

## How to Deliver a Strong Formal Presentation

For most people, the thought of delivering a formal presentation; be it in a work or study situation, will strike dread, fear and general foreboding. All too often the perception is that a formal presentation will be boring. This doesn't need to be the case, especially if the presentation you are delivering forms part of an interview assessment or assignment. It is important to remember that a presentation is given to an audience (that is evident from the mere meaning of the task), and so audience engagement is paramount to the success of the presentation delivery.

So how do you successfully engage an audience? Well, it is a case of balancing content with the need to captivate! As Constance Lamb from Zenon Consulting has suggested; "You may have the most scintillating content but the presentation can fall flat if the audience is forgotten". To manage this balance, consider three key things when preparing your content:

- 1) What do you want your audience to remember?
- 2) How can you motivate, persuade and influence them to take action?
- 3) How will they remember your message?

When planning your presentation try to remember that the first 30 seconds are crucial to hooking your audience's attention. If you don't get the opening right you might end up losing them and it can take a lot of effort to get them back again! So in the preparation for your presentation, really focus on your opening comments and slides; spend time crafting bold opening statements and aim to create a punchy style of writing and speech whilst keeping your language simple.

Some handy tips to help you deliver a punchy opening presentation statement include;

- Go straight to the heart of the presentation or subject issue
- Open with your thoughts; tell the audience what you believe
- Ask them a question to get them engaged from the very beginning
- Use opening slides with sentences so punchy, that they only contain three words
- Think about colour, design and pattern in your slides and handouts

Once you have caught your audience's attention you need to maintain and retain it! Repeat your content regularly, ask them to participate periodically and go back to key points from earlier on in your presentation. This should keep them engaged. It also aids recall- don't forget that most people will remember five key points from a 40 minute presentation (if you are lucky!).

As your presentation draws to a close, don't rush through your conclusion. The beginning and end of a presentation are the most important sections, and the most memorable. If your presentation forms part of an assignment, assignment or job interview, you need to concentrate on getting the close to be just as punchy as the opening. Use unusual metaphors, imagery and visuals to stimulate an exciting and captivating close. Then breathe a sigh of relief and smile!

When you have prepared your presentation, have the Words Worth Reading Ltd [speech and presentation writing](#) arm polish it to perfection!