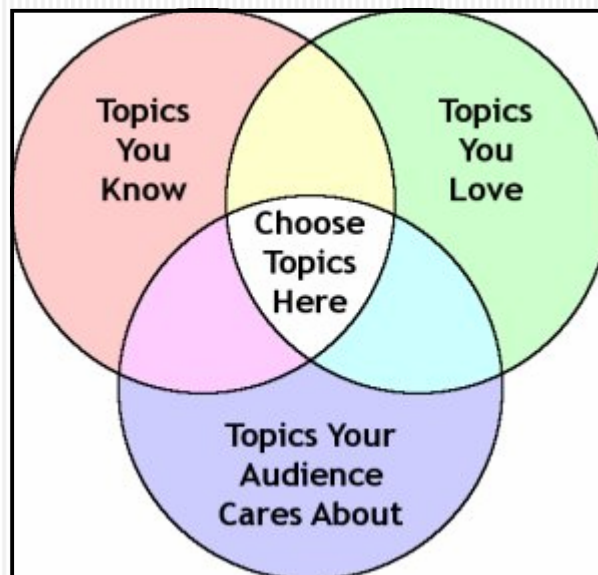


Successful Presentations



Presentations and Speeches

How to Improve your Public Speaking Skills



Presentations And Speeches



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1. Introduction

Speeches and presentations are typically one-way communications, and in this way they are usually different from the typical dialogs and conversations that give students little time to prepare and demand that they think quickly. But, the style of presentations is quickly changing and listeners no longer want to be passive recipients of information, they want to participate and to interact.

Most students though, indeed most people, fear public speaking. But one way for EFL students to reduce their fear is to realize that they can plan everything far in advance and practice, practice, practice. This in contrast to the extemporaneous responses needed for common business conversations.

Presentation skills are critical skills for today's businessperson and success can be found more quickly than most people think.

Most business people benefit tremendously from joining a local Toastmasters Club. The group offers a friendly and supportive environment where practice and improvement are matter-of-course. There are clubs literally around the world and many of them operate in English, thus providing extra benefit for Business English students.

Toastmaster Clubs around the World: <http://www.Toastmasters.org>
Clubs welcome newcomers and interested parties. An invitation to attend is not needed.

2. Know your Audience

Your purpose in making a presentation is to inform, persuade, or entertain your listeners. In order to achieve your purpose, you must satisfy them with something in which they are interested. Thus, it is important to know what your audience is interested in, what their expectations are and even what mood they are in.

You can find out about the audience through research before you speak, through interaction at the beginning of your talk, and by making adjustments during the speech.

Before you Speak

Before you speak--and even before you prepare your speech--you should know what sort of audience you will have. What is the nature of the group? What do they expect to hear from you? Do they have any special interests or prejudices about which you should be aware?

Who is in the Audience?

In speaking to a group of managers at work, you have a good idea of who will be in the audience. There may be some individuals to be wary of or a decision-maker to whom you should focus the speech.

Gain Rapport

If you find out about some key people in the audience, you can use them in your opening comments to gain rapport with the audience. Everyone likes a humorous comment about the boss--at your expense, not at his or hers.

At the Beginning of the Talk

Comments you make at the beginning of the speech or presentation can give you clues about your audience and their expectations.

Although, you can't be expected to have several versions of a speech or presentation, you can use some opening remarks and responses from the audience to give you an idea of the direction of their interest and perhaps their mood. If the audience seems in a light mood, perhaps you could sprinkle in a few jokes to keep their interest. If they seemed to be very serious about your topic, you should get right to the meat of the matter.

Don't be a Self-centered Speaker

Nothing is worse than going to a speech, wanting to hear some information, and having the speaker drone on and on about something of no interest to you or most of the audience. The speaker must get an idea in the beginning of his talk concerning what the audience wants--not what he or she wants to say.

