**How to give a GOOD Presentation: Tips and Suggestions**

**By: Dhruv J. Parikh**

To give good presentations, you have to find a topic and be able to talk about it for a few minutes.  Most *teachers or instructors have guidelines* that tell you how to present and what to present about, so be very careful and follow what your teacher says.  The following **Tips and Suggestions** are general suggestions that can help you get a good mark for your presentation.

In your presentation you have to fulfill at least one of the following four (4) objectives:

1. **To Inform**
	* When you inform you are **sharing knowledge**. Talk only about the data that is relevant (necessary) to the audiences’ needs. Too much information is boring.
2. **To Entertain**
	* Avoid jokes as **Personal anecdotes** (stories) are the most sincere way to win an audience. Always relate your humor directly to your presentation topic. Focus on energizing the audience in the first couple of minutes then get to the “meat” (body).
3. **To Touch Emotions**
	* Do not depress your listeners. **Never criticize** without offering constructive solutions. Offer ideas improve the situation.
4. **Move to Action**
	* What is the one thing you want the audience to do in reaction to your speech? **Be specific and direct**! You have to request a commitment.

**Tips for a Good Presentation:**

***Introduction:***

* When introducing your topic, **smile and look at the audience**, do not look down in fear.
* **Start slowly**, with your shoulders back and chin up and **then gradually speed up**.
* Use a **genuine opening** like: “I am glad to be here today”; “I am happy to be talking to you about …”; “I am delighted to share with you…”
* Recognize that **you are the expert** on the topic you are talking about.
* **Always Smile** and tell yourself how good you feel.
* **Dress nicely** in professional looking clothes.

***Voice:***

* **Be Heard**  Make sure your audience can hear you, so **practice projecting your voice** as there is *no excuse for not being loud enough*.
* **Air Intake**  Effective air intake (*breathe*) and appropriate pauses during your talk will help you **control the volume** of your voice.
* **Vary your voice**  Periodically **change your speed, pitch and volume** and *do not mumble in a monotone* (one tone). If you blank out, forget a word or choke, just smile! The audience will assume you know what you are doing.
* **How to improve your voice**  Learn to **listen to yourself talk** so you can control your voice more easily because you are conscious of how you sound before you speak.
* **Fluency**  **Avoid saying words when you stop**, such as: “Um”, “Er”, “Like”, and “Totally”.

***Body Language:***

       **Smile**  This is very important as your **positive attitude** rubs off on the audience.

       **Eye Contact**  This **builds trust** with the audience, so look at them and the instructor.

       **Gestures**  This means **speaking with your hands**. Try to make sure gestures are smooth and natural and do not use too many.

       **Keep your hands out of your pockets**  Keep them visible and feel comfortable using them.

       **Shoulders**  Can help convey confidence if straight, but if bent they can also make you appear tense and nervous.  So, **keep your shoulders straight**!

***Visual Aids:***

      Not necessary in all presentations, but if they are, follow these rules:

* + **Keep them simple**  Put the **main points** on them only.
	+ **Minimize words**  The audience wants to hear your presentation, not read the paper.
	+ **Use large fonts**  Large fonts will let the back row of students see the presentation.
	+ **List key points**  Makes them easier to remember.
	+ **Use color**  The audience pays attention when they have to watch colorful images
	+ **Prepare Handouts**  This **helps the audience remember your topic** the next day, something they will thank you for, if they have to write a test or an exam.

**What Not to do in a Presentation:**

         Don’t talk to your audience in a manner that creates unnecessary distance.

         Don’t talk down to them by using sophisticated words, foreign expressions or obscure quotations, unless you are sure they will appreciate them.  So no big, fancy words to sound smart! (You don’t need them)

         Don’t come across as arrogant (proud) in your knowledge of your subject and its terminology; communicate to listeners in words they can understand.

**Things to avoid:**

       Do not make excuses or comments about the fact that you have never presented before.

       Never speak if you do not know what to say.  Remember that you are the expert!

