

## **Presentation Skills**

Presentation skills are the skills you need in delivering effective and engaging presentations to a variety of audiences. These skills cover a variety of areas such as the structure of your presentation, the design of your slides, the tone of your voice and the body language you convey.

### **Planning a Presentation**

Presentations offer important opportunities to put all your communication skills on display, including research, planning, writing, visual design, and interpersonal and nonverbal communication. Presentations also let you demonstrate your ability to think on your feet, grasp complex business issues, and handle challenging situations—all attributes that executives look for when searching for talented employees to promote. Perhaps best of all, oral presentations let your personality shine through in ways that even the best-written reports can't provide.

If the thought of giving a speech or presentation makes you nervous, keep three points in mind. First, everybody gets nervous when speaking in front of groups. Second, being nervous is actually a good thing; it means you care about the topic, your audience, and your career success. Third, with practice, you can convert those nervous feelings into positive energy that helps you give more compelling presentations. You can take control of the situation by using the three-step writing process to prepare for successful presentations.

#### **1. Plan**

##### **Analyze the Situation**

Define your purpose and develop a profile of your audience, including their emotional states and language preferences.

##### **Gather Information**

Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs.

##### **Select the Right Medium**

Choose the best medium or combination of media for delivering your presentation, including handouts and other support materials.

### **Organize the Information**

Define your main idea, limit your scope and verify timing, select a direct or an indirect approach, and outline your content.

## **2. Write**

### **Adapt to Your Audience**

Be sensitive to audience needs and expectations with a “you” attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and bias-free language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company’s image.

Adjust your delivery style to fit the situation, from casual to formal.

### **Compose Your Presentation**

Outline an effective introduction, body, and close. Prepare supporting visuals and speaking notes.

## **3. Complete**

### **Revise the Message**

Evaluate your content and speaking notes.

### **Master Your Delivery**

Choose your delivery mode and practice your presentation.

### **Prepare to Speak**

Verify facilities and equipment, including online connections and software setups. Hire an interpreter if necessary.

### **Overcome Anxiety**

Take steps to feel more confident and appear more confident on stage.

Planning presentations is much like planning any other business message: You analyze the situation, gather information, select the right medium, and organize the information. Gathering information for presentations is essentially the same as for written communication projects.

## Analyzing the Situation

As with written communications, analyzing the situation for a presentation involves defining your purpose and developing an audience profile. The purpose of most of your presentations will be to inform or to persuade, although you may occasionally need to make a collaborative presentation, such as when you're leading a problem-solving or brainstorming session. Given the time limitations of most presentations and the live nature of the event, make sure your purpose is crystal clear so that you make the most of the opportunity and show respect for your listeners' time and attention.

When you develop your audience profile, try to anticipate the likely emotional state of your audience members. You also need to determine whether your audience is comfortable listening to the language you speak. Listening to an unfamiliar language is much more difficult than reading that language, so an audience that might be able to read a written report might not be able to understand a presentation covering the same material.

Also consider the circumstances in which you'll be making your presentation. Will you speak to five people in a conference room where you can control everything from light to sound to temperature? Or will you be demonstrating a product on the floor of a trade show, where you might have from 1 to 100 listeners and little control over the environment? Will everyone be in the same room, or will some or all of your audience participate from remote locations via the Internet? What equipment will you have at your disposal?

For in-person presentations, pay close attention to seating arrangements. The four basic formats have distinct advantages and disadvantages: **Classroom or theater seating**, in which all chairs or desks face forward, helps keep attention focused on the speaker and is usually the best method for accommodating large audiences. However, this arrangement inhibits interaction among audience members, so it is not desirable for brainstorming or other collaborative activities.

- **Conference table seating**, in which people sit along both sides of a long table and the speaker stands at one end, is a common arrangement for smaller meetings. It promotes interaction among attendees, but it tends to isolate the speaker at one end of the room.
- **Horseshoe, or U-shaped, seating**, in which tables are arranged in the shape of a *U*, improves on conference table seating by allowing the speaker to walk between the tables to interact with individual audience members.
- **Café seating**, in which people sit in groups at individual tables, is best for breakout sessions and other small-group activities. However, this arrangement is less than ideal for anything more than short presentations because it places some in the audience with their backs to the speaker, making it awkward for both them and the presenter. If you can't control the seating arrangement, at least be aware of what it is so you can adjust your plans if necessary.

