



# Virtual Presentation Skills and Communication

*“The single biggest problem in communication  
is the illusion that it has taken place.”*

*George Bernard Shaw*

Presented by:

**Adam Lazarus**

[adam@corporatespeechconsultants.com](mailto:adam@corporatespeechconsultants.com)

# INTRODUCTION

*What you say and how you say it,  
makes an impact on your audience.*

According to Professor Mehrabian of UCLA, your ability to communicate your message will be assessed in the following three areas:

- Verbal** - What you say
- Vocal** - How you say it
- Non-Verbal**
  - How you use body language and gestures
  - Your appearance
  - Your use of visual aids
  - The environment.

Of the impression we impart:

- \_\_\_% is verbal
- \_\_\_% is vocal
- \_\_\_% is non-verbal

Even though 7% of your presentation message leaves an impression, it should be the best 7% you can achieve.

Prepare the content of your message diligently and judiciously.

Speaking to inform is a skill that improves with practice. This ability to convey knowledge effectively will prove invaluable throughout your professional life.

# PREPARATION SHEET

---

**MY PURPOSE:**

Is my purpose to inform, persuade or entertain?  
Write out a purpose statement.

**MY KEY MESSAGE:**

What do I want my audience to see, think, feel and believe once I have completed my presentation?

**AUDIENCE PROFILE:**

What is the prior knowledge, interest, prejudice, need, language, etc. of the audience? How do I suspect they will react to my message?

## HOW YOUR AUDIENCE WILL EVALUATE YOU

1. **Appearance:** Did you dress appropriately for the occasion? Were you neat or sloppy?
2. **Introduction:** Did your opening capture the attention of the audience?
3. **Audience:** Did you relate your subject to the interests, needs and understanding of the audience? Did you engage with the audience effectively?
4. **Major Purpose:** Did you achieve your main purpose (to inform, persuade, or entertain)?
5. **Central Thought:** Did you successfully deliver your central thought?
6. **Main Points:** Did you successfully deliver your main points?
7. **Body of Talk:** Was your talk easy to follow? Did it follow a logical sequence?
8. **Transitions:** Did you make smooth transitions between ideas?
9. **Conclusion:** Was it impressive, clear and final?
10. **Grammar:** Was the speech grammatically correct?
11. **Originality:** Did you offer something unique, fresh or surprising?
12. **Choice of Words:** Did your words suit the subject matter, the audience and the occasion? Did you elevate the speech by using clear descriptive words, metaphors and / or phrases?
13. **Delivery of Speech:** How was your...
  - Body language and posture
  - Eye contact and facial expression
  - Vocal quality and volume
  - Articulation, pitch, pace and emphasis
14. **Attitude:** Did you convey your intended tone? (Warm / serious/ formal, etc.)
15. **Visual Aids:** Were they used effectively? Did they enhance or detract from the speech?

## STRUCTURING THE PRESENTATION – YOUR OPENING:

*Your introduction needs to arouse the interest and curiosity of the listener and acts as a wedge into the audience's consciousness.*

The lead-in to any presentation has a function: it gives the listener a first impression and grabs their attention.

**Here's a 4-Step Opening Sequence you can use in all of your presentations:**

- Step 1 - Get their attention (examples below)
- Step 2 - Why should they listen to you? (What's really in it for them?)
- Step 3 - What are your credentials? (Establish your subject-matter expertise succinctly)
- Step 4 - A preview of what's to come (E.g. "In the following 10 minutes, I'll be teaching you X, Y and Z."), and set expectations (E.g. no phones, save questions, ask questions throughout, take notes)

**Here are 11 powerful attention-getters – for Step 1 of Opening Sequence:**

1. Provocative or powerful question - *make sure to build on the information in the answer*
2. Personal anecdote or story
3. Startling statement
4. Joke
5. A *genuine* compliment
6. An action
7. Music or another audio
8. Quotation
9. Common bond
10. A historical connection – *link current moment with historical event*
11. A future vision – *contrast how things are now with the state of things after a successful change*

## STRUCTURING THE PRESENTATION – YOUR CLOSING:

*Your audience will form a final impression of you as you conclude.  
Prepare a strong ending and don't fade away vocally at the end.*

This will drive home your message powerfully and win the listeners' support.  
Here are some powerful ways you can close your talk:

1. Give a *concise* summary
2. Paint a picture of the future
3. Offer a short story that is relevant to your topic
4. Relay an emotional climax
5. Give a firm appeal for action
6. Offer an inspiring quotation
7. Tie in the ending back to your beginning

Don't forget:

- Don't exceed the time limit
- End with conviction and strength
- Stand firm for 5 or 6 seconds before leaving the podium
- Maintain good posture

# THE INFORMATIVE SPEECH

*Let your audience know what something is or how something works.*

## 1. Introduction

Step 1 – Get their attention

Step 2 – Why should they listen to you? (What’s really in it for them?)

