



A Guide to Creating and Delivering an Effective Presentation

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Foreword

The thought of public speaking will bring on some level of nervousness in nearly everyone, and in some cases, severe panic and fear. It even has its own name, Glossophobia and studies have shown that people fear public speaking above death! If you are apprehensive about having to speak in front of a room full of people, you are not alone.

The anxiety may cause you to worry for weeks before a speech or presentation, find excuses not to do it and even change jobs or turn down promotions that involve public speaking. During speeches you can also feel physical symptoms such as:

- Shaking
- Blushing
- Heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Dry mouth

This is all part of our “fight or flight” response and even though there is no physical danger our response may be to avoid the situation due to embarrassment and fear of failure. In severe cases where it effects wider social situations the symptoms may need treating with therapy or even medication.

However, what we are looking at here is making a presentation to colleagues, customers, or our peers. In most cases we can implement strategies and understanding that will help avoid the worst anxieties, build confidence and help you deliver a successful presentation.

KILLER POINT: It's not life or death it's just a presentation!

Why learn to present well?

Presentations are used to inform, educate, motivate and persuade both internal and external audiences. Being able to do them well benefits both the business and you as an individual.

- ✓ A professional image – both you and the company
- ✓ Positive communication of products, services and ideas
- ✓ Credibility
- ✓ Personal confidence
- ✓ Ability to show critical and creative thinking
- ✓ Improves planning skills
- ✓ Leadership skills
- ✓ Career advancement

Planning

Pre-planning

In relation to this guide, we will be looking at a work or business presentation so you will hopefully already have some understanding of the chosen topic. This gives us a good starting point and numerous advantages:

- Lots of internal resources to call upon
- Internal support from colleagues
- Prior knowledge of the audience
- Motivation to succeed – positive outcomes
- Familiarity with the venue where possible – own premises
- More knowledge of the topic than the audience – training, product presentation, a new service or solution.

KILLER POINT: You hold most of the cards

Planning Part One – what, who, why, where & how

The better we prepare, the more we practice, the increasingly more confident we will become and so the better the chances we have of a successful presentation.

First things to think about:

- *What* am I presenting and *what* is the desired outcome/message?
- *Who* am I presenting to, how many people and what are they expecting?
- Visualise success, *what* does it look like?
- *Where* will the presentation take place? – if it is not at your own venue then where? Can you familiarize yourself with the venue? Can you visit prior to the day? Can you view images of the presentation space?
- *How* long have I got? How long should the presentation be. Opinion – Depending on the circumstances, between 30 to 45 minutes is deal for the whole presentation. If it must be longer, break it down into 30-minute chunks with defined breaks)
- *Which* type of presentation method.
 - Delivery without any aids
 - Use of PowerPoint or similar
 - Is there a product demonstration included?

Before you start to put *anything* together make sure you know the answers to the questions above. It is pointless preparing a 25 slide PowerPoint presentation that takes 90 minutes if, you only have 20 minutes!

KILLER POINT: Preparation is the key to your success

Planning Part Two: The Presentation (PowerPoint)

DO NOT start by trying to build the presentation in PowerPoint!

A movie director doesn't immediately start filming, initially they build a storyboard to map out the message and flow of the film and highlighting key scenes.

So, let's start by sketching out your ideas on a large format medium such as A3, a large whiteboard or flipchart. Use a thick pencil or marker pen so that you are not tempted, at this stage, to go into detail.

So, what do we need to think about at this stage?

- **Empathy** – Who are the audience? what is their knowledge, experience, and background? What do they want to hear from you?
- **Start at the end** - What is the ultimate/key message you are trying to convey (there should be no more than three if possible)? Write it down in as few words as possible – is it to promote a product or service, introduce an idea, deliver a plan or results?
- **Title & Introduction** – Does it need to be a practical title? Is there an opportunity to grab the attention of the audience? What are they going to take away? What's in it for them?
- **Focus** – Sketch out the slides in sequence with a single key word or image idea only. Does the presentation flow? Does the presentation build to the key messages?
- **Less is more** – Now go back to the beginning and ask these questions.
 - Can I take out any slides out without losing the message or the flow?
 - Can I combine any slides to reduce the overall number? – whilst sticking to the Powerpoint tips (next chapter)
 - Is the impact of the message maximized?

KILLER POINT: You are the presentation, PowerPoint is an aid

Building the Presentation: PowerPoint Tips

Slide Design

You may well be using a Company background or slide design so there is no real requirement to worry about this. If not don't be tempted to spend time at this stage playing around with slide design, concentrate on the content. However, before adding the content consider these tips.

