Pitch Perfect
Perfecting Your Presentation Skills

dBg – Presenting Excellence
There’s a lot more being transferred than just words. It is in that nonverbal portion that there’s some serious magic. Somewhere hidden in the physical gestures, the vocal cadence, the facial expression, the eye contact, the passion, the sense of how the audience is reacting...There are hundreds of subconscious clues that go to how well you will understand and whether you are inspired”

Chris Anderson, Curator TED
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Effective Presentations

What makes an Effective Presenter?

Someone who:

- Leaves nothing to chance
- Starts and finishes well
- Is concise and succinct
- Speaks directly to their audience
- Understands their audience’s needs
- Is natural and open
- Takes their time
- Uses their voice effectively
- Appears to enjoy the experience
- Is in control
- Doesn’t try to be funny, but rather uses humour if and when appropriate
- Has their own individual style
- Is passionate and enthusiastic
- Is at ease with technology
- Understands why their topic matters to their audience

Fears

It is extremely common and perfectly normal to experience a wide range of fears associated with giving a presentation. For a great many people, the thought of presenting in public is terrifying and can cause sleepless nights, anxiety and worry. Symptoms can include:

- Increased heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Dry mouth
- Faltering voice
- Blushing
- Shaking
- Butterflies in the stomach
- Mind going blank
- Rushing

It is important to remember that in experiencing one or more of these symptoms you are not alone but rather it is simply part of being human and you’re not alone. When we perceive a situation as being threatening in any way, a series of internal processes are triggered known as the ‘fight or flight response’ and in the case of giving a presentation the response can be to flee from the room as fast as humanly possible despite the fact that we have been evolving for thousands of years and our brains should really be able to spot the difference between a woolly mammoth with a bit of an appetite and a business presentation.

This is an irrational response based on learned perceptions of speaking in public. We can’t flee from giving presentations if we want to succeed in our professional lives so the alternative is to face up to them and embrace the opportunity. Many people don’t allow themselves that chance for fear of:

- Being judged
- Feeling humiliated
- Not being as good as someone else
- Not being liked
- Making mistakes in front of others

To overcome this fear we need to accept that being nervous is not only all right, but it is actually helpful just as long as we don’t let those nerves take over and stand in our way.
Controlling Nerves

1. Physical relaxation
2. Efficient breath control
3. Positive mental attitude

Physical relaxation

Physical tension can affect the body and voice in a negative way and it is vital to be as relaxed as possible. Before any big event, take a moment to:

- Release any excess tension in your neck and face
- Relax your shoulders by squeezing them up to your ears and then letting them drop
- Make sure your jaw muscles aren’t tense.

Efficient breath control

When we have a thought and need to communicate that thought, a series of events take place in our body in a specific order and in a fraction of a second.

- Initial thought in the brain
- Brain sends a message through central nervous system to the muscles of respiration to inhale sufficient oxygen to phonate (create sound)
- Muscles of inspiration (most importantly the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles) contract and air is drawn into the lungs
- Muscles of inspiration relax and muscles of exhalation (abdominals and internal intercostals) contract and air is pushed back out through the trachea passing through the larynx in which live the vocal folds
- The vocal folds vibrate and sound is created
- Those vibrations are moulded by the articulators into sounds recognisable as language
- Audience hears and understands
- The thought has been communicated

With so much going on in such a short space of time, it is vital that every part of the machine is in perfect working order otherwise the effect will be that of something being ‘not quite right’. This is especially true of the breath – the mechanism which not only supplies the brain with valuable oxygen but also powers the voice.

In moments of fear, the breath is usually one of the first things to disengage. We start to shallow breathe in our upper chest. When we do this we not only appear to be nervous and give off nonverbal signals of being in a state of anxiety, but we are also failing to fill our tank sufficiently to fuel our brain and produce a resonant and supported sound nor are we doing anything to minimize the effect of nerves.

Before giving a presentation, it is vital that your breathing is calm and measured. To achieve this you need to aim to be engaging your diaphragm fully during inspiration.

