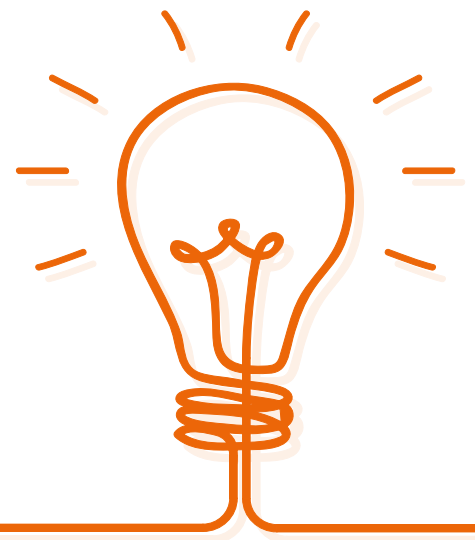


Presentation Skills



Participant Crib Sheet

THE 3 LAWS OF PRESENTING

“AN AUDIENCE WILL FORGIVE ALMOST ANYTHING IF YOU DON'T BORE THEM TO DEATH”

1. Never Be Boring

As children we were great presenters. Monday mornings at primary school, show and tell. We could make a toy come to life, we visited the moon, we starred in our own movie. But somewhere between then and adulthood, we became boring. We now deliver information, we download data. As a presenter though, your job is to be interesting. If you are interesting you are effective, if you are entertaining then you are memorable, if you are inspiring then you are influential. An audience will forgive almost anything as long as you don't bore them to death.

2. Be Confident

A structured, prepared approach to presenting is absolutely essential. With structure comes the control of any situation, any opportunity to communicate a message. People who control the effectiveness of basic communication don't just exhibit confidence; they are also seen as leaders by others. They generate confidence in themselves and others. People naturally look towards confident people for decision making and authority. They are persuasive, influential and memorable.

3. Be Yourself

Being yourself is all that you need. You have all of the natural abilities and attributes you need to get any message across in the way you want it to be received. You need to make sure that you make the most of you, on purpose, all of the time. The more of you that you make available to the audience, the more they will be able to connect with you, bond and feel comfortable. Just by being yourself will allow you and your audience to be comfortable with your style and natural flow.

TOP 10 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

1. Keep it Simple

Presentations should be simple. Less is more and your audience will thank you for it. Problem is, simplicity comes from planning and preparation, which always provides enormous amounts of content. Here's the problem. Lot's of extra knowledge results in long, drawn out, crammed slide decks. You need to ask yourself, "What are the 3 key things they need to remember?" Your planning and preparation will enable you to deliver these and everything else acts as a support.

2. Think customer & audience

Don't let the content drive your presentation, let the audience do it. You've got to put yourself in their shoes and get to know them as much as possible. Use 5 simple questions: Who is the audience? What is the purpose of the presentation? Why are you the one delivering? Where is the presentation? When is the presentation? Use these to formulate your audience and customer plan.

3. Organisation & preparation

Keep that laptop closed and the computer on standby. Don't even think about PowerPoint until you really understand what you are about to do and what you need to deliver. You must know the purpose of the presentation and the value it will add to the audience. You must know the key elements that make up the message you want to convey. Once you've got this, then use the PowerPoint 10/20/30 rule - 10 slides, 20 minutes, font size not less than 30. This is not about sharing information, if it was then all they would need to do is read a document.

4. Outline your content

Go back to basics. When you begin to plan, avoid diving in at the technical deep end and begin to capture your thoughts, comments and feelings in the best way for you. Be mindful of the way that you learn. Some people love to make copious amounts of notes, some draw mind maps or doodle, some use voice recorders. Whatever works for you. Remember, you may use technology when you present, but the act of delivery is essentially you.

5. Have a clear structure

Structure is the foundation of a world class presentation. Without it, your style, delivery and supporting visuals will become insignificant. You need to take time at the very beginning to put your thoughts and ideas into a logical order. This will help you with the flow of your presentation, which means that the audience will see where you're going.

6. Start with solid content

Your presentation must be based on solid content. If you are using statistics then be prepared to prove them, if using examples, have the evidence. Ensure that the content is applicable to the audience, that it is important to them not just because it's important to you. This is not an opportunity to bombard your audience with reams of data and information. Don't think that you need to give everything in order for them to understand anything. Use solid, relevant content to build a winning presentation.

TOP 10 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

7. Include stories and metaphors

Great presentations tell a story. Great presenters emphasise messages through stories, anecdotes and metaphor, most often personal experiences. The easiest way to present complexity is through an example or a story that makes the point. They are easy for someone to remember, so find a way to make them memorable. Make them short, make them interesting.

8. Would you pass the lift test?

You are in a lift with a senior stakeholder and they ask you about your presentation topic. What would you say? Could you sell them a solution or arrange a presentation in the time it takes to get from the 10th to the ground floor? This may happen to you, maybe not, but it forces you to get to the essence of your message and make it clear and concise.

9. So what?

If there's one question that will enable your presentations to be world class, it's 'So What?' It's a tough question, but you need to continually ask yourself this as you plan and practice your presentations. Is your content relevant or is it fluff? If you can't answer this, then it probably needs to go. How many times have you heard someone present and you've asked yourself 'So What?' Do you want people listening to you to be asking themselves the same question?

10. Confidence in your creation

The more you know the content, the better prepared you are. The more rehearsal and practice you have done, the less nervous you will be. Fear comes from the unknown. If you know your material, the flow, what's next and have anticipated questions, then you reduce anxiety. Let confidence fill the space that nervousness has left behind.

