Giving Effective Presentations in English

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Agenda
- General Aspects
- Opening Presentations and Signposting
- Using Rhetorical Techniques
- Using Visuals Properly
- Creating Rapport and Non-verbal Communication
- Concluding Presentations and Handling Questions

General Aspects
- selecting material
- structuring material
- visualising material
- producing supporting material

Selecting Material
- adequacy for target audience
- level of detail
- level of jargon
- level of formality
- adequacy for oral delivery

"I don’t think we’ll use visuals at this year’s AGM."

Structuring Material

Opening
- signalling start
- welcoming/introducing oneself/ institution
- stating purpose and scope
- optional: effective techniques

Main Body
- three to four main points
- transitions
- logical order
- coherence

Conclusion
- brief recapitulation
- significance/future prospects
- optional: effective techniques
Visualising Material

Clear Layout
colour scheme and contrast
font type and size
legibility

Balance of Text and Space
key words
parallelism
typing errors and mistakes

Supporting Diagrams
level of complexity
adequacy for topic/audience

Choice of Medium
available equipment
equipment test

If you can't state your position in eight words or less — you don't have a position" (Seth Godin)

Producing Supporting Material

adequacy for topic/audience
level of detail
point of time for distribution

Opening the Presentation

- to choose the appropriate level of formality
- to establish rapport
- to make a good first impression

Conventional Openings

signal beginning
introduce yourself/company/institution
state purpose and scope
give brief overview
signal transition to main part

Conventional Openings: Example

Perhaps we should begin.
Good morning everyone. Thanks for coming. As you know I am a member of the Project X team here at the University of Rome, La Sapienza.

stating purpose and scope

So I'll start off by filling you in on the background to the experiment set-up. And then I'll go on to present the most significant results. I'll conclude by giving an overview of the impact of the results on our project.

giving overview

Let us now have a closer look at the experiments we conducted.

signalling transition to main part

Effective Openings

give them a problem to think about
give them some amazing facts
give them a story or personal anecdote
Effective Openings: Examples

Problem Technique

suppose ... how would you ...?
Have you ever wondered why it is that ...? well if I could show you ... Would you be interested?
How many people have this morning ...? Well imagine ...
Do you think that's possible?

Amazing Facts Technique

Did you know that ...
According to the latest study, ...
Statistics show that ...
I read somewhere the other day that ...

Story /Anecdote Technique

You know ... When I think about ... I'm reminded of ...
Have you ever been in the situation where ... I remember when ...

Rhetorical Strategies

-to highlight and focus attention
-to enhance rhetorical effectiveness

Emphasising 1

using emphatic remarks
It's our best chance of success > It is our best chance of success
adding intensifiers
We have done much better than we expected - even better than last year.

Emphasising 2

stressing certain words (adjective/intensifier)
This was successful > This was very successful.

stressing the definite article
It's the project to invest in. > It's the project to invest in.

using certain phrases
Introducing additional point
Plus ..., In addition, What's more, ...
highlighting point
Above all ..., in particular, ... The main thing is
Focusing

change in sentence structure
use of what ...
use of do instead of main verb
We can't expect too much too soon if we can't
do is expect too much too soon.
effect: builds up anticipation

Repeating

simplest form:
repetition of intensifier/adjective
The overall result has been far, far more significant
than expected
statement > repetition > explanation
We didn't go AHEAD with the project ... we didn't go ahead - because
we weren't READY
pause + repetition of key word
Nobody knows that better than we do. - NOBODY.
There is no alternative to using the xy algorithm. – NONE.

Tripling / Machine Gunning

- three- (manifold) repetition of certain types of expressions
- makes point more memorable
The new connection is faster, more reliable and more cost-effective.

Dramatic Contrast

- reinforces point made
- use of (simple) opposites
- use of contrasting expressions
Ten years ago we were unknown to the public.
Today we have a reputation for excellence.
While other universities have relied on traditional approaches,
we have been adopting innovative techniques.
Nothing will change, if we don't do something.

Rhetorical Questions

- more interesting
- more conversational
- involves audience
- raises attention and anticipation
We've successfully started this project.

