



The Presentation Process

“The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public.” - George Jessel

By studying successful presentations, a common theme will develop. Presenting is a process that the speaker and audience will go through together, and also includes both skills and tools. This proven process provides structure and direction when Preparing, Developing, Delivering and Evaluating a presentation.

At the core of a successful presentation is the knowledge of their topic, or Subject Matter Expert (SME). The next layer of skills can best be categorized as Communication, Professionalism and Motivation. These three categories of skills must be sharpened to the point that each becomes a core strength. Outside these skill sets is the understanding of the entire presentation process.



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Preparing Your Presentation

“Failure to prepare is preparing to fail.” -Coach John Wooden

Presentation Purpose

Every effective presentation has a clear purpose. You should be able to identify in a single sentence specifically what your audience should *know*, *feel*, or *do*. It should be a concise-but-detailed statement that describes what you want from your audience after your presentation.

Identifying the objective of your presentation early in the preparation process will help to focus your presentation development (introduction, supporting data, and closing) on applicable information that applies to why you are speaking in the first place. Anything that does not relate to or further your objective should not be included in your presentation. Questions to ask yourself as you document your presentation purpose include:

Know: What do I want the audience to understand, believe, or think about what I am proposing?

Feel: How do I want the audience to feel about this information? Inspired? Worried? Confident? How do I want them to feel about me? My company? My department?

Do: What action do I want the audience to take as a result of the presentation?

Reference *Corporate Ovations, Chapter Two, Know Your Purpose*

Audience Analysis

An audience analysis is the process of examining information about the listeners who will hear your presentation. An awareness of your audience should guide you through the composition of your presentation. Below you will find some general audience analysis categories that you should include in your presentation preparation.

Status Who are they? What is their status compared to yours? Are you equals? Are you a level below the audience on the organization chart? Higher? Is the audience composed of customers and prospects (higher status)?

Common Characteristics Generally speaking, what commonalities can you identify among audience members? Demographics? Conservative? Accountants?

Expertise Are the audience members experts in your field? Or are they novices?

Interest Why are they here? Are they stakeholders? Decision-makers? Influencers?

Concerns What do they want from you, your presentation, or your organization? What doubts and questions are they likely to have? Why?

Reference *Corporate Ovations, Chapter Three, Audiences Want You To Connect*

Developing Your Presentation

“There are always three speeches, for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave.” - Dale Carnegie

Opening your Presentation with CABA

One proven method to starting your presentations is incorporating the CABA (Credibility, Attention, Body, and Audience) method when you write the opening. You want to establish your credibility, get the attention of your audience, give them a preview of your presentation and identify with your audience.

Credibility Establish your credibility and good will. You can do this by sharing your experience on a particular subject.

Attention Get the attention and interest of your audience. You can do this by making a startling statement, arousing curiosity, posing a question, or telling a story.

Body Preview the body of the speech. Let them know the main points you will be discussing.

Audience Connect with the audience and show you care enough to learn more about them before you speak.

Reference *Corporate Ovations, Chapter Four, Open With Power*

Closing your Presentation with MAS

The last thing you say just might be the most remembered. If your closing is poor, it can affect the audience’s impression of your entire presentation. A good closing incorporates MAS (Memorable, Action, and Summarize). You want to conclude your presentation with something memorable, challenge the audience or make a call for action, and tell the audience what you told them.

Memorable

Leave the audience with something they will remember about your presentation. It can be a statistic, quote or story that creates a connection with the audience.

Action

Challenge the audience to act on the message of your presentation. It can be a decision or an action to perform. The call to action can be as simple as remembering a key point from the presentation.

Summarize

Recap the purpose and key points of your presentation. You are telling the audience what you told them so your main idea is fresh on their mind.

