

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION

I. What is a presentation?

How it differs from conversation?

- One-way communication
- Has a clear aim
- Organized form
- Understandable for outsiders

Aims of the presentation:

- Providing *information* to the audience
- *Convincing* the audience about our views
- Invoking *emotions* in the audience
- Motivating the audience to *take action*

Structure of the presentation:

Introduction: set the scene - tell them what you are going to tell them
Core content: main message in max 5 points with arguments - tell them
Closure: round it up - tell them what you told them

Technique of the presentation:

Don't:	- read out (except: importance, language, quotes, practice)
	- memorize (except: language)
Do:	- use an outline

Good presentation requires as much thought as performance.

THINKING

- Gaining expertise in the topic
- Research and preparation
- Organizing your thoughts

PRACTICE

- By yourself
- Rehearsals with friends
- In front of real audience

II. What to present?

KNOW THE TOPIC

Topic: broadly defined (usually defined by the organizer)
Subject: concrete area within the topic
Message: overall point that helps to achieve aim of the presentation
Points: concrete elements to support message (max. 5)
Arguments: explanations used to support points

It is key to feel that you have enough knowledge of the topic to present your cause convincingly. You should also acknowledge your limitations, however, and freely answer “I don’t know” to an unexpected question without being defensive about it.

KNOW THE AUDIENCE

The subject within the topic, the message and the points should all be chosen according to the concrete audience you are talking to. In order to be well prepared, try to get to know as much of the audience as possible. But you should never aim to satisfy all the different individual expectations in a presentation setting.

MAKE A POINT

The key to an effective presentation is that you are making a point, i.e. saying something relevant to the audience with every single sentence. The structure described below helps to think through which points to make, but you still have to strive to eliminate “fillings” from the speech (such as meaningless introductory, linking or closing sentences).

GET A MESSAGE ACROSS

The presentations only makes sense for you as well as for the listeners if there is a clear aim to achieve. This aim will be met if you get the basic message across. A presentation is best if it has one basic message supported by a number of different points (as opposed to have five messages, each supported by one point). As a general rule, the more you want to motivate the audience (invoke emotions, take action) the more focused you will have to be.

BE ORIGINAL

You will be original, and therefore interesting if ...

- you say something for the first time
- you say something that is based on your experience (research, observation)
- you say something personal

II.1. Introduction

Goals of introduction:

- Getting attention of the listeners
- Focusing their attention to the topic
- Unifying their interest in the same direction
- Unifying their emotions in the same direction.

Don't	- start with defensive, self-devaluating statements (e.g. I am not a big expert on this topic; I am not a very practiced presenter...)
Do	- start out loud and strong - introduce the topic, subject, points - show the audience how this topic is relevant to them - start with something unifying (either agreeable for all of them; or it can be provocative in which case they all disagree)

Introduction techniques:

- Historical relevance
- Personal relevance
- Quotation
- Story
- Question
- Joke relevant to the topic
- Gratitude (if necessary, e.g. sponsors)

Don't	- use a commonplace or empty statement (e.g. this is a very important topic for all of us. We are all going through hard times.)
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Introduction lasts max. 10% of the time of the whole presentation

II.2.Core content

II.2.1. Structure

How to chose/determine the points of our presentation?

- Only few points, max. 5 in a speech of any length
- Only the ones that are important to *this* audience
- The ones that get attention, e.g. show conflict

Steps:

- brainstorm all points that can be used to support your message
- chose the most interesting ones that clearly demonsstrate a conflict or that clearly are relevant to the given audience
- chose the remaining points in order of relevance as well

How to organize the points?

- Visual layout
- Chronological order
- Cause – consequence relationship
- Problem - solution relationship
- Given structure, also known to the audience (e.g. case study, project proposal)
- Any other *analytical* order

Start from what they know and go towards the unknown

You can also use a combination of the above

Presenting each point:

- Start with the statement
- Prove the statement
- Repeat the statement

II.2.2. Proving our statements: using arguments

Use rational logic

- Point out relationship (e.g. cause-consequence)
- Don't make the audience seem silly

Quote examples

- Relevant example
- Self explanatory

Quote data and numbers

- Not too much
- Give graphic illustration
- Point out relationships or important figures

Quote personal experience

- Relevant experience
- Not about yourself but about the topic

Give references

- Refer to people important to the audience
- Refer to the everyday man, voice of the street

Use metaphors

- Metaphor should be well chosen
- Most effective way of illustration

Arguments have to be clear and illustrative

II.2.3. Preparation and research

FIND FACTS & PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

Personal relevance

- What do I know of the topic/subject?
- What kind of personal experience I had related to this subject?
- How and when and from whom did I acquire the knowledge or experience?
- What is my opinion on the subject?
- Do my friends, relatives, colleagues have related experience?
- What is their opinion?