**Exercise:**

Stand or sit in a neutral and aligned position

- Imagine that your whole upper torso is an empty box and when you breathe in, you are filling that box from the bottom up with air
- As you inhale, place a hand on your abdomen and focus on the breath reaching that hand (it doesn’t – the movement is caused by the abdominal viscera being displaced when the diaphragm pulls down)
- Try to keep your shoulders and upper chest as still as possible
- Slowly inhale through the nose or mouth on mental count of 4 and exhale on a count of 6 and let your body breathe at its own pace
- Once you have mastered this technique (which is not a new way of breathing, but the way our respiratory function is designed), you will notice that you are taking in more air on slower inhalation cycles; i.e. you are not ‘panic-breathing’
- Slow your cycle of inhalation and exhalation to around 4–5 full cycles per minute for relaxation (this will, of course, increase during speaking). Even one to two minutes of this type of deep breathing will help to relax you and give you a stronger voice
Mental attitude

“Whatever you think you can or think you can’t, you are usually right”

Henry Ford

One of the most common fears is of being exposed and of making mistakes in front of an audience. This comes from a negative mental attitude which concentrates on things going wrong, embarrassment and failure. However, it is worth remembering that:

- If you do make a mistake, it is not the end of the world – recovering from a mistake shows that you are human and is more likely to put your audience at their ease.
- Audiences are very rarely hostile towards the speaker – in fact the majority of audiences want the speaker to be successful.
- If you believe that you will give a good presentation you are far more likely to do so. Spend some time visualising your presentation by going through it section by section in your mind noting:
  - How you looked
  - How you sounded
  - How you felt

Place yourself in the venue mentally and see yourself delivering your presentation extremely successfully and receiving a very warm and positive response from your audience. Top sports men and women spend time visualising their task ahead of them and of the moment of victory. When you are actually about to give the presentation, it will feel like you have been through it before, and successfully at that, and you will feel less nervous.

- Think of three positive reasons why your audience should listen to you – write them down. The act of writing these three positive things about yourself, your ability to present and the importance of your message will reinforce the positive mental attitude needed for a successful presentation.
- Have a mantra – ‘this is the presentation, there are no other presentations’ (paraphrased from the 1982 film The Verdict)

Other techniques to help you prepare before the event itself

- Take some form of exercise before a presentation, even if it is only going for a short walk – exercise reduces physical tension, releases endorphins and will make you appear alert.
- Try to get to the venue in advance of the presentation where possible and spend some time in it ‘making the space your own’ and checking the technology.
- Where possible, mingle with your audience and talk to them before you begin – they will appear less daunting.
Planning and Preparation

What you need to know to prepare effectively

If you are fully prepared then there is very little that will throw you.

The planning stage of your presentation is fundamental and you should allow ample time for preparation and thought before going to your computer. Even if you do not have much time to prepare, at least think of your presentation as a story:

1. Identify the problem
2. Identify the causes of the problem
3. Demonstrate how to solve the problem

To do this you need:

» Time alone to think
» To identify your purpose
» To know why your topic matters to your audience

Focus

Presenters need to be aware of some of the problems audiences have:

» The length of presentations
» There is often no requirement for them to respond
» Issues of clarity – audiences will disengage if they do not understand or if the structure is unclear

The need to engage an audience with incentives to listen and respond is imperative:

» Use of questions to encourage participation
» Connecting to audience (especially by looking at them)
» Making it matter to them

Know your objectives

» What do you want your audience to understand?
» What do you want your audience to do after the presentation?
» What is the best way of designing your presentation to meet those objectives?
» Why does your topic matter to your audience?

Know your audience

» Who is your target audience?
» What is their level of responsibility?
» Do they know each other?
» Why are they there (choice)?
» How much do they already know about the topic?
» What do they need/want to know by the end?
» How can you link new material to things they already understand?
» Do you need to win your audience over?
» You must consider your audience’s needs otherwise you will not get their interest

Know your venue

» Where are you giving the presentation?
» What is the ‘tone’ of the venue?
» Where is the audience in relation to you?
» Do you need to alter the layout of the room for any reason?
» What are the acoustics of the venue?
» What audio/visual equipment is needed/available?
» Is there a lectern?
» What, if any, microphones are being used?