During the Presentation

While you are giving a talk, you can often tell if the audience is enthralled with your material or if they are getting bored or restless. The problem usually occurs when the speaker is so caught up in what he or she is saying that the audience might as well not be there.

Don't get them Bored

In any situation where it seems that the audience is getting restless or bored, the best thing to do is to summarize things and to end your talk. It is better to have a shorter speech than to go too long and bore people. This is true in any speech.

Benefits of Knowing the Audience

When you know what the audience wants and likes, when you know what mood the audience is in, and when you know something about the audience, they become more interested in what you have to say.

A successful speaker achieves the goals of expression, listener satisfaction and desired rewards

3. Outline your Presentation

Your outline is the blueprint for your presentation.

Your outline should:

- ▶ Highlight the key logical elements of your talk. These elements include whatever points are being made to logically support the core message.
- ▶ Highlight the key structural elements of your talk, such as the introduction, body, conclusion, stories, higher-level concepts, etc.
- ▶ Link the elements together in a sequence, assigning approximate timings.
- ▶ Map out the transitions between elements - how you will move from one major point to the next.

Speech Outline Formats

The most common speech outline is:

1. Introduction - 10-20% of the time allocated for your speech
2. Body - 65-75% of the time
3. Conclusion - 10-20%

The speech content for the purpose of your presentation is:

1. Tell them what you're going to say
2. Tell them
3. Tell them what you've said

Put these together, and you have the start of a good speech outline:

1. Introduction: Establish topic and core message; List supporting points
2. Body: Explain your Supporting Points One, Two and Three
3. Conclusion: Review main points; summarize core message; call-to-action

It is surprising how well this simple outline works for a wide range of speech topics.

This same basic formula can be seen in novels, short stories, movies, plays, reports, business briefings, emails, memos, and many other forms of communication.

4. Ten Key Points from Toastmasters

1. Make it Meaningful. Speak only about topics that deeply interest and fascinate you. If your topic doesn't interest you, how can you expect it to inspire your listeners?
2. Organize your Presentation. A speech should be organized to effectively deliver your message. The speech should have an opening that captures the audience's interest and sets the stage for your message, a body that provides supporting points, and a memorable conclusion that reinforces your message.
3. What is your Point? Focus your presentation on a *specific purpose*. Is your intent to inform, persuade, or inspire? Choose one, build your speech around that goal and convey your message with sincerity, conviction, and enthusiasm.

4. Keep it Simple. When you don't understand a section of a book or magazine article you are reading, you can read it again until the meaning is clear to you. When you are speaking, your listeners do not have this luxury. They hear your words only once. If you want them to understand your message when they hear it, you must use words that your audience will understand and will accurately convey your message, and you must construct your sentences so they are simple and clear.

5. Use your Body. When you talk to your friends or co-workers, you move your hands and arms, walk around, make eye contact, or change the expressions on your face. These movements are called body language. Body language is as important in public speaking as it is in everyday conversation. Use your natural body language in your speeches to illustrate and emphasize the points you are making and you will dramatically increase your effectiveness. Body language has another purpose, too. Gestures, movement and facial expressions help to release any nervous energy you may have as you stand before an audience.

6. Use your Voice. What kind of voice do you have? Is it resonant, musical and easy to listen to? Or is it harsh, monotonous or tiresome? You can make it just about what you want if you're willing to work at it. Every time you make a presentation, involve your mind, body and voice in communicating the message to your listeners. The first step in building a better speaking voice is awareness. You should work to develop a voice that is pleasant to the ear and displays enough variety of sound to be an expressive part of your speaking.

7. Research your Topic. Your speech will be more effective if you can support your main points with statistics, testimony, stories, anecdotes, examples, visual aids and facts. You can find this material on the Internet, at a library, and in other places. Use information collected from numerous sources and carefully support points with specific facts, examples and illustrations, rather than with just your own opinions.

