



Appendix A-9

How To: Presentations

A-9 a. Presentations
From R-1 Field Guide to Outreach

Presentations

Relationship Builders

Outreach presentations have many different purposes ranging from the “hard sell” to simply informing. Regardless of purpose, however, all presentations share one goal: To build a relationship with the audience that will last well after the presentation ends. This relationship is crucial to making the audience receptive to the presenter’s purpose and messages. That’s why presentations are often more effective than other forms of outreach that cannot achieve a personal level.

Presentations are an essential element in the outreach mix. How well they are done can have an enormous impact on the success of marketing objectives. In the minds of an audience, the quality of A presentation is a mirror image of the quality of facilities, services, events, products, and programs.

Presentations can be formal, semi-formal, or informal. Some are entirely verbal; others feature media. Their purpose can be to entertain, inform, orient, indoctrinate, or persuade. In fact, a presentation can take almost any form to suit an occasion, topic, and audience.

All presentations should be focused with a clear purpose. The most effective way to achieve that purpose is to appeal to your audience’s emotions and instill trust and confidence by learning to give effective presentations.

- Any staff person involved in outreach activities
- People who give presentations
- People who staff public events
- Public affairs representatives
- Personnel responding to customer inquiries

WHO
SHOULD
READ
THIS
CHAPTER

How To Prepare a Successful Presentation

Before you begin preparing your presentation, it is a good idea to create a “rough game plan” by answering the following questions about your anticipated audience and the agency you represent.

AUDIENCE

- 1) Who is going to attend the presentation?
- 2) What benefits will they derive by attending?
- 3) Where is the best place for them to attend?
- 4) When is the best time for them to attend?
- 5) Why should they care about the presentation?
- 6) How will they respond to the presentation?

AGENCY

- 1) Who will make the presentation?
- 2) What is the purpose of the presentation?
- 3) Where will this presentation place your agency in the minds of the audience?
- 4) When is the best time to give your presentation?
- 5) Why should you be making this presentation?
- 6) How will you follow up the presentation?

Use your answers to create either a narrative or an outline that roughly describes your presentation, including its purpose, who will give it, where it will take place, and at what time of year. Also describe your audience and how they will benefit by attending.

If you are working with a team, distribute this “rough game plan” to all members, so you can refer to it as you prepare your presentation. Remember: This plan is just a “rough” used to organize your initial thoughts. Most likely, you will revise it as you proceed through the steps below.

The Basics: Content and Presentation

The success of a presentation is based on a very careful combination of content and delivery. Since delivery is designed to compliment content, we will deal with content first. Below are six steps for preparing content for any presentation. They are followed by “tips” to help you develop your delivery skills.

A well-written presentation will not be successful if the presenter is not prepared, and a well-delivered presentation will not be successful if it does not contain solid messages suited to the audience.

 **Rule of Thumb**

Content

Step 1: Design the Close

Designing the close may seem like an odd way to begin, but it makes sense when you consider that all of a presentation's content must lead up to these final thoughts. Also, the close is often considered to be the most important part of a presentation because it's where you either accomplish your objective or you don't.

First, write down the most important points or messages of your presentation. You may need to make a longer list now that you will shorten later, since the best closes are short (usually no more than five minutes). Plan on coming back and revising these key points after you firm up the rest of your content.

Your close needs to tell the audience exactly what you want them to do after the presentation. Figure out the best way to ask them to do what you ask, making sure to give them all the information they need so it is easy for them to respond. Again, keep this part of the close short!

Find a way to make your close lively, so the audience will remember your key points long after the meeting is finished. You may want to brainstorm ideas now and then come back and choose the best one after you finish designing your content. Here are some standard closing techniques that may work for you:

- **The Happy Ending Close** provides answers to questions presented in the opening and body of the presentation.
- **The Funnel Close** quickly summarizes numerous ideas or concepts and then focuses on three or four key ones.
- **The Shotgun Close** involves repetition plus verbal and written participation by the audience. It is usually built around concepts from the opening and the body of the presentation.
- **The "I'm Here to Help" Close** requires an opening and body that presents problems or issues relative to the audience. In the close, the presenter shows how the audience can solve these problems easily.
- **The Jigsaw Puzzle Close** defines a major problem in the opening and breaks it into smaller pieces in the body. In the close, the presenter provides answers to the smaller pieces, solving the major problem in the process.