Reference *Corporate Ovations, Chapter Five, Close with Confidence*

Presentation Key Points

The body of your presentation is where you will present the data that supports your introduction. A typical presentation body is divided into three main points. If you have more than three points, consider grouping your material into themes or related chunks of information. It is important that the body is well organized so that the audience can follow the progression of your ideas. You want to present the audience with the facts, backup information, arguments and other necessary information that will ultimately bring the audience to the intended goal of your presentation.

Key Point #1

Supporting Material

Key Point #2

Supporting Material

Key Point #3

Supporting Material

Reference *Corporate Ovations, Chapter Six, Structure the Presentation Body*

Delivering Your Presentation

“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across, your ideas won’t get you anywhere.” - Lee Iacocca

Communication Factors

When you present face to face, people receive information through what you say verbally, how you sound vocally, and how you appear visually. The entire package must be synchronized for maximum benefit. In order to be believable, we must learn to look and sound credible. When the messages you send visually and vocally contradict what you say verbally, audiences will be skeptical of your credibility. Just because your voice says one thing, your body movement, posture and actions may say another. The implications of this are extremely important for anyone who wants to be an effective presenter.

Fillers

Words such as “um” and “ah” fill hesitations in the speaker’s flow of words. Speech fillers interrupt the message and confuse the listener by creating run-on sentences and garbled messages. The key is to catch yourself at the start of a filler word and replace it with silence.

Pauses

A well-timed pause is one of the most powerful tools any speaker can use. The speaker can reach out and grab the attention of every single person in the audience by doing one thing - nothing!

Hands

Gestures should have a beginning, middle, and an end. Use them as you would naturally in conversation, but avoid waving your arms too much and do not point your finger directly at people. You should not stand with your hands rigid and motionless, just as you should not appear like a puppet, making unnatural, false, exaggerated or jerky gestures. You should vary your gestures. Some presenters unconsciously make the same gesture over and over, creating a distraction and ultimately detracting from the message they want to deliver.

Eyes

In large audiences, you cannot make eye contact with everyone, but you should try to make direct eye contact with selected people at various points around the room. Eye contact keeps your audience involved. While speaking, try to vary your direct eye contact and your whole audience glances. Eye contact also serves as a means for feedback for the speaker

Reference *Corporate Ovations, Chapter Eight, Say It Like You Mean It*

Handling Questions

The ability to facilitate a question-and-answer segment in your presentation is the opportunity to enhance your audience's understanding of your topic and make the information relevant to them individually. You will also find that the participant's involvement with asking questions will increase their level of attention and retention. Utilizing a three step process for responding to questions can help the presenter maintain control and credibility as a speaker.

- 1) Acknowledge** When a question is asked, the speaker should acknowledge the question from the audience member. The speaker can say, "Thank you for the question." Avoid saying, "great question" every time because it appears as if you are grading the questions from the audience. Some may consider this "playing favorites."
- 2) Repeat** In a larger audience, repeating the question for the benefit of all who could not hear is appropriate. In smaller groups and one-on-one situations, the speaker can repeat just to clarify the understanding of the question.
- 3) Respond** The third step is to provide the response to the question. Look first at the person who asked the question, then step back and answer the question by making eye contact with all of the audience as you finish the response to the question.

The 'B' Key

Visual aids can be a valuable asset to your presentation and add to your overall credibility. However, they can also distract the audience from the speaker and your message. The 'B' key on the keyboard blacks the screen (temporarily), instead of having to shut off or cover up the projector system. It acts as a toggle, so pressing it again will resume your presentation.

Clickers

A clicker can be an inexpensive enhancement for professionalism. Instead of constantly turning to your keyboard to advance the slides, the clicker can perform this task for you.

Stand Left

If you are projecting a PowerPoint presentation, writing on a white board or working with flip charts, it is important to stand to the left of your visual aid. Just as in the English language, people read from left to right. By standing on the left side of the screen (from your audience's view), the audience sees you and then your visual aid.

Reference *Corporate Ovations, Chapter Eleven, Handling Questions*

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