



Presentations – structure and key phrases

Presentation styles

Read the two alternative openings for the same presentation and then study the points below.

Opening 1

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you very much for inviting me here to speak to you. Let me introduce myself – my name is Carlos Pinto and I am the sales director of Downtown Properties. My objective today is to introduce our company and show you how we can help you find the right office for your business. I have divided my presentation into three parts. First I'll tell you a little about the history of our company, then I'll show you some slides of office space that we currently have available, and finally I'll deal with the question of cost. My presentation will take around twenty minutes, and if you have any questions I'll be pleased to answer them at the end. Okay. Let's start by looking at who we are and how the company has developed over the last twenty years (*shows first slide, which is a timeline of the history of the company*)

Opening 2

I bet you're sick of looking for office space, right? Are you feeling like this? (*shows slide with a cartoon of a stressed businessman in a small room*) Who feels like that? (*everyone laughs*) Wouldn't you prefer to feel like this? (*shows slide with a cartoon of a relaxed executive in a large, modern office*) Now, you all know the importance of location for business success. Well, we can help you. We're called Downtown Properties, and we've been offering rental solutions in this city for more than twenty years. I'd like to find out something from each of you in turn: what is the single most important reason why you want to move from your current offices?

- Opening 1 is more formal, structured and European-style. There are many typical 'key phrases' for presentations. In fact, the whole extract is based on standard phrases for introducing the speaker, introducing the topic, describing the structure of the presentation, telling the audience when they can ask questions, moving to the first point, etc.
- The advantages of a presentation in this style are: it is safe for a non-native speaker; it relies less on personality; it guarantees that all important points will be covered; it makes the structure clear at the beginning; the audience knows when to ask questions.

- The disadvantages are: it might be boring; it might focus on irrelevant information.
- Opening 2 is more informal, spontaneous and American-style. There are no 'key phrases'.
- The advantages of a presentation in this style are: it is lively; it involves the audience; the speaker can respond immediately to the needs / interests of the audience.
- The disadvantages are: it is risky for a non-native speaker; it relies on an extrovert personality; the speaker might lose direction or miss important points.

Most people will use a presentation style that is somewhere between these two extremes, and it depends on many things such as the speaker's confidence and personality, the topic, and the expectations of the audience.

The mind map opposite gives help with key phrases for those occasions when you choose to use them. Units 15, 18 and 20–22 are also very relevant to the language of presentations.

Presentation structure

A possible structure for a presentation is given below. Use it as a planning checklist – you don't have to follow every step, but at least consider all the points. The first letters make an easy-to-remember acronym: *Bomber B*.

Bang! – something that you say or do at the beginning that gets the attention of the audience: a visual aid, a story, a joke, a surprising fact, a reference to 'here and now' (the audience, the place, etc).

Opening – thanking the organizers for inviting you, a few words about yourself, telling the audience the topic and structure of your presentation, making it clear whether questions should be kept to the end or not.

