

AMA's

6 Simple Steps to Killer **PRESENTATIONS**



American Management
Association®

TRAINING SOLUTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS & ORGANIZATIONS

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Introduction



Command attention and confidently present your ideas with poise and control. Whether it's presentations at work or public speeches, learning how to create compelling, persuasive presentations (and get past the jitters) is a powerful way to demonstrate your leadership potential. It all starts with being carefully prepared.

From developing the content to connecting with your audience, this eBook will help you make your next presentation with ease. Plus there are tips for fighting stage fright and creating killer visuals. And when you're ready to take your presentations to the next level, take one of the courses suggested at the end. In these seminars, you can practice your presentation skills in a safe environment and get expert feedback.



6 Simple Steps to Developing Compelling Presentations

"If you can't write your message in a sentence, you can't say it in an hour."

Dianna Booher

Step 1: Set expectations.

Outline what you're trying to achieve with your presentation. This will help make sure you don't spend too much time on one aspect and ignore the others.

Step 2: Determine your audience.

Figuring out who your audience is and what they are interested in makes sure your presentation stays relevant to them.

Step 3: Start with what you know.

Begin generating content by brainstorming what you already know.

Step 4: Identify what you need to find out.

Now begin to fill in the gaps between the objective of the presentation, what you know about the audience, and what you already know about the subject.

Step 5: Create a structure.

The most widely used presentation models use some form of "Tell them what you're going to tell them" (Introduction), "Tell them" (Body), and "Tell them what you've told them" (Conclusion).

Step 6: Put the presentation in outline form.

The best way to avoid reading your presentation (and putting the audience to sleep) is to put it in outline form.

INSIDER TIPS

Avoid writing full sentences in notes. This will help keep you from reading the presentation.

Avoid using note cards.

Make key words ALL CAPS.

Indicate places to pause in your notes.



Preparing to Give the Presentation

"There are always three speeches for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave."

Dale Carnegie

Practice

- Go through your presentation several times to get the flow of the content.
- Practice the introduction and conclusion more than the body to open and close your presentation on a strong note.
- Focus on one aspect of delivery every time you practice.

Stick to your timeframe.

- Plan to talk for 10% less than the allotted time to allow time for questions.
- Brainstorm in advance content that you can talk about if you have extra time.
- Similarly, select in advance content to cut if your presentation is running long.

Use notes.

- Keep words to a minimum.
- Practice pausing while consulting notes.
- Put key notes in all caps.

"It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech."

Mark Twain



INSIDER TIPS

Visualize success. Imagine yourself giving the speech successfully.

Consider both the verbal and non-verbal messages you send while speaking. What does your body language convey?

Ask a close friend to watch you present, then ask for their feedback.

Practice in front of a mirror.

Mark in your notes reminders to look up and out at the audience.

You don't need to make eye contact with the audience—it's enough to make sure you look in their direction.



Fighting Stage Fright

"Best way to conquer stage fright is to know what you're talking about."

Michael H Mescon

- Be prepared
- Pause and breathe deeply.
- "Belly breaths"—breathing deeply enough to make your belly move in and out—has been proven to calm nerves.
- Envision yourself going smoothly and confidently through the presentation.
- Socialize with the audience before giving the speech.
- Concentrate on the content of your presentation, not the audience.

 **REMEMBER**

The best defense against jitters is practice.

You're talking about something you know.

The audience doesn't have your script. They don't know if you forgot something.

It's not an exercise in memory: You are free to consult your notes.

It's not about being perfect. No one likes a perfect person.



13 Creative Ideas for Starting a Presentation

1. Ask a question
 2. Poll the audience
 3. Use an anecdote
 4. Tell a joke
 5. Show a video
 6. Play music that gets the audience pumped up
 7. Say something unexpected
 8. Use a quote
 9. Share a parable or story
 10. Use statistics
 11. Describe the future
 12. State a problem
 13. Demonstrate something
-



6 Tips for Powerful Visuals

"Out of clutter, find simplicity."

Albert Einstein

According to research, 85% of what we learn comes from what we see. Only 11% comes from listening. Using visuals helps people retain what you say. But what most people don't realize is that visuals perform specific functions. They should:

- Clarify concepts
- Improve comprehension
- Make the concept memorable

If your visuals aren't performing at least one of these functions, consider whether they belong in your presentation, or should be distributed as a handout instead.

Here are some tips for creating effective visuals:

- Use color
- Make sure they are legible from a distance
- Use large, emotionally appealing images
- Keep them simple
- Consider opening and closing with videos
- Don't forget you can use music to accompany images or videos

"Visual storytelling of one kind or another has been around since cavemen were drawing on the walls."

Frank Darabont

INSIDER TIPS

Visuals should illuminate and enrich, not replace, your speech

Choose visuals that appeal to more than one sense.

Use fewer words.

Think about your content—whatever can be shown visually should be.

Don't include tons of charts—this level of detail can be handed out as a takeaway.

Use color-rich and emotionally resonant images with very few words.



Tactics for Engaging Your Audience

“Designing a presentation without an audience in mind is like writing a love letter and addressing it: To Whom It May Concern.”

