

Presentation Skills

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Introduction



- Channel - the actual presentation
- Receiver - the audience

Barriers to Effective Presentations

Barriers can be listed as

- Complexity
- Jargon
- Visibility
- Poor sound
- Bad listening
- Prejudice and bias
- Lack of clarity
- Level of the audience
- Timing

Eliminating Barriers

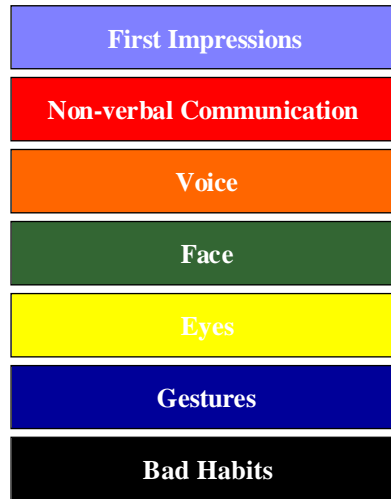
Barriers can be reduced or eliminated by thorough preparation. Guide the preparation by asking: -

- Who is the presentation for?
- Why is the message being communicated?
- What exactly is the message being communicated?
- Where will the presentation take place?
- When will the presentation take place?
- What do I want the audience to think, feel or do at the end of the presentation?

Exercise: Identify the main barriers to effective presentations that affect you. How might you reduce or eliminate them?

The Presenter

The Presenter



The Presenter - Managing First Impressions

For a presenter - the first impression an audience has is dependent upon two main attributes

Appearance

- Grooming
- Clothes
- Surroundings

Behaviour

- Attitude
- Communication style
- Professionalism

Exercise: As a presenter, identify your strong points and your weak points. Outline how you might overcome your weak points.

Eye Contact

Eye contact can be used to establish

- A level of trust
- A level of understanding

Points to note:

- Use 'calm' eye contact, not rapid glancing
- Do not stare at one section of the audience
- Let your eye contact flow over the entire audience
- You cannot have eye contact if you are looking at your visual aids!

To use eye contact effectively the presenter must:

- Know the material
- Establish a personal bond with the audience
- Monitor visual feedback and act on it.
- Feel comfortable looking at the audience.

Using Visual Feedback

Take in non-verbal messages that the audience are sending and act on them. If the audience is not looking at you:

They may be bored

- Solution: use some humor or increase vocal variety / use of gestures.

They may not be able to hear you

- Solution: Increase your volume and see if they respond

They may be puzzled

- Solution: Repeat or re-phrase what you have just said and watch for the response.

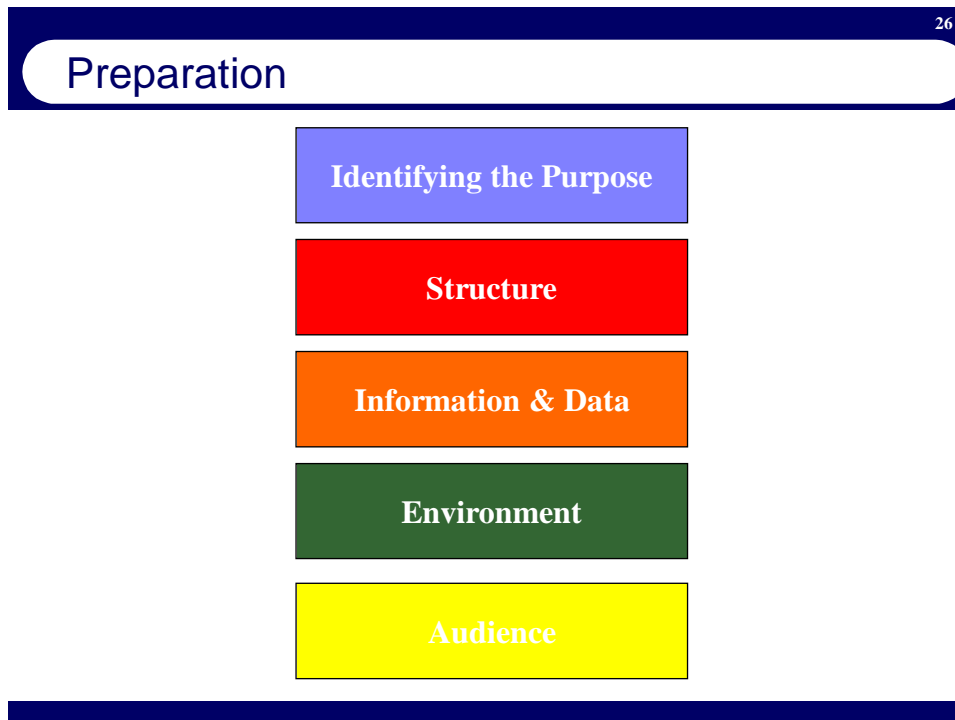
They may be uncomfortable

- Solution: Check the environment and ask them what you can do to make them more comfortable.

NOTES

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Preparation



Preparation

*Proper prior preparation prevents
poor performance of the person
putting on the presentation.*

Identifying the Purpose

The purpose of the presentation needs to be known so as to:

- Clearly identify the main objectives
- To develop a structure suitable for the objectives.
- To identify what information is required.
- To identify the audience and their needs.