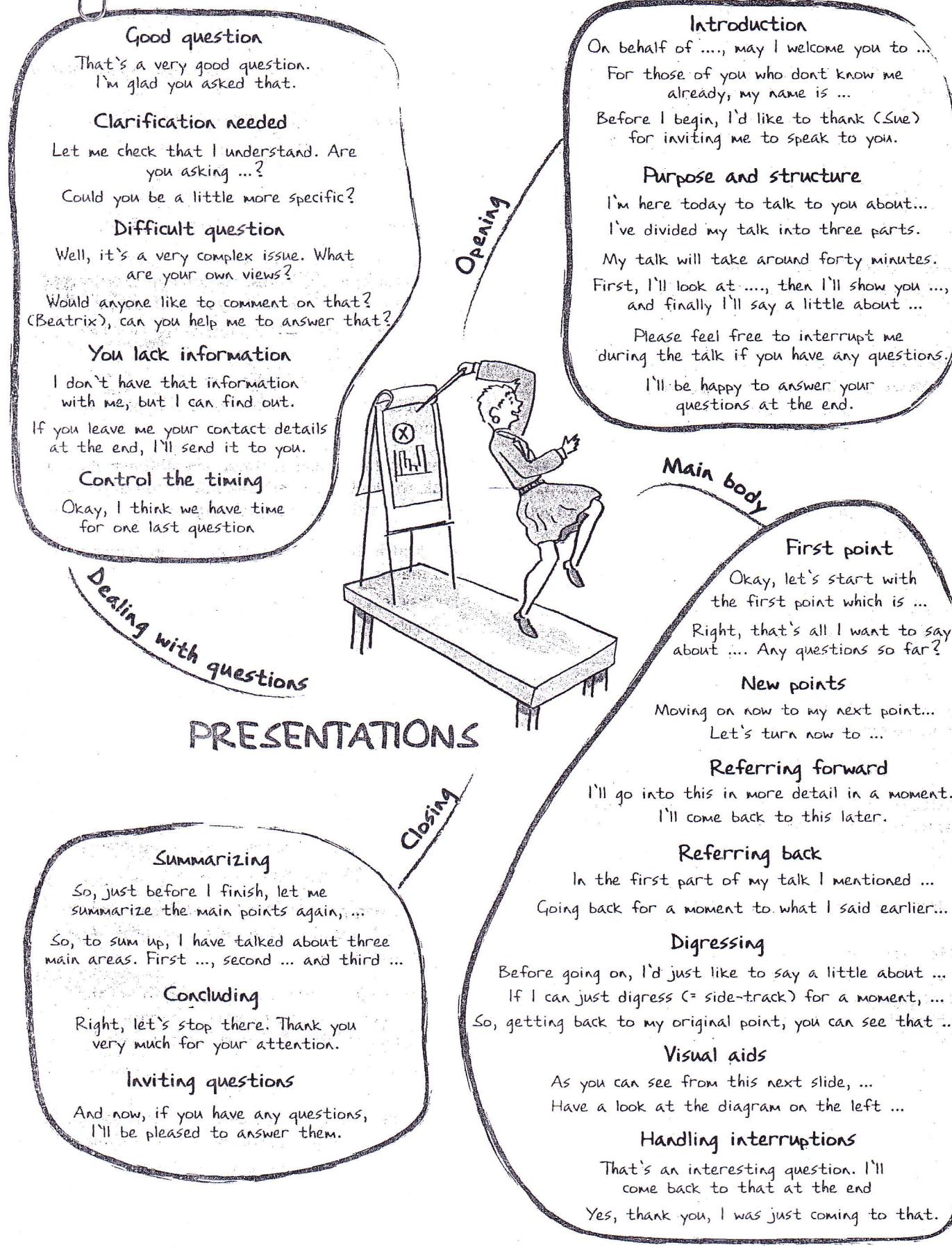
Message – the main points of your presentation. Decide on just three key points at the planning stage and write them down as three short sentences. This will focus your mind, and more than this will be hard for the audience to remember. Perhaps use these three sentences as the final slide in your presentation.

Bridge – make it clear to the audience how your message connects to their needs / interests.

Examples – use practical, easy-to-understand examples to make your points clear.

Recap – short for 'recapitulation', a summary of your main points.

Bang! – a link back to your first *Bang!* to give a sense of closure.



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Presentations – structure and key phrases: Exercises

14.1 Put the words into the correct order to make phrases used in a presentation.

a) Could please your attention, I have?

Could I have your attention, please?

b) I'm here at InfoCom new product responsible for development.

I'm here at InfoCom new product responsible for development.

c) For who don't know me those of you already, my name is Nancy Holmes.

For who don't know me those of you already, my name is Nancy Holmes.

d) It's always a pleasure of experienced professionals an audience to speak to like yourselves. I know a long way that of you many have travelled to be here.

It's always a pleasure of experienced professionals an audience to speak to like yourselves. I know a long way that of you many have travelled to be here.

e) On the company behalf of, to this presentation may I you welcome.

On the company behalf of, to this presentation may I you welcome.

f) The aim of our new product line is to give some you information about my talk.

The aim of our new product line is to give some you information about my talk.

g) Please during the talk feel free me to interrupt if you any have questions.

Please during the talk feel free me to interrupt if you any have questions.

h) Okay, I'd like to slide by at this first looking begin. Can see at the back the people okay?

Okay, I'd like to slide by at this first looking begin. Can see at the back the people okay?

i) My forty minutes take presentation will around.

My forty minutes take presentation will around.

j) I've divided into my talk three parts main. First, I'll give you the different models an overview in of the range. Then I'll to describe move on each the key benefits of model. And finally I'll say about prices a little.