       Learn how to control the use of  “You know”

       Saying nothing is better than saying “Uh…uhhh….ummm”

***Final Tips:***

1. **Know your subject and your topic**  Do your **research** before beginning the presentation.
2. **Rehearse**  Usually the best place to do this **in front of your mirror**, because you can see your body language during the presentation.
3. **Maintain eye contact**  Do this not only with the instructor, but **with everyone**, in the audience.
4. **Remain Calm**  Try to get a good night’s sleep before the presentation, and remember to breathe deeply if you feel upset during the presentation.
5. **Smile**  Smile at the audience until your cheeks hurt, this helps you feel confident and relaxed.
6. **Keep time for questions**  Try to think of sample questions about your topic and come up with answers for them.

## Introduction

Presentations and reports are ways of communicating ideas and information to a group. But unlike a report, a presentation carries the speaker's personality better and allows immediate interaction between all the participants. A good presentation has:

* [**Content**](http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/learning/artifacts.html) - It contains information that people need. But unlike reports, which are read at the reader's own pace, presentations must account for how much information the audience can absorb in one sitting.
* [**Structure**](http://nwlink.com/~donclark/knowledge/information.html) - It has a logical beginning, middle, and end. It must be sequenced and paced so that the audience can understand it. Where as reports have appendices and footnotes to guide the reader, the speaker must be careful not to loose the audience when wandering from the main point of the presentation.
* **Packaging** - It must be well prepared. A report can be reread and portions skipped over, but with a presentation, the audience is at the mercy of a presenter.
* **Human Element** - A good presentation will be remembered much more than a good report because it has a person attached to it. But you still need to analyze if the audience's needs would not be better met if a report was sent instead.

## http://www.nwlink.com/%7Edonclark/leader/ahold/reports.jpgThe Voice

The voice is probably the most valuable tool of the presenter. It carries most of the content that the audience takes away. One of the oddities of speech is that we can easily tell others what is wrong with their voice, e.g. too fast, too high, too soft, etc., but we have trouble listening to and changing our own voices.

There are four main terms used for defining vocal qualities:

* **Volume**: How loud the sound is. The goal is to be heard without shouting. Good speakers lower their voice to draw the audience in, and raise it to make a point.
* **Tone**: The characteristics of a sound. An airplane has a different sound than leaves being rustled by the wind. A voice that carries fear can frighten the audience, while a voice that carries laughter can get the audience to smile.
* **Pitch**: How high or low a note is. Pee Wee Herman has a high voice, Barbara Walters has a moderate voice, while James Earl Jones has a low voice.
* **Pace**: This is how long a sound lasts. Talking too fast causes the words and syllables to be short, while talking slowly lengthens them. Varying the pace helps to maintain the audience's interest.
* **Color**: Both projection and tone variance can be practiced by taking the line "This new policy is going to be exciting" and saying it first with surprise, then with irony, then with grief, and finally with anger. The key is to *over-act*. Remember Shakespeare's words "*All the world's a stage*" -- presentations are the opening night on Broadway!

There are two good methods for improving your voice:

1. Listen to it! Practice listening to your voice while at home, driving, walking, etc. Then when you are at work or with company, monitor your voice to see if you are using it how you want to.

2. To really listen to your voice, cup your right hand around your right ear and gently pull the ear forward. Next, cup your left hand around your mouth and direct the sound straight into your ear. This helps you to really hear your voice as others hear it...and it might be completely different from the voice you thought it was! Now practice moderating your voice.

## The Body

Your body communicates different impressions to the audience. People not only listen to you, they also watch you. Slouching tells them you are indifferent or you do not care...even though you might care a great deal! On the other hand, displaying good posture tells your audience that you know what you are doing and you care deeply about it. Also, a good posture helps you to speak more clearly and effective.



