

Presentation Skills (when English is not your first language) – Part 2

Context:

We found clients were jaded/tired by heavy topics such as preparing for/reacting to Covid. In response we have introduced a new workshop getting clients to focus on their presentation skills in speaking about an outside interest they are truly passionate about. We had a lot of fun in the workshops and from this have generated some really practical hints and tips in improving presentation skills when English is not your first language!

Principles 11 to 20

11) Technique: Facial expressions and body language. Maintain an open, positive body language and project your voice clearly. For online meetings, reflect on your background. It is incredible how people mess up their background with weird, random objects or stark white walls.

Be careful about overusing virtual backgrounds they can make your head look weird! My bookshelf, in my living room, is my personal favourite. Think about how close you want to be the screen. Don't sit too far away and make sure you are well-centred in the screen.

12) Technique: Make your conclusion powerful. Signal the end of the presentation, summarize the key points and finally focus on one main point and explain its significance.

13) Technique: Shake up your conclusion. Quote a well-known person; refer back to the beginning (for example complete a joke or anecdote started at the beginning); ask a question that will leave

people thinking; provoke the audience; or call the audience into action.

14) Ending your presentations - useful language

To use in conclusions:

- To conclude I would like to...
- That brings me to the end...
- That wraps it up...
- One final thought I would like to leave you with...
- A final question I would like you to think about...
- I would like to end with the following quote/question/thought...
- I would like you to do one thing after this presentation...

Asking questions:

- Does anyone have any questions?
- I am happy to take some questions now.
- If you have any questions let me know.
- I would like to open up the presentation for any questions.

15) Technique: Questions

When you don't know the answer, the best approach is to confidently admit you don't know. If someone else is better placed to answer the question, clearly highlight that. If you are unsure of the meaning of the question, ask for clarification. If the information is confidential, politely avoid giving an answer in a tactful manner. One 'cheeky' technique is to thank the person for the question and ask them an even better question that you can answer! ***Whatever your technique – 'hold the questions lightly'.***

16) Language: Questions

Useful phrases in managing questions:

- That is a great question, that is a good question...
- Thank you for that interesting question...
- In answering your question, I would like to start by saying...
- That is a good question, I don't know the answer but I will get back to you on that by the end of the week.
- Would you mind repeating your question, I am not sure I fully understood the meaning?
- That is an interesting question, I will refer that to Sally who works in the accounting team.
- Thanks for that question, an even better question could be...

17) Technique: It sounds obvious to say but take your time in both presenting and responding to questions. Speak slowly and clearly. This is particularly pertinent when presenting online.

18) Technique: The rule of six. If using PowerPoint try and keep to a maximum of six sentences in each slide. Each sentence should have a maximum of six words. This is very prescriptive and you clearly don't need to be so exact, but this speaks to an important working principle - don't make your PowerPoint slides too busy.

19) Technique: The rule of three. Many experts state a maximum of three subsections in the main part of your presentation. For PowerPoint – we recommend using font size 24, and avoiding animation overkill!

20) Technique: Less is more. Again when presenting online remember the dangers of **information overload**. This could be in the amount you say, the detail in your slides or the length of your presentation.

Remember that online delivery can require even greater concentration so 'chunk up' your content into bite sized pieces and make your presentation as interactive as possible.

Don't forget to check principles 1 to 10 (in Giving Sensitive Feedback – Part 1) if you have not read them already.
