

Presentation Skills (when English is not your first language) – Part 1

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!

Outputs from our workshops - focusing on language and technique – Part 1.

- 1) **Technique:** Your introduction should welcome the audience, introduce yourself, state the topic/purpose and why this is relevant to the audience.
- 2) **Technique:** In the introduction, very briefly give an overview of the structure of the presentation and deal with three practical issues: Timing, handouts and questions.
- 3) **Language:** Useful expressions to integrate into the introductory part of your presentation. Where significant we have referenced 'formal' or 'semi-formal'.

3.1) Welcome

- Welcome to my presentation today.
- Welcome today, can you all hear me okay? (**virtual meeting**)
- Good to see you all again. (**semi-formal**)

- If everyone is ready/comfortable/comfy, let's go for it/let's begin, let's start. **(semi-formal)**

3.2) Your name

- My name is Peter Smith.
- For those of you who don't know me, my name is Peter Smith. **(formal)**
- I would like to introduce my colleague... **(formal)**

3.3) Subject

- Today I will be talking about...
- Today I would like to talk about/focus on...
- The focus/subject of today is to...
- This presentation will look at/explore/summarise/review/assess/analyse...
- The focus for today is to go deeper/get a better understanding of...

4) **Technique:** The classic structure for presentations

- **Introduction:** Tell the audience what you are going to say.
- **Main Part:** Say it.
- **Conclusion:** Recap what you said.

5) **Technique:** To get the attention of the audience in the first few minutes

- Ask a rhetorical question, a question that 'hangs in the air', a gently provocative question,
- Start with an interesting/pertinent/little known fact,
- Tell the audience an interesting story or anecdote,
- Give the audience a problem to think about.

- 6) Language:** Use words like, 'we, our, us' to demonstrate a shared sense of direction/ownership.
- 7) Technique:** Using **signposting language** - Let the audience know at all times what you want to do and how you want to do it, repeat new information, and summarise the main points in each part of the presentation.

Useful expressions:

- **Introducing information:** To start I suggest we... I would like to start with... By way of introduction... To kick off I would like to...
 - **Ordering information:** Firstly, secondly, thirdly, additionally, furthermore, another interesting point is that...
 - **Continuity expressions:** Let's go on to... now let's look at... I would like to continue with a... Moving on... So that means....
 - **Referring to graphs and data:** The graph demonstrates, illustrates, highlights, suggests, reveals, shows, provides evidence of...
 - **Reframing/seeing both sides:** Another way of looking at this is to... An alternative perspective... In other words... On the other hand... The counter argument is...
- 8) Technique:** Have strategies to deal with nervousness: prepare well, learn to relax (stretching, breathing) but know that some nerves are ok and can help to get you 'in the zone'. You are not looking to be a zen master but you do need to harness your nervous energy.
- 9) Technique:** Take some time to check out the room. Think about how you will use the space. Where will you position yourself? How will you move about the space? Where are the audience likely to look? Do you have space to breath? Are the chairs positioned in an optimum position? Are there any obstacles/visual distractions that can be moved? **(face to face)**

10) Technique: If the space is virtual, think about how you will use the virtual space. How will you integrate the chat or Q&A functions? Do you want spoken or written questions? How will you switch between slides and gallery view if you have many participants? How will you ask participants to notify you? How will you use breakout rooms? How will you use additional functions such as Polls?