Ken Haemer

Start by thinking through who your audience is and what you want to convey to them. Create an audience profile before developing your content so you're certain to cover what interests them most. Here are some tips for engaging the audience while presenting:

- Tell a story. This is much more effective than facts—people are more likely to remember it and connect emotionally to the content.
- Use language that appeals to all the senses.
- Don't be afraid to use emotion.
- Use quotes and anecdotes to humanize the content.
- Be “open” with your body language—face the audience, smile when appropriate, and walk around.
- Ask questions.
- Use names.
- If the content allows for it, have hands-on demonstrations.
- Are there quick interactive things you can do—a quick poll or guessing game?

“A good orator is pointed and impassioned.”

Marcus T. Cicero

INSIDER TIPS

Be unexpected

Change up your body language: facial expressions, stance, eye contact, movement, and hand gestures.

Try pausing before you make your main point. This is where changing gestures and vocal inflections becomes especially effective.

Practice projecting your voice so it can be heard anywhere in the room.

If you're telling them something they already know, the pace can be quick, but slow down when you're interpreting facts, using emotion, or responding to your audience.



9 Things You Should Never Do When Giving a Presentation: AMA Research

By Chris Brown

Think back to your last presentation. Were people interested and engaged in what you were saying? While you may think yourself to be a great speaker, it is not particularly hard to annoy your audience. Recently, AMA surveyed 360 professionals to see which presentation habits were the most annoying. The final results are ranked here, from most to least annoying:

1. Reads the presentation (37%)
2. Has no knowledge of the subject matter (22%)
3. Uses too many “Umm”s and “Uhh”s (16%)
4. Takes too much time (8%)
5. Speaks in a boring/monotonous voice (7%)
6. Speaks too fast or not loud enough (6%)
7. Has bad slides (2%)
8. Uses no visuals (1%)
9. Doesn't make eye contact (1%)

While these are all problems to avoid, the top three are the worst—they were the only habits to receive more than 15% of the vote. AMA wants to make sure you give the best presentations possible, so here are some tips to help you stop making these three particularly irritating presentation mistakes.

Annoying presentation habit #1: Reading the presentation

The most annoying presentation habit is also one of the easiest to fall victim to. If you have a visual aid, such as a PowerPoint slideshow, it is often tempting to look back and read what you've written. By reading your slides, you impart no additional information, and therefore give your audience no reason to keep listening once they have finished reading the slide themselves.

Make sure each slide has no more than six bullet points, and no more than six words per bullet point. This prevents you from overloading your slides with information, and allows you to elaborate on your main points. When following this

“If you don't know what you want to achieve in your presentation, your audience never will.”

Harvey Diamond

“A presentation is a chance to share, not an oral exam.”

M.F. Fensholt



9 Things You Should Never Do When Giving a Presentation: AMA Research

"Light travels faster than sound. That's why certain people appear bright until you hear them speak."

Albert Einstein

in practice, having slides with repetitive layouts and no variation on sentence length or structure becomes very boring. You should have some slides with only images and no words, as not only does this keep your audience focused on what you are saying, but it also forces you to truly know what you are presenting. Reading a presentation is a crutch, and one that does not go unnoticed.

Annoying presentation habit #2: No knowledge of the subject matter

This comes down to one factor: preparation. The more prepared you are, the better you can effectively explain your main points and avoid sounding like you've never even heard of your topic before. If giving a great presentation is important to you, do yourself a favor and start preparing for it ahead of time. Throwing together a presentation in a day or two is extremely difficult and leaves you little margin for error, both in terms of correcting any mistakes and practicing beforehand. You could have the next great business idea, but if you cannot effectively communicate it, your audience will not find you to be credible. Your presentation should be on a topic you have prior knowledge of, but in order to show that you know your stuff, coming in prepared will make all the difference.

"The world is waiting for your words."

Arvee Robinson

Annoying presentation habit #3: Using too many "Umm"s and "Uhh"s

If you do not speak eloquently, your presentation sounds unprofessional. Using too many "Umm"s and "uhh"s is a symptom of a larger problem: Not communicating effectively. This could be a result of stage fright or making it up as you go along, but more often than not, it happens unconsciously. Despite how innocuous they seem, they can ruin your credibility.

Rehearse multiple times beforehand, out loud. If you practice giving your speech like you would when it matters, you can hear how you sound, and avoid these small yet grating interjections. Practice in front of a friend or colleague, or to yourself in the mirror. If no one can help, record yourself. The more you rehearse before the big presentation, the more likely it is that you can catch yourself before letting the "umm"s and "uhh"s slip out when you're in front of an audience.



Ensure Your Ongoing Success with AMA's Total ProfessionalSM

Through American Management Association's research and more than 90 years' experience developing leaders, AMA has identified the four core areas all professionals need working knowledge of: Professional Effectiveness, Relationship Management, Business Acumen, and Analytical Intelligence. Round out your professional skills with the following recommended courses:



Building skills in these four areas is key:

Professional Effectiveness	Developing Your Emotional Intelligence Taking On Greater Responsibility
Relationship Management	Making the Transition from Staff Member to Supervisor Management Skills for New Supervisors
Business Acumen	Technical Project Management Financial Forecasting
Analytical Intelligence	Critical Thinking Analytical Thinking and Problem Solving



Additional Resources



Read more

[3 Ways You Can Annoy Your Audience in a Presentation](#)

[Why Brevity Is Best in a Presentation](#)



Watch a webcast

[How to Brief Like a Pro](#)



Sign up for a webinar

[Mastering PowerPoint®: Shortcuts and Tips to Create Presentations Like an Expert](#)

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