Step 3 – What are your credentials? (Establish your subject-matter expertise succinctly)

Step 4 – Preview what’s to come (E.g. “In the following 10 minutes, I’ll be teaching you X, Y and Z.”), and set expectations (E.g. no phones, save questions, ask questions throughout, take notes)

## 2. Body

*First Main Point:* Illustrate and support with examples, evidence, statistics, visual aids.

*Second Main Point:* Illustrate and support with examples, evidence, statistics, visual aids.

*Third Main Point:* Illustrate and support with examples, evidence, statistics, visual aids.

## 3. Conclusion

What is a realistic ask of your audience based on who they are, what they’ve just heard, and what they are able to give or do? Clearly state what you want the audience to understand or do. End with a final summary, illustration, application or your main theme.

# THE MOTIVATED SEQUENCE

*Motivate your listeners to take specific action.*

**1. ATTENTION** – Gain the attention of the audience and focus on the main ideas of the speech. Use the 4-Part Opening Sequence of a speech.

**2. NEED** – Define your general problem and relate it to the needs of your audience. The audience must understand the need for change. Illustrate the need by using examples, evidence, testimony and statistics. Ensure these are related to the needs of an audience.

**3. SATISFACTION** – Provide a solution to the problem. Do this by offering the following details:

- How your solution meets the needs you identified earlier
- Your comprehensive plan
- Demonstration of how your solution will work
- Use of strong evidence and support materials
- Raise and address any objections you can anticipate

**4. VISUALIZATION** – Use vivid descriptions and imagery to paint a picture of your proposed solution. This will help show your audience how they can benefit by your plan, what the future will look like, how they will profit from a policy, or what positive result they can expect.

**5. ACTION** – Now that you've created a desire, end with a strong Call to Action (CTA). For example, tell them to buy your product, vote for your idea, book the vacation, click on this website and register NOW. Make it a direct appeal. Conclude on a strong note that convinces the audience to act based on the soundness of your proposal.

# THE SPEECH TO CONVINC

*Convince your listeners to adopt your view*

1. **HISTORY** – Present a history of the problem.
2. **EFFECTS** – Discuss the effects of the problem at the present time. Give illustrations, evidence, facts, proof, and examples to support your claim.
3. **CAUSES** – List the causes that brought about the effects. Use supporting evidence again.
4. **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS** – List examples, facts, analogies, illustrations.
5. **SOLUTIONS** – Present your solution to the problem. Offer the evidence and reasons for choosing the solution or promoting a particular belief or idea.
6. **COSTS** – Outline the financial, time, emotional costs involved in implementing your solution.
7. **BENEFIT** – Show the audience how they will benefit from your proposal. For example, will they get a better education, increase their profits, obtain better access to an opportunity?
8. **CONCLUSION** – Conclude your speech with a final statement supporting your solution / proposal. What action would you like the audience to take?

# IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

---

P

R

E

W

# SPEECH STRUCTURES

## INFORMATIVE

- Attention
- W.I.F.T
- W.L.T.M.
- Preview/Purpose
- Main points
- Conclusion

## IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

- Point of view
- Reason
- Example
- Wrap-up

## THE MOTIVATED SEQUENCE

- Attention getter
- Define the audience's need
- Satisfaction
- Visualization
- Call to action

## STRUCTURE – TO CONVINC

- History of the problem
- Effects of the problem
- Causes of the problem
- Solution
- Costs
- Benefits
- Call to action

# INTRODUCTION TO PERSUASION

## General Principles of Persuasion:

1. People resist abrupt change. Confirmation bias results in holding onto beliefs, ideas and the status quo. Often, people respond to gradual, incremental change.
2. People must clearly understand how your idea will benefit them, and how their needs will be met.
3. People need to feel understood first.
4. People need to trust you. They will trust you if they see you as: Fair, Honest, Credible, Possessing integrity, Knowledgeable, Passionate, Objective and Open Minded.

## Maintain credibility from beginning to end:

- Initial credibility – Your audience is evaluating you even before you begin.
  - Consider non-verbal cues – posture, attire, body language.
  - Make eye contact with the audience before you speak.
  - Write your bio (noting relevant accomplishments and achievements) and offer to the person introducing you.
- Acquired credibility – This is achieved during the course of your talk.
  - Establish common ground with your audience.
  - Present a well-organized speech with well-supported arguments.
  - Demonstrate that you are ethical and well-informed.
  - Demonstrate congruence – your message, your facial expressions, your body and your voice all support each other.
- Definitive credibility – This arrives at the end of your speech or Q & A Period.
  - End with a positive impression.
  - Finish with strength, maintaining eye contact and connection.

## 3 APPEALS TO PERSUADE

### 1. Logos – Logical Appeal

Use reasoning to encourage the audience to draw conclusions in your favour.

Examples are evidence such as concrete examples, facts, survey results, statistics and expert opinions. To persuade, your facts and information must be relevant to the needs of the audience, and that connection must be clearly understood.

### 2. Pathos – Emotional Appeal

An attempt to evoke an emotion in your audience so they are motivated to join your cause. Any emotion can inspire people to act – happy, sad, compassion, anger, nostalgia etc.

