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Presentation style

There are always three speeches for every one you actually gave. The one you practised, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave.

— Dale Carnegie

Aims

- How to use effective presentation delivery techniques
- How to adapt your style for maximum clarity
- How to use your voice and visuals
- How to make sure your delivery is clear
- How to write thank you letters to presenters and organizers

A

Presentation delivery techniques

Quiz

What is your presentation style? Tick the boxes which are closest to your natural style of presentation.

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Direct | I am direct. I say what I think. | ☐ |
| 2 | Indirect | I am indirect. I prefer to avoid conflict. | ☐ |
| 3 | Details | I need facts and details. | ☐ |
| 4 | Suggestions | I prefer to offer a general outline. | ☐ |
| 5 | What / Why | I make my point first and then I explain it in more detail and give examples. | ☐ |
| 6 | Why / What | I like to explain the background context and then summarize the point I want to make. | ☐ |
| 7 | Formal | I believe a formal style is appropriate in a presentation. | ☐ |
| 8 | Informal | I prefer a relaxed friendly style. | ☐ |
| 9 | Emotional | I think it is important to show my emotions. | ☐ |
| 10 | Neutral | I think it is important to keep my emotions to myself. | ☐ |
| 11 | Fast | I usually speak quite fast when I present. | ☐ |
| 12 | Slow | My natural presentation style is slow and measured. | ☐ |



Briefing

There are six presentation delivery techniques you can use to get your audience's attention. These are especially effective at the beginning and end of your presentation.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Ask a rhetorical question | Begin your presentation with a question which introduces and illustrates your key message. You answer it yourself and at the end you repeat the question (we saw this in action in 5A). |
| 2 Make a contrast | Contrast two things. Always start with the negative, for example <i>It's not this, it's THIS!</i> |
| 3 Repeat for emphasis | Repeat key words and phrases to emphasize key points. Remember US President Obama's <i>Yes, we can.</i> |
| 4 Sell an experience | Put the audience in a situation which brings alive the point you want to make, for example by talking about a relevant personal experience. |
| 5 Make important points in groups of three | This technique helps the audience memorize what you want them to remember and take away from the presentation. |
| 6 Surprise addition | Give your audience a bonus. Offer one more idea or suggestion at the end of your presentation. |

Listening



- 1 A tour operator is giving a presentation to a group of travel agents about holidays in Croatia. Listen to her presentation. Which of the six techniques does she use?

Tick the techniques you hear.

Ask a question	Make a contrast	Repeat for emphasis	Sell an experience	Group points in threes	Just one more thing



- 2 Listen to the talk again. This time put the techniques in the order the presenter uses them.

Ask a question	Make a contrast	Repeat for emphasis	Sell an experience	Group points in threes	Just one more thing



Business practice



1 Listen and repeat these sentences.

Ask a rhetorical question

Let me start with a question. How do you engage your staff?
Let me ask a question at this point. How many of us do overtime on a regular basis?

Make a contrast

It's not what you do. It's the way that you do it that counts in this business.
You don't just come for sun. You come for culture and history and fun!

Repeat key messages

So let me repeat one more time, turnover is vanity, profit is sanity.
Remember, timing is everything.
One thing is important in presentations – practise, practise and practise again.

Sell an experience

Let me show you how this works.
I'm going to show you how good this idea is.
Let me tell you about a real-life experience.
Let me take you on a journey.

Say things in threes

So let me summarize. Revenue up, costs down, gross margin up.
Remember the Three Ss: signpost, signal, summarize.
Here are three things you can be sure of.

Surprise additions

And one more thing ...
Before I finish, let me offer you one more idea ...
I'd like to offer you one final thought ...
One final thought before we finish ...

2 Here are some famous quotations. What technique does each one demonstrate?

- 1 *Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.* John F. Kennedy
- 2 *Veni, vidi, vici. I came, I saw, I conquered.* Julius Caesar
- 3 *Oh, and just one more thing ...* Steve Jobs
- 4 *Famous entrepreneur Richard Branson was once asked: 'What does Virgin stand for?' He could have answered 'a great music store' or 'a great airline', but instead he answered with one word – 'fun'.* Carmine Gallo



- 5 *Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.* Lao Tsu
- 6 *To be or not to be? That is the question.* William Shakespeare

3 Prepare your own presentation.

- Choose two or three of the presentation delivery techniques that you feel comfortable with.
- Choose a topic you are interested in.
- Prepare a one- to two-minute presentation using the presentation techniques.

4 Deliver your presentation. Record it and then play it back. If possible, ask a friend or colleague to review and comment on it.

Focus on your use of the presentation delivery techniques. Did you use them successfully?

Business culture

When you are giving a presentation in a foreign language, you can sometimes be difficult to understand. Use these five techniques to make it easier for your audience to understand you.

- 1 **A-r-t-i-c-u-l-a-t-e.** Speak a little slower than you usually would.
- 2 **Pause** before names, dates, figures, places and events – it makes them easier to understand. Try saying your name, for example *My name is (pause) Jaime (pause) Guerrero.*
- 3 **Avoid idiomatic or colloquial expressions.** If you have to use them, explain them, for example *As the chairman said, we have to start again from scratch, so we'll start again from the beginning.*
- 4 **Spell out acronyms and initials.** For example, say *I work in Customer Relations Management* not *I work in CRM.* Don't assume your audience knows the acronyms and initials.
- 5 **KISS – Keep It Short and Simple.** Short sentences with one thought per sentence are easier to understand than longer ones with lots of different ideas in them. If you can, keep your sentences to about 12 words.

If you use these five techniques, your presentations will be clearer and easier to follow.



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