Effective closes summarize the presentation's main points, ask the audience to respond, and leave an impression.

 Rule of Thumb

Content

Step 2: Design the Opening

In the first 120 seconds (two minutes), you must cover the basics, including why are you presenting, what you are presenting, and what the audience will gain from the presentation. But first you must capture your audience's attention and interest. Many presenters use one of these attention-grabbing openers before they proceed to the basics:

- Ask a provocative question
- Use a quote that relates to the topic
- State a startling statistic or fact
- Appeal to human interest
- Pay the organization or audience a sincere compliment
- Refer to a recent event related to the topic

The best presentations begin where the audience is and end where the presenter wants them to be.

 Rule of Thumb

Content

Step 3: Design the Body

The body of the presentation should present key points and provide material to support and illustrate each one.

Make a list of your key points, limiting them to seven or fewer because people can only absorb a certain amount of information at a time. Organize the points either chronologically, by topic, or by category. Figure out a way to amplify each one, or use one of these techniques:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| • Comparison/Contrast | • Ideal vs. Reality |
| • Features/Benefits | • Old Way/New Way |
| • Advantages/Disadvantages | • Objections/Answers |
| • Problem/Solution | |

For best results, use more than one technique for each point to add interest. For example, address the old way versus the new way and then show the features benefits of the new way. Regardless of the methods you use, create a logical "patter" based on clarity. When you finish discussing each point, present a mini-summary capturing the important ideas and concepts. Then move onto the next topic using a common bond that links the information.

Many presenters use an agenda chart showing the points they cover during the body of their presentation. Using a clear list that is spoken as well as written helps the audience follow your train of thought. A list also helps hold their interest by allowing the audience to gauge your progress.

Content

Step 4: Add Spice

Keeping your audience's attention is critical but not always easy to do, especially as your talk goes on. That's why it's necessary to plan ahead to include some "waker-uppers." Adding spice every six to eight minutes keeps most audiences interested. Here's a list of proven techniques you can use to enliven your presentation:

- Visual aids
- Human interest stories
- Analogies
- Demonstrations
- Humor
- Planned (or planted) questions
- Testimonials

Content

Step 5: Design Visual Aids

Why should you use visual aids? Studies provide a variety of reasons:

- We remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, and 50% of what we see and hear.
- People are 43% more likely to be persuaded if they can see what you are talking about.
- You can tell the same story in 25 to 40% less time if you can show it visually.

Good visual aids stimulate interest, clarify, substantiate, and reinforce what you say. Even in this high-tech age, the best visual aids are simple. Most use color (usually no more than three).

The best way to show figures is with pie charts, bar charts, or graphs, which should contain no more than three or four pies, bars, or curves each. Use bar charts for comparisons, pie charts to show relationships, graphs to show changes and trends, and diagrams to help explain complex structures.

For visual aids with text, try to minimize the number and complexity of words. Don't use full sentences; use bullets instead. Symbols or cartoons that relate to the topic can brighten textual aids. In most cases, you want to emphasize only one key point per visual, adding overlays to explain more complex points.

Design all visual aids so the lights can be kept as bright as possible, so the audience can continue to see the presenter.

 Rule of Thumb

Content

Step 6: Create Cheat Sheets

Cheat sheet allow you to keep key words and phrases in front of you. A cheat sheet should have the first three to five words, or the key words, you will say for every major point. Cheat sheets help surrounding words flow more automatically, so you won't sound like you have memorized the presentation or, worse yet, like you are reading it word for word. With strategically-placed cheat sheets, you can appear to be giving a completely spontaneous presentation. Place cheat sheets in front of you at a podium, around the side frames of transparencies, or write them lightly on flip charts.

