

## **Formal Presentations**

Formal presentation is the ability to deliver an interesting, informative, and organized presentation. There are several points which we are required to keep in mind when we are preparing for a formal presentation. They are:

- Planning: Occasion, audience, purpose, thesis, and material
- Outlining and structuring: Introduction, main body, and conclusion
- Choosing the mode of delivery
- Guidelines for effective delivery
- Body language and voice
- Visual aids

### **PLANNING**

Preparing and delivering the first business presentation or public speech in our life can be daunting. We may find it difficult to decide what we want to say and how to say it, or perhaps the thought of speaking before an audience scares us. It is true that some people are naturally talented at public speaking. However, with some helpful guidance, anyone can prepare and deliver a successful speech that will be remembered for all the right reasons.

When preparing a presentation, the first instinct may be to sit down with a pen and paper and charge ahead into the first line of the speech. However, devoting some time to careful planning of the speech will save a lot of time and effort later on. Effective preparation enables us to answer all the questions and doubts about our speech before they arise. The contents of our speech, and how we deliver it, are based on five important factors:

- Occasion
- Audience
- Purpose
- Thesis
- Material

### **Occasion**

Occasion refers to the factors such as the facilities available for our presentation, time, and context of our presentation. Facilities include the venue or locale along with the projection equipment, lighting, seating, ventilation, etc. Every location has its unique physical environment. We may present in magnificently large auditoriums or oppressively small conference rooms. We need to know the physical setting; find out whether we will have a podium or a table, whether

we will have a public address system, and so on. Also, attention should be paid to the physical conditions prevalent in the venue such as seating, room temperature, and lighting. We should try to understand whether the audience will be seated on hard metal chairs for an hour in a freezing room, whether the lighting will be too powerful to render our slide presentation ineffective, etc. If we identify such problems in advance, we can either ask for alternative arrangements or modify our materials, visual aids, and style to suit the environment.

Time refers to both the time of the day of presentation and the duration of the talk.

Straightforward and factual presentations may work well during the morning hours, but in case of an after-dinner speech, we may need to adapt our remarks to the occasion. Remembering the fact that most professional presentations are brief, we should present the important points in the first few minutes.

Context refers to the events surrounding our presentation. When we are presenting in a team, for example, we need to consider the team members. They might have left a positive or negative impression in the minds of the audience and, hence, we would need to adapt ourselves to the existing situation just before presenting our part. Besides these immediate events, the recent happenings in our company can also affect the presentation. For example, if you are about to present a new proposal on budget just after your company has suffered a financial loss, you should emphasize on those features of your budget that focus on reducing the costs. The occasion dictates not only the content of our speech, but also the duration, the tone, and the expectations of the audience. For example, humour may be inappropriate during a serious sales presentation, while it may be welcome during a wedding speech, or a sports event. We should also be aware of our role and any observations that we might make during our speech. For example, if you are presenting the final report of your project to a group of professors or senior colleagues, you need to take care of the short duration, firm but polite tone, and also their expectations.

## **Audience**

All audiences have one thing in common. They are at the receiving end of our communication. They may be our friends, clients, colleagues, sometimes unfamiliar faces, or a combination of all these. The nature of our audience has a direct impact on the strategy we devise for our presentation. Hence, it is necessary to have some prior knowledge of the audience.

- What are their interests, likes, and dislikes?
- Are they familiar with the topic?
- Is their attitude hostile or friendly?
- What is the size of the group?
- Age range? Gender distribution?

## **Purpose**

There can be three different purposes of a presentation: to inform, to analyse, or to persuade.

