fears by deciding how likely they are to happen and replace false fears with more positive thoughts. For example, instead of thinking that you will be nervous, and it will show, start to see yourself as someone who can look and sound confident.

### **Overweighting of the negative**

It's quite common to focus on what didn't work, what we forgot to say, the one piece of critical feedback. But, what about all the good things we included and did achieve. What about all the positive feedback? Learn to accept praise and praise yourself.

### **Get set up early**

One of the best ways to ensure the presentation runs smoothly is by getting in early so that you have time to set up the room, get comfortable with the space, sort out technical issues and deal with the unexpected.

## **Talk to your audience in advance**

When individuals come in the room, meet and greet them, shake their hands, talk to them, find out what their experience and objectives are. If there is an expert make a beeline for them, appeal to their ego by seeing whether they you can include them in the teaching. When you officially start your teaching, you will have already warmed up and will be talking to a group of individuals that you have already met (rather than a group of strangers). Plus the expert is on side.

## **Get the audience talking as quickly as possible**

Use a yes set, ask simple questions, get the group involved in an activity, do an icebreaker, ask the group to introduce themselves.

## **Breathing deeply**

When you feel anxious, breathing deeply can be an excellent way of relaxing. Take deep breaths and hold them in for several seconds slowly expelling air.

## **Relaxation**

Posture is important - establish a good central position; weight balanced; feet and arms relaxed; shoulders open and relaxed. Tense muscles and hold for three seconds. Release. Work through feet, calves, buttocks, arms, hands, shoulders and face.

## **Visualising success**

There is incredible power in the visualisation process if we use it to our benefit. Professional athletes use visualisation all of the time — to picture themselves scoring a goal or hitting a home run. You can visualise yourself running a successful teaching session. Imagine the situation where you are going to face your audience and run through the presentation with everything going smoothly. Doing this will help you identify what you need to do to make it successful.

## **There is no magic wand**

The best way of gaining confidence is to put yourself out of your comfort zone and gain experience. Every time you do this, you will gain more confidence.

## **Act as if**

When we act like we are confident, we become more confident (see Amy Cuddy TED Talk). Confidence is a behaviour as well as an attitude. Confident people use space and time effectively (don't hide behind tables, hang on lecterns, shrink body language, speak too quickly, start too soon).

## **Think about the worst thing that could happen**

Think about the worst thing that could happen and then look at its probability. It may help to put a few thoughts on paper. When you look at your worries on paper, they often seem unlikely and less overwhelming.

## **Intentionally plan your opening**

Good morning and welcome. My name is X. The purpose of this session is to Y and over the next few minutes I will Z.

## **Remind yourself of your purpose**

How your teaching benefits the audience. You're just the messenger!

# 12. Maximising your ability to communicate

To deliver really effective presentations it is essential that you understand body language and the messages this may convey to your audience.

Albert Mehrabian is one of the most quoted experts on body language and he is probably most well-known for his work on how we interpret others when they communicate with us. He identified that we interpret communication using three elements, namely words, tone of voice and body language.

Through his research Mehrabian also surmised that proportionally, the three elements were not of equal importance. He claimed that in face-to-face communication, the majority of what is put across is portrayed through non-verbal communication:

- Words (the literal meaning) account for 7% of the overall message.
- Tone of voice accounts for 38% of the overall message.
- Body Language accounts for 55% of the overall message.

This is particularly important when considering the delivery of an important presentation. It illustrates the fact that however well prepared and impactful the content of your presentation is, the success or failure to engage is 93% dependent on how you deliver it. As we can see the largest impacting factor is body language.

There are many aspects of body language that feature strongly when delivering a key presentation. If you watch world leaders when they present you may notice that their body language is carefully scripted, to the same level as the words they are saying. Each hand gesture and each look to various parts of the audience at specific points in the presentation is pre-prepared.

In "Silent Messages", Dr Albert Mehrabian describes his research into how people communicate their feelings and attitudes. He found that people's nonverbal behavior generally has more bearing than their words in communicating feelings or attitudes to others.