Now it's time to concentrate on delivery. Remember: Without a skilled delivery, all of your work on content will be worth very little.

Delivery

Tip 1: Develop a Comfortable Presentation Style

There are many standard presentation styles from which to choose, or you can develop your own. Just make sure you are comfortable with the style and that it complements the content of your presentation.

Regardless of style, all successful presenters exhibit two essential qualities: conviction and enthusiasm. These qualities are the key to persuading people to change their minds, support you or your agency, buy a product or service, or pursue a course of action — the whole reason you are giving your presentation!

The natural human tendency is to justify on facts but buy on feelings, so make your conviction and enthusiasm contagious.

✌ Rule of Thumb

Delivery

Tip 2: Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse!

Why rehearse?

- Rehearsing is the single best solution to the problem of tight nerves and sweaty palms.
- Ninety-five percent of how well your presentation is going to go is determined before you even start.
- If you don't rehearse, your audience will know you haven't.

Delivery

Tip 3: Overcome Nervousness

If you appear nervous, the audience will think you do not have a handle on your material, and they will become uncomfortable. If you do get a case of the jitters, never announce that you are nervous because it will make your audience feel obligated to worry about you. Instead, try to breathe deeply, remember you are well-prepared, and move ahead.

Here are a few more suggestions for overcoming nervousness:

- Memorize the first two minutes of the presentation; this will give you time to relax
- Create and practice using cheat sheets
- Arrive an hour early so you are comfortable in the room
- Meet, touch, and talk to the audience as they arrive; this will help you put them in perspective as just ordinary people

Delivery*Tip 4: Avoid Bad Habits and Distractions*

Overcoming bad habits and distractions takes practice because most of us are not aware we are guilty of these actions. The most common bad habit is poor posture, including slouching, speaking with your head lowered, hanging onto the lectern or podium, standing very rigid, and rocking side-to-side or heel-to-heel. Smoking or drinking while presenting are just bad manners, as well as distracting. Here are some other distractions to avoid:

- Misspelled words on visual aids
- Talking to the podium or board, not the audience
- Off-center or out-of-focus projection
- External noises (e.g. from other rooms)
- Stilted phrases and "big" words
- Playing with objects

Delivery*Tip 5: Maintain a Pleasant Facial Expression and Eye Contact*

When we like what we are doing, we smile! Make sure you remember to smile at appropriate moments during your presentation. You will also want to maintain good eye contact with the audience. Try to focus on the entire room without favoring one side, or one person, over the rest of the room. Lack of good eye contact suggests you are talking at the people instead of to them, or that you do not feel strongly about the topic. Eye contact also provides you with immediate feedback on how you are coming across.

Eye contact helps every person in the audience feel welcome and important.

 Rule of Thumb

Delivery*Tip 6: Use Movements and Gestures*

Gestures fall into two categories: not enough and too many! Try to find a happy medium and keep your movements moderate, planned, and controlled. Use gestures to make a point or to attract attention to a point or visual aid. Practice is the best way to improve your use of movement and gesture.

Delivery*Tip 7: Choose Appropriate Dress*

You will often be judged on your attire, so do not wear clothes that talk louder than you. Get to know the organization sponsoring your talk or find out as much as you can about the audience. This will help you choose appropriate attire. In most cases, you will want to dress just a step above your audience, unless you are part of a formal panel.

Delivery*Tip 8: Develop a Pleasing Voice*

Your voice will either keep the audience awake or put them to sleep; help them believe what you are saying or tell them you do not believe in what you are saying. Always use good English and be sure to look up and practice every word in your presentation that you don't know how to pronounce, or else don't use it. Guard against "uhs" and "ums" as well as phrases such as "y'know", "kindof," sortof," etc.