I've divided into my talk three parts main. First, I'll give you the different models an overview in of the range. Then I'll to describe move on each the key benefits of model. And finally I'll say about prices a little.

14.2 Match the phrases from exercise 14.1 to their uses below.

1 Getting attention a

2 Name

3 Position

4 Greeting

5 Audience / Place

6 Purpose

7 Structure

8 Timing

9 Questions

10 First point

14.3 Speaking practice. Exercise 14.1 gives some phrases for opening a presentation and exercise 14.2 gives the correct order. Make your own script:

- Write the phrases again, in order. Writing will help you to memorize the language.
- Use your own name, organization, etc.
- Substitute any other words or phrases to personalize the introduction for you.

When you finish, read it aloud several times. As you speak, think about where and how often to pause, and also which syllables have a strong beat.

14.4 Match the more formal phrases in exercise 14.1 with the more informal phrases below.

1 Okay, let's get started. a

2 I'm Nancy Holmes.

3 And I'm in charge of product development.

4 Thanks for coming.

5 It's nice to see so many familiar faces, and I hope you all found somewhere to park!

6 I'm here today to tell you about our new product line.

7 I'm going to cover three areas: first, the different models in the range, then key benefits, and finally price.

8 I'll speak for about forty minutes.

9 If you have a question, please feel free to interrupt.

10 Okay, let's take a look at this first slide.

14.5 Speaking practice. Read aloud the version in exercise 14.4. It is already in the correct order. Again, use your own name.

14.6 Speaking practice. You are going to use the structure in exercise 14.2 to practise a more spontaneous opening. Follow the instructions.

1 Cover all the exercises on this page except exercise 14.2.

2 Give the opening to a presentation:

• Use the headings in 14.2 as a guide while you speak.
(Don't worry if you change the sequence a little.)

• Invent any details that you want – it is not a memory exercise.

• Practise several times in a low voice, and then speak with a strong, clear 'presentation' voice.

14.7 Each pair of words can be used in one sentence.
Write them in the correct spaces.

as / see come / later digress / little
 finish / summarize getting / to going / moment
 let / attention moving / talk pleased / answer
 right / far start / looking turn / question

- 1 Okay, let's start by looking at an overview of our new product line.
- 2 I'll go back to this point.
- 3 That's all, that's all I want to say about the overview. Any questions so far?
- 4 So, let's move on, I'd like to talk about the key benefits of each model.
- 5 Let's go back for a moment to what I said earlier.
- 6 If I can just say a little for a moment, I'd like to say a few words about the background to this decision.
- 7 So, let's go back to the point, you can see that this really is a big improvement on the old model.
- 8 Finally, I'd like to turn to the price of price.
- 9 From the table you can see from the table in this next slide, our prices are still very competitive.
- 10 So, just before I stop, let me summarize the main points again.
- 11 Right, that's it's stop there. Thank you very much for your attention.
- 12 And now, if you have any questions, I'll be available to answer them.

14.8 Memory game. Follow these instructions:

- Take one minute to try to memorize all the phrases in exercise 14.7. Repeat them in your head, or aloud in a low voice.
- Cover the whole of 14.7.
- Take a piece of paper. Write down the phrases using the hints 1–12 at the top of the next column. (If you are in class, work with a partner.)

Speaking practice

Give a short presentation. Follow these instructions:

- 1 Decide on a topic. Here are three suggestions:
 - You are the Director of Tourism for a city or region in your country. Give a presentation about why people should come to visit.
 - Choose an object that you have with you, or that is in the room. Give a sales presentation about why it is the best of its kind and why everyone should have one.
 - Choose a topic that is similar to real-life presentations that you make.

- 1 Okay / start / looking / overview / product line.
- 2 I'll / back / this later.
- 3 Right / all / want / say / overview / questions / far?
- 4 So, / moving / like / talk / key benefits / each model.
- 5 Going back / moment / what / earlier.
- 6 If / just digress / moment, / like / say a little / background / decision.
- 7 So, / getting back / original point, / can see / is / big improvement / old model.
- 8 Finally, / like / turn / question / price.
- 9 As / see / the table / this next /, prices / very competitive.
- 10 So, / just / finish / let / summarize / main / again.
- 11 Right, / stop there. / Thank / much / your attention.
- 12 And now, / if / questions, I'll / pleased / them.
- When you finish, compare with the original phrases.