- Work on the *message first*, animations and transitions can come later.
- Limit messages to *one* per slide
- Use bright content colours against a dark background – it is *more visible to the audience*
- Limit the number of objects per slide (text, images) to *no more than six*
- Make titles smaller than the content – *the message is the most important thing*
- Fade out the previous text and highlight the one you are discussing, when using a list – the audience will *focus on the highlighted text*.
- Don't be tempted to overuse animations – keep it slick but not confusing
- *Check* spelling and grammar

Once you are ready to build the presentation in PowerPoint, follow your storyboard by adding the key message to the slides. Following the principles above, add more content to the slides working towards more detail. (content - images – transitions – animations)

To complete the presentation.

- Double check the spelling and grammar
- Check the transitions and animations work with the timings and order you want
- Finally check that the presentation flows and delivers the message you are aiming for

The Presentation

Practice

You now have your presentation. Now you need to *practice, practice, practice*.

Initially run through the presentation and either add notes to the presentation (recommended) or separate notes on what you are *actually* going to say. Reading the content directly off the slide will not make for an interesting presentation, the audience can read the slides, your job is to bring it to life.

Practice ideas:

- Delivering the presentation out loud
- Practice in front of a mirror
- Check timings – too long, too short? (Allow extra time for pauses, laughter, applause & questions)
- Audio and video (if possible) yourself – What do you look and sound like? Where can you make improvements?
- Are you using prompt cards – how many, when, what's written on them?
- Practice in front of friends, family or colleagues? – get feedback
- Run through at least 10 times, more if possible

KILLER POINT: Practice makes Permanent

Presentation Day

So, presentation day has arrived. You have built a great set of slides, you have practiced well, you know what you are trying to achieve, and you are now ready to deliver. If you don't have prior knowledge of the venue, can you visit prior to your presentation (the day before or the morning of the talk). If not done so previously, speak to the organiser about the running order, equipment, and timings.

You will still be nervous however, there should now also be excitement and a confidence that all the planning and preparation time you have put in will hold you in good stead and support you in delivering a great presentation.

Presentation day checklist

- ✓ Is all your equipment working (laptop, presenter, laser pen – spare batteries?)
- ✓ Have a routine that works for you – how you dress, what you eat, relaxation techniques
- ✓ Drink plenty of water and not too much caffeine
- ✓ Arrive in plenty of time, don't rush things

Delivery

- ✓ Make sure you cover “housekeeping” (if not covered by others) – fire exits, toilets, comfort breaks.
- ✓ Welcome your audience, tell them who you are, which company you represent and why you are there (title slide)
- ✓ Explain to them what you are going to present and what is in it for them – grab their interest
- ✓ Icebreaker - Show some empathy with your audience. Give some thought about what *they* might be thinking about *you*. If you feel comfortable and it is appropriate, can you make a joke or humorous comment about yourself maybe something topical, about the location, your age or accent
- ✓ With a smaller unknown audience, you may be able to ask a question to check their interest or knowledge of the topic. – a good way of engaging and relaxing them and you.
- ✓ Be open with stance and positioning – open arms, move towards the audience when possible
- ✓ Tell them a little more about what you are going to cover. Explain when you will or if you will, be taking questions, how long it is going to be and if there will be breaks.

- ✓ If you do take questions and you don't know the answer, make a note and say you will get back to them – make sure you do!
- ✓ Take your time, don't rush. Pause to give emphasis where appropriate. Take opportunities to check progress and the understanding of your audience.
- ✓ Highlight and emphasize the key messages
- ✓ Summarise your presentation
- ✓ Be yourself (the larger the audience the more you may have to “exaggerate yourself” and enjoy it!

KILLER POINT: Tell the audience what you are going to tell them – Tell them – Then tell them what you have told them

Introduce - Deliver - Summarise

Post Presentation

- Reflect – What went well, what could be improved?
- Feedback – what did the host think about your presentation? What did the audience think? Can you use feedback forms to gain insight?
- Are there colleagues who can critique the presentation?
- Was the presentation recorded for audio and/or video? Are you able to review?
- Is there a follow up with the audience or host via email or similar?
- ***When's the next presentation!***

TED Talks

TED Talks are a brilliant and free resource to learn new skills, understand the psychology and skill behind presenting and, of course, a place to watch great and inspiring presentations.

Books:

- ✓ Talk Like TED – Carmine Gallo
- ✓ TEDTalks – Chris Anderson (Head of TED)

Presenting skills on TED:

- ✓ Anything by David JP Philips

Brilliant Presentations:

- ✓ Bryan Stephenson (2012)
- ✓ Larry Smith (2012)
- ✓ Sir Ken Robinson
- ✓ Seth Godin (2003)
- ✓ Robert Ballard (2008)
- ✓ Hans Rosling (2006)

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