This was particularly true when people gave mixed messages about how they felt about something; facial messages carried more weight than vocal messages, which in turn carried more weight than verbal messages.

For effective and meaningful communication, verbal and nonverbal behaviour need to support each other in meaning - they have to be "congruent".

## Notes

# 13. Understanding your visual image



In any presentation, your body language adds power to the message. It supports what your words are saying. The operative word here is, of course, "supports". Body language must be in tune with the message and also not distract or detract from the message. If they are denying each other, then your presentation will fail.

**Confidence and sincerity** are the absolute basis for this process. If your body is declaring that you are not sincere in what you are saying, then your credibility decreases and there is no way your message will have the impact it should have. Think about **the tone of your message**. Is it relaxed, conversational? Then make your body language relaxed. Is it passionate, strong and powerful, then create body language that conveys that power. Is it alert and enthusiastic, then your body language will be upright and reflecting that enthusiasm.

You also need to be aware that your **gestures** can support or detract from your message. Learn to become aware of what your hands are doing while you speak.

Many people have habits that are terribly distracting and yet they aren't aware of what they are doing. They click or twiddle a pen, play with their hair or their clothes, hold a microphone with fingers unconsciously making a rude gesture, take glasses on and off, put hands in pockets and take them out.

All of these things are not necessarily detrimental in themselves, if the audience is absolutely focused on the speaker and the message. But if there is any reason for the audience's attention to stray (and we all have short attention spans) then they will become fascinated, at best, and possibly annoyed at whatever it is that the speaker is doing with their hands.

If, on the other hand, those **hands are working to support the speech**, they will bring the attention back to the message. They will also give power to the impact of the message.

**Natural gestures** are basically the aim. If you are not a natural gesturer, your body will support your message. It is necessary to be aware that you are not repeating the same gesture many times. It may add emphasis the first time, but after that it will distract as much as the others mentioned earlier. Watch television journalists and sooner or later you will notice this.

**Your clothes, too, can distract attention from your message.** If you have a very bright or unusual item of clothing, if your scarf or tie flaps in a breeze, if your earrings dangle or click, or your necklace or tie pin clicks on a microphone, the audience will be distracted from your message. Again, unless your message is absolutely riveting, your clothes will become the centre of attention just as gestures can, and your message will lose its impact.

**How you stand and walk** works in just the same way. If you are a passionate speaker who simply cannot stand still, then hopefully you will support the passion of your message. Try to use standing still to give the same sort of impact that a pause in the middle of rapid speech would give.

If you choose to move or change position just to provide relief because you think your speech is boring; be careful. It may be that your movement will have more impact than your message. Timing can help so that you change position with a new idea or with a new visual support. Try to make all of your body language work with the movement. So, for example, if you want to walk to give the impression of thinking of a new idea, then set your hand up to your face to indicate thoughtfulness and speak slowly or stop speaking altogether.

**Facial expression:** This must be in harmony with your message, or it will work against it, just as your body language does. Avoid constant smiling—smiling constantly while talking is difficult and does not sound or look appropriate. Constant smiling may indicate to the audience that you are nervous or unsure of yourself.

Avoid tense facial muscles—too much tension in your face may signal to the audience that you are thinking too hard, or are too serious. This may be disconcerting to your audience. Use positive facial expressions—good facial expressions reflect appropriate emotions and feelings, such as confidence and interest.

Avoid overuse of a 'poker face'—using a poker face hides your emotions during a card game; however, if you show no emotion while presenting, you may appear disinterested, distant or aloof.

If you have difficulty controlling facial expressions in front of a group, imagine that you are speaking face to face with someone you know. That will allow you to relax and use the appropriate facial expressions.

**Eye contact** is a way of connecting to your listeners. This connection helps:

- You feel less isolated.
- You feel more relaxed.

As a rule, maintain eye contact with an individual for one to three seconds. The number of individuals you should make eye contact with depends on the size of the audience. In small groups, occasionally focus on each member of the group.

In large groups, you can use the 12, 3, 6, 9 method. First, make eye contact with someone at the back of the audience, then at the right, then at the front and then the left. Another method is to pick a few friendly faces, address each and move on.