14.9 Match the beginning with the end of each phrase.
They are used for dealing with questions.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 I'm glad | complex issue. |
| 2 Leave me your | one last question. |
| 3 Could you be | you asked that. |
| 4 Well, it's a very | contact details and I'll send it to you.. |
| 5 We have time for | a little more specific? |
| 6 Let me check | own views? |
| 7 What are your | the top of my head. |
| 8 I don't know that off | that I understand. |

14.10 Match the phrases from exercise 14.9 with their uses below.

- a) Reply to a good question
- b) Clarification needed
- c) Reply to a difficult question
- d) You lack information
- e) Control the timing

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	

- 2 Plan your presentation. **Make a few very short notes on the main points.** However, do not write a full script. You want to look at the audience, not at a piece of paper.
- 3 Look back briefly at the mind map and the exercises to review some phrases.
- 4 Give your presentation. Remember to ask for questions at the end.
(If you are working in class, your teacher will set a time limit. If you are working alone, use a colleague / friend / domestic animal as your audience.)

Presentations – being lively and persuasive

The ancient Greeks

The ancient Greeks were famous for their love of arguing and debating in public places – people like Plato and Aristotle gave the best presentations of their day. They thought that the best form of argument was reason, but they recognized that because of human weakness two further techniques would always be used: appeal to a person's good character and appeal to the emotions. These three techniques together they called 'rhetoric', and nowadays we use the expression 'rhetorical language' to refer to language that is deliberately intended to persuade and influence.

You will see a summary of the most common rhetorical techniques in the mind map opposite. Some would be recognizable to the ancient Greeks, others are more associated with the language of advertising or public relations. All are useful in business presentations – they add a bit of colour to what would otherwise be a rather dry and boring talk. But use them with care: they can sound false and manipulative if used too often or too obviously.

A persuasive presentation?

Below is a short presentation that uses many of the techniques opposite. How many of them can you spot? Check afterwards with the Answer Key, then read it aloud, emphasizing the rhetorical techniques.

This year marks our fiftieth anniversary as a life insurance company. And over those fifty years, we've seen a lot of life. We've seen anger and joy. We've seen bad times and good times. Social change has been dramatic. But over that time one thing has been constant: our commitment to innovation, quality and value.

That's why we're still here, and growing. We understand our customers. We know what our customers want. They want financial security – for now, and for the generations who follow. In these changing times, they want a solid future.

What about you? Perhaps you want to build funds to pay for your children's college education? We have a plan that's right for you. Perhaps you want to provide for your children in the event of you having an accident – or worse? We have a plan that's right for you. Perhaps you want to turn your regular savings into a guaranteed retirement income for your golden years? We have a plan that's right for you.

All that is for families. But families aren't the only ones to benefit from our products. We also provide business owners with financial incentives to offer their employees. With our products, you can give your staff pension plans, health plans, and life insurance. Those are the things that really count in a compensation package, those are the things that make a worker feel valued. And we all know: a happy worker is a productive worker.

I encourage individuals, families and business owners to take time today to create financial peace of mind tomorrow. Thank you.

A key element in 'persuasion' is effective use of your voice. Above all, this means using pauses for emphasis and dramatic impact. Try reading aloud the above presentation again. Do it several times in different ways. Experiment with pauses, volume changes, and intonation. Exaggerate for fun; create a sense of drama.

Other issues in presentations

In a presentation it is essential to transmit self-confidence and build trust. To achieve this, key issues are:

- Good eye contact. Looking directly at the audience is vital – it is always a mistake to read from notes, or have your back to the audience.
- 'Being yourself'. This means using your strengths and not trying to be something that you are not. If you are normally funny, then use humour, otherwise don't. You want your natural personality, and your natural interest and enthusiasm for the subject, to come across to the audience. This won't happen if you are thinking all the time about presentation tricks and techniques.

If you begin to feel nervous at any time, the best advice is: stop, breathe, smile, and look around the room. One slow, deep breath will give you a sense of calm and help to lower your voice and reduce its speed. Smiling and looking around the room will give you and the audience some human contact.

