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Planning and getting started

AIMS

- Presentation technique and preparation
- The audience
- Structure (1) The introduction

1 Presentation technique and preparation

- 1 Look at the picture. What kind of situation is this? Do you think the presenter looks as if she is giving a good presentation? Why? Why not?

Discuss or make notes on the characteristics of a good presentation. Think about both the *content* and the *way* the speaker presents information.



2 The text below contains several recommendations for giving effective presentations. Scan the text to match the seven points below to the right paragraph, a–g. You do not have to read the text in detail.

- 1 Choose visuals to support the presentation.
- 2 Have a simple, clear structure.
- 3 Show enthusiasm.
- 4 Use PowerPoint.
- 5 Making informal presentations.
- 6 Consider the audience.
- 7 Dealing with nerves.

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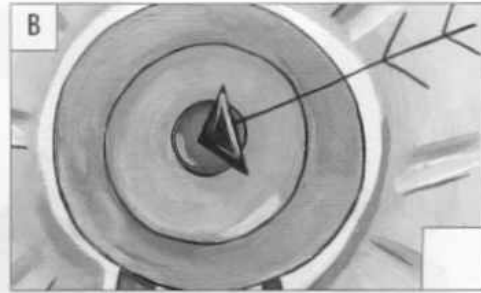
What advice from Luis E. Lamela do *you* think is the most important?

- a The key to a successful oral presentation is to keep things simple. I try to stick to three points. I give an overview of the points, present them to the audience, and summarize them at the end.
- b My purpose or desired outcome, the type of audience, and the message dictate the formality of the presentation, the kind of visuals, the number of anecdotes, and the jokes or examples that I use. Most of my presentations are designed to sell, to explain, or to motivate. When I plan the presentation, I think about the audience. Are they professionals or nonprofessionals? Purchasers or sellers? Providers or users? Internal or external? My purpose and the audience mix determine the tone and focus of the presentation.
- c When I make a presentation, I use the visuals as the outline. I will not use notes. I like to select the kind of visual that not only best supports the message but also best fits the audience and the physical location. PowerPoint, slides, overhead transparencies, and flip charts are the four main kinds of visuals I use.
- d PowerPoint and slide presentations work well when I am selling a product or an idea to large groups (15 people or more). In this format, I like to use examples and graphs and tables to support my message in a general way.
- e In small presentations, including one-on-ones and presentations where the audience is part of the actual process, I like transparencies or flip charts. They allow me to be more informal.
- f I get very, very nervous when I speak in public. I handle my nervousness by just trying to look as if, instead of talking to so many people, I'm walking in and talking to a single person. I don't like to speak behind lecterns. Instead, I like to get out and just be open and portray that openness: 'I'm here to tell you a story.'
- g I try very hard for people to enjoy my presentations by showing enthusiasm on the subject and by being sincere. I try not to use a hard sell – I just try to report or to explain – and I think that comes across. In addition, it helps that I am speaking about something that I very strongly believe in and something that I really, really enjoy doing.

Luis E. Lamela, February 11, 1997

From *Business and Administrative Communication* by Kitty Locker, Irwin McGraw-Hill, 1998.

- 3 What are the key considerations involved in *preparing* a presentation?
- 4 Listen to a group of management trainees talking about the preparation of presentations. They mention eight key areas, each represented by one of the pictures below. Number the pictures in the order in which they are mentioned.



Discussion

Comment on any of the points mentioned in the discussion you have heard. Which do you think are the most important? Do you feel it is necessary to write out a presentation?

2 The audience



1 Read the comments from the audience who are listening to a presentation at an international conference. What caused the problem in each case?

- 'What on earth is he talking about?' ~ 'I've no idea!'
- 'Hey, Sarah! Wake up! He's finished!'
- 'Read that! I can't read that! I'd need a pair of binoculars!'
- 'Speak up! I can't hear a thing!'
- 'Summarise four main points? I only noticed one! Have I been asleep?'

2 Look at the following situations.

A medical conference in Tokyo with papers on new techniques in open-heart surgery.

An internal meeting of administrative staff to discuss a new accounting procedure.

The Purchasing and Product Managers of a Taiwanese company interested in buying some production equipment from your company.

