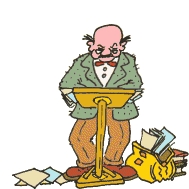
**TIPS ON MAKING PRESENTATIONS**

*If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough*

Albert Einstein

As part of an extended interview/selection centre you may be asked to give a short presentation. Usually you choose the topic from a list which may include**your hobbies, a recent holiday, a current affairs topic or one of your achievements**, or sometimes you may be asked to make a presentation on a case study you have previously done as part of the extended interview. The purpose is not to test your subject knowledge, but to see how well you can speak in public. **Typically you will be asked to talk for five minutes**, and will be given 20 or 30 minutes beforehand to prepare.

**BASIC TIPS**

* **Dress smartly**: don't let your appearance distract from what you are saying.
* **Smile.** Don't hunch up and shuffle your feet. Have an upright posture. Try to appear confident and enthusiastic.
* **Say hello and smile when you greet the audience**: your audience will probably look at you and smile back: an instinctive reaction.
* **Speak clearly,**firmly and confidently as this makes you sound in control. Don't speak **too quickly:**you are likely to speed up and raise the pitch of your voice when nervous. Give the audience time to absorb each point. Don't talk in a monotone the whole time. Lift your head up and address your words to someone near the back of audience. If you think people at the back can't hear, ask them.
* **Use silence** to emphasise points**.** Before you make a key point pause: this tells the audience that something important is coming. It's also the hallmark of a confident speaker as only these are happy with silences. Nervous speakers tend to gabble on trying to fill every little gap.
* **Keep within the allotted time** for your talk.
* **Eye contact is crucial to holding the attention of your audience.**Look at everyone in the audience from time to time, not just at your notes or at the PowerPoint slides. Try to involve everyone, not just those directly in front of you.
* **Walk around a little and gesture with your hands.** Bad presenters keep their hands on the podium or in their pockets! Don't stand in one place glued to the spot hiding behind the podium! Good presenters will walk from side to side and look at different parts of the audience.
* You could try to **involve your audience** by asking them a question.
* Don't read out your talk, as this sounds boring and stilted, but **refer to brief note**s jotted down on small (postcard sized) pieces of card. **Don't look at your notes too much**as this suggests insecurity and will prevent you making eye contact with the audience.
* It’s OK to use **humour**, in moderation, but better to use anecdotes than to rattle off a string of jokes.
* Take along a **wristwatch** to help you keep track of time – the assessor may cut you off as soon as you have used the time allocated, whether or not you have finished.
* It can be very helpful to **practise at home** in front of a mirror. You can also record your presentation and play it back to yourself: don't judge yourself harshly when you replay this - we always notice our bad points and not the good when hearing or seeing a recording or ourselves! Time how long your talk takes. Run through the talk a few times with a friend.
* **It's normal to be a little nervous.**This is a good thing as it will make you more energised. Many people have a fear of speaking in public. Practising will make sure that you are not too anxious. In your mind, visualise yourself giving a confident successful performance. Take a few deep slow breaths before your talk starts and make a conscious effort to speak slowly and clearly. Research by T Gilovich (Cornell University) found that **people who feel embarrassed are convinced their mistakes are much more noticeable than they really are**: we focus on our own behaviour more than other people do and so overestimate it's impact. This is called the spotlight effect. If you make a mistake, don't apologise too much, just briefly acknowledge the mistake and continue on. For more details see ["59 Seconds" by Prof. Richard Wiseman](http://www.amazon.co.uk/59-Seconds-Think-little-change/dp/023074429X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1253607539&sr=8-1)
* **Build variety into the talk** and break it up into sections: apparently, the average person has a three minute attention span!