



CRAFT A PRESENTATION THAT WILL IMPRESS YOUR AUDIENCE AND ADD VALUE TO THE MEETING

*Practical exercises and professional tips
that will help you frame your next presentation
to a board, your team, a potential client or an
industry group.*

Whether you are presenting to your board, your team, a client or in front of your industry, you want to do a good job. Not only is your reputation on the line – your presentation may result in a promotion, a new client, an approved project or funding!

Preparing an excellent presentation takes time and effort. This worksheet is designed to help frame your presentation so that you will stay on task and create a tailored, prepared and professional presentation.

The worksheet is split into two sections:

Context – what you need to know about the event, the audience and the objective of your presentation.

Content – the body, opening and closing of your presentation and any documentation or visual aids.

There is space within the worksheet for you to record your answers and thoughts.

You can use this worksheet each time you need to present.

As a bonus, there are two more sections that give some tips on:

Practice – how to practice your presentation and what to look out for.

Performance – how to best prepare yourself on the day and on the “stage”.

CONTEXT

What you need to consider, research and understand.

Clarify the context in which you will present to ensure your presentation fits into the rest of the event and meets the participants' expectations. This will also help you tailor your presentation and meet your own objectives.

A. Event:

You will not be presenting in a vacuum. What else is happening at the event has a big effect on how your content will be perceived and interpreted.

1. What's the overall objective of the event/meeting? Is it information sharing? Are decisions being made?

Pro Tip

You can find many answers to these context questions by looking at the agenda(s), programme(s), and by asking the meeting organisers.

2. Why have you specifically been invited? What particular knowledge or information do you have? What perspective are you bringing to the group?
3. What else is happening in the meeting? Are there presentations before you? Are the participants under time pressure? Are there big decisions to be made?

4. Where are you on the agenda? Are you early in the meeting or later? Is the meeting hours or days long? What information will the participants have heard before you?

5. How much time have you been allocated to present? Do you need to include time to ask and answer questions or for interruptions?

B. Audience:

Be clear about who will be in your “audience” to ensure that you tailor your presentation to their needs.

1. Who’s going to be in the room? Why are they there? What’s their role?

2. What do the participants already know about your subject matter? Why should they care about what you’re talking about?

C. Your objectives:

Define the objective of your presentation clearly in your mind before you start crafting the presentation. This will help you include only the information you need to and ensure the participants have all the information they need.

1. What do you want the participants to think, feel or do following your presentation? Do you need a decision to be made (e.g. to accept, reject or approve your project)? Be as specific as possible. This is your Call to Action (CTA).

Pro Tip

A speech call-to-action is an explicit appeal to your audience to take a specific action following your presentation.

It could be:

- *to approve your proposal*
- *to hire you*
- *to buy your product*
- *to give you funding*
- *to want to speak to you one-on-one*

CONTENT

What are you actually going to say? How are you going to say it?

Now is the time to start building and shaping your actual presentation. *Do NOT open the slide deck just yet. This is likely to distract you with formatting rather than the actual structure and content of the presentation.*

D. Body:

The body of your presentation leads to and contributes to your objective.

1. What are the elements that will lead the participants to think, feel or do what you want them to?

Pro Tip

How much you can include in a presentation depends on how much time has been allocated to your presentation. As a guideline a comfortable speaking pace is 120 words per minute.

Group the elements as much as you can to form 3-4 main points.

Each main point can have 3 or 4 pieces of evidence or sub-elements.

2. What information do you need to provide to make that happen? What hard facts or data is necessary? How much context do you need to provide?

3. Read over what you have so far and ask yourself if there is any information missing. Are your points clear?

4. Have you included any information that is not absolutely necessary? Remove it.

5. Look at your main points and think about a logical structure in which to present them. Reorganise as necessary.

6. Think about how you can transition from one main point to the next in a logical, smooth manner.

E. Opening and Closing

People remember the openings and closings of presentations so make them impactful. Using stories, quotes, anecdotes or statistics are all powerful ways to get the participants' attention and make your message memorable. The opening and closing also help to give cohesion and a sense of resolution to the presentation, so it's helpful to think of them together.