Know your responsibility

» How much time have you been allocated and what time of day you are presenting?
» Is there a particular theme or style?
» Are there any guidelines to follow?
» How many people are speaking?
» When are you due to speak?
» Who is introducing you?

“If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I’d spend six hours sharpening my axe”  
Abraham Lincoln
Know your topic
- Generate ideas – prioritise your information at an early stage
- Create a simple outline – main points in a focussed and logical order
- Keep main points brief – three is generally a good number for a standard presentation
- Ensure your points are reflective of your objective and the audience’s needs
- Build your points in a logical and structured progression and allow sufficient time for openings and closings

Know your material
- What supporting material adds clarity to your argument?
- What supporting material adds credibility to your argument?
- What supporting material adds colour to your argument?

Openings and Closings
You need to hook them in at the start and leave them with a powerful ending.

Your opening and closing are the times at which your audience will usually be at their most alert – you have an ideal opportunity to capture their imagination at these points and effect the way they feel or risk losing them. It is a good idea to learn your opening and closing so that you don’t have to refer to notes and it is essential not to rush.

Opening
- An opportunity to introduce yourself (if necessary) but ditch the lengthy platitudes and pleasantries of how happy you are to be there etc. A brief word is all that’s needed
- A chance to tell your audience why they should listen to you
- A valuable opportunity to actively engage or provoke your audience
- Use brief single-thought sentences
- Tell a story
- Reveal something new or unexpected
- Challenge them with something unconventional
- Start with a powerful image or video
- Get them laughing
- Never start with an apology

Closing
- An opportunity to review your topic, summarise and reiterate the main points
- A chance to draw your conclusion
- A chance to tell a final story
- The time to leave your audience with a parting statement, question or recommendation to stimulate further thought and action
- An opportunity to take everything back to the beginning
- Display a relevant quote
- Inspire your audience
- End! Don’t ‘fizzle out’
Main Body of Presentation

A presentation should have one key message or theme running through it that links everything together.

Once you have established that message, keep it in mind when creating the main body of your presentation.

- Each section is a mini presentation in itself — it should have an opening, a main point and a closing
- Try to limit the number of sections in a presentation — too many and your audience will lose the thread of the key message
- Make points in a logical and structured order
- In a longer presentation, use linking statements to help your audience follow exactly where you are
  - The next stage in our project was to...
  - Another important issue of consideration was...
  - By following this argument we can now see that...
- When planning your presentation, if you write your speech out in full don’t use those notes to deliver (you will automatically read from them); use prompt cards instead
  - Card rather than paper (which can be too flimsy)
  - Key points on cards — not full script
  - Keep points clear — no more than 3 or 4 points per card
  - Use large font and underline or highlight key words
  - Use cards to remind yourself to look up, where to breathe or slow down etc
  - Number your cards
- Your core point must be 100% clear to you — if not, your audience has no chance of getting it. You should be able to complete the following in one succinct thought: “At the end of my presentation, I want my audience to...”

Persuasive Language and Rhetoric

“Persuasion is Aphrodite’s daughter. It is she who beguiles our mortal hearts”

Sappho

The power of rhetorical language cannot be underestimated — to persuade, to convert and to compel. The techniques that were originally identified by the ancient Greeks are routinely heard in action in powerful speeches and everyday conversation and are just as effective today as they were over two thousand years ago.

A presentation is different from a public speech in that it is less formal and not so much of a performance; but that is not to say that, even though it is more of a ‘large conversation,’ it has none of the elements of performance — it certainly does and language plays its part.

By appealing to the three pillars of rhetoric — Ethos, Logos and Pathos — you will find that you are able to connect with credibility, evidence and emotion.

There are many particular types of rhetorical device — below are some of the more relevant ones to public speaking and presenting:

Rhetorical Question

The simplest and one of the most effective rhetorical techniques — asking the audience a question which they are not necessarily required to answer out loud but engages their imagination.