**Head Movements:** While presenting, ensure that your head movements help convey, and not confuse, your message. Think of how confusing it would be to the audience to hear you saying "No" but see you nodding your head "Yes".

**Posture:** Your posture as a presenter is closely linked to the mood of your audience. Stand up straight, but not stiff or rigid, or you will look tense. Point your feet toward the audience and distribute your weight evenly on each foot.

Sit all the way back in your chair, and do not slouch. If you look too relaxed, you will convey a sloppy image to your audience. You should avoid certain postures since they do not reflect a professional, positive image:

- **Crossed arms:** Crossing your arms may be comfortable; however, it conveys distance, aloofness or a distrusting manner.
- **Hands in pockets:** Putting your hands in your pockets during your presentation looks bad.
- **Clinging for life:** It is fine to hold on to a lectern, but you do not want to look like you are clinging onto it for life! You should look relaxed and natural.
- **Hands behind your back:** Clasping your hands behind your back may cause your audience to wonder what you are doing back there!
- **Wringing hands:** Wringing your hands, or clasping or playing with your hands or fingers, is a sign of nervousness.



# 14. Effective voice in presentations

How effectively you use your voice can immensely add to or detract from your presentation. The most beautifully written lines are wasted if not heard, or if misunderstood, or if poorly delivered. To avoid these three common problems be aware of voice **projection, enunciation, expression** and ... **posture**.

**Projection** - Your voice, like a pipe organ, needs air and lots of it to be heard. To increase your airflow, practice deep breathing, which expands your lower ribcage. This not only projects your voice better but also helps you relax. Practice for a few minutes each day.

**Voice resonance** - Voice resonance is the intensification and prolongation of vocal sounds by adjusting vocal cords and speech channels (it's harder to explain than to do). Actors, narrators, and broadcasters resonate because their voice carries farther, sounds richer, and tires less.

The **vowels** are what carry your voice and make you heard. But just because you're heard doesn't mean you'll be understood. Think about all those British Rail platform announcements you've heard - but didn't understand. That's because the consonants are what make you understood. And that leads us to **enunciation**.

**Enunciation** - Crisp and correct pronunciation of words is what makes you understood. Since people unconsciously lip-read, this aids understanding.

Great actors are great not because we can hear and understand their lines, but because of the way they deliver them - their expression. Expression conveys our emotions and feelings and evokes them in others. It results from vocal variety **in range, emphasis, tempo, and phrasing**.

Practice getting a greater range of musical notes in your voice. Be sure the emphasis is on the important words and phrases. Vary the tempo or pace of your speech, speeding up with excitement, slowing down with gravity and pausing occasionally for emphasis or humour.

**Emphasis** - We put meaning into words by placing emphasis in certain points. Read the lines of famous plays or speeches and then listen to recordings of great actors or great orators delivering the same passage. Analyse how these use expressions in their voices to transform these mere words, to create moods, to communicate feelings and evoke our emotions.

**Tempo** - Refers to the speed of speech i.e. the number of spoken words per minute. Speaking quickly at the beginning of a presentation gains the attention. However, if the speaker continues at too faster tempo, listeners will switch off.

Speech is more interesting when the speed is varied. If your average speed is too slow your listeners will become bored and impatient. On the other hand, if your average speed is too fast your listeners won't have time to take in what you are saying and once again, they lose interest.

**Phrasing** - Words are the units of writing. Phrases are the units of speaking. It is in the moments of silence between phrases, that the listener interprets the meaning. Therefore it is important to separate phrases with pauses so that the listener can get the big picture.

**Posture** - It surprises some people that posture appears on this list of tips to improve your voice. But if you think about it, it's obvious: you can't project, enunciate or put expression into your voice if your posture is poor. Ensure that your feet are a little apart. Straighten the legs, bracing the knees; bring the stomach wall under control; expand the whole chest; sit shoulders easily on the chest; bring head upright (head in the air, rather than nose). Finally ensure your weight is forward on the balls of your feet.

# 15. The words you use

Use simple, clear words and phrases when making a presentation so your audience can visualise and remember your message.

