



Title :	EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS
Description :	LEARNER GUIDE

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Recognise the importance of presentation skills in academic and professional life
- Effectively plan and structure a talk
- Deliver a talk in a manner which sustains the interest and confidence of the audience
- Reflect on and learn from your experience.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Go to the last page of this workbook and write down 3 expectations that you have from this training programme. Record these 3 expectations on the “Training Evaluation Document” of part 1 and return to the next section of the manual on completion.

Continue here when you completed with this activity.

“.....some of the world's best public speakers will admit that they are shy. How do they do it then?”

Many people want to “die” by the thought of having to stand up in front of many people to talk. That is simply because they do not know that there are easy-to-follow secrets to become effective and confident public speakers.



This Soft Skills Training Course serves as an introduction and general reference for use when preparing for a talk or a presentation. The course will guide you for whenever faced with making a public presentation or a speech, a lecture, a conference presentation or when addressing a seminar.

We are required to do presentations to provide information, sell products/services, and persuade others to follow our way of thinking or follow a certain action. Presentations can, however, be boring and dull in which case we will not succeed in achieving our goals.

Not everybody is comfortable in making such presentations and MOST people are shy. Even some of the world's best public speakers will admit that they are shy. How do they do it then?

This module covers the practical aspects of preparing, delivering and ending a presentation. Some attention is also given to handling speech anxiety.

Once we have mastered the simple art of public speaking we will be able to overcome our fears and anxieties and we will succeed in becoming shy with confidence! **YOU** can be a public speaker – **YOU** can deliver effective presentations with confidence should you master the few basic principles outlined in this course.

2. WHY BE A GOOD PUBLIC SPEAKER?

Talks, speeches or oral presentations play an important role in academic and professional life. Some people become anxious about having to give a talk, but there is nothing difficult about being an effective speaker. An effective presentation involves the application of techniques that can be planned and rehearsed.



People have different kinds of strengths when it comes to writing and speaking. You may be very happy just getting on with written assignments, or you may be glad to prepare a talk because you find that you are much better at explaining things aloud than you are at writing them down. Whatever your particular preferences, research shows that speaking to others about concepts and information helps you learn – it helps you *change* and grow in familiarity with the language of your subject discipline, which in turn helps you increase your knowledge, understanding and skills in that area in the future.

Grasping an academic discipline is a bit like learning a foreign language; speaking it aloud is the best way to learn. That is why, if you want to become involved in academic life, you will be asked to give papers at conferences, where you will listen to and give talks to others with similar interests.

It may well be, however, that you are not in an academic field and may question the need to be an effective public speaker. If that is the case, you should take oral presentation skills just as seriously. Employers and organisations everywhere ask for confidence and skills in the areas of interpersonal communication and presentation. There are very few occupations and professions that do not require these skills, and remember that being interviewed in person in order to get a job is very largely about

demonstrating your ability to answer and ask questions and in other words giving a short presentation. You are also very likely to progress in your workplace if you have good oral skills; the ability to speak and listen appropriately and effectively is linked to the ability to work effectively with and to inspire others, whether they are colleagues, clients or customers.



Both for learning and for your future professional life, speaking skills are **VERY** important.

ACTIVITY 1

Which of the following statements are true for you?

		Yes/No
A	I prefer to write rather than to talk about my field of expertise because I have had more practice at writing and can do it in my own time.	
B	Being able to express myself clearly in speech will help me think clearly, and vice versa.	
C	If I know I have to talk about something, I will definitely do some preparation, because I don't want to stand in front of others with nothing to say!	
D	If I'm interested in and knowledgeable about something, I find it easier to talk about it.	
E	Explaining things to other people helps me understand them better myself.	

ACTIVITY 2

For a moment, consider the numerous talks and lectures you have listened to during your life and:

List some characteristics of the talks you enjoyed:

List some characteristics of the talks that bored you:

When you give a presentation what do you think are your strong and weak points?

