

# **Presentation Skills**

A presentation is the process of presenting a topic to an audience. It is typically a demonstration, introduction, lecture, or speech meant to inform, persuade, inspire, motivate, or to build good will or to present a new idea or product.

A presentation is a means of communication that can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing a meeting or briefing a team.

Many people feel terrified when asked to make their first public talk. Some of these initial fears can be reduced by good preparation that also lays the groundwork for making an effective presentation.

Presentation skills are the skills you need in delivering effective and engaging presentations to a variety of audiences. These skills cover a variety of areas such as the structure of your presentation, the design of your slides, the tone of your voice and the body language you convey.

Presentations skills and public speaking skills are very useful in many aspects of work and life. Effective presentations and public speaking skills are important in business, sales and selling, training, teaching, lecturing, and generally feeling comfortable speaking to a group of people.

Developing the confidence and capability to give good presentations, and to stand up in front of an audience and speak well, are also extremely helpful competencies for self-development and social situations.

Presentation skills and public speaking abilities are not limited to certain special people - anyone can give a good presentation, or perform public speaking to a professional and impressive standard.

## **The Key Elements of a Presentation**

Making a presentation is a way of communicating your thoughts and ideas to an audience and many of our articles on communication are also relevant.

### **Consider the following key components of a presentation:**

#### **Context:**

Ask yourself the following questions to develop a full understanding of the context of the presentation.

#### When and where will you deliver your presentation?

There is a world of difference between a small room with natural light and an informal setting, and a huge lecture room, lit with stage lights. The two require quite different presentations, and different techniques.

#### Will it be in a setting you are familiar with, or somewhere new?

If somewhere new, it would be worth trying to visit it in advance, or at least arriving early, to familiarise yourself with the room.

#### Will the presentation be within a formal or less formal setting?

A work setting will, more or less by definition, be more formal, but there are also various degrees of formality within that.

#### Will the presentation be to a small group or a large crowd?

#### Are you already familiar with the audience?

With a new audience, you will have to build rapport quickly and effectively, to get them on your side.

#### What equipment and technology will be available to you, and what will you be expected to use?

In particular, you will need to ask about microphones and whether you will be expected to stand in one place, or move around.

#### What is the audience expecting to learn from you and your presentation?

Check how you will be 'billed' to give you clues as to what information needs to be included in your presentation.

**Presenter**

The role of the presenter is to communicate with the audience and control the presentation.

Remember, though, that this may also include handing over the control to your audience, especially if you want some kind of interaction.

**Audience**

The audience receives the presenter's message(s).

However, this reception will be filtered through and affected by such things as the listener's own experience, knowledge and personal sense of values

**Message**

The message or messages are delivered by the presenter to the audience.

The message is delivered not just by the spoken word (verbal communication) but can be augmented by techniques such as voice projection, body language, gestures, eye contact (non-verbal communication), and visual aids.

The message will also be affected by the audience's expectations. For example, if you have been billed as speaking on one particular topic, and you choose to speak on another, the audience is unlikely to take your message on board even if you present very well. They will judge your presentation a failure, because you have not met their expectations.

**Reaction**

The audience's reaction and therefore the success of the presentation will largely depend upon whether you, as presenter, effectively communicated your message, and whether it met their expectations.

As a presenter, you don't control the audience's expectations. What you can do is find out what they have been told about you by the conference organisers, and what they are expecting to hear. Only if you know that can you be confident of delivering something that will meet expectations.

**Method**

How will the presentation be delivered?

Presentations are usually delivered direct to an audience. However, there may be occasions where they are delivered from a distance over the Internet using video conferencing systems, such as Skype.

It is also important to remember that if your talk is recorded and posted on the internet, then people may be able to access it for several years. This will mean that your contemporaneous references should be kept to a minimum.

**Impediments**

Many factors can influence the effectiveness of how your message is communicated to the audience.

For example background noise or other distractions, an overly warm or cool room, or the time of day and state of audience alertness can all influence your audience's level of concentration.

As presenter, you have to be prepared to cope with any such problems and try to keep your audience focussed on your message.

**Muhammad Umer Ch.**

**Department of Applied Psychology**

**BS English II (Presentation Skills)**