We have all sat through presentations where there is absolutely nothing wrong with the core messages, and the structure is fine, but the energy just seems to be lacking. We have already discussed the effect that positive body language can have but this in isolation may not be enough. Your audience needs to feel your energy within everything you do, so that includes the words that you use and how you express them.

The words you choose to use are extremely important. Take a look at the table below and compare the words used within each row. Notice how a simple exchange of words, essentially conveying the same meaning can increase the "energy" conveyed. The words in the right-hand column might well be described as "power" words.

Standard Word	Power Word
Good	Exceptional
Active	Dynamic
Completely	Absolutely
Enthusiasm	Passion
Determined	Driven

## Verbal stumbling blocks

Verbal stumbling blocks can affect your presentation credibility. There are seven verbal stumbling blocks to avoid when presenting:

<b>Hedging statements</b>	Avoid hedging statements, such as "Of course, that is only my opinion". You do not sound confident with the qualifying term "only" in this statement. Say what you mean to say and do not undervalue yourself. Be assertive, not passive, by removing the qualifying word "only" in this example
<b>Tag questions</b>	A tag question is a mini-question that immediately follows a statement, such as "It's hard to present, isn't it?" By saying that, you sound as if you are asking for permission or apologising.
<b>Apologies</b>	Avoid statements like, "I'm sorry if this next section is long". To build your credibility with the audience, you must sound assertive and confident.
<b>Over explaining</b>	Get to the point and do not beat around the bush. Do not give four examples when one or two will suffice
<b>Wishy-Washy statements</b>	Avoid wishy-washy statements, such as "I think...." or "I suppose..." Such phrases will not gain you any credibility.

## Notes

# 16. Visual aids



## Selecting visual aids

Your presentation is not complete just because you have finished writing it. The next step is to incorporate some presentation aids into it. A presentation aid is anything you can use to explain, illustrate or support the information in your presentation.

### Popular presentation aids include:

- Flip charts and whiteboards.
- Computer-based slides.
- Models and props.
- Hand-outs.

"We are visual creatures. Over 75% of the neurons in our brain that process sensory information are processing vision." Dan Roam, author of *Back of the Napkin*

Presentations are a glance media – more closely related to billboards than other media.

Imagine having an advertising billboard full of bullet points, car drivers would crash trying to read the ads. Your visual messages should be processed within three seconds. The audience should be able to quickly understand the meaning of your slides and turn their attention back to you.

Presentation aids can be effective in bringing your presentation to life. The type you choose depends on the nature of your presentation. Some aids work best in small, informal settings, while others are better suited to larger gatherings. Whichever presentation aids you choose, they should always enhance your presentation.

Too many aids can be confusing to the audience. Make sure you know where to focus the audience's attention at all times and point them in that direction.

### Integral visual aids do four things:

1. Serve your purpose, which is to communicate the message to your audience.
2. They enable you to highlight key information. If you bombard people with information, they will not remember your main point. Aim to present less information and more messages in your visual aids.
3. They help you focus on what is relevant. If a visual aid is not relevant or is merely decorative, discard it.
4. They allow you to interpret, rather than just present, information. You are the expert and your audience needs your expertise to understand better what they are hearing.

### Follow these guidelines to keep visual aids effective;

- Avoid being wordy.
- Do not overload visual aids.
- Use interpretive titles.
- Use progressive disclosure.

# Create reader-friendly visual aids

This means that your audience must be able to read and understand your visual aids immediately. If the audience has to spend time trying to interpret them, they may miss the key points of your message.

## **Typeface, font and point size**

Make sure you use a readable typeface and font. For most computer-based projected presentations, it is best to use a 'sans serif' style, such as Arial, Calibri or Helvetica.

## **Limit the number of supporting points**

The middle section should contain points that support your main message, about three supporting points. This is a manageable number for you and your audience. Present these in your notes as a series of headings.

## **Elaborate on each supporting point**

Make sure each supporting point supports the main message of the presentation; however, do not give too much information, as this will only obscure the main point. Present this information as bullet points under each heading.