When you talk about a relevant personal experience or observation, you are the expert: nobody knows what you do.

Ideally you will have been involved in the process of gathering data and facts to support or justify your point (e.g. you conducted a needs assessment survey among the target group). The combination of presenting *data* from *personal* experience (research) is the strongest convincing force.

II.2.4. Emotional influence

Ten basic emotions

Love (admiration, thankfulness, forgiveness)	Hate (anger, upset, revenge)
Joy (humor!)	Grief
Pride (without prejudice)	Shame
Hope (without misleading)	Fear
Desire (leads to action)	Satisfaction (status quo good)

You have to be very careful in using emotional influence. If you do not feel comfortable with it, better to avoid it. If used well, it is the most effective way to convince, inspire and motivate people.

Do	- unify the audience by shared emotions - use contrast (first negative then positive emotion)
Don't	- make the emotional part too long - be judgemental in any way

Emotional influence can be exerted through all types of arguments. However, it is not good to use all arguments for emotional influence.

Use of humor

- depends highly on the personality style
- you have to be comfortable with it
- has to be appropriate
- best way to find your way out of unexpected situations
- should be politically correct

II.3. Closure

Goals of the closure:

- make sure that the message gets across
- leave the audience with a sense of accomplishment (learning, personal reflection, further thoughts etc.)

Closure techniques:

- Summary restating core message (and points)
- *Short* story – only if strong enough, leaves suspense
- Quote – like story
- Question
- Call for action

Do	- stay at your place, smile and wait for the reaction (applause)
Don't	- use unnecessary statements (e.g. it was a real pleasure talking to such attentive audience, I hope to be able to meet you again, sorry if I was not too clear sometimes etc.)

III. How to present?

III.1. Visual aids & effects

Statements of the points of the core content should be written out, while arguments should be illustrated (graphs, photos, drawings, clippings etc.).

Flipchart

- If there is no other form of technical equipment available
- If there is no need for those
- Can make the presentation more lively
- Better to develop points or drawings on the spot
- Handwriting needs to be legible!
- Good use for interactive part (QandA)

Overhead

- Max 3 points on a page
- Big font type
- Good to present summary but not explanations
- Definitely not to present charts, matrixes etc.
- Only very clear images

Slides

- To present photographs of nice images or the subjects of the topic (e.g. buildings, landscape, paintings, clippings, portraits of people)
- Not so good for written text

Powerpoint

- Have to practice its use
- Good to give an interesting taste to a boring topic
- Suggests professionalism
- Can become boring if used for a longer presentation
- Use highly depends on audience

Films (video projector)

- Good illustration tool but it can draw attention away from main message (unless it contains the message)

Handouts

- To provide information, e.g. data, statistics, graphs that is used during the presentation
- It should not have additional information, only more detailed if necessary
- To provide a summary outline of the presentation
- Should be given out after the presentation (unless this is the only visual aid, in which case it should be handed out beforehand)

If the room needs to be darkened due to the use of projectors, make sure that light remains directed on you (the presenter)!

It is not wise to use more than two different devices, best is to use just one electronic (plus flipchart).

“Special effects”

- Demonstrations (done by yourself or involving audience volunteers)
- Lights or sounds

Such effects should not take too much time and should not draw attention away from making the point – they should be used to make a point!

ALWAYS REHEARSE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND SPECIAL EFFECTS!

Preparing a flipchart as visual aid

- colored
- clearly, well arranged
- proportionally filled
- legible
- interactive
- most important parts are emphasized
- logical
- not to be overcrowded
- clear interpretation of signs what we used
- black and blue markers are useful for writing, red and green are good for emphasizing
- besides or instead of text using signs and pictures
- clear structure
- title (to help people to remember)

III.2. How to make presentations interactive?

