

Unit 101 – Introducing Your Presentation

Today we look at some of the language used during internal presentations.

To start off this episode, I've asked some of my colleagues what tips they might have for making a good introduction. Following that, we have the main dialog and then the debrief. So here's me putting my colleagues right on the spot...

Clayton: Okay, we're talking about presentations, and in particular introductions to presentations. Jeff, do you have any guidelines you use when you're writing, preparing or actually doing an introduction? Is there something you always keep in mind, and say, "Well this is what I always do and must do?"

Jeff: Well, in English we talk about something called an "elevator pitch" – which is like a summary of a proposal or idea, which takes maybe no more than 10 to 15 seconds to explain. The idea is that it should be short enough that you can actually give it to someone in an elevator, just in that very brief period of time that you have their attention.

Now I think when you're beginning a presentation, in some ways you're in the same situation: You may be planning to give a very long speech – it could last 30 or 45 minutes – but you've only got that first minute or so to convince people that they ought to be listening to what you're going to say. So you've got to give them some good reasons to listen to everything else that is coming up – give them an idea of what you're going to say and why they should be listening.

Clayton: Do you have a formula Peter? I do. If you don't...

Peter: Er, well, please tell me! Let me get my pen!

Clayton: Well I got this formula from a certain school a long time ago. It's pretty good. It has all the elements I think should be in every presentation – whether it's formal or informal.

Peter: Well tell us!

Clayton: Your name - well first of all a greeting – you have to say ...

Peter: I think you should always start with a Thank you!

Clayton: Or Welcome or Hello.

Peter: I think Thank you.

Jeff: Or Hello.

Peter: Thank you and welcome.

Clayton: Well why don't we put them all together, "Hello, thank you and welcome to what-do-you-call-it."

Jeff: You can put them all together.

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Clayton: Put them all together – one package. And then a name – I think it's kind of rude not to tell people exactly who you are and your title, what your job is and why you are qualified to speak on the subject.

Peter: And that's a good point – you know a lot of internal presentations these days are done over telephone conference or video conference and you've got people from different international locations. They might've heard your name but they might not know your face. And so when you get up to speak, even within your company and even maybe your division or your department – it is, as you say good manners, but it is also important (to identify yourself).

Clayton: Yeah, I think a lot of listeners to these podcasts – they themselves are very accomplished speakers in their own language – and so I'm sure they know how to make a speech, or presentation, and hopefully though, this podcast will give these speakers, and others, the ideas of how...the types of language we use in presentations, and in particular introductions in this particular podcast.

Vocabulary

elevator pitch: In this context, a pitch means a short speech used to sell something. An elevator pitch is a pitch so short that you could give it to someone, for example a senior manager, just in that 10 to 15 seconds you have his or her attention in an elevator ride. "Last week I saw our marketing VP in the coffee room and I gave him an elevator pitch about my new sales strategy."

accomplished speakers: Accomplished is an adjective that means skilled or expert. So accomplished speakers are people who are very good at giving talks, presentations, etc. "Even if you're not an accomplished speaker, there are a few tips you can follow to give a professional presentation."

signposting: Signposting (or a signpost) is language that helps us follow the structure of a talk, such as "First..., second..., third...", or "Now I'm going to talk about..." They're called signposts because they show the way, just like a road sign. It also can be used as a verb. "It's important to signpost your talk well so people can follow what you're saying."

videoconference: A conference held through a video connection so that people at distant locations can see each other on the monitor. "We had a videoconference with Shanghai last week."

consumer products: Products whose end customer are normal people instead of companies. Consumer products include food, soap, clothing, etc. – anything that people use. "We have been looking for ways to expand from purely consumer product-oriented approaches to more B2B – or business to business – oriented approaches."

visual aids: Visual aids are anything people can look at to understand your presentation better, such as charts, graphs, pictures, models, handouts, etc.

ready when you are: This phrase is used to signal that you're ready to start something whenever the other participants are. For example, if you're about to travel with a colleague, you might say, "It's almost time to leave for the airport. I'm ready when you are."

loud and clear: You can say this phrase to show you can hear something loudly and clearly. Sometimes, it's used to signal that you understand a point someone else has made. "I hear you loud and clear, Barbara. The deadline is tomorrow."

....leading off: ...starting something. "Laura will be leading off the seminar with a presentation on interview skills."

product lines: Groups of products that share some similarities, such as physical qualities, distribution channels, or marketing plans. "Apple's product line includes notebook and desktop computers, iPods, and cell phones."

sector: A division of something larger, such as a society, economy, or company. "Our commercial lending sector is our most successful overall."

analyst: A person who analyzes, or studies and explains, an aspect of a business. "Hal has been a real estate analyst for over 20 years. He's seen everything."

trends: In business, "trends" refers to how something – sales, for example – progresses or moves. There are many terms used to describe trends and they'll be covered in later chapters of this e-book. In general, though, trends can go up or down, stay the same, or fluctuate (go up and down in an unpredictable way). "The latest trend shows that our sales are going up among teenagers in Asia and South America."

forecast: A "forecast" is made when analysts take current information and predict the direction of future trends. "The forecast doesn't look good for our SUV division. People are concerned about gas prices and the environment."