Throughout you presentation, display:

* **Eye contact**: This helps to regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. Speakers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.
* **Facial Expressions**: Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. So, if you smile frequently you will be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm, and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and others will react favorably. They will be more comfortable around you and will want to listen to you more.
* **Gestures**: If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring and stiff. A lively speaking style captures attention, makes the material more interesting, and facilitates understanding.
* **Posture and body orientation**: You communicate numerous messages by the way you talk and move. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates that you are approachable, receptive, and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when you and your audience face each other. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest.
* **Proximity**: Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading other's space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping, and gaze aversion. Typically, in large rooms, space invasion is not a problem. In most instances there is too much distance. To counteract this, move around the room to increase interaction with your audience. Increasing the proximity enables you to make better eye contact and increases the opportunities for others to speak.
* **Voice**. One of the major criticisms of speakers is that they speak in a monotone voice. Listeners perceive this type of speaker as boring and dull. People report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to those who have not learned to modulate their voices.

## Active Listening

Good speakers not only inform their audience, they also listen to them. By listening, you know if they are understanding the information and if the information is important to them. **Active listening** is NOT the same as hearing! Hearing is the first part and consists of the perception of sound.

Listening, the second part, involves an attachment of meaning to the aural symbols that are perceived. Passive listening occurs when the receiver has little motivation to listen carefully. Active listening with a purpose is used to gain information, to determine how another person feels, and to understand others. Some good traits of effective listeners are:

* Spend more time listening than talking (but of course, as a presenter, you will be doing most of the talking).
* Do not finish the sentence of others.
* Do not answer questions with questions.
* Aware of biases. We all have them. We need to control them.
* Never daydream or become preoccupied with their own thoughts when others talk.
* Let the other speaker talk. Do not dominate the conversation.
* Plan responses after others have finished speaking...NOT while they are speaking. Their full concentration is on what others are saying, not on what they are going to respond with.
* Provide feedback but do not interrupt incessantly.
* Analyze by looking at all the relevant factors and asking open-ended questions. Walk the person through analysis (summarize).
* Keep the conversation on what the speaker says...NOT on what interest them.

Listening can be one of our most **powerful** [communication](http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadcom.html) tools! Be sure to use it!

Part of the listening process is getting feedback by changing and altering the message so the intention of the original communicator is understood by the second communicator. This is done by paraphrasing the words of the sender and restating the sender's feelings or ideas in your own words, rather than repeating their words. Your words should be saying, "This is what I understand your feelings to be, am I correct?" It not only includes verbal responses, but also nonverbal ones. Nodding your head or squeezing their hand to show agreement, dipping your eyebrows to show you don't quite understand the meaning of their last phrase, or sucking air in deeply and blowing out hard shows that you are also exasperated with the situation.

[Carl Roger](http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/history/rogers.html) listed five main categories of feedback. They are listed in the order in which they occur most frequently in daily conversations (notice that we make judgments more often than we try to understand):

1. **Evaluative:** Makes a judgment about the worth, goodness, or appropriateness of the other person's statement.
2. **Interpretive:** Paraphrasing - attempt to explain what the other persons statement mean.
3. **Supportive:** Attempt to assist or bolster the other communicator
4. **Probing:** Attempt to gain additional information, continue the discussion, or clarify a point.
5. **Understanding:** Attempt to discover completely what the other communicator means by her statements.

## Nerves

The main enemy of a presenter is tension, which ruins the voice, posture, and spontaneity. The voice becomes higher as the throat tenses. Shoulders tighten up and limits flexibility while the legs start to shake and causes unsteadiness. The presentation becomes "canned" as the speaker locks in on the notes and starts to read directly from them. 

First, **do not fight nerves, welcome them!** Then you can get on with the presentation instead of focusing in on being nervous. Actors recognize the value of nerves...they add to the value of the performance. This is because adrenaline starts to kick in. It's a left over from our ancestors' "fight or flight" syndrome. If you welcome nerves, then the presentation becomes a challenge and you become better. If you let your nerves take over, then you go into the flight mode by withdrawing from the audience. Again, welcome your nerves, recognize them, let them help you gain that needed edge! Do not go into the flight mode! When you feel tension or anxiety, remember that everyone gets them, but the winners use them to their advantage, while the losers get overwhelmed by them.

