

# WORKSHOP 1 PRESENTATIONS IN BUSINESS

## GOALS

- ▶ Understand the importance of good presentation skills in the workplace.
- ▶ Discover the components of effective presentations.
- ▶ Overcome barriers to effective presentations.



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## YOU'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY

### Powerful Presentations Resources

Video (37:00)

CD-ROM Study Guide

Instructor's Resource CD-ROM

WebTutor

ExamView Pro Testing CD-ROM

### Code Blue

Sarah should have done some research to find out who would be attending her presentation. She should have prepared her presentation farther in advance, had more rest, and arrived earlier at the auditorium.

### Code Blue

An emergency room nurse for over 10 years, Sarah Billings felt confident when her supervisor asked her to make a presentation about nursing in the ER. The night before her presentation, Sarah searched the Internet for journal articles on recent ER advances. She made notes until she went to bed, well after midnight.

When Sarah entered the auditorium, five minutes before her 9:00 a.m. talk, she noticed that many people were already

seated. She had assumed that she would address student nurses, but she recognized other staff members, some with more experience than herself. She also realized she'd left her notes at home. Sarah not only couldn't remember her research—she suddenly felt she couldn't remember a single thing about nursing!

When you think of presenters, do you think of people on TV? Politicians? Salespeople? It's true that these professionals speak to groups—large and small—every day. But did you know that people in almost *every* profession make presentations? This workshop provides tools for becoming a skillful presenter on the job, identifies common types of presentations, and offers tips for overcoming barriers to effective presentations.

✓ **How should Sarah have prepared for her presentation?**

# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## Successful Presentation Basics

If making a presentation seems scary to you, you're not alone. Even some of the most skillful presenters are afraid of public speaking. Practice the following guidelines to make your presentation clear and enjoyable for your audience—and for yourself!

- **Plan.** Generally, the time required to plan a presentation should be twice the length of the presentation itself. If your presentation will last half an hour, spend at least an hour planning for it in advance.
- **Know your subject.** A presenter who has thorough knowledge of the topic is more confident, relaxed, *and* interesting.
- **Be yourself.** Stick to your subject, but let your personality shine through.
- **Practice.** Some people rehearse in front of a mirror or while taking a walk. However you do it, the more you practice, the more confident you will be.
- **Know the audience.** What you say and how you say it depends in part on who your audience is. For example, you would not give the same presentation about dolphins to a troop of Girl Scouts that you would to a group of marine biologists.
- **Involve the audience.** Listeners enjoy give-and-take. Ask for questions or volunteers, or arrange small-group activities.
- **Speak clearly and slowly.** Remember that the purpose of your presentation is to communicate. Don't try to impress the listeners with language they can't understand.

## Speaking Well: A Useful Skill in Every Job

When you think of public speaking, you may associate it with certain jobs. Public speaking, however, comes in a variety of forms.

- **Product presenters.** Salespeople and retailers demonstrate the quality and features of their products to make sales.
- **Business service presenters.** Hair stylists, hospital workers, and bank employees present their offerings to the public to put their businesses in the best light.
- **Public service presenters.** Firefighters, public health employees, and recreation workers make presentations to educate the public.
- **Office workers.** Office assistants, managers, human resources personnel, and computer specialists make presentations to their colleagues for on-the-job training, employee benefits, employee voluntarism, and other purposes.

## Key Ideas

- ★ **barrier**—an obstacle; something that stands in the way
- ★ **oral presentation**—a speech given to a group of people

## Tools of the Trade

This workshop presents the components of effective workplace presentations and discusses strategies for overcoming barriers to successful presentations. Review Key Ideas, definitions, and the guidelines presented in Tools of the Trade.

Have learners read and discuss the information about making effective presentations. You may want to encourage learners to share their own experiences of either giving a presentation or listening to one. Have them speculate on what makes presentations effective or poor.

Learners should realize that effective planning, preparation, and delivery are necessary for successful presentations. Planning ensures that the presentation is well organized and contains information geared toward the audience. Preparation involves rehearsing and practicing so that the presentation flows without difficulty and maintains the audience's interest. Even a thoroughly planned and prepared speech will fall flat if the delivery is boring.