Structure

Key point: use a memorable opening, give 3 or 4 reasons supporting your point, (they will not remember more anyway) use a memorable close.

The presentation must be structured so as to enhance the delivery of the message.

The Environment

Key issues

- Can everyone in the audience see you?
- Can everyone in the audience hear you?
- Where are the light sources?
- What is the best position to present from?
- Does the layout suit the purpose?

It is important that the environment does not become an obstacle to having a successful presentation.

Analysing the Audience.

Key point: discover and learn about your audience's wants, concerns interests

Criteria to be aware of:

- Knowledge level
- Interest level
- Reason for being there
- Number expected
- Hierarchical considerations
- Known or strangers
- Hostile, skeptical or friendly

Use the word audience as an acronym for guiding you through the analysis process.

- *Analysis* - who, where, why, what and when!
- *Understanding* - what is their level of knowledge.
- *Demographics* - what is the profiles on age, sex, education, culture etc. for the audience.
- *Interest* - why are the audience present?
- *Environment* - is it suitable for the purpose?
- *Needs* - what are the needs of the audience / self?
- *Customized* - what are the specific needs of the audience that I must address.
- *Expectations* - what do the audience expect from me, have I built in material to meet these expectations?

*Exercise: How much audience analysis do you usually do prior to a presentation?
What benefits would be gained from doing an audience analysis?*

Presenting

Presenting

Kicking Off

No-Nos!

Noise

Kicking Off

Key point: Make your presentation significant with meaning.

Three things must be achieved in the first few seconds of the presentation:

- Establish your authority.
- Tell the audience what you are about to tell them.
- Arouse the audience's interest and curiosity.

The kick-off formula

- *Greet* Use a hook e.g. a story then say Hello / Good morning
- *Identify* My name is...
- *Qualify* I work as ...
- *Topic* I'm going to talk to you about...
- *How long* My presentation will last...
- *Visual aids* I will be using a PC projector
- *Questions* I shall be pleased to take questions just before I sum up at the end.

Points to remember

- Have a strong opening hook to get the attention of the audience and set the theme clearly.

Visual aids

Visual Aids

Visual Aids

Flip Charts

LCD Projectors

Presentation Software

Visual Aids

Key point: use pictures less text

There are two main types of visual aid:

Visual aids that you prepare in advance

- PowerPoint / Freelance presentation on PC
- Models
- Diagrams
- Samples

Those that you develop during the presentation

- Flip charts
- OHP sheets

Using the Flip-Chart

Despite the availability of hi-tech equipment for presentations, the flip chart still remains one of the most effective tools.

- It doesn't need electricity
- Everyone can use one
- Color can be added easily
- They allow spontaneity
- They can be developed as the topic flows

Using LCD Display Projectors

Advantages

- Materials can be prepared ahead of time.
- Material can be changed at short notice.
- Looks very professional.

Disadvantages

- Complexity can creep in
- Can go wrong
- Focus is taken from the content to the method.

Pointers for effective use of LCD display projectors:

- Read the manual to set the interface correctly.
- Practice the set-up
- Allow time to get set-up before the presentation.
- Check the bulb life span
- Don't have the fan blowing hot air directly at a member of the audience.
- Bring a spare bulb and cables.
- Take care not to create a trip hazard with the cables.

Further points to note

- Check the intensity of the image in the room - what looks great on you PC screen may be too light when projected.
- Check the colour combinations - go for contrast.
- Check the font type and size for readability.

Focusing on colour schemes

- More is not necessarily better!
- Try to pick colors that contrast.
- Choose colours for clarity.
- Do the colours chosen give the presentation a professional feel?
- Is there colour balance in the presentation?

Transitions, Questions and Hecklers

Handling Questions

Key point: Take questions before you sum up. Always have the last word.

The audience will ask questions to

- Get more information
- Challenge what you have said.

It is important to control questions so prepare by thinking about possible questions that you might be asked and have answers ready. Poorly handled questions will ruin a presentation.

If there is a question time and no-one is volunteering to ask a question, then you may:

- Pick on a friendly face in the audience and directly invite a question from them.
- Tee up a question yourself.
- Leave a silence.

Guidelines for a Q&A session.

- Answer any question as briefly as possible.
- Repeat the question.
- Ask for more details if you don't understand.
- Take time to think about the answer.
- Credit the person for asking the question.
- Try to involve as many people as possible in the question and answer session.
- Remain calm and courteous in the face of hostility!
- Rephrase a long or complex question before answering.
- Check that your answer satisfies the questioner

Handling the Heckler

As a presenter, when faced with a heckler you have three choices:

- Ignore them
- Engage them
- Challenge them

Whichever you choose is dependent upon issues such as position, knowledge etc.



Notes



Presenter Notes

Key point: do not use your power point slides as notes – you will use too much text.

Not all presenters feel comfortable speaking without notes - here are some ideas on how to prepare effective notes:

On A4 paper

- Do not staple the pages together, keep them in a folder.
- Leave a large margin at the bottom so that your head will always be up.
- Use a big font that can be easily seen.
- Put directions on the sheet to help you with the presentation.

On cue cards

- Use stiff cards
- Do not staple cards together - use a treasury tag.
- Use a big font that can be easily seen
- Use bullet points not dense text.
- Mark in time milestones.
- Build in directions and instructions

Remember not to wave the cards around as a distraction to the audience!!

