
Why am I doing this?

Decide on the objective of the presentation. There will be a general objective as well as specific objectives relating to the subject matter. It is a good idea to write down the objective(s) in one sentence. This focuses the effort, ensures that material selected fits the objective(s) and allows for checking once the notes are written.

Who is this for?

Think about the audience:

1. How large is it?
2. What is their present knowledge of the subject?
3. Are they likely to be biased (for/against)?
4. What are their expectations?

All the above points will help to determine material and approach. It is your task to make sure that the presentation is pitched at the right level for the audience.

Any talk will fail unless careful thought is given to the subject matter; unstructured, rambling talks are difficult to concentrate on. The main points should be made very clear to the audience, or the message will be forgotten quickly. It is essential to get all your thoughts and ideas down on paper. It is necessary to plan the sequence of your presentation.

You will invariably have too many ideas and too much information for the length of your presentation. It is important to keep the number of main points to a minimum. In a 15-minute talk you shouldn't try to make more than four main points. You should concentrate on, and write notes for, the middle for the presentation first; opening and closing comes later.

The selection of material should be governed by the following

- The objective – is some of your material irrelevant to the objective(s)?
- The audience – what do they know already?
- How long- what is the time constraint?

MUST, SHOULD, COULD, sorting points into this order helps to avoid the temptation to include everything you know.

The simplest structure is based on the following:

- Tell people what you are going to tell them
- Tell them
- Tell them what you've told them

(This is the technique used by most news bulletins)

The following structure may be useful when presenting a case or trying to persuade people to your view.

- State the proposition
- Anticipate objections-even if you don't express these to the audience it is important to consider them
- Prove your case- select the best reasons, don't overload

