

## Topics:

- Understanding your audience
- Delivering confidently
- Preparing your content
- Controlling the environment

## Preparation For Your Presentation

Ask yourself:

**Who? What? When? Where? How? Why?**

**Who** are you speaking to? What are their interests, presuppositions and values? What do they share in common with others; how are they unique?

**What** do you wish to communicate? One way of answering this question is to determine your ‘success criteria.’ How will you know if and when you have successfully communicated what you had in mind?

**When?** Timing is important. Develop a sense of timing so that your contributions are seen and heard as relevant to the issue or matter at hand. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent.

**Where?** What is the physical context of the

communication/ presentation? You should schedule time to visit the room and rearrange furniture, for example. Check for availability and visibility if you are using audio or visual aids.

**How** can you best convey your message? Language is important as are your non-verbal cues. Choose your words and your non-verbal cues with your audience in mind. Plan a beginning, middle, and end to your presentation. If time and place allow, consider and prepare audio-visual aids.

**Why?** In order to convert hearers into listeners, you need to know why they should listen to you – and tell them how they will benefit if they do.



## Quick Tips for Effective Power Point Presentations

### Fonts

- Select sans-serif fonts such as Arial or Helvetica. Avoid serif fonts such as Times New Roman or Palatino as they are sometimes more difficult to read.
- Use font size no smaller than 24 point.
- Clearly label each screen. Use a larger font (35 – 45) or a different color for the title.
- Use a single sans-serif font for most of the presentation. Use different colors, sizes, and styles (bold, underline) for impact.
- Avoid italicized fonts as they are difficult to read quickly.
- For bullet points, use the 6 X 6 rule: one thought per line with no more than 6 words per line and no more than 6 lines per slide.
- Use dark text on light background or light text on dark background.
- Do not use all caps except for titles.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms. (Continued on page 6)

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## Rate Your Presentation Skills

For each statement, circle the number that best describes you. Don't worry if some statements seem to score in the "wrong direction." When you are finished, add together all the circled numbers for a total score.

	Statement	Not At All	Rarely	Some times	Often	Very Often
1.	The visuals in my presentation match well with the information I am communicating and help support the message.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	To prepare for my presentation, I think carefully about the message I want to send.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Before I present, I become familiar with the room and the space in which I will be speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I plan and practice my presentation until I can speak comfortably and fluently.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I assume my audience knows very little, and then I give them all the information they need.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	I use an indirect, subtle approach, and I send a gentle message to my audience.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Anxiety gives me stress and brings negative energy to my presentation.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	I make sure that organizers or other staff prepare my equipment so that I can arrive right on time and start immediately.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	I encourage my audience to ask questions at the end of the presentation.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	I pay attention to my non-verbal behavior, like facial expressions and eye contact, to make sure I stay engaged with the audience.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I use examples to support my points.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	My presentations sometimes take longer than planned.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	If I want to persuade an audience, I get them to think about what the future will be like if they continue without making changes.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I focus on the main part of the presentation more than the beginning and end because that is where most of the information is given.	5	4	3	2	1

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

14 -32	33 -51	52 -70
Your presentations are probably quite weak and perhaps a little boring. There are lots of ways to bring more excitement to what, and how, you present. You simply need more practice developing the right kind of content and learning to use your nervousness to create a positive flow of energy. Read this TOOLKIT for tips on building your self-confidence.	Your presentations are OK and they are probably very typical of average presenters. The impression you leave isn't good or bad – it's essentially non-existent and your message is likely soon forgotten. Use the tips in this TOOLKIT to add life to your presentations so that your audience remembers you for all the right reasons.	Super job! You are giving excellent presentations. They are interesting and well suited to the audience, and you know that taking time to prepare pays off in the end. Review the strategies in this TOOLKIT and challenge yourself to continue improving your presentation skills.