So, where do we proceed from here?

So, just how big is the potential? - eNORmous.
So, just how big is the potential? - I'll tell you how big it is. It's absolutely eNORmous.
The fact is our budget is tight. So what's the SOLUTION?
The SOLUTION is to convince our sponsors to provide further FUNDS.

Conclusion

- relevance of planning
- opening presentations
- basic rhetorical strategies
Continuation tomorrow
Giving Effective Presentations in English Part 2

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General Aspects
Opening Presentations and Signposting
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Creating Rapport and Non-verbal Communication
Concluding Presentations and Handling Questions

Revision

General Aspects
Opening Presentations and Signposting
Using Rhetorical Techniques
Creating Rapport and Non-verbal Communication
Concluding Presentations and Handling Questions

Perhaps we should begin. Good afternoon everyone. Thanks for coming. I’m ………….. And, as you know, I

This afternoon I’m going to be:
- talking to you about
- telling you
- showing you
- reporting on
- taking a look at

So, I’ll start off by:
- filling you in on the background to
- bringing you up to date on
- giving you an overview of
- making a few observations about
- outlining

And then I’ll go on to:
- highlight what I see as the main
- put the situation into some kind of perspective
- discuss in more depth the implications of
- talk you through
- make detailed recommendations regarding
Rhetorical Techniques

- Emphasising (stress pattern, intensifiers)
- Repetition including Tripling and Machine Gunning
- Focusing
- Rhetorical Questions
- Dramatic Contrasts

Exploiting Visuals

- to visualise complex matters
- to support explanations
- to demonstrate important aspects

Technical Communication – Diagram Description

- Graph / line chart
- Bar chart
- 2D / histogram
- Pie chart
- Flow chart
- Floor plan
- Organisational chart
- Schedule chart
- Portfolio chart
- Table / matrix
- Diagram

Functions of Visuals

- backing up and reinforcing talk
- more memorable
- easier to understand
- self-explanatory
- appealing to visual sense

Introducing Visuals

signal use of visual
Have a look at this chart/schematic diagram/table...
I’d like you to look at...
give overall topic/significance
As you can see it illustrates the exponential growth of internet usage
explain parts necessary for understanding
The vertical axis represents the number of users in 1000s, whereas the horizontal axis shows the years from 1980 to 1999

Commenting on Visuals

highlight significant aspect/s
I’d like us to focus our attention on the year 1987.
comment on significance
If you look at it more closely, you’ll realise that 1987 was the year with the highest growth rate.
give interpretation
The conclusion to be drawn is clear. This was the year when the World Wide Web began to facilitate internet usage.
give audience enough time to take in visual
Sample Visual Introduction 1

1. See, it’s a fairly typical growth trend. Have a look at this graph. As you can see, it’s a fairly typical growth curve for a young company in the early stages of its development. The vertical axis shows turnover in millions of dollars, and the horizontal axis represents the years 1990 to 1996.

Sample Visual Introduction 2

1. Productivity of our European plants. Let’s take a closer look at these plants, and you’ll see how far production levels in the Netherlands exceed the rest of Europe.

Sample Visual Introduction 3

1. Products. Let’s take a closer look at these products. Let’s take a closer look at this chart to see how far production levels in the Netherlands exceed the rest of Europe.

Visual Commentary: Phrases

- to establish good relationship with audience
- to prepare for problems
- to use appropriate body language
- to impact tone
- referring to background of audience

Creating Rapport / Survival Tactics / Non-verbal Communication

- to establish good relationship with audience
- to prepare for problems
- to use appropriate body language

Building up a Good Atmosphere

- using first person plural
- adding question tags
- using negative question forms
- using phrases to impact tone
- referring to background of audience
Coping with Problems

- Facts wrong!
  - Sorry, what I meant was this.
- Too fast!
  - So, let’s recap on that.
- Forgotten something!
  - Sorry, I should just mention one thing
- Too complicated
  - So, basically what I’m saying is this ...
- Talking nonsense!
  - Sorry, perhaps I didn’t make that clear
- Don’t know the English
  - Sorry, what’s the word/ expression
- Sounds wrong
  - Sorry, let me rephrase that
- No time
  - So, just to give you the main points here

