



# Presentation Skills Workshop

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Break the Barrier

## Abstract

This workshop will equip you to present in a better way. After this workshop, the main goal is that you challenge yourself to change your usual way of presenting by stepping out of your "presentation comfort zone".

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout your professional career, you will need to use and develop your presentation skills.

These skills are not only used in a boardroom setting, but can also be utilised in business meetings, one-on-one conversations, and everyday work scenarios where effective communication is needed.

Today we'll look at:

- Common mistakes
- Challenges you will face while presenting
- How to engage your audience
- General tips for effective presentation

Every presentation will be different, but there are helpful tools which you can apply to every presentation.

Let's cringe at this video together:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69JZD60eR6s>

## **Common Challenges**

What do you find most challenging about presentations?

- Audience engagement
- Feeling nervous
- Lack of preparation
- Technical glitches
- Being brief (not rambling on)
- Preparing an effective slideshow

## **Common annoyances when being presented to**

What are things that drive you crazy while watching a presentation?

- Essay slides
- An extensive stack of slides
- Reading the slides (why is there even a presenter?)
- Unclear expectation for the presentation/ meeting
- Complicated fonts/ colours which do not work well together
- Over complex visuals

## **Excuses we use**

1. My topic is boring...
2. I didn't have enough time...
3. I'm not a good public speaker...
4. No one is interested in what I have to say...
5. I don't have a passion for my topic...
6. I don't want to do this presentation anyway...



## 2. 3 MAIN FACTORS OF PRESENTING

### PRESENTATION → PRESENTER → AUDIENCE

\*Tip: For your presentation to be effective, you need to challenge the usual interaction pattern.

Let's look at each of these aspects.

#### 2.1 PRESENTATION

1. Harvard Business Review – using bullets throughout your presentation is actually very ineffective. Try to find other ways to structure your slides.
2. An extensive stack of slides often leads to overcomplication. Try to use as little slides as possible. If you have a lot of important information to transfer to your audience, think of using alternatives such as a meeting handout, or informative email document.
3. Use a combination of mediums – written, visual, audio. It has been proven that people internalise/ remember visual information better than pure text.
4. Your presentation should bring a different, creative take to the topic – your colleagues can also do research and read for themselves, so what does your presentation bring to the table?
5. Keep it simple – less is more. An overcomplicated PowerPoint might take away from your content. Rather use impactful images with your text in a simple way, not trying to do too much on a slide.
6. If you must use bullet points on your slides – use the 7 by 7 rule. No more than 7 bullet points, and no more than 7 words per bullet.

#### 2.2 PRESENTER

If your audience can understand your presentation without you...why are you presenting?

Challenge yourself to bring a lot of value to the presentation.

### 1. Use of body language

- When we get nervous, we defend ourselves with our body language. We cover our vital organs. Try to open your arms and not fold them in front of you in a defensive way.
- Open body language creates openness between you and the audience. This will break the barriers and encourage audience engagement.
- Have your palms open, it has been shown that open palms allow for openness, and makes your audience feel more comfortable.
- If you have a podium, don't touch it. Holding the podium will limit your movement and cause your body language to be stagnant.
- Move around while talking but create an invisible barrier for yourself so that you do not wonder or pace up and down.
- Remember your facial expression also adds to your presentation. Use smiling, eye contact and show emotion as it relates to what you are presenting.
- If your body language shows that you are passionate, the excitement will flow to your audience, and they will be more likely to engage with your content.
- In a digital space – remember the use of your face and head is important. Try to use things such as nodding your head to show interest.

### 2. Vocals – Use of your Voice

- **Timbre:** Refers to the way your voice feels. Try to talk in a more “soothing” way. When we come across as strong and aggressive, the audience might struggle to be open with us.
- **Prosody:** Refers to the inflections you make while speaking. For example, having the same speaking pattern while presenting. When someone speaks in one tone of voice -monotone – it can put us to sleep. Try changing your pattern of speaking.
- **Pace:** Use slow and fast speaking. Even moments of silence can bring the audience attention to you and give people time to process what has been said.

- Pitch: Refers to the meaning behind the way you speak. We can ask “did you receive my email?” in two different ways, depending on the pitch of voice we use. Meaning is suggested by how you speak, so bear this in mind when making a point.
- Volume: Control your audience by changes in volume. When we speak in one volume constantly, our audience is more likely to drift off or get bored.

### 3. Clear Communication

- Give a clear intention of your presentation.
- Make it clear why your presentation is important.
- Why should the audience listen to you? Make this clear at the start of your presentation or even in the email invitation to your presentation.
- You can use phrases such as “By the end of this presentation, we need to make a decision about...”

### 4. Your interaction with your presentation

- Don't read your slides!
- Try to look at both your presentation and the audience.
- Impart passion when referring to your presentation – show that your topic is important.
- Put in effort. When you take pride in your presentation, it becomes clear that your topic is important.

### 5. Your interaction with the audience

- Make eye contact with the audience.
- When people are losing interest, don't be scared to say something like “If I could have your attention, please.”
- Play around with vocals and body language to keep your audience interested.
- Try to bring in a surprise element. For example, start your presentation in a new way instead of saying “Hello, today I will be talking about....”
- When you present creatively, the audience is more likely to internalise the information.

## **2.3 AUDIENCE**

- Audience response is difficult to control, so you need to be comfortable with unknowns.
- Do not assume the success of your presentation based on audience response.

- Prepare your audience adequately
  - Outline your presentation from the start.
  - Make sure they have a handout if necessary.
  - Communicate your expectation of the audience. For example, if you would like the audience to do research before the presentation and engage during the presentation, prepare them for this.

## **Conclusion**

With regards to specific English phrases, we will be able to elaborate on these in class.

The main takeaway from today – challenge yourself to present in a new, creative way.

Use the tools discussed in this workshop to present well, irrespective of the topic and language of the presentation.

Often HOW we say something is more important than WHAT we say.

If you have any presentations coming up, please let us know and we will happily help you prepare!