## **Use an organising method to structure content**

You could simply number your points, or you could talk about, for example, the "four Ts", the "five Bs", etc. You could also repeat a phrase or theme before each of your main points to link them or play on a popular theme.

## **Ensure the support material is clear**

Do your supporting points truly support your main message? If they are not relevant, leave them out.

Are your supporting points independent of each other or do they overlap? If they overlap, they are sub points.

Are your supporting points clearly stated and consistent with one another? They should be worded similarly and be unambiguous.

## **Ensure the support material is accurate**

Your credibility will be undermined if a member of the audience discovers an error in your presentation. Double-check all data. Make sure you spell all names and titles correctly and that you present direct quotations accurately.

## **Provide frequent directional signs**

Directional signs are transition words that link your ideas together. They can help focus your audience's attention. You can provide directional signals by including a mini summary at the end of a set of points. You can also use smooth transitions as you move from point to point.

Serif' fonts, such as Times, have a more old-fashioned traditional appearance than sans serif. Serif fonts have little extra cross lines at the end of the strokes of the letters, which originated in the days of engraving, before printing, when the engraver needed a neat exit from each letter. Bear in mind that if you need to comply with a company type style you will have no choice over 'sans serif' or 'serif' fonts anyway. Just make sure you select fonts and point sizes that are fit for the purpose.

Titles should be 28-32 points in size. Bullets can range from 20-24 points in size while sub points should appear in at least 14 point bold.

## **Presentation backgrounds**

Most presentation software, such as PowerPoint, enables you to select from a variety of presentation backgrounds. These can range from simple, minimalist backgrounds to complex dazzling ones. You can even design your own background.

## **Look for and exploit visual opportunities**

Use pictures, where possible, to help the audience understand the concepts that you are trying to explain. Look for ways of incorporating graphics and images. Use a graph, chart or matrix to help convey your message. You can display processes, sequences and timelines visually, too. Photographic images of people tend to help the audience connect with your message. Using video clips to show concrete examples promotes active cognitive processing, which is the natural way people learn.

## **Avoid overusing word-only visual aids**

Powerful visual aids contain lots of pictures and few words. They are much more interesting to an audience and they can communicate your message more effectively.

## **Use colour wisely**

Use colour wisely in your visual aids.

Warm colours, such as red, orange and yellow are called 'advancing colours' because they seem to move towards the audience.

Cool colours such as green, blue and violet seem to recede from the audience. For best visibility, use a warm colour with a cool colour, for example, orange on blue.

Remember that approximately 10% of the population is colour-blind. Avoid using combinations of red and green and avoid using grey as a background. Other colours do not contrast well with grey.

Be consistent with your choice of colours and try to use safe colour combinations. Since more than three colours can be distracting, use colour sparingly!

## **Consider the relationship between the words you use**

Fewer words have more impact (less is more!). Choose the words you use carefully. Use short phrases rather than sentences. Delete unnecessary text.

Do not describe in words what you can show in an image. Use pictures, photos, charts, drawings to convey information where you can. If you must use several wordy slides in a row, follow them with an interesting graphic.

## **Proofread visual aids**

Do not overlook this vital step. You must correct any errors that have crept in; otherwise, your visual aids could undermine the credibility of your presentation.

# 17. Effective rehearsal



## **Step one: Reread your notes**

To rehearse effectively, the first step is to reread your notes or script several times. Your focus should be on becoming familiar with the material, rather than memorising it.

Ensure you know your opening lines, your sequence of key points, your closing lines and any anecdotes you are using. Check that any transitions you have prepared, as well as the points when you move onto new slides or introduce props, are clearly marked in your notes.

### **Sit down and read silently**

Format your presentation as if you intend to read it to your audience. Start each sentence on a new line and format with double line spacing. Your choice of typeface and font should be for legibility and not style. Use upper case characters only for the beginning of sentences, proper names and points needing emphasis.

### **Sit down and read aloud**

Once you have read your presentation several times you are ready to read aloud. Reading aloud is a vital memory enforcer helping you to visualise and memorise key points within the presentation.