ASK

- Make little quizzes about the numbers or facts in your presentation (what do you think is the percentage of .../ when do you think this was introduced...)
- Ask closed or semi-closed questions¹ whenever you believe someone will have a related experience or knowledge of the issue (Have you had a similar experience? Do you know about...? Do you agree that ...?)
- Ask open questions to elicit more input and discussion from participants² - this has to be done carefully so as to avoid getting into a long discussion when you have still much to present. A good example of an open question to lighten up the presentation is to say a term-of-art and ask what they think it means (e.g. “now, what would you say ‘logframe’ actually means”)?

MOBILIZE

- Ask people to raise their hands (who agrees that.../how many of you think.../have heard of.../have experienced... etc)
- Ask people to watch out for something (e.g. give out a quiz in the beginning of the presentation and they have to find the answers in what you say)
- Introduce a short exercise within your presentation that will underline / illustrate your message (e.g. communication chain)³
- It works well to start the presentation with an exercise. This will set the pattern for an interactive session since people experience active participation from the beginning as opposed to passive listening. They will more comfortably engage and ask questions later even when you are presenting.

III.3. Personal presentation style

BE SELF CONFIDENT

Gestures: face (mimique), hands, body, moving around

Eyes and eye contact

Appearance (clothing, hair, jewels etc.)

Formal or informal (appearance, address, illustrations)

Relaxedness

SPEAK LOUDER RATHER THAN SOFTER

¹ Closed questions can only be answered by “yes” or “no” (or “don’t know”). Semi-closed questions ask for concrete information, e.g. where do you live?

² As opposed to closed and semi-closed questions, open questions ask for something the answerer thinks, feels, knows and can share about the issue. Open questions usually start with: how, why, what; they encourage the answerer to think and share their thoughts.

³ The communication chain exercise is to illustrate how easily information can be distorted through communication. You show a brief written note to the first participant who may read it and then has to whisper what s/he remembers to their neighbor, then the neighbor whispers to the next neighbor etc. By the time it gets around, the sentence barely resembles the written note.

Throat or mouth: if we speak from the mouth it will be louder and it will not result in husky voice even after longer time or if we have a cold.

Loudness/Acoustics

Microphone

Appropriate breathing (practice to talk more with one breath by breathing in the stomach)

SPEAK SLOWER RATHER THAN FASTER

Speech-period rather than text period

Emphasis on key words within each speech-period

Breaks between them

The bigger the audience, the shorter the speech-periods

Feel the emotions during your speech

SPEAK SHORTER RATHER THAN LONGER

Everything can be presented in writing on an A4 sheet and therefore everything can be presented convincingly in just 2.5 minutes.

Don't linger in presenting the explanation of points. Illustrations can make it shorter.

SPEAK SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Short sentences, appropriate use of jargon and foreign expressions, eloquency, not literary or bureaucratic language, careful intonation...

IV. Relationship between the speaker and the audience

There will be an emotional relationship.

Emotions and their expressions - laughter, boredom, anger - are spreading fast in the audience.

The reactions of a group of people are always stronger than those of isolated people. The bigger the audience, the stronger the reactions.

The audience is always diverse, therefore, to more effectively communicate:

- Simplify (understandable points, spoken language)
- Unify (interest, emotions)
- Keep average pace (in covering content)
- Repeat (points and message)

In order to keep their attention alive

- Be clear
- Be simple
- Be vivid

- Be diverse

In order to build trust in the audience we have to relate positively and be trustworthy to them. We have to both feel and show (express) our sympathy and good intentions towards them.

Example 1.

- Topic:** Fundraising in Central Europe
- Audience:** NGOs
- Subject:** Possibilities in fundraising for NGOs in CE
- Message:** Local resource mobilization needed
- Points:**
1. Foreign donors are withdrawing
 2. Government sources are scarce
 3. Tradition of individual giving exists
 4. Private wealth is growing
 5. Most effective for sustainability
- Arguments:**
1. Data, quote from foundation representative
 2. Data, personal experience
 3. Example, story
 4. Data, example
 5. Logic, example

Example 2.

- Topic:** Fundraising in Central Europe
- Audience:** Donors
- Subject:** Ensuring sustainable funding for NGOs in CE
- Message:** Need to support programs that aim at local resource mobilization
- Points:**
1. Lack of other possibilities, i.e. foreign or government grants
 2. The possibility for this option is there (e.g. private wealth is growing)
 3. Culture of philanthropy needs to be developed
 4. NGOs need to acquire skills for local resource mobilization
 5. Effective contribution to sustainability of NGOs
- Arguments:**
1. Data, quote from government representative
 2. Data, example
 3. Example, story
 4. Example, personal experience
 5. Logic, example