## Becoming a Better Presenter

Effective presentations involve a variety of different elements: knowing what your audience wants; preparing good, interesting, and engaging content; being confident in presenting the material; knowing how to manage your environment successfully; and making sure that your message has maximum impact.

Balancing all four elements is not an

easy task. When combined with the natural anxiety often felt before giving presentations, it's easy to understand why many people struggle with this skill. In fact, fear of public speaking is extremely common.

However, with the right tools and techniques, along with planning and preparation, you can transform your

fear into energy and confidence.

Here are the four key elements of effective presentations in more detail:

- Understanding your audience
- Preparing your content
- Delivering confidently
- Controlling the environment

### Understanding Your Audience (Statements 2, 5, 6, 9)

The success of most presentations is generally judged by how the audience responds. You may think you did a great job, but unless your audience agrees with you, that may not be the case. Before you even begin putting your PowerPoint slides together, the first thing you need to do is understand what your audience wants. Try following these steps:

- Determine who the members of the audience are.
- Find out what they want and expect

from your presentation. What do they need to learn? Do they have entrenched attitudes or interests that you need to respect? What do they already know that you don't have to repeat?

- Create an outline for your presentation and ask for advanced feedback on your proposed content (where appropriate).

When what you say is what your audience wants or needs to hear, then you will probably receive posi-

tive reinforcement throughout your presentation which will help build your confidence.

When your audience is satisfied, it doesn't matter if your delivery wasn't absolutely perfect. The primary goal of the audience is to get the information they need. When that happens, you've done a good job. Of course, you want to do a great job, not just a good job – and that is where the rest of the tips can help.

### Preparing Your Content (Statements 6, 11, 13, 14)

The only way to satisfy your audience's needs and expectations is to deliver the content they want. That means understanding what to present and how to present it. Keep in mind that if you give the right information in the wrong sequence it may leave the audience confused, frustrated, or bored.

If you provide the information in a well-structured format, and you include various techniques to keep the audience engaged and interested, then they will probably remember what you said – and they will remember you.

There are a variety of ways to structure your content, depending on the type of presentation you give. Here are some principles you can apply:

- **Identify a few key points** – To help the audience retain the messages you

are giving them, use the **chunking** principle to organize your information into five to seven key points.

- **Don't include every detail** – Good presentations inspire the audience to learn more and to ask further questions to maximize their understanding of the content.
- **Use an outline** – At the beginning, tell your audience what you intend to cover and let them know what to expect. This helps build anticipation and interest from the start.
- **Start and end strongly** – Capture people's interest as soon as you begin and leave them with a message they won't forget. It's tempting to put all of your effort into the main body of the presentation; however, if you don't get people's

attention at the start, they will probably lose interest and not really hear the rest anyway.

- **Use examples** – Where possible, use lots of examples to support your points. A lecture is often the least interesting and engaging form of presentation. Look for ways to liven things up by telling stories, talking about real-life examples, and using metaphors to engage your audience fully.

A special type of presentation is one that seeks to persuade.

**Monroe's Motivated Sequence** (outlined in this Toolkit), consists of five steps, and gives you a framework for developing content for this kind of presentation.

## Delivering Confidently (Statements 1, 4, 7, 10)

Even the best content can be ineffective if your presentation style contradicts or detracts from your message. Many people are nervous when they present, so this will probably affect your delivery; however, it's the major distractions you want to avoid. As you build confidence, you can gradually eliminate the small and unconstructive habits you may have. Here are some tips to help you:

- **Practice to build confidence** – Some people think that if you practice too much you will sound rehearsed and less genuine. Don't necessarily memorize your presentation, but do be very familiar with the content so you are able to speak fluently and comfortably, and adjust as necessary.
- **Be flexible** – This is easier to do if you are comfortable with the material. Don't attempt to present something you just learned the previous night. You want to know your material well enough to answer questions. If you don't know something, just admit it and commit to finding the answer.
- **Welcome questions and comments from the audience** – This is a sign that a presenter knows what he or she is talking about. It builds audience confidence and people are much more likely to trust what you say and respect your message.
- **Use slides and other visual aids** – These can help you deliver a confident presentation. The key point here is to learn how much visual information to give the audience and yet not distract them from what you are saying.
- **Keep your visuals simple and brief** – Keep pictures, charts, and graphs to a minimum. Your visuals should punctuate, not dominate, your presentation.