Tension can be reduced by performing some relaxation exercises. Listed below are a couple to get you started:

* Before the presentation: Lie on the floor. Your back should be flat on the floor. Pull your feet towards you so that your knees are up in the air. Relax. Close your eyes. Fell your back spreading out and supporting your weight. Feel your neck lengthening. Work your way through your body, relaxing one section at a time - your toes, feet, legs, torso, etc. When finished, stand up slowly and try to maintain the relaxed feeling in a standing position.
* If you cannot lie down: Stand with you feet about 6 inches apart, arms hanging by your sides, and fingers unclenched. Gently shake each part of your body, starting with your hands, then arms, shoulders, torso, and legs. Concentrate on shaking out the tension. Then slowly rotate your shoulders forwards and the backwards. Move on to your head. Rotate it slowly clockwise, and then counter-clockwise.
* Mental Visualization: Before the presentation, visualize the room, audience, and you giving the presentation. Mentally go over what you are going to do from the moment you start to the end of the presentation.
* During the presentation: Take a moment to yourself by getting a drink of water, take a deep breath, concentrate on relaxing the most tense part of your body, and then return to the presentation saying to your self, **"I can do it!"**
* You do NOT need to get rid of anxiety and tension! Channel the energy into concentration and expressiveness.
* Know that anxiety and tension is not as noticeable to the audience as it is to you.
* Know that even the best presenters make mistakes. The key is to continue on after the mistake. If you pick up and continue, so will the audience. Winners continue! Losers stop!
* Never drink alcohol to reduce tension! It affects not only your coordination but also your awareness of coordination. You might not realize it, but your audience will!

## Questions

#### Keep cool if a questioner disagrees with you. You are a professional! No matter how hard you try, not everyone in the world will agree with you!

Although some people get a perverse pleasure from putting others on the spot, and some try to look good in front of the boss, most people ask questions from a genuine interest. Questions do not mean you did not explain the topic good enough, but that their interest is deeper than the average audience.

Always allow time at the end of the presentation for questions. After inviting questions, do not rush ahead if no one asks a question. Pause for about 6 seconds to allow the audience to gather their thoughts. When a question is asked, repeat the question to ensure that everyone heard it (and that you heard it correctly). When answering, direct your remarks to the entire audience. That way, you keep everyone focused, not just the questioner. To reinforce your presentation, try to relate the question back to the main points.

Make sure you listen to the question being asked. If you do not understand it, ask them to clarify. Pause to think about the question as the answer you give may be correct, but ignore the main issue. If you do not know the answer, be honest, do not waffle. Tell them you will get back to them...and make sure you do!

Answers that last 10 to 40 seconds work best. If they are too short, they seem abrupt; while longer answers appear too elaborate. Also, be sure to keep on track. Do not let off-the-wall questions sidetrack you into areas that are not relevant to the presentation.

If someone takes issue with something you said, try to find a way to agree with part of their argument. For example, "Yes, I understand your position..." or "I'm glad you raised that point, but..." The idea is to praise their point and agree with them. Audiences sometimes tend to think of "us verses you." You do not want to risk alienating them.

## Preparing the Presentation

#### After a concert, a fan rushed up to famed violinist [Fritz Kreisler](http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/default.asp?pn=Composers&char=K&ComposerID=570) and gushed, "I'd give up my whole life to play as beautifully as you do." Kreisler replied, "I did."

#### To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail.

Great presentations require some preplanning. First, read [Meetings](http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadmet.html) for an outline of preparing and conducting a meeting, such as acquiring a room, informing participants, etc. A presentation follows the same basic guidelines as preparing for a meeting.

The second step is to prepare the presentation. A good presentation starts out with introductions and an icebreaker such as a story, interesting statement or fact, joke, quotation, or an activity to get the group warmed up. The introduction also needs an objective, that is, the purpose or goal of the presentation. This not only tells you what you will talk about, but it also informs the audience of the purpose of the presentation.

Next, comes the body of the presentation. Do NOT write it out word for word. All you want is an outline. By jotting down the main points on a set of index cards, you not only have your outline, but also a memory jogger for the actual presentation. To prepare the presentation, ask yourself the following:

* What is the purpose of the presentation?
* Who will be attending?
* What does the audience already know about the subject?
* What is the audience's attitude towards me (e.g. hostile, friendly)?