1. How can you open your presentation to grab the participants' attention and frame the presentation in a captivating way?

2. How can you close your presentation so that it leaves the participants clear on the “call to action” or objective of the presentation? How can you relate your closing to your opening to give a sense of resolution to the audience?

If you are struggling to construct your content or feel like you need further feedback and advice on your presentation, you could get guidance from a coach or trainer.

F. Supporting Information

Think about what information that can be provided before, during and after your presentation and in what format.

1. What information can you provide in advance? Is there background information that you can provide that would help to frame your presentation?

Pro Tip

If you think you need to use a slide deck, think of it as a way to illustrate your presentation, rather than a way to repeat or replace it.

Use images whenever possible instead of words.

Limit the number of words on each slide – or the audience may read the slide instead of listening to you.

2. Would a PowerPoint/Keynote presentation help to support your presentation or parts of your presentation? What information would you include on the slide deck? At what points would an image or a few words add to your message? What visuals can illustrate your message?

3. What information can you provide following the presentation? Do you need to provide a handout at the event? Can you follow up with more (detailed) information by email? Could you provide a more comprehensive version of your slide deck or report as a follow up?

PRACTICE

Practice makes perfect. Yes, you need to practice.

If you practice your presentation you will be less nervous and come across as more confident and competent.

G. Practice your presentation out loud, with your slide deck (if using). Video yourself and/or practice with a friend or presentation trainer/coach. Review the video/presentation, asking yourself these questions:

1. Was my main message delivered? Was my call to action clear? Did my main points lead to my call to action? Did the evidence and data illustrate and support my points?
2. Did my visual aids (e.g. slide deck) add to the presentation and message? Were they shown at the appropriate times?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident and competent did I sound and look? Why? Was it what I said, how I said it or how I presented myself?
4. What do I do with my hands when I speak? Does my face look animated, natural and engaging? What does my body language say about me? Do I have any uncomfortable habits that distract from what I am saying?

Pro Tip

You want to remain natural and genuine during your presentation so don't try to memorise your entire presentation word for word.

Instead, practice it enough times that all you need are a few notes to guide you.

PERFORMANCE

You are ready to perform – it's D-Day.

Some of these questions and points might seem obvious, but having prepared so thoroughly you want to be in the best mental and physical condition so that you are relaxed and focused on your presentation – the performance.

H. Getting mentally and physically ready:

1. Who can you talk to on the day of the presentation who will make you feel good about yourself and positive about the event?
2. Is there a song that lifts you up and makes you feel positive?
3. What can you do to make sure you get a good night's sleep?
4. What food do you need to get ready to have a healthy breakfast to set you up for the day?

Pro Tip

Exercise, even walking around the block, will help you to clear your mind, release the endorphins and get the blood flowing to your brain.

5. What form of exercise can you do on the morning of the interview?
6. What are you going to wear on the day? Is it clean and ironed? Are your shoes clean?
7. Where is the event being held? How are you going to get there? Do you need to find a parking spot? Or take public transport? How long will it take you to get there?
8. Do you have the opportunity to check the room and equipment (microphone, laptop, beamer) provided? Can you do a run-through in advance?

I. Time to shine:

1. Breathe. Before you go into the building (and before you're called to the stage/front of the room, if possible), take some time to breathe deeply. This will help to calm and center you.
2. Take the stage/front of the room confidently. Stand firmly. Look at your audience. Smile.
3. Communicate clearly. Speak at a steady pace. Breathe at the end of your sentences. Avoid words such as "just", "like", "perhaps", which weaken your assertiveness. Look at the audience from time to time and smile, when appropriate.
4. Close strongly. Smile at the "audience". Accept the applause (if it's given). Walk confidently off the stage.

Congratulations on preparing and delivering your presentation and getting your message across. You have surely impressed your audience and added value to the meeting or event.

For further assistance feel free to reach out to me at:
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