The purpose of a presentation not only decides the content and style but also affects the amount

of audience interaction. For instance, when our purpose is to provide information or to analyse a situation, we generally interact with the audience in a limited manner. Examples of typical presentation forms with an informative purpose can be a presentation at the new employee orientation programme or an explanation of our project status. On the other hand, when our purpose is to persuade people to take a particular action, collaborate with them in solving a problem, or making a decision, the interaction would be more. We generally begin by providing facts and figures that increase our audiences' understanding of the subject; we may also offer arguments in defence of certain conclusions and recommendations. In addition, we invite them to participate by expressing their needs, suggesting solutions, and formulating conclusions and recommendations. However, this would need a lot of 'on-the-spot' thinking skills and in-depth knowledge of the subject. Sales presentations, speeches by political leaders during election, etc., come under the category of persuasive presentations. At times, our goal may be to help the audience have a good time. When we welcome the gathering at a conference, we are cheering and gearing them up for the coming sessions. Likewise, when we give an after-dinner speech at a company gathering or an awards dinner, our purpose is to leave the group in a jovial mood. Depending on the purpose, we should be flexible enough to adjust to new inputs and unexpected audience reactions.

### **Thesis Statement**

The thesis statement is very important in a presentation because it spells out the subject and establishes its impact among the audience. It is also the central idea of a presentation. Using a question or a sentence fragment should be avoided. Simple language should be used to frame a complete, declarative statement. Let us look at the following versions of thesis statement written by a student for a presentation on Choosing a reputed university for higher education. We can observe that the first two are ineffective for the reasons mentioned in parentheses, while the third is an effective thesis statement.

- Why should we be careful in choosing a reputed university? (question: does not reflect the content)
- Choosing a reputed university for higher education (fragment: does not tell anything specific; repetition of the topic of presentation)
- Choosing a reputed university for higher education has five significant advantages (tells the audience that they will know these benefits after listening to the presentation)

Begin to formulate your thesis statement as soon as you select your topic and decide on your purpose. Then allow yourself enough time to explore and develop your ideas. Shown below are the steps to arrive at your thesis statement:

Topic: Choosing a reputed university for higher education  
Topic area: Advantages of a reputed university  
General purpose: To inform  
Specific purpose: I wish to tell my audience about the benefits they will reap by choosing a reputed university  
Thesis statement: Choosing a reputed university for higher education has five significant advantages.

### **Material**

Once we complete formulating our thesis, we need to develop the information that elaborates

it. Collecting material requires some research. For example, when we are explaining a process or procedure, the main text of our presentation will include a series of steps involved. Similarly, when we are giving a product presentation, besides the complete information about the product, we may have to collect information pertaining to the competing products and their features. For most of the professional presentations, we may have to consult the library, Internet, magazines, newspapers, organizational records, statistics, and publications. Sometimes, we may even have to collect information through surveys or interviews. We may also have to contact external organizations to procure information for some of our presentations. Once we finish collecting material and ideas for our presentation, we should assemble them at one place. We may list all the ideas on a piece of paper and then organize them.

## **OUTLINING AND STRUCTURING**

An outline is a framework in which bits and pieces of the presentation material are fitted. It serves as a guide to show us the right path for our presentation. Hence, spending time in developing an outline never goes waste. In fact, we can use an outline as our ‘script’, but should be prepared to deviate in response to audience feedback. Suppose we are planning to deliver a presentation on ‘Graduate study in the USA’ to the graduating students of a college. This may be a thirty-minute presentation about the steps and requirements to pursue an MS or PhD programme in the US universities. The outline can be in the form of words, phrases, or sentences: • Introduction • Decision-making • Basics of US higher education • Graduate study programmes – MS – PhD • Application forms • Admission procedure • Requirements – Statement of purpose – Academic aptitude – Professional development – Personal qualities – Presentation skills – Recommendation letters • Conclusion We may have to revise the subheadings under each or some of these main topics. But, as already said, we should be ready to skip or add some topics if the audience wants us to do so. We will learn more about outlining in Chapter 13 on reports. Structuring or organizing the material clearly is vital for an effective presentation. A wellorganized presentation can make our messages more comprehensible, create the desired effect on our audience, and boost our image as a speaker. On the other hand, rambling or taking too long to get to the point, including irrelevant material in the speech, omitting necessary information, or messing up the ideas can lead to a chaotic structure. Even experienced speakers get into trouble if their material is not organized appropriately and end up confusing their audience. The key to all these problems is to organize our ideas into a well-known pattern. First, we need to tell our audience what we want to tell them; then, we should tell them the ideas; and finally, we should repeat what we have already said. In other words, a presentation should have the following format:

- Introduction should grab attention, introduce topic, contain a strategy for establishing credibility, preview the speech, establish rules for questions, and have a smooth transition to the main text.