Another useful technique – good at any time, not just when you are nervous – is to throw the presentation back to the audience. Ask them a question, or ask them if they have any questions to ask you.

Finally, planning is everything. *Fail to prepare and prepare to fail.* This means:

- Be clear about the 3–5 points you want the audience to go away with.
- Know your audience (especially their level of background knowledge).
- Prepare your notes (key words – perhaps on numbered cards).
- Think of ways to present the information visually (but keep slides clear and simple).
- Get to the room early to practise with the technology and check the seating.

Emotional language

Imagine that your car breaks down on a lonely country road. It's the middle of the night. Our car recovery service with GPS tracking means that we'll be there within an hour.

Metaphor

This proposal is pointless. It's like rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic.

Idiom

Don't worry, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Anecdote

It reminds me of the time I ...

Rhetorical question**You don't expect an answer**

Can we really get involved in this project when our resources are so limited?

You give the answer yourself

What's the solution? You can see it right here on this next slide.

BEING LIVELY AND PERSUASIVE

**The rule of three'****Use words / structures in groups of three**

It's economical, reliable, and easy-to-clean.

I ask you: 'Is this reasonable? Is this good business practice? Is this what our customers expect?'

Make three key points

This presentation will cover three main issues. First, ... Second, ... and Finally

Do you want high safety at low cost?
Global reach - local solutions

Contrast**Repetition****Sounds**

Beginning of word:
Software for leisure and learning

Stressed syllable in middle of word:
And we call our shop: Planet Organic.

End of word:
We need negotiation,
not confrontation.

Words

We deliver on time, every time.
This device is powered by a tiny battery.
It's a battery that lasts 40% longer than the one in our previous model.
Yet this same battery weighs less than a paper clip.

Sound + Structure

Beat the rest - choose the best.

You'll feel happy and healthy,
relaxed and refreshed.

Words + Structure

Saving time is good, saving money is better.
Wherever you are, whenever you need us, we'll be there.

Stop-and-start repetition

What's the problem? The problem is...
Just take a moment to look at our results. Results that have made us a leading player in the financial services industry.

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Presentations – being lively and persuasive: Exercises

15.1 Complete the rhetorical questions with the pairs of words in the box.

How + do When + expect Why + keep on
 Where + go How much + is What + waiting

- 1 The opportunities are there. We've got the staff.
 _____ are we _____ for?
- 2 Our production costs are going up and we're losing market share. There's one question on everyone's mind.
 _____ do we _____ from here?
- 3 We went from a small office in Bratislava ten years ago to be market leader in Central Europe today.
 _____ did we _____ it?
- 4 We've invested €5 million in new plant and machinery. I know what you're thinking. _____ can we _____ to see a profit?
- 5 Product development times went way over schedule and we were late to market. Again. _____ do we _____ making the same mistake?
- 6 We spend a lot of money on TV advertising at all hours of the day and night. _____ of that _____ wasted?

15.2 Replace one key word in each sentence with a close synonym from the box. Your aim is to produce repetition of sounds for dramatic impact.

boom effective glorious major progress variety

- 1 We're 100% focused on technological innovation – we believe in the power of improvement.
- 2 You don't want just any knowledge management system – you want a system that is efficient and helpful.
- 3 Choose us as your local partner, and watch your business grow!
- 4 As well as value, we also offer choice.
- 5 Congratulations to all members of the sales team – results this year haven't just been good, they've been wonderful.
- 6 Invest in Rubovia – we have easy access to important markets.

15.3 Replace one word each time with a word that has already been used. Your aim is to produce repetition of words for dramatic impact.

- 1 You have a lot of information on your databases. But can information you mine that knowledge to get what's really useful?
- 2 Our new range of shoes features tiny diamonds set into the leather. It's the most exclusive line that we have ever produced.

- 3 What's the reason that we keep going over-budget? The explanation clearly is that we lack good financial control.
- 4 The issue of energy conservation is becoming increasingly important – it's the topic that's at the top of the agenda in the construction sector.
- 5 We have a global presence, with offices in every major centre from Berlin to Beijing. But being international doesn't always help – sometimes you need a local strategy as well.

15.4 Underline five contrasts in this presentation extract. (Remember, one contrast will have two words.) The first one has been done for you.