8. Get Comfortable with Visual Aids. Visual aids help an audience understand and remember what they hear; they are a valuable tool for speakers. The most popular visual aids are computer-based visuals, overhead transparencies, flip charts, whiteboards, and props. The type of visual aid you choose depends on several factors, including the information you wish to display and the size of the audience. Visuals must be appropriate for your message and the audience, and be displayed correctly with ease and confidence.

9. Persuade with Power. Throughout history speech has been a major form of social influence and control, as people have rallied around those who could speak persuasively. The ability to persuade, to get other people to understand, accept, and act upon your ideas, is vital when you communicate with and lead others. Developing your persuasive skills is one of the best investments in time and effort you can make. Your listeners will be more likely to be persuaded if they perceive you as credible, if you use logic and emotion in your appeal, if you carefully structure your speech and if you appeal to their interests. Avoid obvious use of notes because they may cause listeners to doubt your sincerity, knowledge, and conviction.

10. Inspire Your Audience. An inspirational speech motivates an audience to improve personally, emotionally, professionally, or spiritually and relies heavily on emotional appeal. It brings the audience together in a mood of fellowship and shared desire, builds the audience's enthusiasm, then proposes a change or plan and appeals to the audience to adopt this change or plan.

5. Eleven Powerful Presentation Tips:

What Makes a Great Presentation

1. Stick to what you know well and thoroughly research the rest.
2. Consider your nervousness to be excitement, positive energy.
3. Focus on your core message. Anecdotes, stories and even jokes should support your main idea. If they don't, edit them out.
4. Organize your presentation simply. Keep it simple.
5. Add quotations, data and facts to support your main points.
6. Start strong, close even stronger. Audiences remember best the beginning and end of presentations.
7. Mix it up. Vary the volume, tone and speed of your voice. They will help make your key points and keep your listeners tuned in.
8. Move around. Use your body, gestures and movement to help emphasize your ideas. Standing behind the lecture is visually uninteresting.
9. Connect with your audience. Know what they want and need to hear, make eye contact, and solicit their comments. Make your talk a dialog. Smile!
10. Use visual aids to support your key points and only to support your key points. Don't allow your aids to become the messenger, you are the messenger.
11. Finish on time. No one likes to be held over late at a presentation or meeting.

6. How to Conquer the Fear of Public Speaking and some great preparation tips

Do you "feel the fear" when asked to do some public speaking?

Public speaking is still one of our greatest fears and it turns grown men and women into nervous wrecks. The mere thought of it turns our tongue to cotton wool, causes our internal plumbing to act up and turns our knees to jelly.

Well, there's no need for all of this because help is at hand.

All you need to remember are your P's and Q's.

Let's start with the P's

1. Preparation. When you sit down to write what you're going to say, bear in mind who you'll be speaking to. Will they understand what you're talking about; will they understand the technical stuff and the jargon? If in doubt remember the old saying - "Keep It Simple Stupid". Make sure that what you say has a beginning, middle and an end. Think of some anecdotes that help reinforce your story. People think visually so paint verbal pictures for your audience. And always remember, people want to know what's in it for them - so make sure you tell them!

2. Place. Have a look at the room before the presentation if you can. It's not always possible, however, even if you get there half an hour before, you can check out where you'll be speaking. Stand at the point where you will deliver from, imagine where the audience will be and check that they can see and hear you. You may even wish to place a glass of water where you'll be able to find it.

3. Personal Preparation. Before any presentation, think about what you are going to wear; when in doubt dress up rather than down. You can always take things off for a more casual look. Men could remove their jacket and their tie. Women could remove items of jewelry. As part of your personal preparation, write your own introduction. Write out exactly what you want someone to say about you, large font, double-spaced and ask the person introducing you to read it. They won't object and will probably be pleased and impressed.

4. Poise and Posture. When you're called to speak, stand up or walk to the front quickly and purposefully. Pull yourself up to your full height, stand tall and look like you own the place. Before you start to speak, pause, look round your audience and smile. You may even have to wait until the applause dies down. Remember, you want the audience to like you, so look likeable.