A staff meeting to discuss a charity event for earthquake victims.

Imagine you have to give a brief presentation in two of the above situations, plus one other situation that you decide. Make brief notes on the following:

- Will your talk be formal or informal?
- What are the audience's expectations in terms of technical detail, expertise, etc.?
- What is the audience's probable level of specialist knowledge? Are they experts or non-experts?
- How long will your talk be: five minutes, 20 minutes, half a day, or longer?
- What is your policy on questions? Will the audience interrupt or will they ask questions afterwards? Will there be any discussion?
- How will you help the audience to remember what you tell them?

3 Structure (1) The introduction

- 1 In any presentation the beginning is crucial. Certainly some things are essential in an introduction and others are useful. Here is a list of what could be included in an introduction. Mark them according to how necessary they are using the following scale:

Essential		Useful		Not necessary
1	2	3	4	5

Subject / Title of talk.

Introduction to oneself, job title, etc.

Reference to questions and / or discussion.

Reference to the programme for the day.

Reference to how long you are going to speak for.


Reference to using PowerPoint.

The scope of your talk: what is and is not included.

An outline of the structure of your talk.

A summary of the conclusions.

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-  2 Listen to the beginning of a presentation on the marketing plans for a new telecommunications system produced by Telco.

a) Is it a good introduction?

b) Why? Why not?

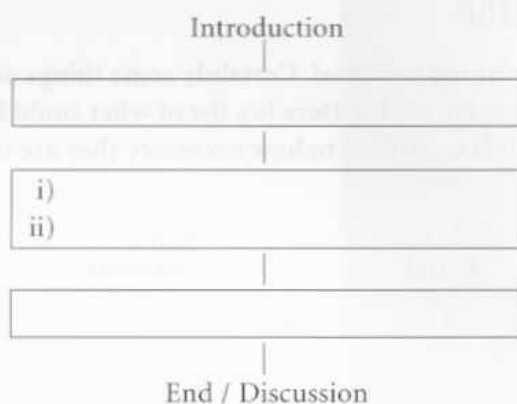
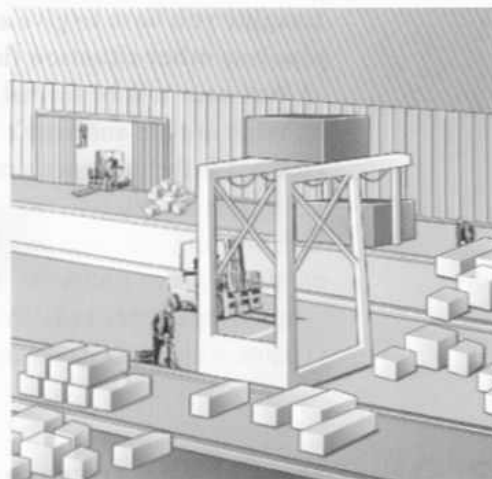
c) Label the structure of the talk.

Introduction

- 3 Now listen to a second example of an introduction to a presentation. This one is about plans to develop a new production plant in Taiwan.

As you listen, think about these points:

- Is it a good introduction?
- Why? Why not?
- Label the structure of the talk.



- 4 Work in pairs. Each of you should suggest a possible phrase for each of the prompts below.
- Greet your audience.
 - Introduce yourself.
 - Give the title of your talk.
 - Describe the structure of your talk.
 - Explain that the audience can interrupt if they want.
 - Say something about the length of your talk.
 - Say a colleague will be showing a video later.

- Now listen to the recording of a model introduction based on suitable phrases for a–g.

Practice 1

Use the notes below to prepare a brief introduction to a talk on safety for a manufacturing company.

New safety conditions for production staff

- 1 Protective clothing
 - 2 Training in accident prevention
 - 3 Changes to working practices
- Questions / Discussion



Listen to the recording of a model answer after you have given your own version.

Practice 2

Give a one-minute introduction only to a talk on any topic you like! If you cannot think of a topic, choose from the list below:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| your home town | your favourite sport | tourism |
| your first-ever job | eating out | holidays |
| a thing you really like | your previous job | your hobbies |

TRANSFER

Prepare an introduction to a short talk on one of the following:

- your company and / or its products / services
- any company you know well
- an institution that you know well.

