

Express Yourself to Success!

Excerpt from

Present Yourself

Guide to Giving Great Presentations



www.ExpressYourselfToSuccess.com

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Purpose of Presentations

A presentation is a type of talk given to communicate a specific message. It can be used to:

- persuade your group, team or audience to make a decision or commitment and then take the action you've laid out for them. This is typically used to influence a group or to sell something like a product or service or to secure buy-in to an idea or project.
- inform an audience or group on a particular subject, such as a status report
- instruct or explain a concept, process, or method, such as a business plan
- demonstrate a product, software, etc.

The Problem with Presentations

We often associate a presentation with a series of PowerPoint slides. This, however, is not the case. Anyone can string together information, facts and statistics, arrange them in PowerPoint and set up a slideshow. Unfortunately, many presenters do just that and leave their presentation up to the slides to carry them through. So what happens? Their presentation is boring, tedious, mind-numbing and at best, mediocre.

One of the main factors to understand when delivering a presentation is that your presentation is *you*, not PowerPoint. Let's face it: if PowerPoint is the presentation, there's no need for you. If that's the case, you've just made yourself unnecessary - just distribute a printout of your slides to your team or work group and call it a day.

PowerPoint is your tool, not your presentation. It's a great piece of software when used to support your communication in a way that complements your content, reinforces your message and aids in comprehension and retention of the subject you're delivering. Use PowerPoint to *enhance* your presentation, not *be* your presentation.

You are the dynamic and emotional element of the presentation. You're the character, the personality and the tone. You're the one who takes that content and makes meaningful, useful, relevant, and memorable to your audience. You're the channel between the audience and the content. You're the one who makes it come to life. You're the one who inspires, motivates, persuades, fascinates or encourages the audience to have an emotional response to your message. You are the only emotional element to the presentation. The facts and figures on the PowerPoint slides support your position or point. They are the proof, you are the presentation.

Use PowerPoint to *enhance* your presentation,
not *be* your presentation.

When you take the time and create a great presentation, you'll win over your listeners and make a great impression. You'll become more respected, valued and your reputation as a person of knowledge and an expert in the topic you're covering will increase dramatically.

There are four steps that create an effective, engaging and memorable presentation:

1. Preparation
2. Creation
3. Review and Evaluate
4. Rehearse

Preparation

1. Define Your Objective
2. Understand Your Audience

Define Your Objective

Let's first consider your objective. Take some time to think about it: *Why are you giving the presentation?*

If your boss told you that you have to give it, well that's not a reason. Your presentation is your time to be noticed so it's to your advantage to determine what it is that you want to achieve. So ask yourself: *"What is my purpose for doing the presentation? What is my goal? What do I want to achieve?"*

Is it to sell a product? To secure business? To communicate a new business plan? To demonstrate a new product? To secure funding? To gain support? To provide a clearer understanding of a situation, concern, problem or topic?

If you're having difficulty thinking of your objective that way, take a look at it another way: what is it that you want your audience to do when you're finished your presentation? What do you want them to think? How do you want to alter their perceptions? Do you want them to change a particular behaviour? Do you want them to understand a new system that the department will be using? Do you want them to support the new project that you're proposing? Determine and then write down the action you want them to take or the position you want them to support at the end of your presentation.

Clearly stating your objective gives you direction for your presentation. It helps you focus on relevant information and keeps you on track as you put your presentation together.

You see, once you know your objective, you can identify the main points that you need to make and it'll be easier to gather appropriate supporting material, stories, and examples to effectively get your point across. You can do this only when you know what you want to achieve at the end of your presentation.

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