Our exclusive new watch makes its own electrical power by the movements of your hand. Wear it for one day to get energy for at least two weeks. It is made of titanium – a light material, yet strong and kind to your skin. The styling is superb, combining classical elegance with modern design. As you know, our watches are not cheap. But people who wear our watches are not looking for a cheap product. They are looking for something special. They want a quality timepiece – to celebrate their success today, and pass on to their children tomorrow.

15.5 Complete each sentence with the three most appropriate words or phrases from the box.

clean commitment customer needs
 distribution channels drive future maintain
 highly profitable well-run running costs
 time-to-market vision

- 1 Take a look at our new machine. It's easy to _____, easy to _____, and has very low _____.
- 2 It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you our new CEO. She's a woman with _____ and _____.
- 3 Why should you invest in this company? Because it's _____, _____ and has a great long-term _____.
- 4 Sales are flat. What can we do? We need more accurate identification of _____, more efficient _____ and faster _____.

Metaphors and Idioms

- Here is an example of a metaphor:

It's like rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic.

(= It's just making small changes that will do nothing to stop the big disaster that's coming.)

- Here is an example of an idiom:

There is light at the end of the tunnel.

(= Finally there is a solution in sight after a long period of difficulties.)

A metaphor is where you describe one thing in terms of another. An idiom is a fixed expression whose meaning is different to the meaning of the individual words. In practice, they are often very similar.

Metaphors and idioms add colour to a presentation or discussion. But use them with care: other non-native speakers may find them difficult to understand. Also, you have to get every single word right, otherwise they sound ridiculous.

15.6 Complete each phrase with the correct word/s in the right-hand column.

- make a _____
- corner the _____
- get off the _____
- cook the _____
- come under _____
- keep an eye _____
- get a piece _____
- put my _____
- spend money _____
- be in _____
- sell like _____
- be a real high-_____
- see it in _____
- get more bang for _____
- be a big fish _____

- ground
fire
market
killing
books
of the action
like water
on things
the red
foot in it
black and white
your buck (AmE)
hotcakes
in a small pond
flyer

15.7 Match the phrases in exercise 15.6 with the meanings below.

- accidentally say or do something embarrassing or that annoys someone
- be important, but only in a small field of activity
- be criticized
- be destined to go to the top of a profession
- become involved (in something exciting and profitable)
- be over budget; have a negative bank balance

Speaking / Writing practice

- Write the script for a short presentation that you might give as part of your job or university course. At the planning stage, refer to units 14 and 15.
- Practise speaking the presentation, using the script.

- dominate (or even monopolize) the market
- falsify the accounts
- get more value for the money you spend
- have written confirmation, not just a verbal agreement
- look after things (while someone is away)
- make a large, sudden profit
- sell very well
- spend a lot of money without any control
- start a project and make it successful

15.8 Complete each example by writing the letter of a phrase from exercise 15.6 in the gap.

- Our main competitor has just gone bankrupt! If we offer a job to their marketing director and get access to their client list, we'll _____.
- We're losing money fast. If we go on like this, we'll _____ by the end of the year.
- I have an apology to make. I went out for a drink with some colleagues after work yesterday and I _____. I told them you were applying for a new job.
- I'll be away for a few days, but Isabel will _____.
- It's an interesting project, but I don't think it will ever _____. It's too expensive.
- On balance I think it's the right thing to do. But it's a big risk, and we're going to _____ from the shareholders for taking it.
- City Hall has plans to build a huge out-of-town industrial park. There's going to be a lot of contracts for the construction work, and we need to make sure we _____.
- Profits were up 28% last year. And don't worry – we didn't ask our accountants to _____.
- It's the World Cup next year. If we put the national flag on our t-shirts they'll _____.
- We have to set a tight budget – with corporate hospitality it's very easy to _____.
- Thank you for that kind introduction, but I'm not really as famous as you say! My area of research is very specialized and it's quite easy to _____.
- All three candidates have good CVs. I think we should choose the one with real leadership potential, the one who's going to _____.
- This is a very innovative product in a very specialized field. I think we can _____.
- They were making a lot of promises at the meeting, but we need to _____ before we can go ahead.
- Value-for-money is important to many people. We need to give a clear message: shop with us and you'll _____.

- Now write down the key points (max 20 words in total) on a piece of paper. Practise again using just these key points to guide you – not the full script.
- Practise again. Be lively and persuasive.