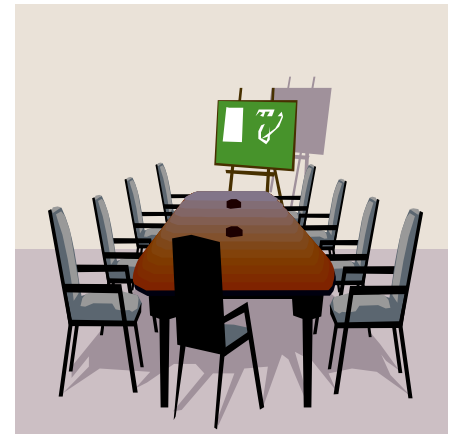
Don't try to fit your entire presentation on slides; if the slides cover every single detail, then you've probably put too much information on them. Slides should give the overall message and then the audience should be able to know where to look for supporting evidence or additional detail.

- **Manage your stress** – Confidence has a lot to do with managing your stress levels. If you feel particularly nervous and anxious, then those emotions will probably show. They are such strong feelings that you can easily become overwhelmed which can affect your ability to perform effectively. A little nervousness is actually useful, if channeled and controlled, because it can build energy.

## Controlling the Environment (Statements 3, 4, 8, 12)

While much of the outside environment is beyond your control, there are still some things you can do to reduce potential risks to your presentation.

- **Practice in the presentation room** – This forces you to become familiar with the room and the equipment. It will not only build your confidence, but also help you identify sources of risk. Do you have trouble accessing your PowerPoint file? Does the microphone reach the places you want to walk? Can you move the podium? Are there stairs that might cause you to trip? These are the sorts of issues you may discover and resolve by doing one or two practice presentations.
- **Do your own set-up** – Don't leave this to other people. Even though you probably want to focus on numerous other details, it's a good idea not to delegate too much of the presentation to others. You need the hands-on experience to make sure nothing disastrous happens at the real event.
- **Test your timing** – When you practice, you also improve your chances of keeping to time. You get a good idea how long each part of the presentation will actually take and this helps you plan how much time you will have for questions and other audience interactions. Members of the audience want you to respect their time. If you end your presentation on time or early, this can make a very positive impression on them! When speakers go over the allowed time they may disrupt the whole schedule of the event and/or cause the audience unne-



cessary inconvenience. Be considerate and stick to your agenda as closely as possible.

Presenting doesn't have to be scary or something you seek to avoid. Find opportunities to practice the tips and techniques discussed to become more confident in your ability to present your ideas to an audience. We all have something important to say!

## Monroe's Motivated Sequence Pattern

Developed by Alan Monroe (1969), the Motivated Sequence derives its name from the fact that by following the normal processes of human thinking, it motivates an audience to respond affirmatively to the speaker's purpose.

The sequence contains five distinct steps:

**Attention** (get the attention of your audience).

**Need** (describe the problem; demonstrate a need for change).

**Satisfaction** (present a practical and concise solution).

**Visualization** (allow your audience to picture the results).

**Action** (request immediate action from your audience).

### The Attention Step

First and foremost, you need to gain the attention of your audience. In order to gain favorable attention, one or more of the following are recommended:

- Relating to the audience
- Showing importance of the topic
- Making a startling statement
- Arousing curiosity or suspense
- Using a quotation relevant to your topic
- Sharing a humorous anecdote
- Telling a dramatic story
- Posing a question (maybe rhetorical)
- Using visual aids for illustration