To develop a pleasant presentation voice, pay attention to these four basic elements of voice when you rehearse:

- Pitch: Learn to employ variations and inflections.
- Loudness: Vary your loudness to avoid a monotone delivery, but keep the level moderate. (You will want to know if you will have a microphone.)
- Rate: Speaking too fast or too slow can distract listeners; practice pacing your dialogue through the use of pauses.
- Quality: The quality of your voice is directly related to your knowledge, confidence, and belief in the subject; know your content well.

Delivery*Tip 9: Practice Using Visual Aids*

There's nothing worse than a presenter fumbling with visual aids or equipment that doesn't work. Avoid both by practicing the use of your visual aids and by test-running equipment before your presentation.

Delivery*Tip 10: Have Fun with Questions*

A question-and-answer session at the end of the presentation can be a time to relax and enjoy yourself, or it can make you feel “put-on-the-spot.” The most important thing to remember is to maintain a positive attitude. You are only human and so is the audience so try to have fun with the questions. And always remember you can admit you don't know an answer.

Delivery*Tip 11: Avoid Delivery Don'ts!*

- Don't do anything you have to apologize for in advance.
- Don't use a presentation designed for one audience for a different audience.
- Don't read every word verbatim from every visual.
- Don't “play it by ear”; rehearse.
- Don't lie; it will come back to haunt you.

How To Prepare a Successful Presentation

Content

- Design the close.
- Design the opening.
- Design the body.
- Add spice.
- Design visual aids.
- Create cheat sheets.

Delivery

- Develop a comfortable presentation style.
- Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse!
- Overcome nervousness.
- Avoid bad habits and distractions.
- Maintain a pleasant facial expression and eye contact.
- Use movements and gestures.
- Choose appropriate dress.
- Develop a pleasant voice.
- Practice using visual aids.
- Have fun with questions.
- Avoid delivery don'ts.

Outreach Presentation Worksheet

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

1. What is the name of organization you are presenting to?
2. What is their main interest in your agency?
3. Why is this particular topic important to them?
4. How will this information benefit them?
5. What do you want them to do after the presentation?
6. How can these people help your agency achieve its goals?

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR AGENCY

1. What role does the presentation play in the overall goals of the agency?
2. Where should this presentation place your agency in the minds of the audience?
3. Why are you making this presentation?
4. How will this presentation benefit your agency?

5. Have there been any previous presentations related to this topic?

DESIGNING THE CLOSE

1. How can I summarize without being redundant?
2. What points should I stress that will be memorable?
3. What can I do to keep my closing lively?
4. What do I want the audience to do after this presentation (course of action)?

DESIGNING THE OPENING

1. Why are you speaking to the audience?
2. How is what you are representing important to the audience?
3. How is what you are presenting important to your agency?
4. How can the audience use the information you are presenting?
5. How can you keep the audience's attention?

VISUAL AIDS

Presentation Aids	Consider for Each
<input type="checkbox"/> Flip Charts	• Type of presentation
<input type="checkbox"/> Overhead Transparencies	• Type of material to be presented
<input type="checkbox"/> Slides	• Size of audience
<input type="checkbox"/> Movies	• Room size
<input type="checkbox"/> Videos	• Available equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> Computers	• Presenter's technical ability
<input type="checkbox"/> Live Computers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Handouts	

A "GET-READY" CHECKLIST

Checklists allow you to relax and be prepared for a presentation. Here's a list of things you may find useful when you are getting ready for your presentation.

To Find Out in Advance

- Directions to the presentation site
- Time of presentation
- Contact persons (names & numbers)
- Description of meeting room and available equipment
- Audience information
- Interested parties/contacts who may be in attendance
- Transportation
- Traveling time
- Hotel and meal arrangements

To Take Along

- Boards/charts/visual aids
- Electrical equipment (extension cords, microphone, computer equipment, etc.)
- Pointer for charts
- Tripods or stands
- Handouts
- Previous reports and notes
- Cheat sheets
- Business cards
- Additional support material
- Vital information about your agency
- References for information presented