(sales) strategies: Specific plans to achieve a goal. In the case of sales, this would mean plans to use certain sales methods and marketing plans. "As part of our sales strategy, we're going to focus on growth markets in SE Asia."

kickoff meeting: Kickoff (from sports) means to start; so a kickoff meeting is the first in a series of meetings or the first event at a conference, etc. "At our annual sales meeting, Jenny chaired the kickoff meeting this year."

prepared remarks: Often at a presentation, a speaker will give "prepared remarks." In other words, he or she will give a talk which has been planned beforehand. "I have my prepared remarks written on cards so I can review them before I speak."

handout: "Handouts" are written copies of material related to a presentation, which are distributed to the audience. Handouts might be copies of PowerPoint slides, notes, or resources. Note that the phrasal verb "hand out" also means "to distribute." "Phil included a list of helpful websites with his handouts."

tie in to / tie in with: To be related to, or connect with, a topic or product. "LEGO produces a variety of toy building sets to tie in with popular movies such as 'Star Wars.'"

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Dialog

Perry: Okay, everybody, let's all take a seat and get things started. We have a long day ahead of us, and we need to keep to the schedule... So let's see how our videoconference line is working. Hello Sydney and New York! Can both of you hear us and see us ok?

Sydney: Yes, Perry, we have our whole sales group here. Everything is working ok, and we're **ready when you are**.

New York: **Loud and clear** here in New York too, Perry.



Perry: OK then.....**leading off** this morning is Claude Dautry from consumer products division, and he'll be presenting some of the latest sales figures and trends for our **product lines** in this very key **sector**. Claude...if you're ready.....please take it away.

Claude: Thank you, Perry.... And good morning everybody. A warm welcome from our Paris office, whether you are here in person – or here via video from Sydney or New York. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Claude Dautry, senior sales **analyst** from our Consumer Products Division, and I'll be presenting our analysis of recent sales data. We will then examine some important **trends** and conclusions we can make about the growth of our product lines. After that, we plan to look at some **forecasts** and proposed sales **strategies** to adjust to the trends we see developing.

During this **kickoff meeting**, we hope to arrive at some recommendations to forward to senior management, before their next shareholder meeting. And finally, we will open it up to any questions you might have about sales in general, whether it concerns the EU, the Americas or the Asia-Pacific region. I estimate my **prepared remarks** will cover about 30 minutes, and the next 30 minutes will be dedicated to answering your questions. Hopefully, you've all received the **handout** material I sent, but I'll also be showing the charts in PowerPoint, in case you don't have your handouts with you. So, let's take a look at our first topic, which– uh yes, you have a question?

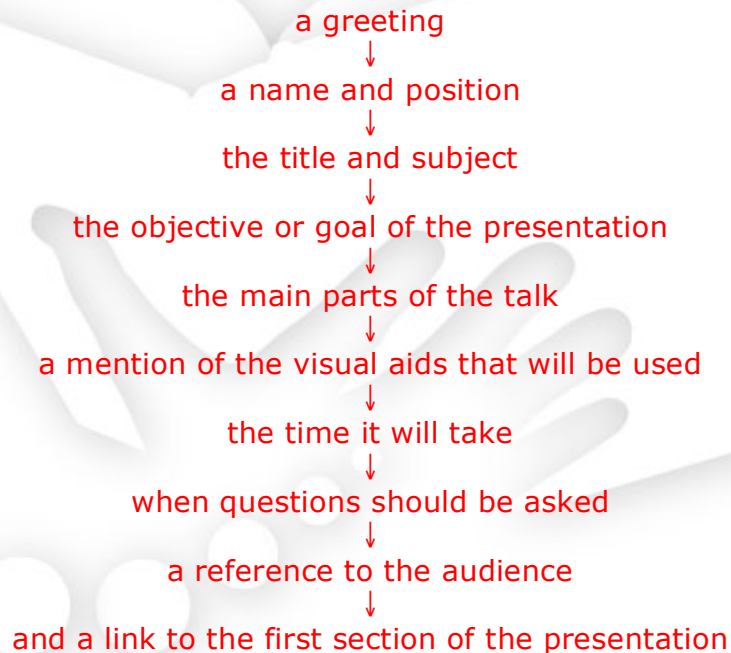
Questioner: Yes, sorry to interrupt...I was wondering if you planned to talk about global marketing efforts and how they **tie in to** regional sales promotions.
(fade out)

Debrief

Building up a spirit of teamwork in an internal meeting is very important, especially during the introduction stage of a presentation. Personality plays a part, but some simple language patterns do help. Use pronouns such as *we*, *all*, *us*, *our*, *ours*, and *everybody* as much as possible. For example, when starting a meeting, we can say:

- Well, why don't we all get started?
- Let's all take our seats, if we could.
- Is everybody ready to start?
- Ok, let's kick this meeting off.