Non-verbal Communication

Nerves
- be slow in beginning
- memorise introduction
- use notes (A5 at most in size)

Eye Contact
- look at all sides
- be enthusiastic

Non-verbal Communication: Body Language

- try to stand relaxed
- use open-arm gestures
- have arms above the belt line
- don’t look arms
- avoid repetitive gestures
- don’t turn back to audience

Non-verbal Communication 2

Voice quality
- speak at a natural pace
- better be slow than too fast
- articulate clearly
- don’t drop voice at end of sentence
- use stress and emphasis

Audience reaction
- be sensitive
- be ready to deal with interruptions

Concluding Presentations

- to wrap up your topic
- to leave the audience with a clear final message
- to make a memorable final impression

Concluding the presentation

- sum up the main aspects
- Let me now wrap up our topic today. We first looked into ...
  - then we discussed ...
  - And finally we sketched ...
- point out relevance of topic
  - So in a nutshell, Web 2.0 is nothing new but only a media hype
  - or refer to future implications
  - let me conclude by pointing out that more research needs to be done to validate our findings
- or provide recommendations
  - So let’s all make sure that this project will be successful – only we as a team can make this happen
  - or use a quotation
Handling/ Asking Questions
- to deal with interruptions
- to enjoy question and answer session
- to ask appropriate questions

Clarification
politely interrupt
sorry to interrupt you but...
ask clarifying question
Which country were you talking about?
What was the figure you just mentioned?
focus - ask clarifying question
You talked about the country with the highest internet usage. Could you give us more details on that?
give context - focus - ask clarifying question
When you were outlining the new project objective, you said something about a new routing protocol. Could you elaborate on that?

Dealing with Questions
R - respond (acknowledge and thank, reformulate)
A - answer (be brief and structured, no individual discussions)
C - check (find out if question was properly answered)
E - encourage (invite further questions)
good questions
thank people for asking them. I'm glad you asked that.
difficult questions
say you don't know
offer to find out
ask questioner of his/her opinion/position
I am afraid that's outside the scope of my presentation but I can try to find out and get back to you.
Well, what do you think?

Dealing with Questions 2
unnecessary questions
refer to information already given
answer briefly again
move on
remain polite.
As I mentioned when responding to Mr Miller's question, this implies that we have to secure additional funds. Any other questions?
Yes, please
irrelevant questions
point out irrelevance
move on
remain polite.
I'm afraid I don't see the connection. There is another question back there. Please.

Dealing with Hostile Questions
be diplomatic
stay firm
be short and simple
if necessary, be evasive or vague
It depends.
Yes and no.
It's a very complex matter.
avoid saying no
Not quite.
Not really.
Not entirely.
Hopefully not.

Evaluating the Presentation
- to assess quality and effectiveness
- to become aware of potential flaws
Assessing Presentation Performance

Planning
- carefully prepared?

Objectives
- clearly stated? appropriate for audience/subject?

Content
- well researched? broad/detailed enough?
- relevant? appropriate for audience?

Approach
- supported message? varied enough?
- humorous?

Organisation
- coherent? clear? appropriate?

Assessing Presentation Performance

Visual Aids
- appropriate for subject and audience, clearly legible and structured?
- introduced and explained well?

Delivery
- rate of speech and quality? established audience rapport/eye contact? posture appropriate? clearly audible?

Language
- clear? accurate? fluent? appropriate? well pronounced?
- used signalling phrases?

Overall
- message clear? objectives achieved? interesting?
- enjoyable? informative? motivating?

Golden Rules

Leave nothing to chance
- Take your time
Know exactly how to start
- Don’t be deliberately funny
Be concise
- Choose effective visuals
Talk to your audience
- Never compete with your visuals
Know your audience
- Enjoy the experience
Speak naturally and be yourself
- Welcome questions
Treat your audience as equals
- Finish strongly

DEVELOP YOUR OWN STYLE

“Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm.”
Samuel Taylor Coleridge