

Stand up, Speak up & Persuade

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There is a common misconception that a business presentation must be crammed with information, serious and dry. It seems the higher you go in the corporate world; the more you are expected to “confuse to impress”. This results in presentations that are long, verbose, poorly structured and capable of inducing prolonged somnolence!

I believe every presentation is a ‘sales pitch’ of some kind. You may not be selling a product or service, but you want to persuade your audience to take on board your message, take action or change their attitude/views/ minds on a subject. Because of this, every presentation is a balance between entertainment and information. Entertainment is simply the way you get your message across, information is the message itself. Too much information and you confuse your audience or worse still, they switch off. Too much entertainment without the information and your audience feels cheated that they have wasted their valuable time.

Good speech structure helps you achieve this balance and present a powerful and persuasive presentation. The 5 steps to creating a persuasive presentation are:

1. Capturing attention

Nothing can be achieved without first capturing your audience’s attention. Studies show that you have up to 10 seconds to capture the audience. Suggested ways to achieve this are to start with a quote, startling statistic, hypothetical question, or a disturbing statement.

2. Establish need

It is important to focus on your audience’s needs and desires. Too often a speaker gets bound up in their research, jargon and expertise and forgets that the audience may have a different level of understanding. Consider the information you are presenting from your audience’s perspective.

3. Emotion

‘People buy on emotion and justify with logic’. Posture, body language, gestures, eye contact and vocal variety all help to convey passion and enthusiasm which are very persuasive. Using appropriate personal stories assists you to create empathy with your audience, thus helping to make your message memorable.

4. Logic

Use fact to support the emotions that you are conveying in your presentation. This will provide your audience the means to properly comprehend the main body of your presentation.

5. Ask for action

The last and most critical step for delivering a powerful presentation is asking for action. What is it that you want your audience to do or consider as a result of this presentation?

By following these steps and applying the well known ‘6 P’s’ (Prior preparation prevents pretty poor performance) you will come across as confident, articulate, persuasive as well as preventing ‘whiplash injuries’ from your audience falling asleep.

Sharon Ferrier delivers Workshops/Keynotes on communication including:

‘Stand up, Speak up & Persuade’
Public speaking skills to persuade and influence.

‘Escaping PowerPoint Purgatory’
Persuasive presentations with PowerPoint

**For more information on confidence, public speaking, persuasion and influence,
strategic networking and communication skills, visit:**

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