Decide who the audience is. Make notes. Look at the Skills Checklist on page 62 and remember in particular to consider the points under the heading *Audience*. Look at the Language Checklist on page 62.

Do not write the whole text. When you are ready, practise your introduction. If you can, make a recording. When you have finished, answer the following questions:

- Did you make a recording? If you did, listen to it now.
- Does the recording sound well prepared and competent?
- Did you read everything you said from detailed notes?
- Did you talk using only brief notes?
- Did you speak clearly and not too fast?
- Did you outline the topic, structure and content of your talk?
- Did you refer to audience questions and to discussion?
- How could you improve your introduction?

Language Checklist

The introduction to a presentation

Greeting

Good morning / afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

(Ladies and) Gentlemen ...

Hello, everyone.

Subject

I plan to say a few words about ...

I'm going to talk about ...

The subject of my talk is ...

The theme of my presentation is ...

I'd like to give you an overview of ...

Structure

I've divided my talk into (three) parts.

My talk will be in (three) parts.

I'm going to divide ...

First ...

Second ...

Third ...

In the first part ...

Then in the second part ...

Finally ...

Timing

My talk will take about ten minutes.

The presentation will take about two hours ...

but there'll be a twenty-minute break in the middle.

We'll stop for lunch at 12 o'clock.

Policy on questions / discussion

Please interrupt if you have any questions.

After my talk there'll be time for a discussion and any questions.

Skills Checklist

Effective presentations – planning and preparation

Audience

- expectations
- technical knowledge
- size
- questions and / or discussion

Speaker's competence

- knowledge
- presentation technique

Content

- what to include
- length / depth (technical detail)
- number of key ideas

Structure

- sequence
 - beginning, middle, end
- repetition, summarising

Delivery

- style
 - formal / informal
 - enthusiasm / confidence
- voice
 - variety / speed
 - pauses
- body language
 - eye contact
 - gesture / movement
 - posture

Visual aids

- PowerPoint
- type / design / clarity
- relevance

Practice

- tape recorder
- script or notes

Room

- size / seating
- equipment (does it work?)
- sound quality

Language

- simple / clear
- spelling
- sentence length
- structure signals

Quick Communication Check

1 Subject

Complete the spaces in the five opening sentences of presentations.

1 My t _____ today
is about our plans for
entering new markets.

2 I'd l _____ to say
something today about
the AX project.

3 The presentation will
give you an o _____
of our organisation.

4 The t _____ of my talk is
the 'Single European Market
and Competition Policy'.

5 This morning I want to e _____
the special relationship between us
and our suppliers.

2 Presentation structure

The classic presentation has three parts. Here are six sentences from the introduction to a presentation. Put them in the right order.

- a) I'm going to talk about the new organisation of our European Sales. ☐
- b) Afterwards you can ask any questions or say what you think. ☐
- c) Good afternoon, everyone. My presentation today is about changes in our organisation. ☐
- d) Finally I'll describe the new arrangement – the new system. ☐
- e) First I'll describe the current situation – how things are now. ☐
- f) Then I'll explain why we have to change this. ☐

3 Introducing your presentation

Make verb + noun phrases by matching the verbs below to the right words. See the example.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1 to talk about | e | a) questions |
| 2 to explain | _____ | b) an overview |
| 3 to say | _____ | c) a few words |
| 4 to give | _____ | d) the problem |
| 5 to divide | _____ | e) something |
| 6 to answer | _____ | f) the talk into x parts |

4 Your policy on questions and discussion

Make sentences from the words below.

- 1 like whenever interrupt you
- 2 if questions have ask you please any
- 3 questions until save any the please end
- 4 you have I a for handout
- 5 points handout my the includes main the of talk
- 6 few may notes take to want you a
- 7 be will discussion there a later

1 talk, 2 like, 3 overview, 4 title, 5 explain
a) 2, b) 6, c) 1, d) 5, e) 3, f) 4
3
1e), 2d), 3c), 4b), 5f), 6a)
4
1 interrupt whenever you like.
2 Please ask if you have any questions.
3 Please save any questions until the end.
4 I have a handout for you.
5 The handout includes the main points of
my talk.
6 You may want to take a few notes.
7 There will be a discussion later.