*I take the view, and always have, that if you cannot say what you are going to say in 20 minutes, you ought to go away and write a book about it.*

—Lord Barbazon

## Break Down the Barriers

A little planning will go a long way toward defeating barriers to successful presentations. A few common presentation barriers—and methods for overcoming them—follow.

- **Personal barriers.** Barriers, such as nervousness, can be minimized by planning, preparing, rehearsing, and taking time to rest and relax before making your presentation.
- **Environmental barriers.** Get to know the presentation space before you talk. How will the audience best see and hear you? Can you adjust the seating? The room temperature?
- **Audience barriers.** Before your presentation, get to know something about who the audience is, what their interests are, and why they are attending your presentation.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Author George Jessel once said about speeches, “If you haven’t struck oil in three minutes, stop boring!” In other words, you have three minutes or less to convince business audiences that you’ve got something interesting to say.

Those who give presentations regularly time the speech down the minute. Going through the entire presentation out loud without interruption will give the speaker a realistic idea of how long it will take.

*Generally, the time required to plan a presentation should be twice the length of the presentation itself.*



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# INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE PRESENTATIONS

## Segment 1

The ability to speak in front of others is a vital predictor of success in the workplace. In this program, you will see how presentations are used in businesses to train workers, explain new safety requirements, give progress reports, correct problems, or just congratulate people for good work. As you watch the segment, think about what it takes to be a skillful presenter.

### Introduction to Workplace Presentations

View and discuss Segment 1: *Introduction to Workplace Presentations*. Running time: approx. 2:30.



*Kiki Stockhammer is famous for her exciting presentations.*

### Post-Viewing Questions

1. How can good presentation skills benefit employees and companies?

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2. What tools would you need to be a good presenter?

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### Post-Viewing Questions

1. Employees who give effective presentations benefit by receiving praise and promotions on the job. Companies that employ successful presenters benefit from increased sales and an improved company image.
2. Good presenters thoroughly research their topic and audience; are well organized; use visual aids effectively; are persuasive speakers; and project self-confidence.

## ***The Absent-Minded Professor***

Sue Ann was a bit nervous about teaching her first college-level course. She had spent weeks preparing transparencies. She had also found the perfect video that highlighted many topics on the syllabus.

As Sue Ann prepared the television and overhead projector on the first day of class, students began to pile into the room. The room only seated thirty, but by the time everyone had arrived, forty-five students were crammed into the small room. Some sat on the floor, others in folding chairs, and some even stood.

As Sue Ann began her presentation, she knew things were not going to work out as she had hoped. Many students were hot, some did not have enough room to write, and many started to yawn. Sue Ann knew she had lost their attention already.

*You can speak well if your tongue can deliver the message of your heart.*

—John Ford, film director

### **On the Job**

#### ***The Absent-Minded Professor***

Sue Ann's content and visual aids were well prepared, which allowed her to prevent personal and audience barriers. Unfortunately, she neglected to inspect the room in advance, and therefore was faced with environmental barriers.



Which barriers did Sue Ann's planning prevent? Which did she neglect?

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## **On the Net**

How can you make your presentations less stressful? When is sharing humor with your audience appropriate? When is a long presentation *too* long? The following sites offer a wealth of information and resources on creating and delivering good presentations. Find them on the Web at:

<http://powerfulpresentations.net>

<http://www.executive-speaker.com/kirb117.html>

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~pletendr/present.html>

## PRACTICE



1. Search the Internet for pointers on giving effective business presentations. Combine the information from each site with what you have learned in this workshop, and create a poster of presentation tips to share with your class.
2. Use the guidelines from Tools of the Trade to prepare a one-minute presentation about a topic of your choice. Ask your classmates to offer constructive criticism of your presentation.
3. Make a list of interactive strategies a speaker can use to engage the audience. Then, ask your classmates whether or not they would enjoy these kinds of activities during a presentation. Record the responses and illustrate your findings on a graph or chart.

