Effective Presentations

Quick Reference Guide

Types of Presentations

Before you start building a presentation, you need to identify the type of presentation you'll be giving.

Your presentation will fall into 1 of these 4 categories:

Informational

Used to inform the audience about an event, product, or project

Persuasive

Used to convince the audience to accept an idea or proposal

Decision-Making

Used to present the audience with options in order to come to a collaborative decision

Instructional

Used to teach the audience a new skill or present key information on a new topic

Audience and Research

In order for your presentation to be effective, you need to first identify your audience. Then, conduct proper research to provide the audience with accurate and concise details.

Know Your Audience

Give the audience the most value for their time. Think:

- What's in it for them?
- What do they already know or not know?
- What's the best way for you to communicate?

Do Your Research

You have a set amount time to present your information. In order to make it valuable:

- Do your research upfront
- Use facts, not generalities
- Only present information from credible sources
- Decide what's important and leave out the rest

Parts of a Presentation

Introduction

Your audience will quickly decide if you are worth listening to. Start by briefly introducing yourself and the presentation subject, then engage the audience and grab their attention. Start with a story, humor, a fascinating fact, or a quote that will quickly convince the audience you are worth their time.

Middle

This is where you make your main points. Keep your content organized into key points that are easy to follow. If you go on long tangents, you will lose your audience. Keep your visual aids interesting and ensure the content is personal to retain engagement.

Conclusion

When you are ready to wrap up, start giving clues the conclusion is coming to pique the interest of your audience. This is where you summarize and restate your main point, announce any call to action, and finally, end on a polished note to leave the audience with a favorable impression.

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Presentation Design

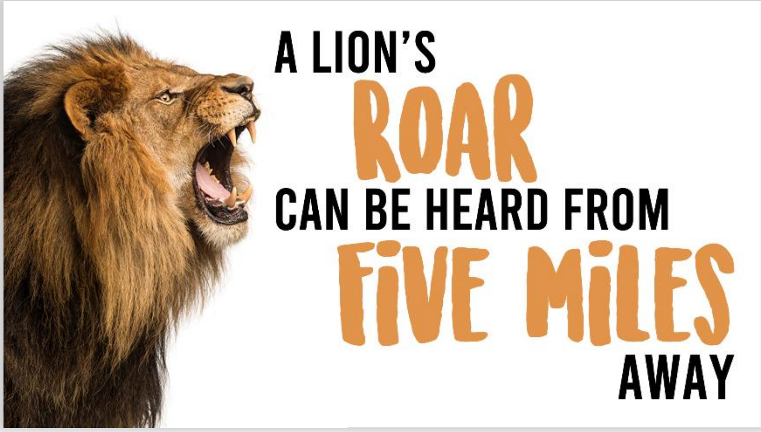
The design of your presentation will make or break your success. Presentation attendees commonly agree the biggest annoyances include presenters reading slides, too much text on slides, and using a font size that's too small.

Follow these simple rules to take your presentations to the next level.

Avoid slides full of bullet points. Aim for 1 main point per slide.

No paragraphs of text. Use just a key word or phrase to remember what to say.

Use high-resolution images that elicit emotion.



A LION'S ROAR CAN BE HEARD FROM FIVE MILES AWAY

Use sans-serif fonts that are large enough for everyone to read.

Use fonts that complement each other in colors that contrast with the background.

If using animations, keep them simple and subtle.

Preparation

Dress Appropriately

The first impression is critical. Dressing appropriately for the audience sets the tone for the entire presentation.

Use Your Computer

Your machine is most familiar to you. It also ensures you present with the software version you're used to using.

Check the Equipment

Ensure the projector is properly connected. If your presentation includes audio, and/or needs the internet, be sure you have access.

Have Slides Prepared

Make sure slides are in an accessible location (an external drive, the desktop, a shared drive) no matter what environment you're in.

Arrive Early

Make sure everything is working before others start to arrive. Run through the presentation once on your own.

Delivery

Focus on the Audience

The audience should always be your number one focus.

Maintain comfortable eye contact with the audience throughout the presentation.

Look to the slide briefly as a cue, but you should rehearse enough to know what to say.

Body Language and Tone

Having excitement and rhythm in your voice keeps the audience interested.

Casually gesture with your hands, move naturally around the front of the room, and of course, smile.

Speak clearly and project to the back of the room.

Time Management

Rehearse the presentation to ensure you can stick to the allotted time, leaving time for questions at the end.

If you are coming up short, have some extra topics or questions prepared. When you get behind, know what info can be left out.

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