- “And did those feet in ancient time walk upon England’s mountains green?”
  (William Blake, Jerusalem)
- “You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory.” (Winston Churchill)
- “But being this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, and will blow your head clean off, you’ve got to ask yourself a question: ‘Do I feel lucky?’ Well, do you, punk?”
  (Harry Callahan in Dirty Harry)
Antithesis

There are thousands of words that have opposites and these provide opportunities for effective contrasts.

- “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” (Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities)
- “There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be solved by what’s right with America” (Bill Clinton)
- “Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures” (Samuel Johnson)

Chiasmus

Another extremely effective tool in making a point memorable is the mirroring of words of the first half of a sentence in the second half.

- “Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something” (Plato)
- “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” (John F. Kennedy)
- “When the going gets tough, the tough get going” (Billy Ocean)

Anaphora

This widely used technique is simple and yet extremely efficient. Individual words or whole phrases are repeated at the beginning or end of a phrase making that phrase both memorable and rhythmical.

- “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender” (Winston Churchill)
- “I have a dream...” (Martin Luther King)
- “Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine.” (Rick Blaine, Casablanca)

Alliteration

The use of words which begin with the same letter or sound creates a memorable rhythm.

- “The people’s princess” (Tony Blair)
- “Let us go forth to lead the land we love” (John F. Kennedy)
- “It takes two to tango” “Right as rain” “Cool as a Cucumber” etc

Tricolon

The rule of three is one of the most effective techniques and is well known in political speeches, advertising and comedy. It can take the form of three single words (the same or different), phrases and sentences.

- “Education, education and education” (Tony Blair)
- “Be sincere, be brief, be seated” (Franklin D. Roosevelt)
- “I stand before you today the representative of a family in grief, in a country in mourning before a world in shock” (Earl Spencer)

Anecdotes

A well-chosen story that is based on personal knowledge or experience is often one of the only remembered parts of a presentation as it reveals something about the humanity of the speaker.

“Don’t tell me words don’t matter” Barack Obama
Rehearsal

Rehearsing your presentation is essential.

You should always rehearse what you are saying out loud and in the way in which you plan to present and, where possible, you should do this in front of trusted colleagues/friends who will give constructive and honest feedback.

It is very important to rehearse your presentation ‘as live’ at least once and if you make a mistake carry on as you would in the occasion itself. The more you rehearse like this the more confident you will be when you deliver your presentation in front of your audience.

Rehearsal is important for time keeping purposes – however much time you have to present, plan for less as this will allow for ad libs and ensure that you don’t commit the cardinal sin of going over time.

Rehearsal is also very useful for spotting unnecessary repetition and ensuring that what you have written sounds good. Presentations and speeches are written to be heard rather than read – they are not documents.

The first time you hear your words out loud should not be at the same time as your audience does.

Non-Verbal Communication

Posture

Your posture can have a significant effect on your energy and how you are perceived.

Your audience will make a judgement about you as soon as you enter the space or stand up to speak and it is here that you can make a strong first impression.

To achieve a confident and open presence, stand in an aligned and neutral position:

- Feet hip width apart and roughly parallel – feeling your weight firmly on the floor
- Knees loose (i.e. not locked)
- Shoulders down and slightly drawn back
- Spine aligned
- Head held high

“The harder I practise the luckier I get” Gary Player
Take a moment to look at your audience before speaking and let them look at you.

When you are in this strong position, you should be able to feel the whole weight of your body in your feet, which will give you a sensation of being grounded. Shoes can affect posture so it is advisable to do ensure your footwear is not adversely affecting your posture.

Being grounded adds weight and gravitas to your voice and delivery and gives you a solid platform from which to start your presentation. That is not to say that you need to remain fixed in this position throughout – on the contrary, movement and gesture is important and can add to your impact but it needs to come from a grounded base.

Stillness is powerful and movement is engaging. Use both well and your audience will be fully absorbed. Come our from behind a lectern. Move with purpose rather than shuffling around or pacing back and forth like a caged animal. Worse still, rocking from one foot to the other.

Gesture

“Suit the action to the word, the word to the action”

Hamlet (3,ii)

It is often the case that presenters are told not to move about during a speech because it’s distracting. Whilst certain uncontrolled and involuntary movements, such as swaying and meandering, are distracting, effective use of gesture can greatly enhance an audience’s understanding and enjoyment of a presentation and keep their attention.

