

A Guide to a Successful Presentation

Presented by the Public Awareness Committee for inclusion in the Public Awareness Planner

Rule of Thumb

A rule of thumb for successful presentations has been passed through the ages. It has become known as the old-time minister's three-sentence outline for delivering memorable sermons. If you remember these, everything else that follows can only make your presentation better.

Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em
Tell 'em
Tell 'em what you told 'em

Avoiding Failure

More presentations fail because they are too complicated. Seldom do they fail because they are too simple. Avoid failure by:

keeping your presentation short
keeping to your time limit
repeating key points
working from note concepts
developing your spontaneity

Develop your communication skills

People generally develop four communication skills in their lifetime. The following identifies the four skills and then puts them into context of how we interface with them.

Skill	How Often it is Used	The Order in which it is Learned	The Order in which it is Taught
Listening	45%	1 st	Least
Speaking	30%	2 nd	Next least
Reading	16%	3 rd	Next most
Writing	9%	4 th	Most

Source: Gerre Jones

Speaking skills, although learned second and used more than reading or writing, are seldom taught.

Non Verbal Language

This could be considered a fifth communication skill that is rarely identified with developing presentation skills and delivering a successful presentation.

Studies have shown that only 7% of what is communicated between people is transmitted through the words themselves. Thirty-eight percent comes through the tone of voice and 55% is

the result of physiology, or body language. Matching voice tone or tempo to body language is a method for establishing rapport. Elements to match and mirror (to establish an unconscious sense of likeness with an audience/listener) include breathing rate, movement rhythms, body postures, and eye movements. Creating a sense of sameness, or bonding, through adjusting physiology to match another person's is very effective in establishing trust. This is vital to establishing a relationship with your audience during the presentation.

Verbal Communications

Words	7%
Tone of Voice	38%
Body Language	55%

What a basic presentation looks like

In any presentation, present only the pertinent few facts rather than the irrelevant many. Normally, the first two to five minutes set the success of the presentation. Twenty minutes is ample time to present your point and make the presentation memorable.

For any presentation, no matter what the length, the underlying rule is:

BE PREPARED

The Presentation Writing Formula

For every minute of delivery, be prepared to spend an hour in preparation time. A 20-minute presentation may take 20 hours in preparation time, if the presenter is serious about giving a successful presentation.

Preparation Time

5%	For understanding objectives
5%	To knowing the audience
25%	To researching the subject
15%	To organizing the information gathered
5%	To setting up the order of the presentation
20%	For writing a first draft of the presentation
10%	For revising the first draft
5%	For doing a revision and polishing
10%	For rehearsing

For example, considering the formula above for a 20-minute presentation, eleven hours would go to preparing to write it, and seven hours for writing, rewriting and polishing. Two hours would be given to rehearsing.

The Winning Format

Begin your presentation by telling your audience what you are going to say and what you expect to achieve.

Let the audience know if they can ask questions during the presentation, or hold them for asking at the end of the presentation.

Let the audience know the agenda of your presentation and how long you expect to take.

Convey enthusiasm from the start.

Avoid using jargon and buzzwords. Be yourself. Speak clearly and informally at a relaxed pace.

Maintain eye contact with the people in the room. Don't fixate on any one location or person. Circulate occasionally, if possible.

Avoid distracting body language as you speak. Don't jingle keys or coins, or fold or unfold your arms. If arm movement habits are a problem, try holding notes or a pen in one hand. Use hands to express presentation points.

Don't take yourself seriously.

Avoid a monotone delivery.

If using overheads (slides), keep them simple and don't overuse.

Show one thought per slide

Simplify the information – you can amplify it orally

Use thick lines, charts and graphs

Orient slides with the longest side on horizontal

Duplicate a slide if it is to be used more than once in a presentation

Don't leave a slide on the screen after discussing it (fill in transition with a light blocking slide)

Number slides in bottom right

Use about 10 words per slide and about 5 line entries

Keep titles short.

Select proper colours of text and background (i.e. white or yellow on blue, black on white, but never red on blue)

Keep font size 14 and greater.

Avoid irrelevant humour.

Don't turn away from the audience to read from the screen.

Talk slowly going over new information.

Repeat questions before answering when the person asking the question is hard to hear.

Use the conclusion to restate theme, tell the audience what was said and reinforce it.

After the conclusion, tell the audience where they can get more information on the topic.

Converting Text to Talk

Since you do not talk the way you write, you must tailor your presentation to the ear.

Use short, simple sentences
Repeat words and main points
Bring words to life with
gestures and personality
Mix verbal and visual elements

The Seven Deadly Public Speaking Sins and How to Avoid Them

Source: Suzen Fromstein, M.C.Inst.M.

Failure to Practice Properly

If the presentation does not warrant serious preparation time, don't deliver it.

Practice 3 to 7 times in front of a mirror. This provides immediate feedback on how you look, eye contact, body language (poise, posture, gestures). Tape your practice to control voice tempo, speed, volume, and emphasis.

Absence of a Well-defined Theme

The absence of a well-defined message suggests the speaker hasn't cared about the audience enough to think through the presentation.

Before writing your presentation, determine the one message you want the audience to take home with them. Summarize the message in one sentence. This is your theme.

Failure to Focus on your Target Audience

Some speakers fail to identify and concentrate on the core individuals of an audience who are able, or might be able to favourably respond to your central message.

Identify the profile of your audience (age, gender, income, occupation, education, and lifestyle). Determine what the target audience knows about you and your message and what they need to know to respond favourably to your message.

A Lack of Passion

A presentation without passion is a presentation without power. A presentation must deliver more than facts, ideas and arguments. It must convey value, meaning and feelings.

Express, act out, demonstrate your passion and commitment to your message. Let your feelings permeate everything you say.

Wasting the Opening

The first four minutes of your presentation are critical. This is when the audience forms their first impression of who you are and what you are saying. When you waste the opening of the presentation, you destroy it.

Never apologize at the beginning. Start strong. Leap right into the presentation. Capture the audience's attention. Remember that it is never necessary to recover from a good start.

A Weak Close

Your concluding remarks are the most memorable part of your presentation.

What idea do you want the audience to leave with? That's the finish, put it last. Don't thank the audience, they should thank you.

Failing to Write the Presentation Script

The consequences of failing to write a quality presentation script: The speaker talks too long on one thing and not long enough on another; key points are omitted; the speaker loses track of the time and the point, gets lost and repeats himself or herself. In the end, although the speaker may be remembered, their speech will be forgotten.

Open your speech with the second most important point and close with the most powerful point. Try to limit your 20 minutes to three powerful points that are supported by other information. Write the conclusion first and then develop the supportive information.