### **Stand up and read aloud**

Once you have read your presentation several times its good practice to do so standing up. When you stand up you can apply emphasis to those passages of the speech that require special attention. You can speak up where appropriate and single out key words with extra intonation. At this stage, look out for words or word combinations that are difficult to pronounce and consider changing them.

### **Stand up, read aloud and move**

With these key tasks completed, you can now practise your presentation aloud—moving around. Walk around and move your arms—pointing for extra emphasis perhaps. Move your head adjusting your gaze to establish eye contact with an audience as you make each decisive point. With a mirror, you can build a sense of your own mobility and speaking presence.

### **Record your presentation**

Your last rehearsal step is to consider preparing an audio recording of yourself. Prepare a recording that you can listen to when travelling to and from work or during a quiet moment at home. You need to build familiarity, and along with familiarity goes confidence.

## **Step two: Simulate the situation**

Rehearsing in a small room will not prepare you for delivering a presentation in a large auditorium. Try to rehearse in the room where you will be giving the presentation. If this is not possible, try to simulate the situation as best you can. Practise in a room of similar size and shape.

Try out all the equipment you will be using. Make sure you know how everything works and where your files are, so you will not be fumbling during the presentation.

There are things you can do to reduce potential risks to your presentation; however, much of the outside environment is beyond your control. Take nothing for granted; check and double check, and plan contingencies for anything that might go wrong.

Plan and control the layout of the room as much as you are able. If you are a speaker at someone else's event, you will not have much of a say in this. If it is your event, then take care to position yourself, your equipment and your audience and the seating plan so that it suits you and the situation.

For instance, do not lay out a room theatre style if you want people to participate in teams. Use a boardroom layout if you want a co-operative debating approach.

## **Step three: Practise your Q&A session**

It is a good idea to be prepared for any questions the audience may ask you. Request that a colleague sit in on your rehearsal and have this person ask questions that might arise from your presentations.

The question and answer session at the end of a presentation is often an important segment. Always be prepared for it!

## **Step four: Get feedback**

Feedback on your rehearsal is always useful, as you can use it to fine-tune your presentation. It is possible to provide feedback to yourself by taping your rehearsal and then reviewing it afterwards; however, it is always better to get feedback from another person.

Ask a colleague to watch you rehearse and then provide you with feedback. Ask them to focus on your visual image, delivery style, how clearly you present the content, and whether your presentation aids are helpful.

When we present in front of an audience we all have very fragile egos. Encourage those around you to tell you the things you did well, in addition to areas that require improvement.

## **Step five: Test your timing**

When you practice, you also improve your chances of keeping to time. You get a good idea of how long each part of the presentation will actually take, and this helps you plan how much time you will have for statements and other audience interactions.

Members of the audience want you to respect their time. If you finish your presentation on time or early, this can make a huge, positive impact to them. No one has ever complained about a presentation being too concise and to the point. Say what you have to say and when you have said it stop!

When speakers go over their allotted time, they may disrupt the whole schedule of the event and/or cause the audience unnecessary inconvenience. Be considerate and stick to your agenda as closely as possible.

## **Address problems discovered during rehearsal**

When you rehearse your presentation, you may discover a few problems with it, or your colleague might point out issues that you have not even noticed!

Make sure that you address all the problems discovered during rehearsal. For example, you may have to rework your visual aids and rewrite your notes.

By addressing these problems during the rehearsal, you can help to reduce the chances of things going wrong when you deliver your presentation to the audience.



# 18. Using presentation notes

## Speaking without notes

You may admire speakers who can speak without notes and may aspire to do this. Fine. But be aware that very few experienced speakers actually speak without notes. They just make you think they do! Here are some possible ways they fool you:

- They have notes but have done the same talk so often they've memorised it.
- They have notes but have spent time memorising.
- They are using visual aids which act as their notes.

One of the most valuable skills you can develop as a presenter is the proper use of notes. A surprising number of otherwise skillful speakers fall down in this area. Notes poorly prepared and poorly used can cause many problems...