A 45 minutes talk should have no more than about seven main points. This may not seem like very many, but if you are to leave the audience with a clear picture of what you have said, you cannot expect them to remember much more than that. There are several options for [structuring](http://nwlink.com/~donclark/knowledge/information.html) the presentation:

* **Timeline**: Arranged in sequential order.
* **Climax**: The main points are delivered in order of increasing importance.
* **Problem/Solution**: A problem is presented, a solution is suggested, and benefits are then given.
* **Classification**: The important items are the major points.
* **Simple to complex**: Ideas are listed from the simplest to the most complex. Can also be done in reverse order.

You want to include some visual information that will help the audience understand your presentation. Develop charts, graphs, slides, handouts, etc.

After the body, comes the closing. This is where you ask for questions, provide a wrap-up (summary), and thank the participants for attending.

Notice that you told them what they are about to hear (the objective), told them (the body), and told them what they heard (the wrap up).

And finally, the important part - practice, practice, practice. The main purpose of creating an outline is to develop a coherent plan of what you want to talk about. You should know your presentation so well, that during the actual presentation, you should only have to briefly glance at your notes to ensure you are staying on track. This will also help you with your nerves by giving you the confidence that you can do it. Your practice session should include a "live" session by practicing in front of coworkers, family, or friends. They can be valuable at providing feedback and it gives you a chance to practice controlling your nerves. Another great feedback technique is to make a video or audio tape of your presentation and review it critically with a colleague.

## Habits

We all have a few habits, and some are more annoying than others. For example, if we say "uh," "you know," or put our hands in our pockets and jingle our keys too often during a presentation, it distracts from the message we are trying to get across.

The best way to break one of these distracting habits is with immediate feedback. This can be done with a small group of coworkers, family, or friends. Take turns giving small off-the-cuff talks about your favorite hobby, work project, first work assignment, etc. The talk should last about five minutes. During a speaker's first talk, the audience should listen and watch for annoying habits.

After the presentation, the audience should agree on the worst two or three habits that take the most away from the presentation. After agreement, each audience member should write these habits on a 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper (such as the word "Uh"). Use a magic marker and write in BIG letters.

The next time the person gives her or his talk, each audience member should wave the corresponding sign in the air whenever they hear or see the annoying habit. For most people, this method will break a habit by practicing at least once a day for one to two weeks.

## Tips and Techniques For Great Presentations

#### Eleanor Roosevelt was a shy young girl who was terrified at the thought of speaking in public. But with each passing year, she grew in confidence and self-esteem. She once said, "No one can make you feel inferior, unless you agree with it."

* If you have handouts, do not read straight from them. The audience does not know if they should read along with you or listen to you read.
* Do not put both hands in your pockets for long periods of time. This tends to make you look unprofessional. It is OK to put one hand in a pocket but ensure there is no loose change or keys to jingle around. This will distract the listeners.
* Do not wave a pointer around in the air like a wild knight branding a sword to slay a dragon. Use the pointer for what it is intended and then put it down, otherwise the audience will become fixated upon your "sword", instead upon you.
* Do not lean on the podium for long periods. The audience will begin to wonder when you are going to fall over.
* Speak to the audience...NOT to the visual aids, such as flip charts or overheads. Also, do not stand between the visual aid and the audience.
* Speak clearly and loudly enough for all to hear. Do not speak in a monotone voice. Use inflection to emphasize your main points.
* The disadvantages of presentations is that people cannot see the punctuation and this can lead to misunderstandings. An effective way of overcoming this problem is to pause at the time when there would normally be punctuation marks.
* Use colored backgrounds on overhead transparencies and slides (such as yellow) as the bright white light can be harsh on the eyes. This will quickly cause your audience to tire. If all of your transparencies or slides have clear backgrounds, then tape one blank yellow one on the overhead face. For slides, use a rubber band to hold a piece of colored cellophane over the projector lens.
* Learn the name of each participant as quickly as possible. Based upon the atmosphere you want to create, call them by their first names or by using Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.
* Tell them what name and title you prefer to be called.
* Listen intently to comments and opinions. By using a *lateral thinking technique* (adding to ideas rather than dismissing them), the audience will feel that their ideas, comments, and opinions are worthwhile.
* Circulate around the room as you speak. This movement creates a physical closeness to the audience.
* List and discuss your objectives at the beginning of the presentation. Let the audience know how your presentation fits in with their goals. Discuss some of the fears and apprehensions that both you and the audience might have. Tell them what they should expect of you and how you will contribute to their goals.
* Vary your techniques (lecture, discussion, debate, films, slides, reading, etc.)
* Get to the presentation before your audience arrives; be the last one to leave.
* Be prepared to use an alternate approach if the one you've chosen seems to bog down. You should be confident enough with your own material so that the audience's interests and concerns, not the presentation outline, determines the format. Use your background, experience, and knowledge to interrelate your subject matter.
* When writing on flip charts use no more than 7 lines of text per page and no more than 7 word per line (the 7 7 rule). Also, use bright and bold colors, and pictures as well as text.
* Consider the time of day and how long you have got for your talk. Time of day can affect the audience. After lunch is known as the graveyard section in training circles as audiences will feel more like a nap than listening to a talk.
* Most people find that if they practice in their head, the actual talk will take about 25 per cent longer. Using a flip chart or other visual aids also adds to the time. Remember - **it is better to finish slightly early than to overrun.**