All these variables can influence not only the style of your presentation but the content. For instance, in a public environment full of distractions and uncertainties, you're probably better off keeping your content simple and short because chances are you won't be able to keep everyone's attention for the duration of your presentation.

## **Communicating Across Cultures**

### **Five Tips for Making Presentations around the World**

When speaking to an international audience, keep in mind that members' language fluency might vary widely. So take special care to ensure clear communication:

**1. Speak slowly and distinctly.** The most common complaint of international audiences is that English speakers talk too fast. Articulate every word carefully, emphasize consonants for clarity, and pause frequently.

**2. Repeat key words and phrases.** When audiences are less familiar with your language, they need to hear important information more than once. Also, they may not be familiar with synonyms, so word key points in the same way throughout your presentation.

**3. Aim for clarity.** Keep your message simple. Eliminate complex sentence structure, abbreviations, and acronyms.

Replace two-word verbs with one-word alternatives (such as *review* instead of *look over*). Such verbs are confusing because the definition of each separate word differs from the meaning of the two words combined. Similarly, avoid cultural idioms, such as *once in a blue moon*, which may be unfamiliar to an international audience.

**4. Communicate with body language.** Emphasize and clarify verbal information with gestures and facial expressions. For instance, smile to emphasize positive points and use gestures to illustrate the meaning of words such as *up*, *down*, or *under*.

**5. Support your spoken message with visuals.** Simple, clear visuals, from flip charts to electronic slides, can help you describe your key points. If possible, prepare captions both in English and in your audience's native language.

## Selecting the Best Combination of Media and Channels

For some presentations, you'll be expected to use whatever media and channels your audience, your boss, or the circumstances require. For example, you might be required to use specific presentation software and a conference room's built-in display system or your company's online meeting software.

For other presentations, though, you might have an array of choices, from live, in-person presentations to webcasts (online presentations that people either view live or download later from the web), screen-casts (recordings of activity on computer displays with audio voiceover), or twebinars (the use of Twitter as a *backchannel*).

## Analyzing an Audience for Oral Presentations

### Task 1

#### To determine audience size and composition

#### Actions

- Estimate how many people will attend and whether they will all attend in person, online, or a mix of both.
- Consider whether they share professional interests or other affiliations that can help you establish common ground with them.
- Analyze the mix of men and women, age ranges, socioeconomic and ethnic groups, occupations, and geographic regions represented.

## **Task 2**

### **To predict the audience's probable reaction**

#### **Activity**

- Analyze why audience members are attending the presentation.
- Determine the audience's general attitude toward the topic: interested, moderately interested, unconcerned, open-minded, or hostile.
- Analyze the mood that people will be in when you speak to them.
- Find out what kind of backup information will most impress the audience: technical data, historical information, financial data, demonstrations, samples, and so on.
- Consider whether the audience has any biases that might work against you.
- Anticipate possible objections or questions.

## **Task 3**

### **To gauge the audience's level of understanding**

#### **Action**

- Analyze whether everybody has the same background and experience.
- Determine what the audience already knows about the subject.
- Decide what background information the audience will need to better understand the subject.
- Consider whether the audience is familiar with your vocabulary.
- Analyze what the audience expects from you.

- Think about the mix of general concepts and specific details you will need to present.

## Organizing a Presentation

The possibilities for organizing a business presentation fall into two basic categories: *linear* or *nonlinear*. Linear presentations are like printed documents in the sense that they are outlined like conventional messages and follow a predefined flow from start to finish. The linear model is appropriate for speeches, technical and financial presentations, and other presentations in which you want to convey your message point by point or build up to a conclusion following logical steps.

In contrast, a nonlinear presentation doesn't flow in any particular direction but rather gives the presenter the option to move back and forth between topics and up and down in terms of level of detail. Nonlinear presentations can be useful when you want to be able to show complicated relationships between multiple ideas or elements, to zoom in and out between the "big picture" and specific details, to explore complex visuals, or to have the flexibility to move from topic to topic in any order.

The difference between the two styles can be seen in the type of software typically used to create and deliver a presentation. Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, Google Slides, and similar packages use sequences of individual slides, often referred to as a *slide deck*. They don't necessarily need to be presented in a strict linear order, because the presenter does have the option of jumping out of the predefined order, but in most presentations using slides, the speaker moves from start to finish in that order. Prezi is the best-known nonlinear presentation software and doesn't use the concept of individual slides.

