

Analysis of Setting

Setting comprises a number of rhetorographic factors which are place, time limit, time of day and emotional climate or environment for the speech.

Place

The effect of a place is obvious; a lecture on a chemical experiment will be more suited for a chemistry lab than in an auditorium or a banquet hall. A presentation of new ad design might be better in a darkened closed conference hall than a football field.

Factors such as room size, temperature, lighting, arrangement of furniture, physical comfort, discomfort of audience, and crowd in the room, all have a bearing on the tone and manner of the presentation. For example large rooms are fitted with special sound system with acoustics so that there is no echo. Smaller rooms and conference halls, which accommodate 10–12 people, do not have such requirement.

Time

Time limit and time of day both are equally important. Sometimes time limit may be decided on the basis of the topic concerned, TV or radio coverage and personal schedule of the speaker. Whichever of these might be the reason, time limit is nevertheless an important criterion for setting the boundaries for the presentation.

Emotional climate

The environment or the overriding psychological state of the participants also has an effect. The speaker needs to be sensitive to the emotional state of the listener. Addressing an emotionally charged group of workers would require great skill and patience.

TYPES OF PRESENTATION

The types of talks and speeches given throughout the country in public and professional setting are numerous. Presentation types can be defined on the basis of time and purpose.

On the Basis of Time Duration

According to time duration, speech can be short or long. Short talks can range from 1 to 10 minutes in length. Many are periodic, brief progress or committee reports; some are to introduce new managers, employees or distinguished guests to an audience. Short talks may also be delivered to present awards to people who have earned recognition. They can also be used to thank someone or welcome visitors who have come to tour your plant.

Long or formal presentations may vary from 10 minutes to 1 hour. Often, long oral reports or proposals are presented within organization at management or staff meetings. They often restate or summarize significant main points on complex problems that are detailed in long written reports.

Long speeches are frequently scheduled at regional, national or international conferences on business, religious, social, political and related areas. The topics of such speeches range from information on research studies and projects to discussion on controversial issues.

On the Basis of Purpose

Each speech has a general and specific purpose. The most common, general purpose or mega purpose of business talks could be to inform or instruct, to persuade or to entertain. The specific purpose is more narrow or micro and is to achieve a definite, specific result.

To inform or instruct: The purpose could be explaining the results of an investigation, demonstrate the working of a machine, giving instruction or report on surveys. The aim is to promote understanding. Sometimes, the purpose is also to teach something new.

To persuade: The purpose of persuasive speaking is to get listeners to accept willingly your idea or point of view. The keyword is 'willingly' and your goal should be that after you have finished your presentation, listeners accept your proposal, do as you ask them to do and follow where you suggest they go.

Persuasion is a difficult task. Hence, a lot of preparation goes into it. Some examples include:

- PR (Public Relations) firms seek to enhance the image of a company or even an individual in society.
- Internal company PR departments write speeches for executives for news release.
- Advertising agencies write advertisements which are all persuasive messages.

To entertain: These are occasions which have informal, social setting and could be connected with a colleague's promotion or retirement or with anniversary of the organization, committee or person. Humour is a likely ingredient in such speeches. In addition to this, a story or an incident could also be quoted. However, some people are good at using puns, wild exaggerations, irony or even poking fun at authority. But in no case the line of decency should be crossed. If you do not have a natural talent for humour, it is a good idea to prepare a speech in writing. Remember your goal is not to dishonour someone but to entertain the public, while honouring the person concerned.

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STEPS FOR PREPARING PRESENTATION EFFECTIVELY

Good presentation is an outcome of careful planning. Whether it is long or short, the better you prepare, the more confident you will be on stage. The preparation requires the following steps:

Determine the purpose: The purpose for a presentation could be to inform or instruct, to persuade or to entertain. Every presentation also has a general purpose as well as a specific well-defined purpose. State the purpose of your presentation

in clear terms as it helps in defining what is relevant to your presentation. Since a good presentation is bound by time, a purpose will help you focus on what is important so that you could finish your presentation within the time limit.

Analyze the audience and situation: As emphasized earlier, whether the message is oral or written, it should be adapted to the audience. If your talk is within your organization, you will have some idea about who and how many will be in the audience. If it is outside, less information is available. You need to know the size of group, age range, interest, goals and occupations.

Choose the main ideas: The main ideas that form a part of your presentation should cover the purpose statement made earlier. The compilation of main ideas should serve the purpose for which the presentation is being prepared. If the presentation is being made on the basis of a report, then read it thoroughly and jot down the main points. Otherwise think of your purpose and jot down the points, revise and edit them until you have a workable number of headings.