he material of your presentation should be concise, to the point and tell an interesting story. In addition to the obvious things like content and visual aids, the following are just as important as the audience will be subconsciously taking them in:

* **Your voice** - *how* you say it is as important as *what* you say
* **Body language** - a subject in its own right and something about which much has been written and said. In essence, your body movements express what your attitudes and thoughts *really* are. You might like to [check out this web page](http://www.rider.edu/users/suler/bodylang.html)
* **Appearance** - first impressions influence the audience's attitudes to you. Dress appropriately for the occasion.

As with most personal skills **oral communication cannot be taught**. Instructors can only point the way. So as always, ***practice is essential***, both to improve your skills generally and also to make the best of each individual presentation you make.

### Preparation

Prepare the structure of the talk carefully and logically, just as you would for a written report. What are:

* the objectives of the talk?
* the main points you want to make?

Make a list of these two things as your starting point

Write out the presentation in rough, just like a first draft of a written report. Review the draft. You will find things that are irrelevant or superfluous - delete them. Check the story is consistent and flows smoothly. If there are things you cannot easily express, possibly because of doubt about your understanding, it is better to leave them unsaid.

**Never** read from a script. It is also unwise to have the talk written out in detail as a prompt sheet - the chances are you will not locate the thing you want to say amongst all the other text. You should know most of what you want to say - if you don't then you should not be giving the talk! So prepare ***cue cards*** which have key words and phrases (and possibly sketches) on them. Postcards are ideal for this. **Don't forget to number the cards** in case you drop them.

Remember to mark on your cards the visual aids that go with them so that the right OHP or slide is shown at the right time

Rehearse your presentation - to yourself at first and then in front of some colleagues. The initial rehearsal should consider how the words and the sequence of visual aids go together. How will you make effective use of your visual aids?

### Making the presentation

Greet the audience (for example, 'Good morning, ladies and gentlemen'), and tell them who you are. Good presentations then follow this formula:

* tell the audience what you are going to tell them,
* then tell them,
* at the end tell them what you have told them.

Keep to the time allowed. If you can, keep it short. It's better to under-run than over-run. As a rule of thumb, allow 2 minutes for each *general* overhead transparency or Powerpoint slide you use, but longer for any that you want to use for developing specific points. 35mm slides are generally used more sparingly and stay on the screen longer. However, the audience will get bored with something on the screen for more than 5 minutes, especially if you are not actively talking about it. So switch the display off, or replace the slide with some form of 'wallpaper' such as a company logo.

Stick to the plan for the presentation, don't be tempted to digress - you will eat up time and could end up in a dead-end with no escape!

Unless explicitly told not to, leave time for discussion - 5 minutes is sufficient to allow clarification of points. The session chairman may extend this if the questioning becomes interesting.

