

Top Tips – Presentation Skills

First steps:

- Plan & prepare
- Be familiar with the environment & any technology
- Think about your audience/other attendees & why they are there
- Know what your aims & objectives are; what do you want to achieve?
- Practice what you want to say BUT be wary of over practicing as it could sound too staged
- Consider any props or visual aids you may wish to use
- Consider prompt cards

Structure and content:

- Decide on & inform audience of your expectations regarding questions & interruptions
- Be clear & concise in your introduction to grab attention – an audience quickly loses interest!
- Provide a brief overview – your aims, objectives & the content
- Have a giving approach as opposed to what you want to get out of the presentation. An audience will soon detect a ‘sales pitch’ if that is what it is
- Have an interactive middle section - ask questions & seek views – pause - wait – listen - gives you & your audience thinking time
- Stay on track – use prompt cards if needed to follow your planned structure rather than full scripts
- Think as you reach the end - have I got my message across?
- Pull key points together - summarise & check that the audience understand the points made using open-ended questions

Composure and presence:

- Make eye contact
- Dress appropriately & comfortably
- Be passionate about your topic
- Be open & honest & display integrity
- Be yourself
- Be assertive not aggressive but be in charge
- Consider your presence & posture – look confident regardless - stand/sit upright, be relaxed & look comfortable even if you are not
- Breath! – if you feel nervous – start by standing, breathing steadily & easily. Relax & think of something unrelated to your situation to help with nerves & to moderate breathing
- Consider sound, pitch & pace of speech – mix it up – consider size of room/number of people – use your energy to convey enthusiasm

Don't:

- Try & answer questions that you don't know the answer to
- Repeat yourself just summarise key points at the end
- Tell jokes or try and be funny if it does not come naturally
- Try and copy the presentation style of someone else – be yourself
- Make judgements about your success – how you feel may not be a true reflection

Just finish as if you've done a good job regardless of how you may be feeling about your presentation!