5. Pretend. Pretend you're not nervous because no doubt you will be. Nervousness is vital for speaking, it boosts your adrenaline, which makes your mind sharper and gives you energy. The trick is to keep your nerves to yourself. On no account tell your audience you're nervous, most of the time they will not know anyway. Some methods for dealing with nerves are: Before you're called to speak, get lots of oxygen into your system, run on the spot and wave your arms about like a lunatic. It burns off the stress chemicals. Speak to members of your audience as they come in or at some time before you stand up. That tricks your brain into thinking you're talking to some friends. Have a glass of water handy for that dry mouth. One word of warning - do not drink alcohol.

6. The Presentation. Right from the start your delivery needs to grab their attention. Don't start by saying - "Good morning, my name is Fred Smith and I'm from Smith Associates." Even if your name is Smith, it's a real boring way to start a presentation. Far better to start with some interesting facts or an anecdote that's relevant to your presentation. Look at the audience as individuals; it grabs their attention if they think you're talking to them personally. Talk louder than you would normally, it keeps the people in the front row awake and makes sure those at the back get the message. Funnily enough, it's also good for your nerves.

7. PowerPoint. Too many speakers rely on it and it takes over many presentations. You are the important factor here. If an audience is going to accept what you say then they need to see the whites of your eyes. There needs to be a big focus on you, not on the technology. Use PowerPoint if you want but keep it to a minimum and make sure you're not just the person pushing the buttons. Why not get a bit clever at using the faithful old Flip Chart, lots of professionals do.

8. Passion. This is what stops the audience in their tracks. This is what makes them want to employ you or to accept what you're proposing. Couple this with some energy, enthusiasm and emotion and you have the makings of a great public speaker. Give your presentation a bit of oomph and don't say to yourself, "I'm not that kind of person." There's no need to go over the top but you're doing a presentation to move people to action, not having a cozy little chat in your front room.

That's the P's finished, so let's look at the Q's.

9. Questions. Decide when you're going to take them and tell people at the start. In a short speech it's best to take questions at the end. If you take them as you go then you may get waylaid and your timing will get knocked out. Never - never - never finish with questions; far better to ask for questions five or ten minutes before the end. Deal with the questions *and then summarize for a strong finish*. Too many

presentations finish on questions and the whole thing goes a bit flat. When you're asked a question, repeat it to the whole audience and thank the questioner. It keeps everyone involved, it gives you time to think and it makes you look so clever and in control.

10. Quit. Quit when you're ahead. Stick to the agreed time; if you're asked to speak for twenty minutes, speak for nineteen and the audience will love you for it. Remember, quality is not quantity. One of the most famous speeches ever - "The Gettysburg Address", by President Lincoln, was just over two minutes long. Right, that's my cue to quit when I'm ahead. Now that you're armed with this information you too can minimize your fear of Public Speaking.

- Alan Fairweather - <http://www.howtogetmoresales.com>

7. Guidelines for the Use of Visual Aids or How to NOT use PowerPoint

Key Points for Visual Aids

Sometimes the best presentation is... *no presentation*. Ditch the slides completely. Put the projector in the closet, roll the screen back up, and turn the lights back on!

Especially if the slides are bullet points. Or worse... *paragraphs*.

The second you dim the lights and go into "presentation mode" is the moment you move from a two-way conversation to a one-way lecture/broadcast.

It's hard to be interactive when you're behind your laptop, at a podium, watching your slides on the small screen.

Then there's the phenomenon of "talking to the slides", where the speaker is constrained into following a script. Although some can do it, most presenters aren't capable of doing it well, so the speaker just forges on, slide after slide, saying what's already ON the slide, regardless of what he learned about the group.

Then again, asking the attendees for feedback is dangerous when you're following a script, since it's tough to really *incorporate* anything they say.