Pathos can be delivered through stories, metaphors, images, or meaningful, passionate delivery. Introductions and conclusions are ideal places to use Pathos – grabbing attention at the beginning, and ending with conviction.

Your audience will only be motivated by pathos if they can identify with you.

### 3. Ethos – Ethical Appeal

Ethos is about building trust. For your audience to accept your message, they must accept you.

Demonstrate that you're relatable by placing your audience's needs, feelings, motives and concerns before your own (Many speakers place their interests and wants at the centre of the message, which alienates the audience). Also consider non-verbal cues and using body language and eye contact to build trust.

### 3 APPEALS ABOUT THIS CAR....

**Ethos:** 'Buy my old car because I'm Tom Magliozzi.'

**Logos:** 'Buy my old car because yours is broken and mine is the only one on sale.'

**Pathos:** 'Buy my old car or this cute little kitten, afflicted with a rare degenerative disease, will expire in agony, for my car is the last asset I have in the world, and I am selling it to pay for kitty's medical treatment.'"

- Sam Leith, *Words Like Loaded Pistols*



# TIPS FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS

by Seth Godin

1. Sit close to the screen. Your face should fill most of it.
2. Use an external microphone or headset.
3. When you're not talking, hit mute.
4. Don't eat during the meeting.
5. When you're on mute during an audio call, you can do whatever you want. But when you're on mute on a video call, you need to act like you're truly engaged. Nod your head. Focus on the screen. Don't get up and feed your dog.
6. Don't sit with the window behind you. A little effort on lighting goes a very long way.
7. When you're talking, spend some time looking at the camera, not the screen. You'll appear more earnest and honest this way.
8. When you're talking, go slow. No one is going to steal your slot.
9. Don't walk if you're using a phone. And if you're using a laptop, don't put it on your lap.

Reference: <https://seths.blog/2018/09/how-to-be-on-a-zoom-or-skype-call-the-secrets-of-video-conferences/>

## KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL MEETING

The greatest challenge we face in virtual meetings, is building empathy. The nuances that form our impressions while being in the same space are lost. We don't pick up on subtle shifts in body language, rhythm of breath, or the even the energy of the space.

To build empathy, as facilitators of virtual meetings, we must:

1. **Be clear.** Get specific, directive and simple. Tell your audience what you are speaking about, tell them what to do with your ideas, keep your sentences short and sweet. Don't waffle.
2. **Be present.** Watch your audience, not yourself. Use the participant's names. Talk to them. Get familiar and comfortable with the tools of interactivity. Engage as much as possible.
3. **Be kind.** Everyone has a different level of technical knowledge so being sensitive and patient goes a long way in building relationships. Also, in a virtual setting anything can happen -- sound and video may glitch, interruptions occur, power goes out. Be empathetic to the situation.

Here are some practical tips guide you to a successful virtual meeting:

### Technical Tips

1. **Camera on eye-level.** Raise your camera to be at eye level. Look into the camera as you speak to increase connection
2. **Rule of Thirds.** Your head and shoulders should fill  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the screen
3. **Lighting.** The light source should come from behind your camera. Avoid backlighting. Natural sunlight is best. A ring-light will give you a visual bump.
4. **Power up.** Be sure to plug in your laptop.
5. **Expect the unexpected.** When things go wrong, keep your cool and ask for understanding. If power goes down, tell your participants you are having technical difficulties and the meeting will resume in 5 minutes – then check in at 5 minutes with an update.

## Interactive Tips

1. **Chat Function:** Ask powerful questions which participants respond to in chat. Summarize their responses so they feel seen & heard
2. **Google Sheet** - Participants collaborate online in a Google Sheet
3. **Call people by their name**
4. **Body Movement** - Thumbs Up or Down, hold the baton/potato
5. **Questions** – When you ask, be comfortable waiting for a response, direct to chat function, or unmute, ask by name, plant a question. Keep your eyes on the people to see if someone is talking and is muted!
6. **Interactions** – speak slowly and clearly. Say things three times. Write commands in the chat function.

## Handling Interruptions

1. **Set expectations off the top.** Ask people not to interrupt. Tell them to save questions and comments till the end.
2. **Speak with strength.** When you speak with authority and power, you are less likely to be interrupted.
3. **Don't show you're annoyed.** Be careful of body language and facial expressions that show you're annoyed by an interruption. Don't cede power.
4. **Keep talking.** Get louder and don't stop. Remember that the person who interrupted is talking over you, not the other way around!
5. **Say you'd like to finish.** Be polite and say a firm 'hold on' or 'Jeff, I'm not quite finished'. Don't say sorry or please.
6. **Stay in the conversation.** Acknowledge the point and start back where you left off. Take notes if you're worried you may forget where you were.

Reference: [www.fastcompany.com/3057626/5-strategies-to-stop-coworkers-from-interrupting-you-all-the-time](http://www.fastcompany.com/3057626/5-strategies-to-stop-coworkers-from-interrupting-you-all-the-time)