### The Need Step

Now that you have the interest and attention of your audience, you must then make them feel a need for change. You need to show your audience that there is a serious problem with the current situation. It is important to state the need clearly and to illustrate it with strong supporting materials. One or more of the following are recommended:

- Give a clear, concise statement or description of the need or problem
- Use one or more detailed examples which illustrate the need
- Use relevant statistical data (don't overwhelm with statistics)
- Use testimonies and other forms of support to show the extent of the need

In the need step, you will make a convincing demonstration of how the need directly affects your audience: their health, happiness, security, or other interests. By the end of this step, your listeners should be so concerned about the problem that they are psychologically primed to hear your solution.

### The Satisfaction Step

Having aroused a sense of need, you satisfy it by providing a solution to the problem. Now you present your plan/solution and show your audience how it will work. The following techniques are recommended:

- Briefly state the action or change you wish your audience to adopt
- Give a complete, concise explanation of your plan
- Use a theoretical demonstration – show how this action logically meets the problem
- Give actual examples showing that this plan has worked effectively, and it's a practical solution
- Use facts, figures, and the testimony of experts to support your claims/plan

Make sure that you give your audience enough details of your plan so that it is clearly understood. Diagrams and charts are often useful here. You want your audience to leave the satisfaction step with a clear understanding of your plan. Your audience should now be wondering how this will work for them and what it can do for them (e.g., "This sounds like a practical solution for me, however, I would like to see/visualize it in action. How can I benefit?")

### The Visualization Step

Now that you have given your plan/solution, you will intensify your audience's desire for your plan by helping them to visualize it for themselves. You want to project your audience into the future and have them picture the potential benefits of your plan. Use vivid imagery to show your listeners how **they** will benefit. Make them **visualize** how much better conditions will be once your plan is adopted. The step may be developed by using one of the following techniques:

*The Positive Method* – by describing conditions as they will be in the future if the solution you propose is carried out. Provide vivid, concrete descriptions. Select a situation which you are sure will arise in the future and help your audience picture themselves enjoying the conditions which acceptance of your plan will produce.

*The Negative Method* – by describing the adverse conditions that will prevail in the future if the plan you have presented is not carried out. Picture for your audience the danger or the unpleasantness which will result from failure to follow your advice. Select from the Need Step the most undesirable aspects of the present situation and show how these conditions will continue if your proposal is rejected.

*The Contrast Method* – by combining the positive and negative approaches. Use the negative method first, visualizing the bad effects if the audience fails to follow your advice; then

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## Monroe's Motivated Sequence Pattern, continued

the positive method, visualizing the good effects of believing or doing as you recommend.

Whichever method you use, remember that the Visualization Step must stand the test of reality. The conditions you picture must be capable of attainment. Moreover, they **must be vivid**. Let your listeners actually see themselves enjoying the advantages, or suffering the consequences, you describe. Now that your audience is convinced your plan is beneficial, they should be motivated to take action NOW.

### The Action Step

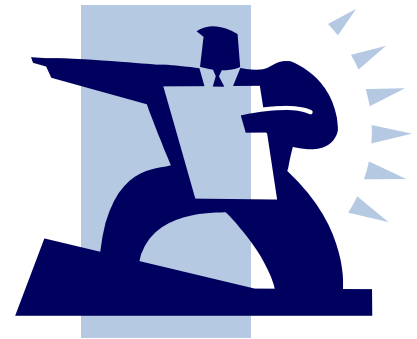
The function of the action step is to translate the desire created in the Visualization Step into overt action. Make a call for action. Tell your audience exactly what you want them to do NOW and exactly how to do it. For example: Tell them where to go today on campus to donate blood. Give them the address of the state representative that they can write to (better yet, give them stamped, addressed envelopes to the representative and maybe even a form letter they can sign). Give them all the information they need to sign up for the CPR class offered next week at the Red Cross. You have done the leg work and you are making it easy for your audience to take IMMEDIATE ACTION. This step can take the form of one or more of the following devices:

- A challenge or appeal
- A summary is always expected of your audience
- A quotation
- An illustration
- A statement of personal intentions

You must conclude with a final stirring appeal that reinforces your audience's commitment to ACT NOW. Beware, however, of making the action step too long or involved. You are trying to make this easy for your audience to do RIGHT NOW.

