**Presentation Requirements**

For F2F and Online Delivery

**What Makes or Breaks a Presentation?**

You have seen them all: presentations that put you to sleep with boring, repetitive slides, one after the other, bullets everywhere, lots of text and even big sentences and paragraphs that force you to read instead of listen, graphics with so much details no one can see/understand, and a ho-hum delivery; all the way to the kind of presentation that keeps you engaged, interested and even inspired, with the presenter looking at you (if F2F), connecting with you (F2F and online) and building a rapport with the audience, teaching you something new and perhaps even motivating you to learn more about the subject.

***Let us get this out of the way….A point about “Winging it”****Some students rely on improvising their way through presentations. They rely on their charm and personality to carry them through. True, being able to think on the spot and “act” before an audience is a great skill. Yet, charm and an exuberant personality can only take you so far. Winging a presentation can also be (and very often is) due to lack of discipline. Such presenters usually: think the more they talk, the better the presentation, and are often oblivious to the fact that a) they are going over time, b) they may be rambling and off topic, c) they have lost the sequence of their thoughts, and, worst of all, d) they have lost the audience.*

*Winging will result in significant loss of marks, even a 0. This presentation focuses on planning.*

**Why Bother Presenting?**

A presentation is not a chore; it is a career-building skill few possess. The fundamental objective of a presentation is one and only one thing: **to convince your audience**. A presentation is fundamentally a “pitch”. You are “selling” the content. If you create the best presentation, but your audience is neither engaged nor interested, there really is no point.

In years of teaching, we can say with confidence that superb presentations have had few things in common:

1. PPT slides that were designed meticulously, interesting and engaging, and well-choreographed, practiced
2. A content that met the needs, level and expectation of the audience
3. And, of course, occasionally, a presenter goes well beyond the call of duty to engage through humour, skits, props, and other audience-grabbing probing questions.

**Script – the Secret Behind Great Presentations**

How do you avoid rambling? How do you reduce the stress of presentation? How do you make sure you stay on topic and finish on time? How do you create a presentation that is centered around the needs of your audience and not yours? The secret? Planning. Seasoned presenters know what they want to say well before they take the stage. Through prior reflection, they choose words that have power; slides that are catching; and a style that lures the audience in. Through meticulous preparation, they focus on influencing and convincing, not merely presenting.

A carefully written script of what you want to say virtually eliminates all the pitfalls of an improvised presentation. Write the exact script of your presentation and place the words you will say on each slide in the “notes” section of that slide – word for word. This creates clarity as you see below. It really is that simple.

You will be submitting your completed PPT file together with the script for each slide prior to your presentation so that your teacher can follow along as you present. The goal of a script is to reduce stress; it allows for a more refined delivery. The only time memorization actually adds to stress is when it has to be recited verbatim, which is NOT the case here. If you remember the key points of each slide (without improvising new content), you are spot on. So, relax and focus on what you must say for each slide. How? See below.

**Process:**

1. Start your research and gradually write a script that is suitable for your audience and meets the objectives of the presentation.
   1. Write the words of the entire presentation in Word (do not use PPT at this stage; you will waste a lot of time). What do you really want to say? What words will convey it best? Draft the speech carefully.
   2. Revise the script to make it more relevant and interesting. Are there better words you should use on a given slide? Can you shorten your words for better impact? Perhaps a question to engage your audience?
   3. Split up your speech into a numbered list, each item on the list with about 10 words. This list will become the slide numbers in your PPT file.
   4. Look at your list. Is the progression smooth? Is the “storyline” solid from one point to the next? Revise if needed.
   5. With the script settled, start with #1 point in your speech. Copy the text of the speech in the note section of the slide.
   6. Find a high-quality graphic related to that point. This graphic should instantly remind you of what to say on that slide. No “stretched” graphics. No low quality pictures. The Web is filled with great graphics on any subject. You are free to use any of them provided you reference them. Put a URL of that graphic after the script in each slide.
   7. *Note 1: The secret of an engaging presentation is high number of slides. The more slides you have, the more “visual” it is and the shorter the text for each slide and the easier to remember what you are supposed to say when that slide comes up.*
   8. Repeat steps e-f or all the slides.
   9. *Note 2: A common question: How many slides do I need? Go with about 10 words per slide and that will tell you how many slides you need.*
2. Practice the first draft of your presentation.. Do you need more content? Should you shorten it? Practice with a Bluetooth slide advancer and time yourself. Revise if necessary.

**What is the point of all this effort?**

This style of presenting focusses on the audience. PowerPoint is an audio AND visual tool. Novice presenters forget the second part. They assume that the main goal of a presentation is completing a “task”. A good presenter can make or break million-dollar contracts. A well-rehearsed delivery can make you millions (Shark Tank or Dragon Den TV series). It is all about “prep”. This approach will teach you skills that you will always remember when pitching your ideas. It works!

**Online Presentation Requirements**

In a live presentation in front of an audience, your body language and how you conduct yourself matter greatly. Naturally, presenting in front of others can be nerve-wrecking. But if you follow the guidance above, your stress will diminish. Guaranteed. Yet, how do we make an online presentation? Is it possible to use visual queues such as eye contact, body language, tone of voice and overall demeanor to make an effective pitch? Yes, absolutely.

