



Presentations

Top Tips

When we first think of 'giving presentations' we often think of standing up in front of a large audience of strangers and talking for an hour or so, but for most of us this is not what is going to happen. For us the definition from Wikipedia "Presentation is the process of showing and explaining the content of a topic to an audience" is probably the most apt. Remember that the 'audience' can be anything from 1 to 1000. They can be friends, relatives, colleagues or competitors. The 'explanation' can last for 1 minute or 1 day and the 'content' can be a speech at a wedding, a description of what your job or business does, or indeed a lecture on brain surgery.

Yet every successful presentation uses many of the same techniques and structures:

- **Preparation** – Plan and practice everything in advance, the script, the technology, the route to the venue
- **The Delivery** – Check to see if there is a dress code. Smart casual usually works but they may expect 'smart business'. Make sure you feel confident, comfortable and relaxed in your clothes.
- **Your Voice** - Don't shout or whisper, just speak clearly and don't rush.
- **Gestures** - Use your hands to emphasise a point, but don't wave them about and try to avoid putting them in your pockets.
- **The Script** - If you have a script make sure you can read the print easily, so print it **BIG** and **highlight important points**. If you have more than 1 page of notes, fasten them together and number them, just in case you drop them!
- **Stance** – **Don't** walk about, your audience will get tired of having to follow you around.
- **The Opening** - You have at the most 7 seconds at the beginning of your presentation to make a good impression – so think about your opening and start on time, late comers can join in when they arrive.
- **Develop Rapport** – Making a connection with your audience whether it is 1 or 100 people builds their confidence and belief in you. The quickest and easiest way is to give something of yourself, so tell them something about **YOU**. It can be something that builds your credibility, something that happened on the way to the presentation or even something amusing.
- **Eye Contact** – Try to make eye contact with the person you are presenting to if it is just 1 to 1, or generally look around the room at people, Don't just fix on one person as it may intimidate them.
- **The Length** – The average attention span of your listener is between 5 to 10 minutes for any single unbroken subject, so don't just speak at people, break up your talk with a picture, a quote, audience participation or an amusing story.
- **Beginning – Middle – End** – Even a 1 minute presentation needs a beginning, a middle and an end.

- **The 1,2,3 of Content** -
 1. Tell the audience what you are going to tell them
 2. Tell them
 3. At the end tell them what you have told them.

- **The Finish** – Be daring, bold and have fun.

Good luck!