When we speak in conversation we use gesture quite naturally to paint pictures of what we are saying and we do this subconsciously. In a more formal speaking situation the gesture is a visual aid to our point.

› Gestures help convey personality
› Gestures help with tone and pitch variety, especially when the audience is far away
› Gestures keep us energised
› Keep movements flowing rather than sudden and jerky
› If you have a stage, use it where appropriate and move with purpose

Eye Contact

Face your audience - look at them and let them look at you.

Don’t turn your back on them (if you are working in the round than at any given point there will be some members of the audience who will have your back view, but you will of course be managing that by moving around). Look into your audience’s eyes and not over their heads. If you have a large audience, divide the venue up into 6 – 8 ‘blocks’ and treat each block as one person. Because of the distance, when you look at a block most of the people in that ‘block’ will feel that you have looked at them.

› Don’t glance at people or scan the room
› Don’t stare people out and make them feel uneasy
› Make eye contact random rather than following a regular pattern
› Look at your audience at the beginning and end of a sentence
› Don’t leave people out by favouring one section of a room or one person
› Don’t be thrown by seeing someone not looking at you
› Use eye contact to monitor your audience and regain attention
› If you are using slides, ensure that you don’t spend too much time, if any at all, looking at the slide yourself
Voice & Impact

Vocal Techniques

Speaking with greater confidence:

- **Pace**
- **Pitch**
- **Pause**
- **Volume**
- **Emphasis and Tone**
- **Vocal health**

Think of speaking in public as a journey on a motorway. If you were to drive from one city to another and remain steadfastly in the middle lane of a motorway and at the same speed whilst you would get to your destination, the journey itself would be extremely monotonous and dull. Changing lanes keeps us focussed and alert. It is the same with speaking – instead of speaking at one pace and on one note with no pauses for the duration of your presentation, and thereby potentially rendering your audience unconscious, keep them engaged with energy, passion and variety in your voice.

### Pace

Most people speak too fast in a formal situation. Our ears cannot speed-listen and we cannot concentrate on what is being said in a presentation in the same way that we can in normal dialogue if the pace of delivery is too fast.

The general rule is that in a formal presentation situation, speaking at around 130-170 words per minute will allow your audience to take in what you are saying and understand your core point.

The problem with this is that many people feel that this is far too slow not least because their primary objective is to finish their presentation as soon as possible.

Speaking at a slower pace requires practise and confidence, but you will be rewarded with an audience that takes in what you are saying, remembers your key message and is not struggling to keep up.

### Pitch

The stress of speaking in front of an audience can result in a tightening of the muscles in the very part of the body which produces the voice (the chest, neck and face) and this restricts our ability to use pitch variety therefore resulting in a dull and monotone voice.

In speech, the human voice has the capacity to use a pitch range of around 16-20 musical notes and yet most people only use three or four in everyday speech and in formal speech sometimes fewer as a result of inhibition.

#### Exercise

Practise using the full range of your voice by reading various texts out loud and using your voice to excite and enthuse – imagine you are on the radio and you only have your voice to commit to the emotion and message of what you are saying. Speaking out loud using different images (e.g. children’s storyteller, motivational speaker, counsellor) will help you to explore and adopt the right tone for your presentation. Your voice is an incredibly sophisticated instrument and we all have the capacity to, quite literally, play it at a virtuoso level.

### Pause

“*The right word may be effective but no word was ever as effective as a rightly-timed pause*”

*Mark Twain*

In everyday conversation pauses are short and rare as we generally know and obey the unwritten rules of speaking to one another. A silence is an invitation for someone else to jump in and take over speaking so we avoid them until we have finished.

In a formal presentation, however, the speaker needs to give their audience time to take in the points one by one. If the material is presented without any breaks at all, it is unlikely to be fully absorbed so it is vital that points are punctuated by pauses.
Pausing also has advantages for the speaker:

- Helps keep breathing controlled
- Slows pace of delivery
- Buys valuable time (should that be needed)
- Can change the meaning of a statement
- Dramatic effect

There are no actual rules about how long to pause and each situation is different and needs to be judged accordingly, but for practise purposes try pausing at the punctuation points – one to two seconds at commas and two to three seconds at full stops. You will soon build confidence and instinctively know when to use pause effectively.