3. SPEECH CONTENT

3.1 THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED

BEFORE we can do any preparation for our address we need to ask ourselves

- Why are you doing the presentation?
- What do you want to achieve with the presentation?
- How long will you speak for?
- What is the bigger picture: where does your presentation fit into the event, the lives of the people and the organisation, where applicable?
- Who is in the audience?
- How many people will be in attendance?
- What do you expect the attitude of your audience will be towards the subject you are talking about – and their attitude towards you?
- Do the audience members know each other?
- Will your audience be in attendance because they want to or because they have to?
- Are there any tensions amongst audience members?
- What do THEY know about my topic?
- Their age group and social status?
- What are THEIR expectations about my presentation?

Answering the above questions BEFORE you start preparing your presentation is of utmost importance. Once you have the answers to these questions you can prepare your presentation accordingly.

3.2 STRUCTURE OF A GOOD PRESENTATION

A good presentation has:

- I. **Creativity** – time spent thinking creatively is never wasted.
- II. **An introduction** - Begin with greeting the audience and briefly introducing yourself and your topic if there is no chairperson to do so.
- III. **Content & structure** - contains information that people need. A speech has a logical beginning, middle and ending, and is well sequenced and paced that the audience can understand it.
- IV. **Ending** - At the end of your presentation, conduct a short "question and answer" (Q & A) session. But handling questions can be nerve-racking because you may not be able to answer them.
- V. **Packaging** - is well prepared. A report can be reread and portions skipped over, but the audience is at the mercy of the presenter.
- VI. **Human Element** - A good presentation is remembered much more than a good report because of the person attached to it.



The above is easier said than done. Let us look at I, II, III and IV above in more detail and reveal the secrets:

I. Creativity

It is suggested that you WRITE down your thoughts. The best way to do this is to make use of a Mind Map™. The benefit of a mind map in writing down thoughts is that you can SEE your thoughts and you can branch out on them in a structured manner.

Begin the creative thinking process by asking Who? What? Where? How? When? These questions stimulate creative thinking.



Never throw thoughts away at the beginning. This is the creative thinking process and you can never have too many thoughts.

Once your thoughts have been put in a Mind Map™ you will see a clear structure emerging. Make use of colour pens to link thoughts and re-structure them. Always aim for not more than 5 main key points for your presentation. More than 5 over loads your audience and they will fall asleep!



II. The Introduction

The most important part of a presentation is the introduction. If you do not make a very good first impression you may just as well forget about doing the rest.

If nobody, such as a chairman, has introduced you, make sure that you state your name, your topic and your background prior to launching into your address. Even if someone will introduce you, be prepared to introduce yourself – even the Chairman or Master of Ceremonies might have butterflies in his stomach and forget to mention exactly who you are!

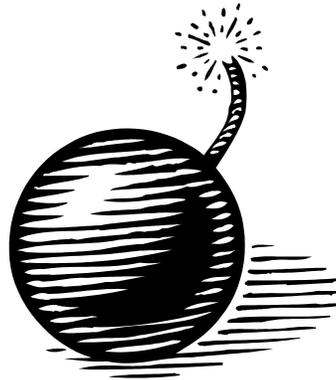
The introduction should furthermore clarify the purpose and provide an overview of the presentation.

Most good public speakers will start with an ice-breaker. Search the web for ideas. This is a good method of capturing the attention of your audience. Anecdotes, a short story or a reference to a real life event applicable your topic that the audience can identify with would also be a good beginning. Be creative but do not choose an opening that will be contrived or with which you are uncomfortable with. If you are not good at telling jokes then DO NOT. With reference to jokes: rather stay away from jokes unless you are a master at it and can make it completely applicable to the situation.