The introduction phase sets the tone and expectations of a meeting or presentation. Although very often the presenter will introduce him or herself to the audience, sometimes another person may introduce the speaker, as in our example where the presenter was introduced by the chairperson of the teleconference. A complete introduction for a presentation includes the following parts:



Not all presentation introductions will have every one of these elements, and not all will follow this sequence. However, most proper introductions will use a majority of these elements in some form, and in this general sequence.

Let's start with some greetings:

- Good morning, everybody.
- Good afternoon, and welcome to the North American division.
- Welcome, all of you, to the Smith Center.
- I thank you all for coming this evening, to our first employee benefits review.

The name and position of the presenter usually follows. If the presenter is well known amongst the audience, he may not even mention his own name. If most of the people know the presenter, then they may precede their self-introduction

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with "For those of you who don't know me...". However, when presenting in front of large or widely separated departments, it is customary to introduce yourself with not only your own full name, but your title and area of responsibility. This tells audience members who you are, what your position is, and what sort of knowledge or duties you have concerning the presentation subject. Let's try some names and titles:

- My name is _____, and I'm a HR manager for our UK operation.
- I'm _____, and I'm a test engineer for the QC Department.

(Repeated with example names)

- My name is Alison Wright, and I'm the HR manager for our UK operation.
- I'm Chuck Yeager, and I'm a test engineer with Quality Department.

When introducing one's duties, or areas of knowledge, we usually use the words "I am responsible for...". Or, "I am in charge of...". Let's try some of these:

- I'm responsible for new employee training...
- I'm in charge of test data collection...
- I'm responsible for designing new electrical switches...
- I manage regional sales promotions in South America...

Try combining the above phrases into complete introductory statements that include name, title and area of responsibility: After the beep, introduce yourself and state your responsibilities at your company. Then listen to an example answer to compare. Of course, the details of everyone's answer will be a little different:

Learner: _____

Example answer: Good morning everybody, my name is Alison Wright. I'm the HR manager for our London division, and I'm responsible for new employee training.

After the presenter introduces himself and his position, the subject of the presentation is then usually stated, along with the purpose of the presentation. A well-designed presentation will then include a guide to the rest of the talk. The presenter will tell the audience what is to come, and what parts of the presentation will be presented in which order. This is called signposting, like the signs on street corners that tell a traveler where he is, and where he is going. Signposting helps to focus the audience's attention.

We'll cover signposting in the next podcast.

Language Review

A. Put the parts of the introduction of a presentation into a likely order. Note that in some cases, more than one order is possible.

1)		the objective of the presentation
2)	your name and position	
3)		and a link to the first section of your presentation
4)		A greeting
5)		the title and subject
6)		the main parts of your talk
7)		when you would like questions
8)		a mention of the visual aids that you will use
9)		the time you will take
10)		a reference to the audience

B. Match the following phrases with the language functions above. The first one has been done for you.

- a. Hello, my name is Ravi Chatterjee and I am in charge of the IT team here in Chicago. 2. Name and position
- b. The main purpose of my talk today is to outline the implementation of our new security policies over the last quarter. _____
- c. My presentation is entitled "Titanium Bridge: Sharing Information Securely with our Customers." _____
- d. I've divided my talk up into three parts. First, I'll give you some background on the new policy. Second, I'll tell you about the implementation. And finally, we'll look at the performance of the new system. _____
- e. I know you are all busy, so I want to respect your time. The whole presentation should take about 15 minutes. _____
- f. Okay? Are you with me? Many of you look like you've heard this all before; don't worry, I'll be focusing more on the results end, which should be new to you. _____
- g. All right, that covers the introduction to my presentation. Now, let's start with the first topic, background on the new policy. _____
- h. Because I'd like to keep this short, please hold your questions until the end. Then we can discuss whatever aspects of the project are of particular interest to you. _____
- i. And I'll be using PowerPoint. _____
- j. Good morning. Is everybody here? Can we get started? _____

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Study Strategy

Using the structure and the phrases highlighted above, build an introduction to your own presentation, either one you have actually given or one that you heard someone else give. Make some notes about what you want to say, but don't write everything down. Then, record yourself speaking. Afterwards, play it back to see if you missed anything. How do you sound? Get some feedback from a friend. Then try it again. Practice makes perfect.

Language Review Answers

Language Review A and B

Note that especially for numbers 6 through 10, the order may vary from presentation to presentation.

- 1) A greeting **j.**
- 2) your name and position **a.**
- 3) the title and subject **c.**
- 4) the objective of the presentation **b.**
- 5) the main parts of your talk **d.**
- 6) a mention of the visual aids that you will use **i.**
- 7) the time you will take **e.**
- 8) when you would like questions **h.**
- 9) a reference to the audience **f.**
- 10) and a link to the first section of your presentation **g.**

Online Practice

Click the "Launch" button to open the **online practice:**

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