If you adhere to the following requirements, you can make a solid presentation even online using your webcam and mic.

1. Ensure that the webcam is right Infront of you. If you are using a laptop, a couple of books will elevate the camera at about the eye level (more or less).
2. If you are using a desktop, you will have an external webcam. Place it so that it is in front of you.
3. If you are using a display monitor with a webcam built in, you are set. Usually the webcam is at the top and well positioned.
4. Before you start your presentation, make sure your audience can see about ½ your body. Do not sit too close. Make sure we can see your elbows. This allows you to incorporate body language in your delivery. It is not the same as a F2F presentation, but it is the closest alternative.
5. Make sure there is enough lighting to see your face. Best place is next to a window with the window in front of you. If you have a laptop, move to a well-lit place. If you have a desktop, any home has a desk lamp. Place it behind the camera to make your face visible. If you don’t have a desk lamp, a nearby Dollar Store will give you cheap options.
6. When presenting, DO NOT read. They graphics on your slides should instantly remind you of what you are supposed to say. Remember: one slide: one theme.
7. Narrate in a natural voice. Imagine there is an audience in front of you; you are trying to convince them to give you something you desperately need. Your voice, your body, your eyes, your facial expressions and you your hands all can make or break your pitch.
8. Focus on your audience to convince them of your sincerity and credibility. Use humour if you can. Smile if possible. A gentle smile is a winning card in a presentation. It exudes confidence. An audience loves a confident presenter; not a mere actor focused on style, but a presenter who is clear, knows what he/she wants to convey and has come prepared.

*A Note about Recorded Presentations: In a real organization, you do not get to try numerous times before a business pitch is perfect. You get one chance. You are taking this course because its learning outcomes are meant to enhance your career success. There is a place and time for recorded presentations. What we want to teach you is a solid methodology for a great presentation. These are career-building skills. A live presentation makes it as close to a real situation as possible.*

**Face to Face Presentation Requirements**

The preparation and planning requirements are identical for an online and F2F delivery. Both require a well-planned PPT presentation and speech. A F2F presentation requires that you be more conscious of your body and eye contact with your audience. There are some behavioral nuances that can enhance or flop a F2F presentation. Touching your hair, fidgeting, what to do with your hands are among the top missteps. Looking at your audience members and maintaining a comfortable body language, on the other hand, will help you engage, convince and sell an idea. An audience responds favorably to a good presentation by smiling, liking, and focusing on you. A presenter (like a performer) recognizes this positive energy instantly, which, in turn, builds your confidence as you go on with your delivery. Engaging your audience is like a nuclear chain reaction. It produces energy!

**Team Presentation Requirements**

Online team presentations have advantages and some drawbacks. It is indeed possible to make a presentation online as a team and do it really well. The preparation requirements are identical to solo presentations – online or F2F. However, in order to pull off a solid online pitch as a group, several requirements must be met:

1. Practice is even more critical. The delivery must be more than simply the sum of the parts (one by one). There must be a flow from one person to the next. A consistency in style and messaging.
2. Just like live presentations, intermix the delivery to showcase your “synergy”. Instead of A, B, C presenting one after the other, mix the turns up: A, C, B, A, B, C, etc… . This makes your delivery far more dynamic and your “team” more relevant.
3. Ensure you have rehearsed the switching part, where you pass the “baton” to the next one. Avoid long pauses in between.
4. Ensure technology is not going to be barrier. Good enough bandwidth is a must. All videos and mics must be turned on during your delivery.
5. Ensure you are in a quiet place. If you live with others, ask them to be quiet for few minutes.
6. And, finally, as a team member is presenting, pay attention! Do you fidget. Do not read, preparing for your part. Look at the webcam to make your “team” presence known to your audience.

**The Point**

A successful pitch starts well before you take the stage. It starts when you are researching your topic, when you decide on what words to use, when you incorporate great graphics and when you rehearse to “impress”. This is what we mean by a “planned” presentation. Throughout your career, you will see that this approach, though more work, is highly effective!

See next pages for the evaluation schemes for online and F2F presentations and some sample presentations.

**Online Delivery Marking Scheme**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weight** |
| Planned script followed | 15 |
| PPT design met requirements | 20 |
| Body language | 25 |
| Memorization and flow | 25 |
| Settings (video, mic, lighting, etc.) | 15 |
| Total | /100 |

**F2F Delivery Marking Scheme**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weight** |
| Planned script followed | 15 |
| PPT design met requirements | 15 |
| Body language (eye contact, hands, body) | 35 |
| Memorization and flow | 25 |
| Overall style | 15 |
| Total | /100 |

**Some recent samples:**

*Note: Due to the pandemics and migration to online delivery in the winter of 2020, we required that video be included in all online presentations. As such, there are not many solid examples yet, but these samples offer insight into what is required. All samples are presented here with expressed permission from the student.*

Catherine Esra – Btech

<https://youtu.be/xPufIO5Ol3c>

Gursheran Sidhu – Btech

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe___3lOvRI&feature=youtu.be>

Ian Jensen – DMIT (without video; note the energy and style) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVjAZvGrdGI&feature=youtu.be>