

Imagine that you are in a meeting room with ten fellow employees. The presenter has yet to arrive despite the fact that the meeting is supposed to begin in precisely one minute. The presenter arrives a few minutes late, and once he arrives he needs to boot up his laptop. His clothes are somewhat disheveled and his hair is a bit unkempt. His appearance catches your attention right away and stands in stark contrast to the professional appearance and attire of the other attendees. Once the presenter's laptop is finally booted, it is more than five minutes past the scheduled start time. Finally his PowerPoint presentation appears on the screen, and he begins to deliver the content. However, within the first moments you have lost interest, and become distracted thinking about work assignments, picking up the dry cleaning after work, and what you will have for lunch once the break arrives. Why are you having such trouble staying focused? The presenter's monotone voice is completely boring. No inflection. No enthusiasm. No excitement about the material he is presenting. "Wow," you think to yourself, "I have to sit through a full hour of this?"

Not the best start to a business presentation, was it? Hopefully you have never had to sit through a presentation of this sort, but they happen with remarkable frequency. If your career requires that you write and deliver presentations, this article may be of interest. After all, you don't want to be like the presenter described above, effectively putting your audience to sleep.

Presentation Components

- Introduction – What is the presentation about?
- Opening – “What’s in it for me?” Capture your audience’s interest by demonstrating the utility of your presentation.
- Agenda – Review what will be covered in the presentation and keep the agenda on track. Your audience is busy.
- Body – The “meat” of your presentation.
- Conclusion – Wrap it up!

Factors Affecting Presentation Effectiveness

- Voice – Use voice to enhance the presentation
 - Use inflection – not monotone
 - Speak slowly - not too fast
 - Speak with clarity
 - Use proper diction
- Visuals – We retain 70% - 80% of what we learn visually
- Body language – Use body language that commands attention and complements your voice



Writing and Delivering a Compelling Presentation

Presentation Goals

Identify the practical benefits of your presentation. What will the participants learn?

Audience Assessment

- Know their level of knowledge on the topic ahead of time
- Do not talk above or below your audience
- Refrain from acronyms or explain what they stand for throughout the presentation

Create Interest

Answer the “what’s in it for me?” question up front. That is precisely what your audience will be thinking at the beginning of the presentation. Start off by identifying the practical benefits of your presentation.

Effective Openings

- Open with energy, enthusiasm and animation (it’s definitely contagious).
- Do *not* apologize. It distracts from the message and reduces credibility.
- Make eye contact. After each point, focus on another member of the audience.
- Give the audience an overview of the presentation.
- Be open to comments and/or questions.
- Establish and maintain contact with the audience.
- Be aware of the audience.
- Be aware of your own voice.

Knowledge Retention

Audiences retain information delivered via the following methods:

Visuals	75%
Hearing	13%
Smell, taste, touch	12%

Therefore, make your visuals memorable! Your audience will be much more likely to retain the presentation material.

Rules for Visuals

- 6 x 6 rule – No more than six bullets per visual. No more than six words per line.
- Use pictures and words.
- Convey a single idea per slide.
- Use uniformity in lettering and fonts.
- Use two to three colors per slide for words.
- Use bullets and numbers.
- Turn off audio visual equipment when not in use. It can be very distracting.
- Use borders.

Flip Chart Tips

- Write reminder notes lightly in pencil (things the audience should not see).
- Cover points with paper when not being discussed.
- Use every other page.
- Leave bottom third blank, otherwise the people in the back will not be able to see the information.
- Use large text and colors.
- Post flip chart pages around the room if needed for future discussion.