### Problems

- You read your notes too much, losing eye contact with your audience.
- You lose your place in the notes because they are too detailed or too small.
- Your note papers flop about or fold over so that you can't read them.
- Your notes are less an aid and more a distraction to you and your audience.

These and many other problems can be overcome by following these tips when preparing:

- Write only key words on your notes, not sentences or even phrases. Exception: verbatim "super preparation" of openings, closings or quotations.
- Write in large, bold print, using a felt-tip pen.
- Write on only one side (lest you lose track of which side you're on).
- Add colour: perhaps red for visual-aid cues, green for anecdotes, and so on.
- Add symbols: an eyeball to remind you of eye contact; +, =, >, etc.
- Put times down left edge to help keep you on schedule.

### When using

- Just glance at your notes, don't stare at them (there's only key words).
- Avoid holding notes in the "choir" position.
- Put the notes down sometimes, on a table say, especially when gesturing.
- Put notes down at the end, especially when answering questions.

As a general rule your notes should follow the 80/20 rule i.e. 20% of your presentation should be written down in the form of key words.

# 19. When things go wrong

Just as you cannot control everything that happens in your life, you cannot control all that happens during your presentation; however, you can plan and practice how to deal with mishaps.

How you handle mishaps will affect the way the audience sees you. You want to appear professional and able to cope with mishaps. You can learn how to deal professionally with mishaps.

When it is obvious to the audience that a mishap has occurred, do not take yourself too seriously. Try not to blush or be embarrassed.

For example:

- Tripping over your own feet: "Now you know why I am not a professional dancer."
- Spilling coffee on yourself: "This is how I lost my job waiting on tables when I was a teenager."
- Dropping your papers on the floor: "I used to be a juggler, but I got fired."

## Handling disasters

Disasters can happen at any time. You have no control over disasters, such as power failures or fire alarms, but you do have control of how you react to these disasters. Remember that the presenter's visual image can affect how the audience feels.

In a disaster situation, you should always try to remain calm. If you appear stressed or panicked, the audience will sense your feelings and become stressed or panicked themselves.

Another way to handle disasters effectively is to have a backup plan, or a 'Plan B'. For example, check where the fire exits are before the presentation, so you can quickly lead the group to safety should an alarm ring. We rely so much on technology these days—what about keeping a printed copy of your presentation to hand, just in case?

### Notes

## Notes

# 20. Review sheet



**Nerves:** Butterflies flying in formation, etc.

Comments:

**Visual image components:** Eye contact, facial expressions, head movements, gestures, posture, dress.

Comments:

**Vocal image elements:** Pitch, pace, volume, resonance, pausing.

Comments:

**Any verbal stumbling blocks:** Hedging statements, tag questions, overuse of intensifiers, exaggerated superlatives, apologies, over explaining, wishy-washy statements.

Comments:

**Well-structured presentation:** The presentation contains an engaging opening, a middle section that contains the main body of the presentation and a strong closing section. The structure is easy to follow with a clear sequence of ideas.

Comments:

**Presentation content:** Content captures the audience's attention, is engaging and enjoyable and builds audience interest. The closing leaves a good impression and states clearly, what the audience needs to do next.

Comments:

**Handling audience questions:** Concise, prepared in advance for questions, fields questions appropriately, handles difficult questions.

Comments:

# 21. Recommended reading

There are many books that have influenced this content and delivery of this course – some of our favourite books are listed below :

- Akash Karia – How to deliver a great TED Talk (2014, Karia)
- Carmine Gallo – Talk Like TED (2017, Pan)
- Robert Cialdini – Influence: The Psychology of persuasion (2007, Harper)
- Farrah Storr (2018) – The Discomfort Zone (2018, Piatkus)
- Amy Cuddy – Presence (2016, Orion)
- David Shephard and Tad James - Presenting magically (2016, Crown)
- Malcolm Gladwell - Blink (2006, Penguin)
- Susan Jeffers - Feel the fear and do it anyway (2007, Vermillion)
- Paul Mckenna - Instant confidence (2006, Bantam)

## Notes

## Notes

Notes



**Notes**

**ISC  
MEDICAL**