- Main body should contain all the main points and supporting material; the entire matter should be organized into a logical sequence.
- Conclusion should contain signal, highlight/summary, closing statement/re-emphasis, a vote of thanks, and invitation to questions.

## **Introduction**

The introduction to a presentation does the job of the preface to a book. It catches the attention (attention grabber) of the audience, tells them the topic and purpose (topic and thesis), develops in them a trust for the presenter and the presentation (credibility), kindles their interest in what the presenter is going to speak in the minutes to come (preview), and takes them slowly into the main body of the speech (transition). Having gone through the sample introduction, let us look into its components in a little more detail:

### **Greeting**

We can start with good morning/good afternoon, etc., or can begin by (a) extending a compliment to our audience—I feel good to present before an intelligent/august gathering like yours/It is refreshing to look at your bright faces this morning; (b) referring to the location or occasion—I hope you all had a good time at the river cruise last evening; On the occasion of World Education Day, let me wish all of you to have lifelong learning.

### **Attention grabber**

This catches the attention of our audience and prepares them to listen to the rest of our presentation. Depending on the topic, we can use a question, a quotation, a startling statement, an anecdote, or even a video or audio clip to grab the attention of the audience. For example, as in the introduction to ‘Effective use of DDT-based insecticides’ given above, you can begin your presentation with a series of questions: ‘How often do you use insecticides? Are you aware of their harmful effects?’ or with the statement, ‘You would be shocked to know that thousands of people die every day by the careless use of insecticides’.

Imagine that you are giving a presentation on the topic ‘The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Developing Leadership Skills’. You can start your presentation with an anecdote similar to the one given below:

On Friday, when I was attending a meeting, I could barely control my open appreciation of Ms Veena, the Chairperson. You may wonder why. I will tell you now. She was able to resolve the conflict between two participants amicably simply by using intelligence to understand their emotions. Yes, friends, in today’s business world, emotional intelligence plays a very important role in cultivating various skills—leadership skill is one of them.

After catching the attention, state clearly and precisely the purpose of your presentation. For

instance, it can be as pointed as this—‘One reason brings me here today—to inform you about our new performance appraisal system’.

### **Topic and thesis statement**

As the topic is very important, we need to include it in our visual aid (PowerPoint slide or overhead transparency) and project the same. Then our specific purpose can be stated in the form of a thesis statement as previously discussed under the heading ‘Thesis’.

### **Credibility**

Many factors may help us develop trust in the audience’s minds for us and our presentation matter. While the audience may believe us because of our power/status/experience, we may need to speak out explicit statements in order to establish credibility in their minds if we are young or inexperienced. We can achieve this goal by stating our interest in the topic, by quoting some relevant statement from a recent newspaper or magazine, or by informing them how much research we have done on the topic.

### **Preview**

We can tell our audience what is coming ahead in our presentation. We can also give a brief idea about the issues we are going to cover in the given time. This can be done by showing the slide containing the main topics and subtopics in the presentation outline.

### **Rules for question and answer session**

Good presenters always anticipate questions and prepare their answers as well during the preparation stage. It is better to inform the audience in the beginning itself whether they can ask questions during or after the presentation.

### **Transition**

Before going to the slide containing the first main point, we can speak out a phrase or ask a question to provide a link between the introduction and the main body of the presentation—‘now that you know what are the issues I am going to discuss today, let me begin with the first point, that is, ...’; ‘So, what are the characteristics of a reputed university?’—It is better to adopt a uniform style to state the main points of a presentation; that is, all the points are in the form of phrases, questions, etc. Do not mix different formats.

A good introduction creates interest and leads the audience effectively into the main body of the speech.