## Defining Your Main idea

Regardless of which overall approach you take, a successful presentation starts with a clear picture of the main idea you want to share with your audience. Start by composing a

one-sentence summary that links your subject and purpose to your audience's frame of reference. Here are some examples:

- Convince management that reorganizing the technical support department will improve customer service and reduce employee turnover.
- Convince the board of directors that we should build a new plant in Texas to eliminate manufacturing bottlenecks and improve production quality.
- Address employee concerns regarding a new health-care plan by showing how the plan will reduce costs and improve the quality of their care.

Each of these statements puts a particular slant on the subject, one that directly relates to the audience's interests. Make sure your purpose is based on a clear understanding of audience needs so that you can deliver information your audience truly cares about.

### **Limiting Your Scope**

Limiting your scope is important with any message, but it's particularly vital with presentations, for two reasons. First, for most presentations, you must work within strict time limits. Second, the longer you speak, the more difficult it is to hold the audience's attention and the more difficult it is for your listeners to retain your key points.

The only sure way to know how much material you can cover in a given time is to practice your presentation after you complete it. As an alternative, if you're using conventional structured slides, you can figure on three or four minutes per slide as a rough guide. Of course, be sure to factor in time for introductions, coffee breaks, demonstrations, question-and-answer sessions, and anything else that takes away from your speaking time.

Approaching time constraints as a creative challenge can actually help you develop more effective presentations. Limitations can force you to focus on the most essential message points that are important to your audience.

### **Choosing Your approach**

With a well-defined main idea to guide you and a clearly defined scope for your presentation, you can begin to arrange your message. If you have 10 minutes or less to



deliver your message, organize your presentation much as you would a brief written message: Use the direct approach if the subject involves routine information or good news; use the indirect approach if the subject involves negative news or persuasion. Plan to spend a minute or two during your introduction to arouse interest and to give a preview of what's to come. For the body of the presentation, be prepared to explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your subject. In the final few moments, review the points you've made and close with a statement that will help your audience remember the subject of your speech.

### **Preparing Your Outline**

A presentation outline helps you organize your message, and it serves as the foundation for delivering your speech. Prepare your outline in several stages:

- State your purpose and main idea and then use these to guide the rest of your planning.
- Organize your major points and sub points in logical order, expressing each major point as a single, complete sentence.
- Identify major points in the body first and then outline the introduction and close.
- Identify transitions between major points or sections and then write these transitions in full-sentence form.
- Prepare your bibliography or source notes; highlight those sources you want to identify by name during your talk.
- Choose a compelling title. Make it brief, action oriented, and focused on what you can do for the audience.

### **Adapting to Your Audience**

Your audience's size, the venue (in person or online), your subject, your purpose, your budget, the time available for preparation, and the time allotted for your talk all influence the style of your presentation. If you're speaking to a small group, particularly people you already know, you can use a casual style that encourages audience participation. Use

simple visuals and invite your audience to interject comments. Deliver your remarks in a conversational tone, using notes to jog your memory if necessary. If you're addressing a large audience or the event is important, establish a more formal atmosphere. During formal presentations, speakers are often on a stage or platform, standing behind a lectern and using a microphone so that their remarks can be heard throughout the room or captured for broadcasting or webcasting.

When you deliver a presentation to people from other cultures, you may need to adapt the content of your presentation. It is also important to take into account any cultural preferences for appearance, mannerisms, and other customs. An interpreter or event host can suggest appropriate changes for a specific audience or particular occasion.

## Developing Your Presentation

Like written documents, presentations comprise distinct elements: the introduction, the body, and the close.

### Presentation Introduction

A good introduction arouses the audience's interest in your topic, establishes your credibility, and prepares the audience for what will follow. That's a lot to pack into the first few minutes of your presentation, so give yourself plenty of time to prepare the words and visuals you'll use to get your presentation off to a great start.

**Arousing Audience Interest** some subjects are naturally more interesting to some audiences than others. If you will be discussing a matter of profound significance that will personally affect the members of your audience, chances are they'll listen, regardless of how you begin. All you really have to do is announce your topic, and you'll have their attention. Here are six ways to arouse audience interest:

- Unite the audience around a common goal. Invite listeners to help solve a problem, otherwise engage in the topic of your presentation.
- Tell a story. Well-told stories are naturally interesting and can be compelling. Of course, make sure your story illustrates an important and relevant point.