At the end of your presentation ask if there are any questions - avoid being terse when you do this as the audience may find it intimidating (ie it may come across as *any questions? - if there are, it shows you were not paying attention).* If questions are slow in coming, you can start things off by asking a question of the audience - so have one prepared.

### Delivery

Speak clearly. Don't shout or whisper - judge the acoustics of the room.

Don't rush, or talk deliberately slowly. Be natural - although not conversational.

Deliberately pause at key points - this has the effect of emphasising the importance of a particular point you are making.

Avoid jokes - always disastrous unless you are a natural expert

To make the presentation interesting, change your delivery, but not to obviously, eg:

* speed
* pitch of voice

Use your hands to emphasise points but don't indulge in to much hand waving. People can, over time, develop irritating habits. Ask colleagues occasionally what they think of your style.

Look at the audience as much as possible, but don't fix on an individual - it can be intimidating. Pitch your presentation towards the back of the audience, especially in larger rooms.

Don't face the display screen behind you and talk to it. Other annoying habits include:

* Standing in a position where you obscure the screen. In fact, positively check for anyone in the audience who may be disadvantaged and try to accommodate them.
* Muttering over a transparency on the OHP projector plate an not realising that you are blocking the projection of the image. It is preferable to point to the screen than the foil on the OHP (apart from the fact that you will probably dazzle yourself with the brightness of the projector)

Avoid moving about too much. Pacing up and down can unnerve the audience, although some animation is desirable.

Keep an eye on the **audience's** body language. Know when to stop and also when to cut out a piece of the presentation.

### Visual Aids

Visual aids significantly improve the interest of a presentation. However, they must be relevant to what you want to say. A careless design or use of a slide can simply get in the way of the presentation. What you use depends on the type of talk you are giving. Here are some possibilities:

* Overhead projection transparencies (OHPs)
* 35mm slides
* Computer projection (Powerpoint, applications such as Excel, etc)
* Video, and film,
* Real objects - either handled from the speaker's bench or passed around
* Flip~chart or blackboard - possibly used as a 'scratch-pad' to expand on a point

Keep it simple though - a complex set of hardware can result in confusion for speaker and audience. Make sure you know in advance how to operate the equipment and also when you want particular displays to appear. Sometimes a technician will operate the equipment. Arrange beforehand, what is to happen and when and what signals you will use. Edit your slides as carefully as your talk - if a slide is superfluous then leave it out. If you need to use a slide twice, duplicate it. And always check your slides - for typographical errors, consistency of fonts and layout.

Slides and OHPs should contain the minimum information necessary. To do otherwise risks making the slide unreadable or will divert your audience's attention so that they spend time reading the slide rather than listening to you.

Try to limit words per slide to a maximum of 10. Use a reasonable size font and a typeface which will enlarge well. Typically use a minimum 18pt Times Roman on OHPs, and preferably larger. A guideline is: if you can read the OHP from a distance of 2 metres (without projection) then it's probably OK

Avoid using a diagram prepared for a technical report in your talk. It will be too detailed and difficult to read.

Use colour on your slides but avoid orange and yellow which do not show up very well when projected. For text only, white or yellow on blue is pleasant to look at and easy to read. Books on presentation techniques often have quite detailed advice on the design of slides. If possible consult an expert such as the Audio Visual Centre

Avoid adding to OHPs with a pen during the talk - it's messy and the audience will be fascinated by your shaking hand! On this point, this is another good reason for pointing to the screen when explaining a slide rather than pointing to the OHP transparency.

Room lighting should be considered. Too much light near the screen will make it difficult to see the detail. On the other hand, a completely darkened room can send the audience to sleep. Try to avoid having to keep switching lights on and off, but if you do have to do this, know where the light switches are and how to use them.

### Finally ...,

Enjoy yourself. The audience will be on your side and want to hear what you have to say!

The Rule of Three **- We remember three things.**

The rule of three is one of the oldest in the book - Aristotle wrote about it in his book Rhetoric. Put simply it is that people tend to easily remember three things.