### **Main Body**

The main body, the discussion, or the text part follows the introduction and supports the aim or specific purpose of a presentation. The major points we highlight in our opening section will be expanded here. Depending on the topic, and the introduction part, we can choose from any of the following patterns to organize the main body of a presentation.

*Chronological* This pattern can be used for organizing points that can be arranged sequentially (in the order in which the events occurred or appeared before us). The entire presentation can be arranged chronologically. This method is useful for topics such as ‘the profile of our institute’,

‘the changing face of the earth’, and ‘history of sports’.

*Categorical* This is one of the easiest and most commonly adopted patterns for many topics. The entire presentation can be divided into various topics and subtopics arranged on the basis of subordination and coordination. This can be used for topics such as ‘the role of advertising’, ‘environmental protection’, ‘importance of professional presentation’, etc.

*Cause and effect* This method can be adopted whenever a ‘cause and effect’ relationship exists. Here, we have to illustrate and explain the causes of the situation and then focus on the effects. It is relevant for topics such as ‘impact of cinema on children’, ‘Internet—boon or bane’, ‘global warming’, etc.

*Problem–solution* Here, we divide the presentation into two parts. In the first part, we describe and analyse the problem. After the analysis we move on to the main objective of the presentation to suggest or propose a solution to the problem. It is a very helpful and effective way for persuasive presentation. For topics such as ‘population explosion’, ‘addiction to gaming’,

etc., this method can be used.

We can strengthen our argument or ideas by providing examples, illustrations, statistics, testimonies, analogies, or definitions.

*Supporting material* Solid ideas do not always impress our audience. We need to back up our well-organized points in a way that makes the audience notice, understand, and accept our message. In other words, we need to use plenty of supporting material or develop our core points adequately.

*Definitions* When we deliver a presentation on a topic that we feel that the audience is not too familiar with, we can use a definition to develop our idea.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion of a presentation provides yet another opportunity for us to impress the audience. Hence, the conclusion should be prepared and presented with the same interest as we take for the introduction. We can conclude our presentation by reviewing the main points. A signal such as to sum up, to conclude, to review, in the end, etc. to indicate the end of the presentation must be used. As we conclude, we should remind the audience briefly about the purpose of our presentation, which could be either to persuade them or to inform them. We should tell them

what we want them to do, think, or remember based on the presentation. The temptation to wrap up in haste or add something new in this part of the speech should be avoided. We can also conclude with a quotation or can recall the earlier story, joke, anecdote with which we

commenced our presentation to bring it to a full circle. Some presenters bring in a change in the pace or pitch of their voice. They slow the rate and speak in a lower pitch so as to mark the difference between the main body and conclusion of their presentation.

### **Modes of Delivery**

What is it that makes our presentation hold the attention and interest of the audience? Our manner of presentation, our vocal inflections, our perfectly timed pauses, our facial expressions, and our gestures—all these are part of an expert delivery. Even a dull and drab topic will turn out to be more interesting if presented well, whereas a really interesting topic may appear to be dull because of poor delivery. So one thing becomes clear—having something to say is not enough; you must also know how to say it. Good delivery does not call attention to itself. It conveys our ideas clearly, interestingly, and without distracting the audience. Most audiences prefer delivery that combines a certain degree of formality with the best attributes of good conversation—directness, spontaneity, animation, vocal and facial expressiveness—and a lively sense of communication. The following discussion provides some suggestions so as to enable one to select the best mode of delivery for a presentation. There are four modes of delivery that can be used for making presentations:

- Extemporaneous
- Manuscript
- Impromptu
- Memorization

### **Extemporaneous mode**

Extemporaneous presentation is by far the most popular and effective method when carefully prepared. When speaking extempore we must prepare the notes beforehand and rehearse our presentation. There is no need to learn every word and line by rote. Our presentation will sound quite spontaneous to the audience, as after thorough preparation, we are speaking while thinking. Careful planning and rigorous practice enable one to collect the material and organize it meticulously. Let us look at some of the positive and negative aspects of this mode of presentation.