- Pass around product samples or other objects. If your company is in the textile business, for example, let the audience handle some of your fabrics. The more of their senses you can engage, the more likely people are to remember your message.
- Ask a question. Asking questions will get the audience actively involved in your presentation and give you information about them and their needs.
- Share a startling statistic. An intriguing, unexpected, or shocking detail can often grab the attention of your listeners.
- Use humor. Opening with an amusing observation about yourself, the subject matter of the presentation, or the circumstances surrounding the presentation can be an effective way to lighten the “pre-presentation jitters” for you and the audience or to make an emotional connection with your listeners. However, humor must be used with great care. Make sure any comments are relevant, appropriate, and not offensive to anyone in the audience. In general, avoid humor when you and the audience don’t share the same native language or culture.

Regardless of which technique you choose, make sure you can give audience members a reason to care and to believe that the time they’re about to spend listening to you will be worthy.

**Building Your Credibility** In addition to grabbing the audience’s attention, your introduction needs to establish your credibility. If you’re a well-known expert in the subject matter or have earned your audience’s trust in other situations, you’re already ahead of the game. If you have no working relationship with your audience or if you’re speaking in an area outside your known expertise, however, you need to establish credibility and do so quickly; people tend to decide within a few minutes whether you’re worth listening to or not.

Techniques for building credibility vary, depending on whether you will be introducing yourself or having someone else introduce you. If another person will introduce you, he or she can present your credentials so that you don’t appear boastful. If you will be introducing yourself, keep your comments simple, but don’t be afraid to mention your relevant experience and accomplishments. Your listeners will be curious

about your qualifications, so tell them briefly who you are and why you're the right person to be giving this presentation.

**Previewing Your Message** In addition to arousing audience interest and establishing your credibility, a good introduction gives your audience members a preview of what's ahead, helping them understand the structure and content of your message. A report reader can learn these things by looking at the table of contents and scanning the headings, but in a presentation you need to provide that framework with a preview. Your preview should summarize the main idea of your presentation, identify major supporting points, and indicate the order in which you'll develop those points. Tell your listeners in so many words, "This is the subject, and these are the points I will cover." Once you've established the framework, you can be confident that the audience will understand how the individual facts and figures are related to your main idea as you move into the body of your presentation. If you are using an indirect approach, your preview can discuss the nature of your main idea without disclosing it.

## **Presentation Body**

The bulk of your speech or presentation is devoted to a discussion of the main supporting points from your outline. Whether you're using the direct or indirect approach, make sure the organization of your presentation is clear and your presentation holds the audience's attention.

**Connecting Your Ideas** Help your listeners move from one key point to the next with generous use of transitions. Between sentences and paragraphs, use transitional words and phrases such as *therefore*, *because*, *in addition*, *in contrast*, *moreover*, *for example*, *consequently*, *nevertheless*, and *finally*. To link major sections of a presentation, use complete sentences or paragraphs such as "Now that we've reviewed the problem, let's take a look at some solutions." Every time you shift topics, be sure to stress the connection between ideas. Summarize what's been said and then preview what's to come. You might also want to call attention to the transitions by using gestures, changing your tone of voice, or introducing a new slide or other visual.

**Holding Your Audience's Attention** After you've successfully captured your audience's attention in your introduction, you need to work to keep it throughout the body of your presentation. Here are a few helpful tips for keeping the audience tuned in to your message:

- Relate your subject to your audience's needs. People are naturally most interested in things that affect them personally.
- Anticipate your audience's questions. Try to anticipate as many questions as you can and address these questions in the body of your presentation. You'll also want to prepare and reserve additional material to use during the question-and-answer period, in case the audience asks for greater detail.
- Use clear, vivid language. If your presentation involves abstract ideas, show how those abstractions connect with everyday life. Use familiar words, short sentences, and concrete examples. Be sure to use some variety as well; repeating the same words and phrases puts people to sleep.
- Explain the relationship between your subject and familiar ideas. Show how your subject is related to ideas that audience members already understand.
- Ask for opinions or pause occasionally for questions or comments. Audience feedback helps you determine whether your listeners understand a key point before you launch into another section. Asking questions or providing comments also gives your audience members a chance to switch for a time from listening to participating, which helps them engage with your message and develop a sense of shared ownership.
- Illustrate your ideas with visuals.

## **Presentation Close**

The close of a speech or presentation has two critical jobs to accomplish: making sure your listeners leave with the key points from your talk clear in their minds and putting your audience in the appropriate emotional state. For example, if the purpose of your presentation is to warn managers that their out-of-control spending threatens the

company's survival, you want them to leave with that message ringing in their ears—and with enough concern for the problem to stimulate changes in their behavior.