Remember as a kid when your mum sent you down to the shop to buy a number of things. But when you got to the shop all you could remember were three things. This is the rule of three

Odds are that people will only remember three things from your presentation

What will they be?

1. The audience are likely to remember only three things from your presentation - plan in advance what these will be.

Believe it or not, the chances are, people will only remember three things from your presentation. So before you start writing your presentation, plan what your three key messages will be. Once you have these messages, structure the main part of your presentation around these three key themes and look at how they could be better illustrated.

2. There are three parts to your presentation

The beginning, the middle and the end. Start to plan out what you will do in these three parts. The beginning is ideal for an attention grabber or for an ice breaker. The end is great to wrap things up or to end with a grand finale.

3. Use lists of three wherever you can in your presentation

Lists of three have been used from early times up to the present day. They are particularly used by politicians and advertisers who know the value of using the rule of three to sell their ideas.

**Veni, Vidi, Vici** (I came, I saw, I conquered) - Julius Caesar\*\*
**"Friends, Romans, Countrymen** lend me your ears" - William Shakespeare
"Our priorities are **Education, Education, Education**" - Tony Blair
A Mars a day helps you to **work, rest and play** - Advertising slogan
**Stop, look and listen** - Public safety announcement

A classic example of the rule of three was Winston Churchill's famous **Blood, Sweat and Tears** speech. He is widely attributed as saying I can promise you nothing but blood sweat and tears. What he actually said was "I can promise you **Blood, Sweat, Toil and Tears**". Because of the rule of three we simply remember it as Blood sweat and tears.

There are lots of other examples of the [rule of three](http://www.presentationhelper.co.uk/rule_of_three.htm) on this link

4. In Presentations "Less is More"

If you have four points to get across - cut one out. They won't remember it anyway. In presentations less really is more. No one ever complained of a presentation being too short.

**Presentation Essentials**

Three Presentation Essentials

Use visual aids where you can

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse

The audience will only remember three messages

So there you have the presentation essentials. I suggest that you print out this little box and stick it in your work book for future reference.

So does it all work? Well it works most of the time - but don't take my word for it Read these **three** posts on the Forum and make up your own mind....

["Got the job"](http://www.presentationhelper.co.uk/Forum/showthread.php?t=185I)[I Blew their socks off!!](http://www.presentationhelper.co.uk/Forum/showthread.php?t=47)
[Images in presentations](http://www.presentationhelper.co.uk/Forum/showthread.php?t=536)

Good luck and happy presenting.

**The Corporate Program**

**The Process**

The Corporate Program is highly participative with each attendee giving several types of "real world" presentations. Videotape and individual critique are used after each presentation. Positive aspects of each presentation are reinforced and options are given for turning negatives into positives.

**Duration and number of participants**

The length of the program is **One Day** and the number of **participants in each program is 6 to 8**

**Topics Covered**

1. Presenting a Positive Image
2. Controlling Nervousness
3. Understanding Your Listener
4. Organizing Content
5. Eliminating Monotone and Boredom
6. Controlling Question and Answer Sessions
7. Eliminating "Overkill"
8. Effective Use of Visual Aids
9. Obtaining Approval and Action

**Who should Attend**

1. Financial Executives who present materials to others
2. Account Representatives
3. Sales Representatives
4. Public Relations Specialists
5. Instructors
6. **Any Subject Matter Experts who present to others**

**The Investment**

The **investment** for the program (with 6 to 8 participants in each program) is **$3900** per program. (Obviously this means that assuming you enroll 8 participants in your program, the cost breaks down to only $488 per person!)

|  |
| --- |
| **The Guarantee**  |
| Upon completion of the program, each participant will be given an evaluation sheet containing two key questions:1. Do you feel that your time in the program was well spent? \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No2. Would you recommend this workshop to others? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_NoIf both questions are not answered "Yes!" by every participant in the workshop - then no invoice will be sent for the program. That's right - if even one participant in a program does not feel that the time was well spent or would not recommend the workshop to others - then no invoice will be sent for the program! (**Note:** This has never happened - and we've been in business since 1984!) (eg.) |