**Volume**

When giving presentations, you need to be aware of your volume; too loud and people will feel lectured at, too soft and they will switch off.

- If you are standing in a strong physical position, your voice will reflect that
- Imagine your voice to be a beam of light and ‘aim’ it where you want it to go – at the person or people furthest away from you in all directions
- Vary your volume – raise it to grab attention and lower it to encourage your audience to really listen

When on a microphone, speak at a more normal level and let the equipment do the work for you.

**Emphasis & Tone**

Deciding which word, or series of words, to emphasise in a sentence can dramatically change its meaning or intended meaning. It is important to be sure which words are to be emphasised and to practise them out loud.

- Highlight key words to emphasise in your text
- Emphasising will help you to slow down
- Emphasising words helps to target your key message

Often speakers are perceived as being under-energised and lacking in vigour and yet they feel that they were the opposite. The reason for this is that those speakers will have been speaking at a conversational level and neglecting the different distances between them and their audience.

In a conversation, the listener’s ear can pick up subtle changes in pitch and tone but in a more formal presentation, the listeners tend to be further away from the speaker and these nuances are not so evident. Therefore, the speaker must exaggerate these patterns of intonation which will to many people seem unnatural but which will enthuse and energise an audience.

**Vocal health**

- Room temperature still water – it will keep you refreshed and will irrigate the vocal folds which will be working at high speed and rapidly drying out
- Avoid caffeine in advance of a presentation – it is a stimulant and can exaggerate your fear and speed up your heart rate as well as being a diuretic
- In some people, dairy products can stimulate the saliva glands

**Delivery**

**Adapting to the Surroundings**

- Wherever possible, get to the venue before the event and walk around it noting sight lines and acoustics (especially large venues)
- Arrive early and take some time to make the space your own (including rearranging the layout if necessary)
- Practise your opening and closing on the stage and get people to watch you and listen to you from various points around the space
- The larger the space, the larger you and your gestures need to be and the slower you need to speak
- The smaller the space, be aware that you still need to be animated and energetic, but keep that in proportion to the size of the room
- The atmosphere and ‘tone’ of the room can have an effect on us – if you are lucky enough to be addressing your audience in Westminster Hall for example you will naturally rise to the occasion. If, however, your assembled audience is squashed into the cramped, windowless and tastelessly decorated office space of a motorway hotel just off Bracknell then make sure that you don’t let that affect your energy levels
Building Rapport

“If they’re laughing, then they’re listening” Sir Ken Robinson

Your audience is with you. More often than not, your audience is sympathetic and interested in what you have to say and they will react well if you are true to yourself and enthusiastic. Follow these three simple rules and you will have a happy audience:

- Be seen
- Be heard
- Be brief

If you appear not to be focused or engaged, if you cannot be heard or if you ramble on and on you will lose your audience, but if you appear confident and believe that what you have to say matters to your audience they will pick up on that and believe it too.

Speak your audience’s language and don’t alienate them with jargon and acronyms they neither understand nor care about.

Use anecdotes to give them something about yourself that they may well be able to relate to. Know what you are talking about and enjoy talking about it. It doesn’t matter what the subject matter is (within reason) if you are, or give the impression that you are, interested in it then your audience will be interested too.

Involve your audience through participation:

- Ask questions
- Have group discussions
- Show video clips and get feedback
- Take a poll (show of hands)
- Use volunteers
- Get people doing things
- Play a game with a time limit
- Set tasks

Building rapport with an audience will help with developing your own natural style. Some people find it useful to copy the approach of well-known speakers and whilst this does have some uses in building confidence, it is less beneficial in developing a personal style.