**Restating Your Main Points** Use the close to succinctly restate your main points, emphasizing what you want your listeners to do or to think. For example, to close a presentation on your company's executive compensation program, you could repeat your specific recommendations and then conclude with a memorable statement to motivate your audience to take action:

We can all be proud of the way our company has grown. However, if we want to continue that growth, we need to take four steps to ensure that our best people don't start looking for opportunities elsewhere:

- First, increase the overall level of compensation
- Second, establish a cash bonus program
- Third, offer a variety of stock-based incentives
- Fourth, improve our health insurance and pension benefits

**Ending with Clarity and Confidence** If you've been successful with the introduction and body of your presentation, your listeners have the information they need and are in the right frame of mind to put that information to good use. Now you're ready to end on a strong note that confirms expectations about any actions or decisions that will follow the presentation—and to bolster the audience's confidence in you and your message one final time.

Whatever final message is appropriate; think through your closing remarks carefully before stepping in front of the audience. You don't want to wind up on stage with nothing to say but "Well, I guess that's it."

## **Delivering a Presentation**

With an outline, speaking notes, and any visual aids you plan to use, you're almost ready to deliver your presentation.

## Choosing Your Presentation Method

Depending on the circumstance of your presentation, you can choose from a variety of delivery methods:

- Memorizing. Except for extremely short speeches, trying to memorize an entire presentation is not a good idea. In the best of circumstances, you'll probably sound stilted; in the worst, you might forget your lines. However, memorizing a quotation, an opening paragraph, and some strong finishing remarks can bolster your confidence and strengthen your delivery.
- Reading. In a few rare instances you may need to read a speech from a prepared script. For instance, policy statements and legal documents are sometimes read in full because the wording can be critical.
- Speaking from an outline or notes. Speaking with the help of an outline or note cards is nearly always the easiest and most effective delivery mode. The outline or notes guide you through the flow of the speech while giving you the freedom to speak naturally and spontaneously, to maintain eye contact with your listeners, and to respond and improvise as circumstances warrant. If you print note cards, use heavy note cards instead of regular paper. They're quieter and easier to flip through as you talk.
- Impromptu speaking. From time to time, you may be called upon unexpectedly to give an *impromptu* or *extemporaneous* speech on the spot, without the benefit of any planning or practice. Take a few seconds to identify the one key idea you want to share with the audience. That idea alone may be enough to meet the audience's expectations, or it might be enough to get you started and allow you to piece together additional ideas on the fly. Then think about a structure that would help convey that idea.

Whichever delivery mode you use, be sure that you're thoroughly familiar with your subject. Knowing what you're talking about is the best way to build your self-confidence. If you stumble, get interrupted, or suffer equipment failures, your expertise will help you get back on track.

## Practicing Your Delivery

Practicing your presentation is essential. Practice boosts your confidence, gives you a more professional demeanor, and lets you verify the operation of your visuals and equipment.

A test audience can tell you if your slides are understandable and whether your delivery is effective. A day or two before you're ready to step on stage for an important talk, make sure you and your presentation are ready:

- Can you present your material naturally, without reading your slides?
- Is the equipment working, and do you know how to use it?
- Could you still make a compelling and complete presentation if you experience an equipment failure and have to proceed without using your slides at all?
- Is your timing on track?
- Can you easily pronounce all the words you plan to use?
- Have you anticipated likely questions and objections?

With experience, you'll get a feel for how much practice is enough in any given situation. Practicing helps keep you on track, helps you maintain a conversational tone with your audience, and boosts your confidence and composure.

## **Preparing To Speak**

In addition to knowing your material thoroughly and practicing your delivery, make sure your location is ready, you have everything you'll need, and you're prepared to address audiences from other cultures, if that applies.

Whenever you can, scout the location for your presentation in advance. Check the seating arrangement to confirm it's appropriate for your needs and the audience. Verify the availability and operation of all the equipment and supplies you're counting on, from the projection system to simple but vital necessities such as flip charts and marking pens. If you're using slides, make sure you know how to get the file from your computer or other device to the projection system.

If you're addressing audience members who speak a different native language, consider using an interpreter. Working with an interpreter does constrain your presentation



somewhat. For instance, you must speak slowly enough for the interpreter to keep up with you. Send your interpreter a copy of your speaking notes and your visuals as far in advance as possible. If your audience is likely to include persons with hearing impairments, team up with a sign-language interpreter as well.