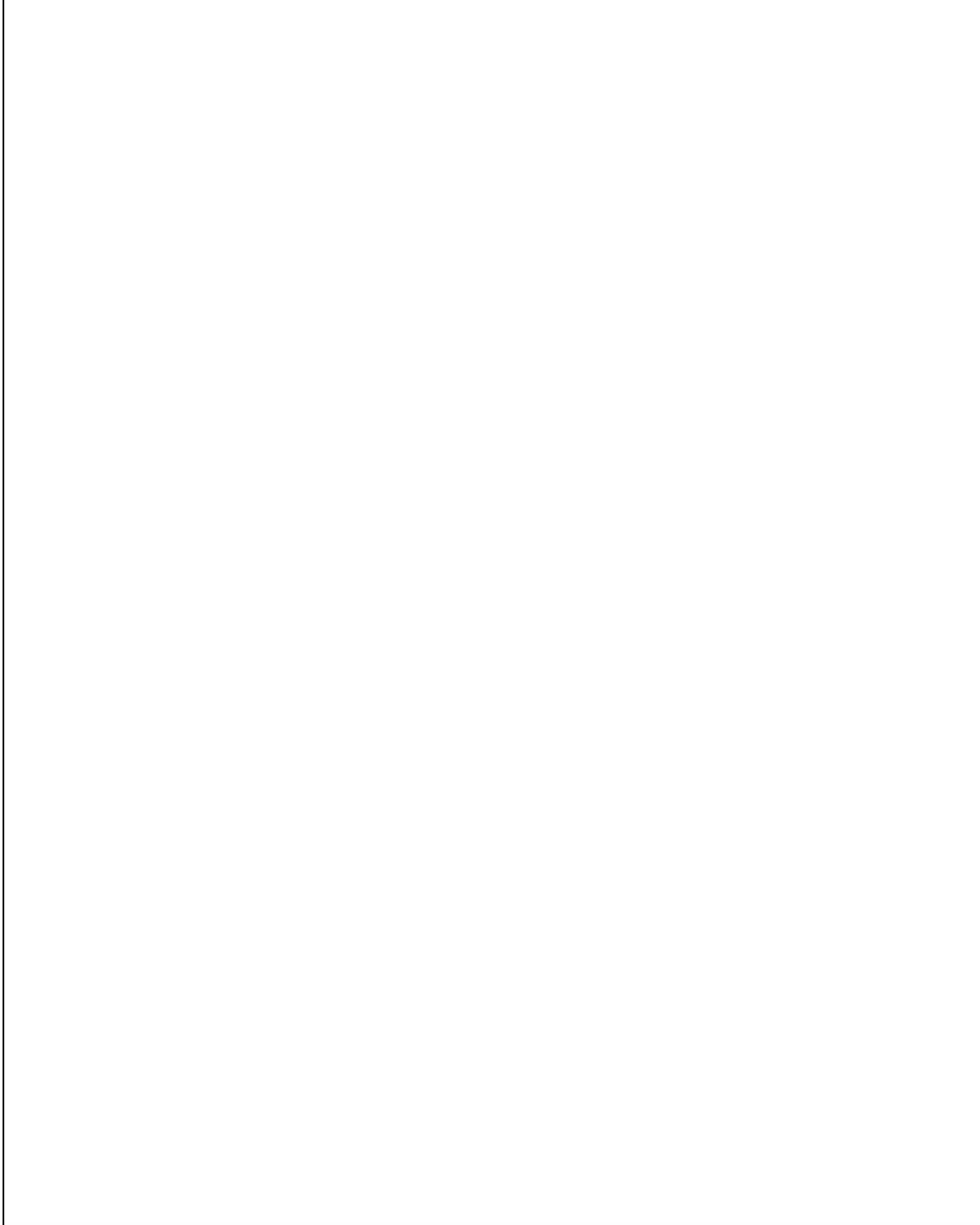
It is best to write your introduction AFTER you have written/prepared your talk allowing you yourself to capture the essence of your talk in a short, effective and clever introduction.

A good presentation should never have more than 5 points of discussion. Remember: It is a presentation – not a lecture. Your introduction should indicate to your audience how long the presentation will be and how many points will be discussed. Informing your audience of what you are about to say keeps them awake and interested. They TOO need to know where you are taking them – otherwise they will not follow you. Also indicate to them that an opportunity will be given at the end for questions avoiding interruptions during your presentation.



ACTIVITY 3

Prepare and introduction to a speech to any topic of your choice. Introduce yourself and your topic. Do your utmost to capture the attention of your listeners. This is a theoretical exercise only.



III. The Content & Structure

The introduction already gives your audience a good indication of what you will be talking about and also creates certain expectations as to what they are now expecting to hear from you.

In the body of your presentation, it is important to organise the points chronologically from simple to more complex (or visa versa depending on your topic etc). Do not wonder off. Should you write your presentation out, always study it carefully with a red pen in the hand and ask yourself: "Which sentence, paragraph and/or word is NOT really needed." We tend to repeat ourselves and/or say the same thing over and over again, in an attempt to sound clever or to simply lengthen our address DON'T!

Many a presenters wonders off their topic simply because they are not well prepared. Do sufficient research about your topic – remember YOU are the expert.

Organise the order of your points logically. A good presentation will never have more than 5 sub-topics or points.

The body of your presentation should be organised. There are various academic patterns that can be followed. The easiest for people to follow is if the presenter STARTS with the conclusion and then support it by logic and facts. Stating various options and then supporting and criticising each is also effective. This way, audiences can be persuaded following each possible step.

Irrespective of the pattern you follow – always make sure that your audience is informed of the route that will be taken.

Always inject your presentation with references, facts and supporting evidence. Therefore it is important to do sufficient research. Even though you may not use all the information you have collected – but you will have an excellent overview of your topic allowing you to be confident. Information can be collected via internet, at libraries, data and statistic resources, newspapers, witty anecdotes, quotations, insightful comments etc. Always distinguish between facts and opinions. Question what you read, go beyond your own boundaries.

Keep a file of all information collected. You might not need all the information – but it might come in handy in future presentations.

III.i VISUAL AIDS

80% of what we learn is learned visually (what we see) and only 20% is learned aurally (what we hear). This means that:

- visual aids are an extremely effective means of communication
- non-native English speakers do not need to worry so much about spoken English since they can rely more heavily on visual aids



It is important not to overload your audience's brains. Keep the information on each visual aid to a minimum - and give your audience time to look at and absorb this information. Remember, your audience has never seen these visual aids before. They need time to study and to understand them. Without understanding there is no communication.

Apart from photographs and drawings, some of the most useful visual aids are charts and graphs.

III.i Simplicity and Clarity

If you want your audience to understand your message, your language must be simple and clear:

- use short words and short sentences
- do not use jargon, unless you know that your audience understands it
- talk about concrete facts rather than abstract ideas
- use active verbs instead of passive verbs

Active verbs are much easier to understand. They are much more powerful. Consider these two sentences, which say the same thing:

Sentence 1: Toyota sold two million cars last year.

Sentence 2: Two million cars were sold by Toyota last year.

Which is easier to understand? Which is more immediate? Which is more powerful? Sentence 1 is active and Sentence 2 is passive.

IV. Ending

The ending is AS IMPORTANT as the introduction. This is what will be remembered most long after your audience have left. Summarise briefly, refer to opening statements, call for action (where applicable) and leave your audience convinced.

Many an effective public address would “use” the introduction as a threat throughout the speech and will again refer thereto in the conclusion. This allows people to remember the imagery used in your speech – thus leave them with a “picture” in their minds.

Always give opportunity for questions and answers. Here are some secrets to follow:

- **Prepare questions and answers**

Prior to the event, write down as many possible questions as you can think of and practise answering them. If you do get the questions or similar ones, you will then be better prepared to respond.

- **Ask for a repeat**

If you cannot hear or do not understand the question, ask the questioner to repeat it.

- **Respect the questioner**

Always respect the questioner even though you do not like the question or the manner in which it is posed; do not feel offended if he asks you a question that has already been answered in your presentation or a previous question. They may not have heard or understood the information previously presented.

- **Keep calm**

Try to keep calm even if your audience is hostile or upset.



- **Be honest**

If you do not know the answer, admit it. You can either offer to contact the person later with an answer or offer it to your audience to see if anyone else can. This technique can open up discussion and generate further interest.

After the Q & A session, summarise your position or emphasise on the most important points of your presentation. This will be your last chance to impress or inform your audience - use it to your advantage.

4. HOW TO DELIVER AN ADDRESS

Preparing a speech is but one small part of the whole process. The nerve-wrecking and MOST important part is DELIVERING the address. This is where most people want to run away to the closest hiding place. Do not fear. The secrets to effective presentations are easier than what you think.



What scares us most in making presentations is the thought that a number of people will actually be looking and listening at us and will be focussed on us for the duration of the address.

If you follow AND PRACTISE the following secrets you will soon realise that the fear to talk in front of people is simply a fear and fears are superficial layers of untruths! We often fear that a snake will “bite” us. Once we have learned about snakes we will know that snakes do not bite! To get rid of the fears we carry about speaking in public – we simply have to understand a few things.

1. The people in the audience do NOT know what you are about to say and will NOT know if you make a mistake (provided you have followed the procedures in writing your speech).
2. The majority of the people, at a guess, about 90%, fear addressing an audience themselves.
3. People are insecure. Not one single person on this earth doesn't have some sorted of insecurity or fear. Even the overly confident person, and more so the arrogant person, carries insecurities within them. What we DO with those insecurities is what matters. Make it work for you; both your own insecurities and those of your audience members. Think of that awkward self-introduction you had to do at the beginning of this course!
4. If we focus on the insecurities and the shyness of others we do not focus on our own.
5. Every person in the audience is just that – a person. A person like you.
6. Public speaking – as is the case with administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation - can be learned by following simple steps. YOU can save a life should you know how to – you too can speak in public should you know how to. It is easy!
7. The most wonderful thing about delivering a presentation is that you use YOURSELF to do that.



5. USING YOURSELF TO DELIVER AN ADDRESS

a. VOICE

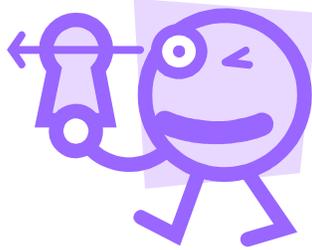
Hopefully, if you are on this skills development course, you have a voice! Fantastic! All that is now needed is for you to know HOW to use your voice.



- Breath! Before you start take a deep breath, concentrate on your breathing. (see breathing exercise below)
- Never read from a script – it is an address, a talk. Not a reading.
- Prepare **cue cards** with key words and phrases only. Number the cards in case you drop them.
- Rehearse your presentation a few times to avoid awkward pauses and to familiarise yourself with the language.
- Pronounce your words clearly.
- Do not swallow words at the end of your sentences.
- Use a variety in pace, tone and volume. Some sentences require emphasis, some require a slow pace. Decide this when you rehearse the speech.
- Do NOT have high inflections at the end of your sentences.

B. EYE CONTACT

- Forget about yourself and eyes staring at you.
- LOOK at your audience. Make eye contact. If making eye contact is your biggest fear – PRETEND to make eye contact and look a few centimetres ABOVE your audience members' heads – they will not see the difference.



- If someone in your audience saps your energy and you feel intimidated try to focus more on other audience members – but try to make eye contact with EVERYBODY. You are there to address everyone.

C. PACE

- Time yourself during rehearsals to ensure that you finish within the allotted time.
- Devise a rough plan so that you know how much time you have left at each stage.
- Do not rush or talk too slowly. Be natural, but not conversational.
- Pause at key points for emphasis.
- Avoid jokes – it is always disastrous unless you are a natural expert.
- Bring a glass of water - your mouth may become dry, and you can use this as an excuse to pause and punctuate your talk. Some public speakers believe one should have a pinch of salt before the presentation! Cayenne Pepper and Ginger also stimulates the secretion of saliva. Try it next time before you have to give a talk!

V. VOLUME

- Speak clearly. Do not shout, mutter or whisper - the audience will lose interest and begin to behave in ways that might distract you. Pitch your voice towards the back audience. If a microphone is available, use it.
- To create more interest, change your pitch of voice (raising or lowering it) or speed of delivery, occasionally.
- Demonstrate your interest in what you are saying through your voice - otherwise, your audience will lose interest.



E. BODY LANGUAGE

- Stand in a position where you do not block the screen.
- Preferably, point to the screen than on the OHP transparency to avoid muttering or blocking audience's view.
- Use your hands or appropriate gestures to emphasise points.
- Do not move about too much. Pacing up and down can unnerve the audience, although some animation is desirable.
- Look at the audience and maintain eye contact as much as possible. Do not fix on an individual - it can be intimidating.
- Keep an eye on the audience's body language - know when to stop and also to cut out certain parts of the presentation.

G. APPEARANCE

- Dress appropriately for the occasion. First impressions can influence the audience's attitudes towards you. Here are some guidelines:
 - Clothes
 - For men, a suit or a long-sleeve shirt and tie is preferable. For ladies, wear a skirt or a national dress.
 - Avoid tight and revealing clothes. They should fit well, be in good condition and be neatly ironed.
 - Choose business-like or conservative styles. Be stylish, but not necessarily what's currently in fashion.
 - Wear colours (like white or light blue) that do not distract others and that are not distracting for you.
 - Accessories
 - Keep all electrical accessories (hand phone, organiser, pager etc) out of sight and turned off. Turn off watch alarms.
 - Shoes should be practical and comfortable (avoid stilettos and sandals with socks).
 - Less is best for jewellery, bags, scarves, hair accessories etc.
 - Ties, generally, should be professional and conservative. Avoid garish, humorous and stained ties.
 - Grooming
 - Clean, neat and simple with attention to detail such as loose hair, chipped nail polish, clean fingernails.
 - Make sure after-shave and perfumes are not overpowering, some people are quite sensitive to these products.

- Hair
 - Clean
 - Not distracting
 - Perhaps off the face or neatly styled for a corporate look

6. HANDLING SPEECH ANXIETY

Feeling nervous before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows that you care about doing well. But, too much nervousness can be unfavourable. Here's how you can control your nervousness and make effective, memorable presentations:

- **Know your material**

Much of the fear comes from wondering if you will make a mistake, or if the audience will know more than you. Thus, you need to practise your speech. If you are well prepared and know your material inside out, you will have more confidence and less anxiety.

- **Know the room**

Familiarise yourself with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practise using the microphone, visual aids and other equipment. The more familiar you are with the room, the more comfortable you will feel. (Also see Section 8)

- **Know the audience**

Smile and greet some of the audience as they arrive. It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

- **Relax**

Focus your attention on thoughts and images that are calming and reassuring. Before you speak, or while you are being introduced, you should take slow, deep breaths. Taking a sip of water may also help calm your nerves.

- **Concentrate on the message** - not the medium.

Focus your energy and attention on your message and your audience and away from your nervousness.

- **Stand in a self-assured, confident posture**

Remain warm and open and maintain eye contact with your audience.

- **Make the audience laugh**, if you can.

This is the best way to start with a crowd before going into your speech. Everyone will then be a little more relaxed because they have laughed together. However, you need to try out your joke with others first to avoid any adverse effect.

- **Gain experience**

Experience builds confidence - your anxieties will decrease with more presentations you give.

7. EQUIPMENT

Your most important piece of equipment is YOU! Check your personal appearance carefully.

Overhead Projector

The overhead projector (OHP) displays overhead transparencies (OHTs or OHPTs). It has several advantages over the 35mm slide projector:

- it can be used in daylight
- the user can face the audience
- the user can write or draw directly on the transparency while in use

Whiteboard

The whiteboard is a useful device for spontaneous writing - as in brainstorming, for example. For prepared material, the OHP may be more suitable.

Duster

The duster is used for cleaning the whiteboard.

Markers

Markers are used for writing on the:

- whiteboard (delible - you can remove the ink)
- flipchart (indelible - you cannot remove the ink)

Flipchart

The flipchart consists of several leaves of paper that you 'flip' (turn) over. Some people prefer the flipchart to the whiteboard, but its use is limited to smaller presentations.

35mm Slide Projector

A slide projector must be used in a darkened room. Most slide projectors take 35mm transparencies or slides, but projectors for 6x6cm slides are also available.

Notebook Computer

The notebook computer is often used with an overhead projector, to project an image from the computer screen onto the wall screen.

