

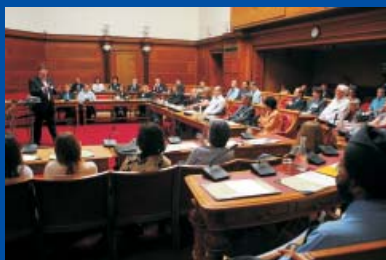
NEW



THE PROMARTA GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS



Edition 1



www.promarta.co.uk

Some Questions to Ask *Before You Agree to Speak*

- What's the event about?
- Who's organising it and why?
- Who's in the audience? General public? Professionals in your field? Colleagues from your organisation? Others?
- Why have you been asked to deliver a presentation?
- What are you expected to speak about?
- Do you know enough about the subject to speak to the expected audience?
- When is it? Where is it? Is this convenient for you?
- What's the programme for the whole event and where do you fit in. In particular, who's on immediately before and after you?
- How long have you got to deliver your presentation? Is this negotiable up or down?
- What facilities are available? Will there be a laptop, projector and lectern?
- Is there a fee? Or just expenses? (Or neither?)
- Are there other benefits—for example raising your profile?

A Few Words About PROMARTA

We organise professional events for the public sector. Our events are as professional as anything the private sector does, but delivered in keeping with the public service ethos. You'll find us easy to work with as we share your values.

We bring with us over ten years experience of working with the public sector; a can-do attitude that makes things happen and our trusted suppliers of everything from audio-visual equipment to catering (if you need them).

We work exclusively for the public sector, mainly in London and the South East. Find out more at www.promarta.co.uk or call **0845 130 2038**.

And About This Guide

With over ten years experience of organising conferences we've seen a lot of presentations and viewed feedback from thousands of delegates.

Our guide offers advice based on what we've seen ourselves and what delegates have told us. Originally produced exclusively for speakers at our events we are now making the *Promarta Guide to Effective Presentations* available to all.

You may distribute this guide as long as you don't make any changes to it and the links remain intact. Please distribute this guide to anybody you think may find it useful.

This guide is printed with soya based inks on Era Silk paper. Era Silk paper is made from post consumer waste collected in the UK and fibres from certified forests.

Anybody Can Deliver An Effective Presentation

Some people have a natural ability to deliver presentations with passion and charisma, captivating the audience and ensuring their message is understood and remembered. Most of us don't. But in reality, almost anybody can deliver an *effective* presentation if they care about what they are talking about, plan carefully and practice their delivery.

Effective speakers:

Keep their presentation simple:

It has fewer slides and fewer points on each slide than most presentations. There are no fancy slide transitions or animations. *Your audience will remember what you said rather than how “flashy” your presentation was.*

Understand their subject:

Don't deliver a presentation on a subject unless you have a good understanding of it.

Have a clear message:

They have set out with a clear purpose—to persuade us to buy a product; support a cause; or consider a particular point of view. *If you don't know what you are trying to achieve, your audience is unlikely to figure it out by themselves.*

And most of all care about their subject:

Their interest in, and passion for the subject will be evident throughout their presentation. *If you don't display some human emotion in your presentation you may as well hand out a report or send the audience an email.*

If you understand and care about your subject, you won't need to read your slides, which should be there to support and reinforce your message rather than act as an autocue. *Your audience hasn't come to listen to you reading your slides.*

Keeping It Simple with Microsoft PowerPoint

This isn't a technical guide to creating PowerPoint presentations.

You can buy books on Microsoft PowerPoint and there are lots of resources on the internet, but most people can figure out how to create a *simple* presentation pretty quickly using online help and asking colleagues if they get stuck.

And unless you really know what you are doing a simple presentation is probably going to be the most effective presentation.

Unless you are feeling very confident, avoid:

Embedded video:

Requires a powerful computer and seems to go wrong more often than it goes right. And you'll end up wasting your precious presentation time trying to make it work.

Internet links:

You don't have much choice if you are doing a live demonstration of a website, but make sure you've got a Plan B for when you lose that internet connection.

Audio:

Let the organisers know you intend to use music (or other audio files) so they can connect their laptop to the venue's PA system on the day. But remember the audience have come to listen to you, not your music or sound effects.

However the use of pictures and images can bring your presentation to life, so long as they are clear, relevant and interesting. Where possible use striking photographs rather than free clip art.

Before You Open Microsoft PowerPoint

It's very easy to create a professional looking presentation with lots of slides full of very important points, but which isn't effective. Take some time to think about the event, what you want to achieve, and the best way of achieving it.

Understand the event:

So you can plan your presentation to meet your and the organiser's needs. See the inside front cover of this booklet for some questions you may want to ask, ideally before you agree to speak at the event.

Understand your audience:

What will they know already? Will they understand your specialist terminology and acronyms? Ask who is being invited to attend the event and nearer the day ask for the job titles of registered delegates to get an idea of who you will be talking to.

Understand your message:

What do you want to say to your audience? What do you want them to do?

Remember they are human too:

People respond to and act on emotions as much as (or more than) on facts and figures. Approach your subject from their perspective—what are they interested in? What's in it for them?

Be realistic:

Your audience will be bombarded with information throughout the event, from other speakers, in workshops, from exhibitors and in informal discussions with other delegates. If you can get them to recall three simple things from your presentation you have done very well.

