

# TIPS FOR PREPARING AND DELIVERING PRESENTATIONS

## Three basic steps

- ❑ Prepare the content
- ❑ Prepare the visuals
- ❑ Deliver a winning presentation

## PREPARE THE CONTENT

Remember Voltaire: *The secret of being a bore is to tell all*

### Know your audience

Any presentation must be geared to your audience. Prepare an audience profile. That will tell you what kind of a presentation you need to prepare.

- ❑ Who are they?
- ❑ What is their primary question?
- ❑ How much do they know already about the issue, problem or project?
- ❑ How willing are they to hear the message? Is it a command performance, completely voluntary or something in-between.
- ❑ Are there any other stakeholders we need to reach with these messages?
  
- ❑ **Who will you audience be?**
  
- ❑ **How would the different audience profiles influence the length, content and style of your presentation?**
  
- ❑ **What should be the content of the presentation?**  
The content of the presentation has three parts: the opening, the body and the close.
  
- ❑ **A strong opening** should include a hook to immediately get your audience interested, followed by an overview

The hook should address directly your understanding of the key question that your audience is interested in. Refer to your focus group data. Remember, too, that the opening statement is your best chance to establish a rapport with the audience – a personal connection. It should also create a sense of urgency.

The overview should tell the audience what they are about to hear. Set it out like the outlines of a story – the story they are about to hear. The overview is a roadmap to the body of your presentation.

- ❑ **The body** is the key to giving your audience an understanding and appreciation of your project. The body should have a logical structure. It should be broken down into parts that fit together. However, keep it simple. Prioritise and consolidate. Most audiences won't remember more than three things about a given subject. Here are the elements that should go into the body of the presentation.

**Background.** This puts the audience on an equal footing with the speaker and will be required in most but not all cases.

A clear **problem statement** backed by **supporting evidence** that shows why the problem or need exists. Again, some audiences may not need a problem discussion. Go back to your audience profile to determine how much background is needed.

The **solution** to the problem which in this instance will be your project. Here you need to be very clear about why your project will solve the problem.

**Evidence** that the project will solve the problem.

The **benefits** that will be derived from the project; why the audience should support it.

**Actions needed** to proceed with implementation. In this case, a discussion of the costs and benefits of a loan.

- ❑ **The close** should summarize the strengths of the project and reiterate how they solve the problem and include a proposal for action. It should be smooth and forceful and give the audience something to remember.

## **VISUALS**

Visuals can be very helpful in focusing the attention of the audience and giving additional clarity to the presentation. Experience suggests that if a presentation is made without visuals, it needs to be short, with stimulating content, delivered in a very lively style. If visuals are used (and we think that usually they should be), keep the following points in mind:

- ❑ Visuals should be closely integrated with and supportive on your main points
- ❑ They should be simple and easy to understand
- ❑ Make sure that everyone in the room can see the visual
- ❑ In explaining visuals, explain (summarize) the whole visual to the audience before explaining its component parts
- ❑ Tie your words to the visual with gestures to keep the viewers eyes fixed on the visual
- ❑ Give the audience a few seconds to absorb visuals before proceeding with the presentation

## **DELIVER A WINNING PRESENTATION**

Some studies suggest that the major element in the success or failure of a presentation is the way it is delivered, so here are some keys to good presentation:

- ❑ Don't read
- ❑ Don't hide behind a lectern. It is a barrier to the audience. Come out from behind the lectern when you can to achieve more intimacy with the audience, connect with them and show them you're alive and interested in making your points with them.
- ❑ Keep hands away from the body, because this will distract the audience - their eyes will usually follow your hands.
- ❑ Use supporting gestures, but use them in moderation.
- ❑ To achieve the right voice volume, direct the presentation to someone at the back of the room.

- ❑ Don't rely on the audience to follow: lead them!
- ❑ Practice the first sentence or two of your presentation (memorize if possible) to ensure a smooth beginning
- ❑ Memorize the last passage to assure a strong ending.
- ❑ Eye contact is critical; it is a silent persuader
  - Try to focus on each person in the room for 3-5 seconds. It may feel unnatural, but it works, and will help you to concentrate and gain your trust with your audience.
  - Don't scan the audience. This suggests insincerity, lack of control and nervousness.
  - Good eye contact will moderate speech, improve gestures and reduce nervousness
- ❑ Pauses are powerful. Don't be afraid to use them. The first place to use a pause is at the start of your presentation. Move to the podium, fix your eyes on the audience for a moment then start. You are in control. Also remember, listeners need thinking space between ideas. This applies also to visuals. Don't try to talk while you are doing something physical like turning a flip chart.

A few parting points:

Remember, you must have a message. Tell a story. No one is interested in generic discussion.

Remember that presentation is an unnatural act. Normal speech is spontaneous. Presentation brings a spotlight to an individual and important things hang in the balance. It is no wonder, then, that presenting is difficult, and sometimes scare. Done successfully, though, it is the key to success.

## **TRAINING TECHNIQUE: PRESENTATION**

### **Description**

A presentation is an activity conducted by a resource specialist to convey information, theories or principles. Forms of presentations can range from straight lecture to some involvement of the learner through questions and discussion. Presentations depend more on the trainer for content than does any other training technique.

### **Uses**

- To introduce participants to a new subject
- To provide an overview or a synthesis
- To convey facts, statistics
- To address a large group

### **Advantages**

- Covers a lot of material in a short time
- Useful for large groups
- Can be adapted to any kind of learner
- Can precede more practical training techniques
- The lecturer has more control than in other situations

### **Things to be aware of before you decide to use a lecture**

- Emphasizes one-way communication
- Is not experimental in approach
- Learner's role is passive
- Lecturer needs skills to be an effective presenter
- Inappropriate for changing behaviour or for learning skills
- Learner retention is not as great unless it is followed up with a more practical technique
- A presentation is common in more formal situations

### **Process**

- Introduce the topic - tell the learners what you're going to tell them
- Tell them what you want to tell them - present the material using visual aids
- Summarize the key points you've made - tell the learners what you've told them
- Invite the learners to ask questions