The Motivated Sequence Pattern is very effective for presentations that seek immediate action. The sequence follows the process of human thinking and leads the listener step by step to the desired action.

*(Adapted from The Art of Public Speaking, S.E. Lucas and Principles and Types of Speech Communication, D. Ehninger, A. H. Monroe, and B.E. Ronbeck.)*



## Quick Tips for Effective PowerPoint Presentations, continued

To test the font, stand back six feet from the monitor and see if you can read the slide.

### Graphics and Design

- Keep the background consistent and subtle.
- Clearly label the graphic.
- Keep the design clean and uncluttered. Leave empty space around the text and graphics.
- Use quality clipart and use it sparingly. The graphic should relate to and enhance the topic of the slide.
- Limit the number of graphics on each slide (no more than 2 per slide).
- Check all graphics on a projection screen before the actual presentation.
- Limit the number of transitions used. It is often better to use only one so the audience knows what to expect.
- Graphics should enhance and complement the text, not overwhelm.
- Use design templates.

### Color

- Limit the number of colors on a single screen.
- Bright colors make small objects and thin lines stand out; however, some vibrant colors are difficult to read when projected.
- If using a chart, limit colors to four.
- Check all colors on a projection screen before the actual presentation. They may project differently from what appears on the monitor.

### General Presentation

- Plan carefully.
- Know your audience.
- Time your presentation.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Check spelling and grammar.
- Do not read the presentation. Practice the presentation so you can speak and elaborate from bullet points. The text should be a cue for the presenter rather than the whole message for the audience.

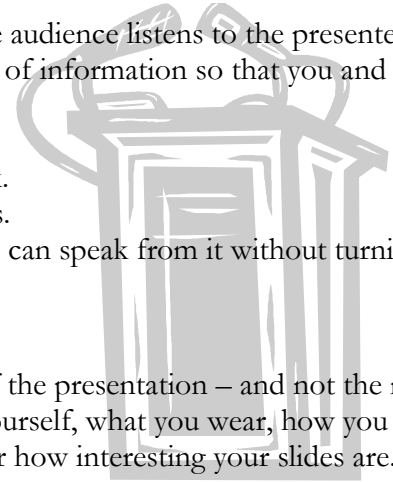


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## Quick Tips for Effective PowerPoint Presentations, continued

- It is often more effective to have bulleted points appear one at a time so the audience listens to the presenter rather than reading the screen. Your role as presenter is to control the flow of information so that you and your audience stay in sync.
- Use a wireless mouse or remote so you can move around as you speak.
- If sound effects are used, wait until the sound has finished before you speak.
- If the content is complex, print out the slides so the audience can take notes.
- Do not turn your back on the audience. Try to position the monitor so you can speak from it without turning away from the audience.
- Limit the information on slides to essentials.

Think beyond the screen. Remember, the slides on the screen are only **part** of the presentation – and not the main part. Give some thought to your own presentation manner – how you hold yourself, what you wear, how you move around the room. **You** are the focus when you are presenting, no matter how interesting your slides are.



### **Resources**

#### ***Websites:***

[www.communispond.com](http://www.communispond.com)

[www.microsoft.com/atwork/skills/presentations.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/skills/presentations.aspx)

[www.stresscure.com/jobstress/speak.html](http://www.stresscure.com/jobstress/speak.html)

[www.speaking-tips.com/Articles.aspx](http://www.speaking-tips.com/Articles.aspx)

#### ***Books:***

“[I Can See You Naked](#),” by Ron Hoff

[Made to Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die](#),  
by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

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