But given how many people hate slide presentations, why is it universally assumed that where there is "a talk", there's PowerPoint?

Conference coordinators rarely ask speakers *if* they'll be projecting slides. They send out the slide templates, then start demanding your slides several weeks before the show. Saying you don't have slides is like saying you'll give your talk naked. "You mean... you're going out there *with nothing???*"

Here are some myths and arguments in favor of slides:

Visuals are more memorable than words alone.

True. But bullet points are still the prevailing content of most slides, and they usually add *nothing* unless the speaker is truly bad.

You have no choice when you're presenting something that must be *shown*.

There are times when the very content you're speaking on directly relates to something you need or want to show. A screen shot, a design, a building, an animation, etc. Often you need to show quantitative data in a chart or graph. These are completely valid reasons, and slides might indeed be the best way. But they aren't the *only* way to show that data. Handouts and giant poster boards (for small rooms and a small number of items to show) can often work better.

But yes, there are definitely times you need slides, and at the end of this post I'll mention where you might look for info on making kick-ass presentations.

They keep the speaker and presentation on track.

I'm sure you all realize what an excuse *that* is, but we've heard it enough times to know some people believe it.

Before you use slides, use the "Do-You-Need-Slides Test"

1) Is what you're showing absolutely dependent on the learners seeing something you cannot simply describe in words? If YES, is the room small enough to use a flipchart, white board, or posters? If the room or audience size is too large, can you use handouts?

2) If NO (your content does not *require* visuals), then what are you trying to achieve with the slides? If you think it's because the attendees *want* slides, think again. *Expect* them? Yes. *Need* them? No. If you think it's to help you stay on track, *find another way!* Use note cards. They're far easier to rearrange at a moment's notice. If

it's to keep the attendees awake and alert and add *emotional* hooks and increase memory or understanding, then you've got a point. But in that case, you need to apply the **other test**:

The "Are-My-Slides-Terrible Test"

- 1) Do your slides contain mostly bullet points?
- 2) Do you have more than 12-15 words on a slide?
- 3) Do your slides add little or no new info beyond what you can say in words?
- 4) Are your slides, in fact, *not memorable*?
- 5) Do your slides fail to encourage a deeper connection to or understanding of the topic?

A "Yes" to *any* of those could be a red flag that something's wrong.

If you're still committed to slides, or if you're certain you need them, here's an overall recommendation:

Put each slide on trial for its life. Ask it to defend itself.
Show no mercy.

Make it beg, make it plead, make it sell itself.

If it doesn't convince you, kill it. And if there aren't enough left to justify using slides, *just say no.*

The best presenters, get the best of both worlds. They can dynamically shift between "lights dimmed slide mode" and "lights up, let's talk" mode without blinking. They don't let the slides constrain them to a script, and they don't let the slide *equipment* keep them trapped behind the invisible wall that separates them from the participants. They can rearrange their slides in real time. *Their slides are GREAT!*



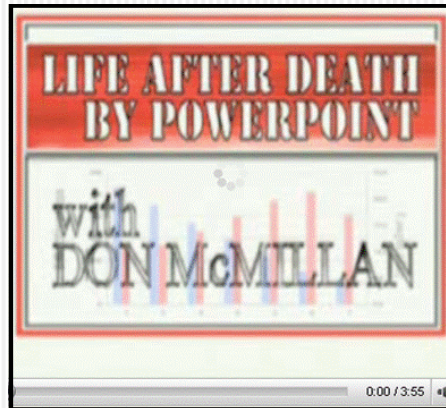
7. Excellent Videos for Reference

(click on the link)

How NOT to make a Presentation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDuU7IUwSyM>



How Not to use PowerPoint: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLpirHzgSRM>



A Comedian using PowerPoint - Well done!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXFi7AdhhGk>



NOTES:

Check These Five Pages of “Presentation Tips”

<http://www.BusinessEnglishEbook.com/Business-English-Presentation-Skills.htm>