DATA INTO INSIGHT

When you are preparing for your presentation, you will start to gather lots of information, data, statistics and facts. You'll have conversations, develop ideas, and plan your strategy. You need all of this to build a solid solution for your potential customer and you need to use it all. But does your customer need to see it all? You want them to be convinced by you, to be influenced, to be focussing on your message. If your presentations are more about getting as much information across as possible, then it becomes a test of stamina and memory for your audience and both will soon run out. You need to ensure that you keep them fit and healthy until the end. To do this you need to turn all of the information you've gathered into insight. It needs to mean something; it needs to have a purpose, be clear and concise. If it has no meaning it's a waste of energy and you'll be wearing your audience out, turning them off.

OPENING WITH IMPACT - START HOW YOU MEAN TO GO ON

Audience compliment

If your audience likes you, then it is more likely they are going to believe you. So, if you want them to like you, show them you already like them. This is not flattery for the sake of it; this is a sincere compliment or highlighting a positive quality. Let them know what's unique about them and what it means to be presenting to them.

Visual aid

Using a visual image to open your presentation can be really effective. You can get people to think directly or indirectly about it, creating the impact you want to have. Make sure that you use high quality images, you want your audience thinking about the meaning, not being critical of the clarity of the image.

Questions and rhetorical questions

If you want to get your audience involved immediately, ask them a question or a rhetorical question. A direct question will engage the audience straight away, seeking an answer. Lots of motivational speakers use this as people pay more attention to their own ideas rather than your suggestions. Rhetorical questions allow the audience to answer the obvious, leading to the opportunity for persuasion.

Citing and authority

A way of drawing an audience's attention to you is to align yourself to an authority, a person, institute or organisation. If you have worked with a Noble Prize winner or speak on behalf of your Head of Department, then mention it.

Startling statements and statistics

Saying something that shocks or makes people sit up is a powerful opening. Reveal a little known statistic, a consequence of not doing something

or something that creates amazement. Don't overuse this as people tend to only remember one or two at a time and shock can wear off.

Personal experience

If you have a personal and relevant story that will enhance the presentation, then use it. It can build rapport and gain empathy very quickly, enabling you to share your message and begin to move and influence the audience. It also has the added benefit of confirming your credibility and qualifications.

Audience challenge

Challenge engages people. It brings out a competitive edge. Even if there is someone who doesn't agree with your ideas, you can still involve them. Tell them at the outset what you are going to do, let them know that by the end of the presentation you will have proved something to them or improved the way they work.

Contrast

Letting people know what they stand to lose or gain, or what will happen if they do or don't is extremely impactful, especially if it is aligned with their key driver. So if it's about profit and loss, give them a financial contrast, if it's supply and demand, give them a contrast on success and failure.

Story

Beginning your presentation with a story can really bring it to life and make it memorable. Audiences can remember stories more easily than anything else. These stories can be used in a number of ways, providing examples, experience, allowing the audience to engage, building rapport, the opportunities are endless.

OPENINGS TO AVOID

HOW TO NOSE DIVE YOUR PRESENTATION

Restating the title of the presentation

Your audience invited you. They already know what you are there to present. There is no need to tell them something they already know.

Please accept my apologies

It might seem to be a way to get the audience on your side, but if you open with an apology, then they will look for your weaknesses. If you are the best, if you are the one, then why would you need to apologise for anything, unless you did it on purpose?

Greeting the important ones

By recognising the people in the room with titles, then you immediately turn off the one's without. You may think that you are being polite, but often it's taken as patronising and condescending. If you want to bring attention to certain people, do it in context of the presentation.

Ego boost

Never ever open your presentation with an exhaustive list of who you are, what you do and how important you are. The most important people in the room are the decision makers and influencers. Leave your ego outside.

CLOSING WITH IMPACT

CLOSINGS TO AVOID

Compelling finish

Your audience will tend to remember more about the last thing they hear than what they hear in the middle. So make sure you put energy both into the design and delivery of your presentation finish. A great finish should have the same impact as an opening.

Summarise your story

Your conclusion should be just that, bringing together all of the points of your presentation in one energetic summary. Now is not the time to talk about new information and benefits. You've delivered your message; you've captured your audience, so clinch the deal.

Personal benefits

Let people know what they stand to gain from choosing you. Keep your language positive and focussed on reward. How your solution will benefit them, what they will be able to achieve. Make it bright, make it compelling and make it success focussed.

Call for action

Use your finish to enable people to make a choice. Get them to commit to an action, whether that is a choice, decision or question. Make sure that when your presentation finishes, your audience is compelled to do something there and then. Show them that you are committed to helping them and set the expectations of them taking action for you.

Weak conclusion

Your presentation has gone well, the audience is engaged, and you've delivered all of the points you wanted to get across. Now is the time to bring it all to a close. However if you fade away at the end of your presentation, then your audience will do the same. Weak conclusions result in your audience feeling empty. They were expecting impact, where was it?

Conclusions just happen?

Never assume that a conclusion just happens at the end of your presentation. A conclusion is the destination where you want to take your audience and it's your responsibility to guide them there on purpose. If it doesn't tie in with your opening and overall purpose, then it's a waste of time.

Don't announce it

If you give advance warning that you are going to conclude, people will start to switch off from that very moment. Reaching your conclusion needs to be subtle, not announcing your intention to finish. Let them know and they'll be thinking what they need to do next and not listening to you.

**“GREAT PRESENTATIONS
FINISH AS STRONGLY
AS THEY BEGAN, SO MAKE
SURE YOURS HAS
ENERGY THROUGHOUT”**