#### **Advantages**

- As we have enough time to prepare for the presentation, we work hard on the theme/ central idea. We can present the theme in the best possible structured way.
- Thorough preparation on our part makes us feel secure and we carry out our responsibility with self-confidence and assurance. Adaptation is also possible if the need arises. In other words, the language of any written text does not bind us. We can be flexible in our use of language.
- Supporting material helps to present our points clearly and also adds weight to our



agreement. Appropriate selection of quotations, illustrations, statistics, etc., helps us to substantiate our point.

- Our delivery sounds natural and spontaneous to the audience as it allows us to establish a rapport with the audience through more eye contact.
- It enables us to move freely, with ease.

Disadvantages

- If preparation is inadequate, we can get lost and find ourselves uncomfortable.
- If we rely too much on note cards and start reading out from them instead of just consulting them for reference, then the speech will lose its spontaneity

### **Manuscript mode**

In manuscript presentation, material is written out and we are supposed to read it out aloud verbatim. We are not supposed to memorize the speech and then recollect it. It is there in front of us to read. But, we should be wise enough not to attempt to read a speech until we have become a proficient reader. Unfortunately most speakers are not good readers. They make it uninteresting by reading in a dull and monotonous way. However, we can overcome this problem with consistent efforts. We could maybe rehearse with a friend or colleague.

For effective use of this mode, we should go through the material several times beforehand until we become absolutely familiar with the text. We should strive to choose material designed to achieve understanding. We should know what is written where.

Advantages

- It is a permanent and accurate record of whatever we have to say.
- There is no chance of tampering with the facts and figures.
- The material is organized systematically. We just have to keep in mind the step-by-step development of main points.
- Language gets polished because we can write and rewrite our material until we feel satisfied on all counts.

Disadvantages

- Since we will be reading from the manuscript, we get less time for making proper eye contact, which is essential to feel the pulse of our audience.
- Since we will be reading to the audience, we cannot talk to them. There is not much scope either for non-verbal communication.
- Adaptation is rather difficult, if the need arises, to give a different twist to our material.
- In the absence of effective reading skill, we fumble

### **Impromptu mode**

The impromptu mode, as the word suggests, is what we use when we have to deliver

an informal speech without preparation. For example, at a formal dinner party you may be invited to deliver a vote of thanks. Do not panic and babble something in an unmethodical way. Instead, calmly state your topic and then preview the points you are to make. Support your points with whatever examples, quotes, and anecdotes you recall at that time. Then briefly summarize or restate your points and end with a smile. Remember, it is not difficult for you to anticipate certain occasions where you may be asked to speak a few words. Be as brief as possible during your impromptu presentations.

#### Advantages

- We sound very natural because we do not get enough time to make any elaborate preparation.
- We get a chance to express our thoughts irrespective of what others think or say about that particular topic.
- We are spontaneous as we say what we feel, not what we ought to say.

#### Disadvantages

- The presentation lacks organized development of ideas because of the shortage of time.
- There is no supplementary material (no data, no statistics, no illustrations, no figures) to substantiate the speech.
- Chances of rambling are very high. Various points may hang loose.
- There is frequent use of vocalized pauses.
- The presentation may turn out to be a failure if the speaker has inadequate proficiency in the language he/she uses.

Gaining a reputation for being a good impromptu speaker can do a great deal for our career aspirations. It has been shown that there is a positive correlation between communication effectiveness and upward mobility.

#### **Memorization mode**

This method of presentation is very difficult for most of us. Probably only a handful of us can actually memorize an entire speech. Usually we memorize only the main parts and are in the habit of writing key words on cards to help us out through the actual presentation. In some cases, if we wish to quote somebody or narrate an anecdote or a joke, it is better to memorize

these for our presentations.

This type of delivery stands somewhere between extemporaneous and manuscript presentation. Speech is written out beforehand, then committed to memory, and finally delivered from memory.

#### Advantages

- It is very easy for such speakers to maintain an eye contact with the audience throughout the presentation.
- The speaker can easily move and make use of appropriate non-verbal communication to add extra value to the speech.
- It is possible to finish the speech in allotted time.

#### Disadvantages

- Memorization requires too much of time.
- There are chances of making it a dull and monotonous presentation because we go exactly by whatever we have memorized.
- Even our memory skills may fail us if we have not rehearsed adequately.
- No flexibility or adaptation is possible during the speech.
- The speaker gets flustered if he/she forgets a word, sentence, or a whole paragraph.

Among all the four modes of delivery, extemporaneous is the best because of its flexible nature and its effectiveness. Hence, it is always better to use this mode to make presentations more lively, effective, and memorable.

### **Guidelines for Effective Delivery**

Success of any presentation also depends on the various elements—verbal, non-verbal (body language), vocal, and visual—used during a presentation.

#### Verbal elements

**Word pictures** We may give our speech a graphic quality by painting word pictures that allow the audience's imagination to take over. Specific details allow an audience to see the scenes we are describing. Our major job as a speaker is to tell somebody something. We should present our point clearly and just enough so that the listener clearly understands the intended message. The task is not merely to get words out of our mouth, but to transfer ideas into the listeners' minds.

**Warm words** Cold words leave us uneasy and unsure while warm words make us feel secure and comfortable. Words are powerful. They conjure images, evoke emotions, and trigger responses deep within us and we react, often without knowing the reason. In the early days of instant coffee, advertisers got off to a bad start by stressing words such as 'quick', 'time-saving', and 'efficient'. All these words are without warmth and feeling. Makers of fresh coffee fought

back with warm, happy, and appetizing words such as 'aroma', 'fresh', and 'tasty'. The instant coffee industry learnt the lesson and its product became 'delicious', 'rich', and 'satisfying'. Sales soon boomed.

Words also suggest whether something is good or bad. We should use those words that strengthen our arguments and weaken those of our opponents.

**Similes and metaphors** Although technical presentations do not require the use of similes and metaphors, we cannot deny that they not only add flavour to a speech but also make abstract ideas imaginable. Reach for vivid comparisons your listeners can understand and remember. Try the following metaphors in your speeches:

- As inflexible as an epitaph
- As cold as outer space
- Building a business is like building an empire
- As profitable as a gold mine
- Delay is the deadliest form of denial

**Impact words** ‘We’ and ‘you’ are the most important words of all. We cannot stir the audience up if we do not address them directly and relate them to us and our topic. Remember the five-to-one rule: Every time you use the singular ‘I’, try to follow it with five plurals. Given below are some words that you may use in your presentations or speeches to get desired results:

discovery, guarantee, love, proven, safely, easy, health, vigour, money, results, save, protect, interest, challenge, opportunity, excitement, enthusiasm, flourish, progress, favourable, adaptation, circumstances.

### Smooth flow

We can also make our speech flow smoothly and gracefully from beginning to end by using some transitional devices. They promote clarity, emphasize important ideas, and sustain our listeners’ interest. Some transitional devices are discussed below:

- **Bridge:** A bridge is a word that alerts the audience that we are changing direction or moving to a new thought. Some examples are:

- (a) We completed the project in January. Meanwhile other developments were taking place.
- (b) That was bad enough. However, there was even worse to come.

- **Number item:** A number item keeps the listeners informed about where we are in a presentation, which covers several points such as:

The first advantage of the new plan is ...

The second benefit of the plan is ...

- **Trigger:** A trigger is a repetition of the same word or phrase to link one topic with another, such as:

That was what the financial situation was like in March. Now I will tell you what it is like today.

- **Interjection:** An interjection is a word or phrase inserted in a commentary to highlight the importance or placement of an idea, such as:

So what we have learned—and this is important—is that, it is impossible to control personal use of office telephones.

Now here is another feature—perhaps the best of all—that makes this such a terrific plan.

- **Internal summary:** Internal summary helps our audience stay oriented by providing a one-sentence summary during the course of delivering the main text of our presentation, such as:

Now, you can see that the problem grew from several causes: a shortage of parts, inexperienced maintenance people, and the overload of opening a new warehouse.

- **Internal preview:** An internal preview, like an internal summary, orients the audience by alerting them to the upcoming points, such as:

You are probably wondering how all these changes will affect you. Well, some of them will make

life much easier, and others will present some challenges. Let us look at three advantages first, and then we will look at a couple of those challenges I mentioned.

- **Signpost:** Signposts tell our audience where we are in our presentation. When we say, 'There are four advantages, as I had already said. Having discussed the first two of them, let me move on to the third advantage', the statement would serve as a signpost to tell the audience that we have completed two and there are two more to go.

- **Rhetorical question:** A rhetorical question can subtly change the direction of the discussion, such as:

That is what a change of image can do to a company. So how can we improve our image?

- **Flashback:** A flashback is a sudden shift/reference to the past, and breaks what seems to be a predictable narrative. For example:

Today, we are the market leader. However, three years ago, this was not the case.

- **List:** A list is a very simple way of combining apparently unrelated elements, such as: We made four attempts to solve the problem.

- **Pause:** A pause is a non-verbal method of showing our audience that we have finished a section of our speech and we are about to move on to another.

- **Physical movements:** Physical movements towards a visual aid, such as a black/white board, flip chart, or screen, suggest that we are moving on to something new.

- **Quotations, anecdotes, and jokes:** A quotation, anecdote, or joke can serve as an excellent

link. We may see a joke like the one given below as a good link to the idea that one may wish to take up next:

The Chairman told me a story of a job applicant who said, 'I like the job, sounds fine, but the last place I worked at, paid more, gave more overtime, more bonuses, subsidies, travel allowances, holidays with pay, and generous pension schemes.'

The Chairman said, 'Why did you leave?' The applicant answered, 'The firm went broke.'

## **Non-verbal elements**

Our appearance, facial expressions, eye contact, postures, gestures, and the space we share with our audience, all communicate our interest, enthusiasm, dynamism, intention, and confidence

to our audience. Whatever the occasion, the following tips will help you to use body language effectively during your presentation.

- Wear a formal dress and use simple accessories; take care of your personal hygiene
- Use facial expressions to exhibit your enthusiasm and interest; do not show your irritation or anger even when someone interrupts you or asks a question that appears to be silly to you; be polite in answering them
- Make eye contact with all sections of the audience (avoid staring at somebody) to observe their reactions and also to show your sincerity and interest
- Use well-timed gestures; avoid monotonous gestures
- Stand tall and straight with shoulders upright; walk/move swiftly; avoid too many and monotonous movements
- Do not come very close to the audience; maintain a distance of at least 4–12 feet
  - While using blackboard, raise your voice and look at the audience in between
  - Avoid fiddling with key ring or tie while presenting
  - Avoid looking outside even if there is some external noise. Try to concentrate on your ideas and audience

### **Vocal elements**

Our voice can serve as an important tool to support our verbal message. How we sound is as important as how we look or what we say. Our vocal elements, namely the tone, pitch, rate, and volume, reflect our attitude about ourselves, our message, and our audience. Try the following tips to help you use your vocal elements to enhance the impact of your presentation: • Speak with enthusiasm and sincerity • Avoid fast delivery • Adjust the volume of your voice • Use silence and pauses effectively • Avoid monotones or vocalized pauses • Articulate each word clearly • Use your optimal pitch

### **Visual elements**

Our audience will remember facts easily if the ideas are connected to the right-brain stimulation. The way to stimulate the right side of the brain is to show pictures. Visual stimuli are more effective than verbal stimuli. We often recall the colour of the cover of a book rather than its title and subtitle.

#### **Advantages**

People find our message more interesting, grasp it more easily, and retain it longer when we use visual support along with our words. Besides increasing the clarity of the message, visuals

make presentations more interesting. For example, investment brokers often use an array of well-prepared charts, tables, models, and so on, to add variety to information that would be dull without them.

Graphics can also boost our image in ways that extend beyond the presentation. They add a professional flavour to our presentation. Finally, our audience remembers a visual message longer than the verbal message.