Preparing Your Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation

Creating an effective presentation will take some time and probably several attempts so start early!

This will give you an immediate advantage over most of your *competition* who will be preparing their presentations on the train on their way to the event. Although some people find this is the only time they can prepare an effective presentation!

Use a template if possible:

Using a corporate PowerPoint template will save you having to make difficult decisions about the design of your presentation. If you aren't sure if your organisation has a PowerPoint template ask your Communications Team.

Ensure your audience can see your slides:

Black or dark blue type on a white background is the most visible combination especially if the conference hall isn't particularly dark. Chose a simple font like Arial and select a large type size, around 30 points is ideal. Alternatively use white type on a dark background, although this may be less visible if the lights aren't dimmed or the projector is underpowered.

No more than three bullet points per slide:

And even less if you can. And no more than one graph or picture per slide. The most we've seen is 12 bullet points on a single slide, all of which were completely unreadable.

No more than one slide per minute:

It's easy to create a huge number of slides, particularly if you are worried about running out of material before your time is up. But your audience won't be able to assimilate what you are telling them and you may run out of time or end up rushing.

Jump straight in:

You have only a few minutes (and a few slides) to convince your audience that you are worth listening to. Ensure your first few slides capture their attention. You might consider skipping the traditional first slide that says what your name is and who you work for. This is probably printed in the programme and you can tell them anyway.

“If you only remember three things...”

Reiterate and reinforce your three most important points at the end of your presentation to increase the chances of your audience remembering them.

Check for errors:

Run the spellchecker and then ask somebody else to proof read your presentation as it's very difficult to spot your own mistakes. If you've used a lot of statistics or other facts check they are correct.

In the Run Up to the Event

Practice! Practice! Practice!

If you've started early, you should have plenty of time to practice.

Keep the organisers informed:

Send your presentation to the event organisers so they can preview what you are going to say; ensure you haven't duplicated material with other speakers; and that your presentation runs on their computers. Don't forget to tell them if your PowerPoint presentation includes any music or sounds.

Belt and braces:

Take a copy of your presentation to the event on a USB memory stick *and* on a CD-ROM *and* on your own laptop if you can.

On the Day

Arrive early:

Ask the organisers to check your presentation is loaded and runs properly. If you've sent more than one version, check they've got the latest one.

Check the technology:

Check you know how to start your presentation, advance through your slides, and also how to go back in case you jump ahead by accident. If there's a PA system, check you know how to use the microphone.

Make yourself known:

Introduce yourself to the conference chair and agree how you'll be introduced. Check where you need to sit before and after your presentation. Once you are satisfied all is in order, chat with other speakers and delegates to get a feel for the event.

Keep an eye on the time:

Many venues place a clock at the back of the hall where only the speakers can see it. Otherwise, place a small clock on the lectern where you can view it discretely or rely on your watch.

Over-running or under-running

Running over your allocated time will make you unpopular with the conference chair, other speakers, the caterers and most importantly your audience—who may find their refreshment break cut short to get the event back on schedule. Always aim to finish a bit early—you can always take a few questions.

Changing slides:

If the organisers provide a gizmo that allows you to change slides from anywhere in the room use it. It's far easier to connect with your audience if you don't have to stand next to the computer throughout your presentation.

After the Day

Review your presentation:

What went well? And what didn't? If the audience asked questions can you incorporate the answers into future presentations?

Ask for feedback:

Event organisers routinely gather feedback from delegates and if asked will normally pass on any relevant comments. Delegates are generally quite considerate and any criticism is likely to be constructive.

Handouts?

It's common for delegate packs to include printouts of speakers' slides but this can undermine the effectiveness of your presentation.

Prepare a separate handout:

Your PowerPoint slides are only a small part of your presentation, and may be meaningless in themselves. Rather than repeating your whole presentation summarise the key points and supply supporting information on a handout.

Distribute it after you've spoken:

Otherwise delegates will be tempted to read ahead of you rather than concentrating on what you are saying. A degree of anticipation keeps the audience engaged.

Publish online:

If you plan to publish your presentation online after the event ask the organisers to record your speech and then use the recording as a soundtrack to your presentation. Catch your introduction as well to set the scene.

Evaluation

We hope you've found this guide useful. If so, please feel free to pass it on to your colleagues, friends, family, acquaintances and anybody else you think may find it useful.

However, we recognise it's probably not perfect, so we'd be most grateful if you could answer just one question:

If you could change one thing about this guide, what would it be?

Answer online at www.promarta.co.uk/onething or email your answer to onething@promarta.co.uk.

What People Say About Our Events:

“We have used Promarta’s services a few times and always find them very reliable, hardworking and efficient. They are very helpful and flexible in the face of last minute changes and urgent issues. I would have no hesitation in recommending them.”

*Celia Minoughan,
Assistant Unit Manager,
Social Regeneration Unit,
Newham Council*

“I am writing to thank you for all your work in supporting our delivery of the recent Active Citizenship Conference at City Hall. It was a complex event and I am grateful for the efficient and smooth manner in which everything was organised. The feedback we have received has been universally positive and this has been due in no small part to the energy you brought to your role.”

*Assistant Chief Constable,
National Crime Squad*

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