Now more than ever, business professionals are being asked to give presentations with teams. Everyone on your team must hone their presentation and preparation skills for these types of team presentations to be effective. Professional team presentations involve thorough planning, smooth transitions, logical sequencing of subject material, and the ability to create a coherent professional message.

**1) Powerful Opening -** Open up with a bang. You want to immediately engage your listeners and set the tone for the presentation. Make sure to plan your statement carefully and deliver a startling statement (statistic or fact) that you can drive home with sincere appreciation.

**2) Introduction -** After your opening, you should always briefly overview your agenda for the presentation and introduce all the members of the team. There are two different ways you can go about your introductions. The team leader can briefly introduce each member of the team and their respective role in the project, or each person can briefly state their own name and what their role will be in the project.

**3) Handoffs** - Part of your preparation for the presentation should go towards planning your handoffs. A poor handoff may slow down the flow of your presentation and confuse the audience. To help ease the transition, you should keep to a strict time frame for each speaker and use verbal cues to indicate that the next speaker is coming up: "In a minute, Bob will tell us how the timeline will work." As a presenter, make sure you are listening so that you hear your cue.

**4) Close with an Impact** - It is important that you end your presentation on a high note. The closing of your presentation will reinforce the message you want your audience to take away with them. You want to have one person, typically the leader, close for the team. At the conclusion of the closing, make sure that you efficiently gather any materials and equipment that you used.

**5) Team Question and Answer Session** - An effectively facilitated question and answer session will leave a lasting and positive impression on your listeners. It is important in a team presentation to plan and prepare for this session. Take some time to predetermine which questions/subjects of questions will be answered by which team member. Also, determine a cue that will let your team members know to add on to your point.

***Structure of the presentation:*** The main points that support the theme remain the same; the only difference is that each main point may actually be the complete presentation for an individual team member. By having a clear structure, individual presenters see their piece as a part of the whole presentation, and when the pieces are put back together, everything works as a seamless whole. It's like the way NASA built the shuttles, with different contractors, each assigned a major assembly such as the wings or the tail, working to exacting specifications so that when it was all bolted together the thing would actually fly.

It's also important that each individual piece include references to previous and upcoming speakers, such as: “As Chris mentioned, one of the root causes of the problem is the fluctuation in density from one batch to the next, and our solution addresses that by …”

***Evidence:*** The supporting evidence portion is put together individually, and then brought back to the team. It's not up to the team to parse the evidence, because the person putting it together is the recognized subject matter expert. However, it's useful to have the team review what will be said to **reduce redundancy and avoid contradiction**.

***Introduction and close:*** The team leader is probably going to be the person delivering the introduction. Besides the standard ingredients of an individual presentation, the team leader should also introduce the individual presenters and briefly explain their roles. The emphasis here is on brevity because he or she will want to say a little more about each person just before handing off to them for their part.

The team leader may also take over for the close, or leave it to the last speaker to tie everything together. Since team presentations may be longer than individual ones, a brief summary at the end is a good idea.

The rehearsal process is even more critical to a team presentation's success than an individual one because all the parts have to work together. Here are some practical tips that can go a long way toward creating an exceptional presentation:

***Plan transitions and handoffs.*** There are two ways to handle this. The team leader can act as a master of ceremonies and handle all of the transitions. The advantage is that only one person needs to practice the transitions. Or each individual speaker can introduce the following speaker. The advantage of this is that there are fewer moving parts and it looks a little less choppy.

***Plan what-ifs.*** It's important for the team to have flexibility built in, and for the team leader to follow the conversation closely and make adjustments. Plan to shorten or omit parts as necessary. Sometimes the portion that one person worked so hard on becomes irrelevant because the customer prefers to spend more time on something else. Plan on something going wrong. What will you do if someone is detained in travel?

***Present in conditions as close to realistic as possible.*** It will make presenters more comfortable by making the actual scene much more familiar. It will also help to identify peculiarities of the venue that might interfere with some of the choreography of the presentation, such as where people sit when not presenting.

In his book, *Perfect Pitch*, Jon Steel tells how his firm won a large contract because, as the client told him, **“Each of you seemed to enjoy what your colleagues were saying as much as I did.”** The competitor's presenters, on the other hand, were studying their notes for their next part and even rolling their eyes at some parts.

Of course, another practical reason to pay attention is that a question might come up during the presentation that the speaker will send your way to answer. If your mind is wandering, it can feel like you're on an awfully lonely island when you have to ask your customer to repeat the question.