- Relax and breathe
- Learn to enjoy what you are doing
- Believe that you are good at presenting
- Allow your personality to come through
- Look the part
- Tell stories and don’t lecture
- Speak slowly and clearly
- If you make a mistake – don’t panic, you are human
- Use humour where appropriate. Don’t ‘plan’ jokes – it is not a stand-up routine
- Smile

Technology

“ We don’t know where we get our ideas from. What we do know is that we do not get them from our laptops” John Cleese

There is a great deal of technology available to us as presenters, but no matter how impressive the use of it is in a delivery the importance of the person has not changed. Programmes such as PowerPoint, Keynote and Prezi should not be ignored but their function is solely to support and augment what the speaker is saying. When used well, technology does this extremely effectively but when overly relied upon, then the connection with the audience is lost.

Visual aids should be just that – visually engaging that enhance what you are saying rather than distracting from you.
Visual media

Advantages:
- Pictures, video, maps etc
- Graphs, charts, diagrams
- Helps audience remember what you are talking about – we are a visual species

Potential pitfalls:
- Too many slides in a presentation
- Overuse of text, fonts, colours and functions
- It can let you down by not working properly or at all

Visual media should always illustrate what is being said because as soon as an image appears, all eyes will focus on that rather than the speaker.

- Build lists one by one rather than putting them up all at once
- As few words per slide as possible – less is more
- No one wants to see whole documents reproduced on screen
- Certain colours (text) are harder to read on different backgrounds than others
- Use blank slides or black out the screen (the ‘B’ key) when you no longer need the audience to look at a particular image
- Keep slides simple and relevant and really ask whether each slide is needed
- Use one font and make sure it is big enough to be visible at a distance (44 Arial)
- Use simple ‘appear’ function rather than ‘fly in’ etc
- Use a remote to ‘speak and click’
- Don’t let technology take over
- You do not need to look at the slides, they are for your audience – refer to your laptop screen or check in your peripheral vision
- Learn important pieces of text and quotations
- Test and rehearse with the equipment
- Give your audience a chance to read any text
- Think of your slides as being like road signs
- Don’t read slides

“If you start reading your material because you do not know your material, the audience is very quickly going to think that you are a bozo. They are going to say to themselves: ‘This bozo is reading their slides. I can read faster than this bozo can speak. I will just read ahead’”

Guy Kawasaki, Entrepreneur and former Chief Evangelist at Apple
Q&A

It is not a rule that you must have a Q&A session but if you do, you need to manage it and make sure that your audience knows when they can ask questions.

- Give your self a get-out clause
- Be gracious and grateful for questions
- Be brief and succinct in your answers
- Don’t become defensive
- Anticipate difficult questions
- Listen to the whole question – don’t interrupt the questioner
- Be assertive and don’t let one person take over – you are in charge
- Repeat the question for the rest of the audience
- You can ask questions in return
- Throw individual questions out to the whole audience
- Be mindful of when to stop

Ten Top Tips

- Prepare thoroughly and abandon your laptop at this stage
- Select visual images that support what you are saying
- Have a very clear core theme
- Be interested in your topic and your audience
- Don’t rush
- Look at your audience
- Don’t read your slides
- Be prepared for technology to let you down
- Don’t go overtime
- Be energetic, enthusiastic, spontaneous and enjoy it

Further research:

Video:
Barack Obama – ‘Don’t tell me words don’t matter.’ Wisconsin, February 19th 2008
http://www.deburghgroup.com/news/don’t-tell-me-words-don’t-matter/


Professor Amy Cuddy – Nonverbal Leakage!

Professor Hans Rosling – Presenting Data and Being Interesting

Steve Jobs / Governor Rick Perry – The Rule of Three

www.TED.com

Articles:
The role of Rhetoric in everyday Advocacy
http://www.thelawyer.com/careers/the-role-of-rhetoric-in-everyday-advocacy/3010048.article
# PLANNING A PRESENTATION

## General information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation Title:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time allocated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue details:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience size:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Objectives:

What do you want your audience to do after the presentation?

## Audience profile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is your audience?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is their level of responsibility?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much do they already know about the topic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the benefit to the audience?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Introduction:

What is your key message/core point?

What is your hook to grab audience’s attention?

Opening:

## Main body:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Points:</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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## Closing:

Summary:

Further action:

Closing: