



Giving Oral Presentations

Preparation

- Know your subject matter well.
- Ensure a clear and logical structure for your presentation with an introduction, middle and a conclusion.
- Try to find an interesting or attention-grabbing way to begin.
- Ensure that your content is pitched at the appropriate level.
- Prepare support materials for your audience, in the form of visual aids such as slides or transparencies, or printed handouts.
- Prepare your own support materials, such as notes or palm cards to keep you on track.
- Know the room in which you will present, and if possible arrange the layout to suit your purpose prior to your presentation.
- Check that the venue has the facilities/equipment that you require.
- Anticipate questions and prepare answers in advance.

Practice

- Rehearse your presentation aloud and time it.
- Rehearse with your visual aids and support materials.

Presentation Skills

- Speak clearly, slowly and loud enough so that everyone present can hear you.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience, looking at different people as you talk.
- Consider your body language – stand, rather than sit; and use your hands and gestures for emphasis.
- Avoid reading your presentation word for word, and try to learn your opening and closing almost 'by heart' so that you don't need to refer to your notes.
- Keep to the time allowed.
- Don't apologise, as you may be drawing the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed.

Handling Nerves

- Prepare thoroughly as it will give you confidence.
- Beforehand, visualise a successful presentation.
- Arrive early as you are less likely to be stressed during the presentation.
- Go slow. Do not rush through your talk to get it over and done with because you are nervous.
- Remember to breathe deeply to help you relax. Take two or three deep breathes before you begin and pause during the presentation to give you time to breathe.
- Concentrate on the fact that you are communicating, not presenting.
- Realise that your audience wants you to succeed; they do not want you to fail.
- Finally, remember to smile.

Handling Questions

- Clarify the question if you need to. If the question is unclear, ask the questioner to repeat the question.
- Keep the answer brief.
- If you don't know the answer, admit it. If appropriate, say you will find out and get back to the questioner.
- Answer mainly to the questioner, but involve the whole audience as well.
- Check back that you have answered the question.

Good luck! Remember, practise makes perfect, and the more often you give oral presentations, the easier it becomes.

Bibliography

Aston, M. 2005, *Study smart: a guide to successful study at TAFE*, Reedy Books, Epping.

Billingham, J. 2003, *Giving presentations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.