When you deliver a presentation to people from other cultures, take into account cultural differences in appearances, mannerisms, and other customs. Your interpreter or host will be able to suggest appropriate changes for a specific audience or occasion.

## **Overcoming Anxiety**

Recognize that nervousness is an indication that you care about your audience, your topic, and the occasion. These techniques will help you convert anxiety into positive energy:

- Put yourself into a positive frame of mind before you start. Remind yourself of how well you know the material and how much you enjoy sharing useful or inspirational information. If appropriate for the setting, smile as you take the stage.
- Stop worrying about being perfect. Successful speakers focus on making an authentic connection with their listeners.
- Know your subject. The more familiar you are with your material, the less panic you'll feel.
- Practice, practice, practice. The more you rehearse, the more confident you will be.
- Visualize success. Visualize mental images of yourself in front of the audience feeling confident, prepared, and able to handle any situation that might arise. Remember that your audience wants you to succeed, too.
- Remember to breathe. Tension can lead people to breathe in a rapid and shallow fashion, which can create a lightheaded feeling. Breathe slowly and deeply to maintain a sense of calm and confidence.

- Be ready with your opening line. Have your first sentence memorized and on the tip of your tongue.
- Be comfortable. Dress appropriately but as comfortable as possible. Drink plenty of water ahead of time to hydrate your voice (bring water with you, too).
- Take a three-second break. If you sense that you're starting to race or ramble, pause and arrange your notes or perform some other small task while taking several deep breaths. Then start again at your normal pace.
- Concentrate on your message and your audience, not on yourself. When you're busy thinking about your subject and observing your audience's response, you tend to forget your fears.
- Maintain eye contact with friendly audience members. Eye contact not only makes you appear sincere, confident, and trustworthy but can give you positive feedback as well.
- Keep going. Things usually get better as you move along, with each successful minute giving you more and more confidence.

Finally, think about the sound of your voice. Studies indicate that people who speak with lower pitches at a slightly faster-than-average rate are perceived as being more credible. Try to sound poised and confident, varying your pitch and speaking rate to add emphasis. For instance, slow down slightly when you're making an important point. Speak clearly and crisply, articulating all the syllables, and sound enthusiastic about what you're saying. Use silence instead of meaningless filler words such as *um*, *you know*, *okay*, and *like*. Silence adds dramatic punch and gives the audience time to think about your message.

## **Handling Questions Responsively**

Whether you take questions during a formal question-and-answer (Q&A) period or as they come up during your presentation, audience queries are often one of the most important parts of a presentation. They give you a chance to obtain important

information, to emphasize your main idea and supporting points, and to build enthusiasm for your point of view. When you're speaking to high-ranking executives in your company, the Q&A period will often consume most of the time allotted for your presentation.

Note that you may not always have the option of establishing ground rules for Q&A.

If you're presenting to a small group of upper managers or potential investors, for example, you will probably have no say in the matter: Audience members will likely ask as many questions as they want, whenever they want, to get the information they need.

On the other hand, if you are presenting to your peers or a large public audience, establish some guidelines, such as the number of questions allowed per person and the overall time limit for questions.

Don't assume you can handle whatever comes up without some preparation. Learn enough about your audience members to get an idea of their concerns and think through answers to potential questions.

When people ask questions, pay attention to nonverbal signals to help determine what each person really means. Repeat the question to confirm your understanding and to ensure that the entire audience has heard it. If the question is vague or confusing, ask for clarification; then give a simple, direct answer.

## **CHECKLIST** ✓ **Developing Presentations**

### **A. Planning your presentation**

- Analyze the situation by defining your purpose and developing an audience profile.
- Select the best medium.
- Organize your presentation by defining the main idea, limiting the scope, choosing your approach, and preparing your outline.

### **B. Developing your presentation**

- Adapt to your audience by tailoring your style and language.
- Compose your presentation by preparing an introduction, a body, and a close.

- Use your introduction to arouse audience interest, build your credibility, and preview your message.
- Use the body to connect your ideas and hold your audience's attention.
- Close with confidence and clarity, restating your main points and describing the next steps.

### **C. Delivering your presentation**

- Choose a presentation method, which should be speaking from an outline or notes in nearly all situations.
- Practice until you can deliver your material naturally, without reading your slides.
- Prepare to speak by verifying the operation of all the equipment you'll need to use.
- Determine whether you should use an interpreter.
- Overcome anxiety by preparing thoroughly.
- Handle questions responsively.