*“ Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning. ”*

—Maya Angelou, writer

### Practice

1. Learners' posters should include ideas from this workshop as well as the additional information gained from their research. A few helpful Web sites are <http://www.toastmasters.org/tips.htm>, <http://www.speechtips.com/>, and <http://www.presentersuniversity.com>.
2. You may want learners to design an evaluation rubric to use for their critiques. Criteria could include preparedness, knowledge, ease of delivery, enthusiasm, clarity, familiarity with audience, etc. Try to keep evaluations positive and encouraging. At this point, the goal is to get practice speaking in front of the class.
3. Examples of interactive strategies: hands-on demonstrations, group discussions, active question and answer sessions, selected volunteers that demonstrate ideas, role-plays, and break-outs into small group discussions.

## SUMMARY

- People in almost every profession make presentations, including car salespeople, clothing retailers, hair stylists, hospital workers, firefighters, and office assistants.
- Giving a successful presentation requires planning, knowing your subject, being yourself, practicing, knowing your audience, involving your audience, and speaking clearly.
- A little planning will go a long way toward defeating barriers to successful presentations.



### ***Speaking Abroad***

The global economy demands that more and more professionals give presentations abroad. What if you had to present a topic overseas, speaking to individuals in a different country? How would this be different from speaking in your native country? Though it's always important to be prepared when giving a presentation, being unprepared overseas can truly put a speaker in a bind.

Successful international presenters ask the person who invited them to speak about why the audience is attending the presentation, and what they hope to get out of it. When presenters aren't fluent in the language and customs of the country they're visiting, they must research the extent of their audience's fluency in English and become familiar with the audience's expectations and customs.

For example, does the country value punctuality? Do they practice the use of business cards? What is a respectable way to dress? Audiences appreciate presenters who express interest in and respect for their country and customs.

Mentioning something about their country, such as an interesting sight you have seen during your visit, will make an audience open and relaxed. Whatever you do, let them know you are sincerely happy to be there.

Watch your audiences carefully to make sure they are following your words, understanding your points, and are interested in what you are saying. Speak more slowly and somewhat louder than normal. Enunciate carefully, and give your audience a chance to become familiar with your speaking style. Use simple vocabulary and familiar words.

It is critical to avoid the use of your native slang. Chances are, your audience will not be familiar with it and may even take offense to something you view as harmless. Certain hand or facial gestures can also send an unintended message. The same caution must be practiced when telling jokes.

Most foreign audiences will have more difficulty understanding spoken English than written English. For this reason, it helps to present key ideas on overheads or slides. When presenting data or statistics, be careful not to overload the audience with confusing facts and figures.

# REVIEW QUESTIONS



1. List some ways that presentation skills can be used in the workplace.

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2. List the common barriers to effective presentations, and describe ways to overcome them.

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3. Why is it important to plan your presentation?

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## Review Questions

1. Presentations can provide information, motivate an audience, persuade people, train people in new skills, evaluate progress, solve problems, or congratulate good efforts. Presentation skills can be used to sell, to persuade, to inform, to congratulate, to introduce, to train, and to review.
2. Some barriers to effective presentations include inexperience, nervousness, listener apathy, uncomfortable rooms, crowded rooms, poor sound systems, poor lighting, and poor preparation. Nearly all of these elements can be overcome by being well prepared, knowing your audience, and knowing your presentation environment.
3. Effective planning and practice allow presenters to know their subject, speak more naturally, know their audience, involve the audience, know what kind of environment to expect, and ease nervousness so they can speak clearly and slowly.

# PROJECTS

1. Watch a session of your city council or the U.S. Congress on cable television. Choose one of the speakers to evaluate on the criteria listed in Tools of the Trade. Suggest ways that the presentation could have been improved.
2. Speakers sometimes develop inappropriate behaviors or speech patterns, such as saying “um” or “you know.” For some, this is a sign of nervousness and not being able to find the right word. For others, it’s simply a bad habit. As you observe or listen to a number of public speakers, in your community or on television or radio, keep track of any distracting habits they display. Be prepared to report your findings to your class.

## Projects

- Have learners complete one or both of these projects as homework or out-of-class assignments. Encourage them to work in pairs or small groups.
1. Suggestions for improvement should come from the tips in this workshop.
  2. Encourage learners to suggest methods for avoiding these bad habits, such as videotaping a practice speech or practicing a speech in front of a mirror.