Research thoroughly: Once your purpose and audience are defined and you have an idea of the main points you wish to cover, you can proceed to collect the necessary facts. Some of the information we use to develop messages is based on personal knowledge. But if we do not have all the information we need, then external search has to be made. An engineer could be asked to explain the company product but what if he was asked to discuss annual performance. In such a case, the following sources could prove to be helpful:

For overviews and conceptual information:

- Encyclopedias
- Handbooks
- Dictionaries
- Annual reporting, e.g. balance sheet and sales reports

For data:

- Fact books
- Statistical sources
- Biographical sources

More sources:

- Bibliographies
- Indexes
- Print sources of information: Books, magazines, journals, newspapers, indexes, government pamphlets and publication from special interest group, e.g. NGO's.
- Non-print sources of information: Audio visual materials and interviews.
- Computer searches: Electronic catalogues and the Internet.

Organize and write draft: Once the data has been collected, write the draft as a complete outline or complete manuscript. A good presentation has three parts, i.e. introduction, body (usually called text or discussion section in reports) and conclusion or summary.

(i) *Introduction:* Your opening sentence should capture the listener's attention. An introduction puts your audience in the right frame of mind, creates interest and prepares them to review the main message. This can be further achieved by using some of the following as a part of the introduction:

- Purpose statement
- Personal story
- Quotation
- Question
- Starting statement
- Reference to the occasion
- Humorous story

(ii) *Body (Text or discussion):* This part of the presentation develops on the major parts of the material collected previously. Sub points pertaining to the main purpose are also covered here. When the presentation lacks organization in this part, the listener can be left so confused that they give up trying to understand the message. To avoid confusion, speakers can arrange their points in a variety of ways. One of the most common method is issue arrangement which is the way you specified your purpose statement. Issue arrangement can take the following forms:

- *Spatial arrangement:* A speaker sets a point of reference at some specific location and then proceeds from there onwards, e.g. You are describing the layout of your college starting, let us say, from the administrative building, and take it as a reference for the rest of the description.
- *Chronological or time arrangement:* It orders information in the order they occurred in time. This could be descending (oldest to latest) or ascending (latest to oldest).
- *Topical arrangement:* Explains an idea in terms of its component parts, the arrangement is topic and sub-topic wise.
- *Causal arrangement:* This is the process of showing how one event made another event happen, i.e. how a cause led to an effect.
- *Comparison-contrast arrangement:* In this arrangement, both the similarities and the differences are discussed. E.g. Mobile services by two companies.
- *Problem-solution arrangement:* This method of organization is particularly useful where the objective is to comfort and solve the problems of life, business, industry and government.
- *Arrangement of major and subordinate points:* This is also a method where there are major and their subordinate points. This can be used with other arrangements also. No matter which pattern you adopt, use it consistently for each major heading. Likewise, handle your subordinate points consistently. This is important as sudden changes and shift in arrangement would leave your audience confused.

- (iii) **Summary or conclusion:** Conclude effectively by restating the major points. Indicate that you are ending the presentation. This can be done by emphasizing on the last point of the body and stating that the last point is Your audience will be ready to receive the ending. Do not end abruptly. Thank your audience graciously for listening to you patiently. If desirable, invite queries and listen to disagreements. Do not argue and try to force your point on others, as different people can hold different values and opinions. Answer graciously and to the best of your knowledge. If you do not know the answer, say you will get back soon with an appropriate reply to the question.

Plan visual aids (if necessary): Prepare handouts with your presentation. These can be distributed in the audience prior to the presentation. You could also display your presentation by the use of LCD and screen. Other visual aids that can enhance your presentation are:

- **Chalk boards or white boards:** Can be used to write the main points.
- **Flip sheets or charts:** These are large chart size papers. They are fastened at one end and attached to an easel or stand. They can be used for preparing notes beforehand.
- **Projectors:** There are a number of projectors such as slide projector or carousels (by camera), overhead projectors and opaque projector.
- **High technology visuals:** Videotapes, computer projections, LCD, videoconferencing and electric black boards can enhance the quality of presentation.

The speaker should adopt the visuals according to the type of audience.

Rehearse and revise wherever necessary: To develop confidence, you should know better than anyone else in the audience and rehearse your presentation adequately to ensure success. Here are some key points to help.

- Stand and rehearse the presentation in front of the mirror. This will help you see how you look while speaking.
- Imagine the audience is in front of you.
- Avoid long sentences and unusual words and sentences.
- Take main points separately and support it with facts.
- Include visual aids.
- Stop at allotted time while rehearsing. If you find your presentation is dragging at some places, revise and cut short.
- Allow time for questioning and answering.
- Anticipate questions from your audience. Think over the answers as you go along.

Rehearse 3–4 times and revise wherever your presentation is falling short of expectations. Remember that each rehearsal will be one more step to a successful presentation. Hence, how many times you need rehearsal depends on the difficulty of topic and individual ability.