Handouts

Handouts are any documents or samples that you 'hand out' (distribute) to your audience. It is not usually a good idea to distribute handouts before your presentation. The audience will read the handouts instead of listening to you.

8. THE VENUE

Often a good presentation is spoiled by weak attention to practicalities, i.e. when the speaker arrives late! Make sure that NOTHING goes wrong. When planning a presentation give careful consideration to the venue.

Make sure you know WHERE the venue is before-hand and how long it will take you to get there!

It is preferable to view the venue before-hand and familiarize yourself with the layout. Check the lighting and ventilation, availability of plugs, the acoustics and the layout (floor plan).

See the attached Venue Checklist for further details.

Appendix I Presentation Checklist

Use the following checklist to identify the main elements of your presentation and to address possible problem areas BEFORE the date of your presentation.

Audience

Have you learned all you can about the following for the presentation?

- The size of the room.
- The layout of the room.
- The size of the audience.
- The time of day (may affect attention span).
- The knowledge or expertise level of the audience.
- The availability of projection equipment, flip chart, chalk/white board etc.
- The expected level of formality of the talk.

Content

- Has the topic been selected?
- Have you defined the content?
- Has a plan/outline been developed?
- Have you determined which tools you need to complete the task?

Introduction:

- Does your introduction get the audience's attention?
- Is there an overview/table of contents page?
- Does your introduction establish the importance of your topic to this audience?

Body:

- Does it stay focused on the topic and purpose?
- Are the main ideas and supporting details organized effectively?
- Is the content relevant?
- Is the content comprehensive?
- Is the content accurate?
- Is time allocated carefully?
- Have you considered time-eaters (e.g. handout distribution)?

Conclusion:

- Does it bring the presentation to a smooth ending?
- Has the main ideas been restated?
- Does it invite discussion and questions?

Design of Visual Aids

Have you prepared visual aids that take the following into consideration?

- Limit yourself to one idea per transparency/slide.
- Use readable fonts.
- Use font types and sizes consistently.
- Use colours consistently and purposefully.
- Use clear, simple visuals.
- Use visuals relevant to the content.
- Use sound effects (if any) purposefully.
- Use texts free of spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

Delivery

- Are all the tools for the presentation ready?
- Do you speak loudly and clearly enough?
- Are you speaking at a suitable pace - not too fast/slow?
- Is your language appropriate?
- Is your grammar correct?
- Do you vary your intonation & tone of voice?
- Do you make consistent eye contact with the audience?
- Do you vary your gestures?
- Do you seem enthusiastic?
- Are you appropriately dressed?
- Have you rehearsed the presentation?
- Have you anticipated potential questions?
- Have you prepared answers for potential questions?

Appendix II PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

Presenter: _____

Topic: _____

Date: _____

Please circle one option for each item.

5 = Excellent

3 = Average

1 = Needs improvement

I. CONTENT

A.	Clarity of purpose & objectives	5	4	3	2	1
B.	Organisation & sequence of presentation	5	4	3	2	1
C.	Relevance of content to topic	5	4	3	2	1
D.	Clarity of content	5	4	3	2	1
E.	Comprehensiveness of content	5	4	3	2	1
F.	Relevance of visual aids	5	4	3	2	1
G.	Quality of visual aids	5	4	3	2	1

II. DELIVERY

A.	Voice projection	5	4	3	2	1
B.	Clarity of pronunciation & intonation	5	4	3	2	1
C.	Accuracy & appropriateness of language used	5	4	3	2	1
D.	Smoothness of delivery	5	4	3	2	1
E.	Effective use of body language	5	4	3	2	1
F.	Effective use of time	5	4	3	2	1

III. QUESTION-ANSWER SESSION

A.	Confidence in knowledge of topic	5	4	3	2	1
B.	Clarity of answers	5	4	3	2	1
C.	Relevance of answers	5	4	3	2	1
D.	Ability to infer/hypothesize answers from available information	5	4	3	2	1
E.	Ability to answer questions objectively	5	4	3	2	1

IV. OVERALL IMPRESSION

A.	Fulfillment of presentation aims & objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
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Learner Guide: _____