

# HIGH IMPACT PRESENTATION SKILLS

13 PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING  
GREAT PRESENTATIONS WITH  
CONFIDENCE, CLARITY & POWER

*High Impact Presentations Skills* is an indispensable guide to giving professional and memorable presentations when you are called upon to do so. Presentation skills are vital in today's business environment and your credibility and future career depend on how you prepare yourself.

Many of us are nervous about speaking to colleagues, clients, or the public. Valuable advice on planning, creating and delivering a powerful message will ensure that your next presentation will be a winner, your credibility is established and your company's image has received a positive projection.

This presentation guide is designed to help you demonstrate your ability to think on your feet, grasp complex issues and handle challenging situations – all attributes that accelerate your way up in the organisation.

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ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT GUIDES

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13 PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING  
GREAT PRESENTATIONS WITH  
CONFIDENCE, CLARITY & POWER

High Impact Presentation Skills – 13 Principles for Making Great Presentations  
With Confidence, Clarity & Power

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## INTRODUCTION

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**N**o matter how expected or unexpected your next presentation might be, remember that presentations offer you important opportunities to display all your communication skills – not only research, planning, writing and visual design, but in interpersonal and nonverbal communication too.

If the thought of giving a speech or presentation makes you nervous, remember even professional speakers and entertainers get nervous after years of experience. Being nervous is actually a good thing: it means you care about the topic, your audience and your career success. With practice you can convert those nervous feelings into positive energy.

You can take control of the situation by using the advice and techniques in this guide when putting your message together and planning each step of the presentation. People often judge the quality of the content by the quality of the presentation so your delivery style and the package and integration of support material are as important as your message.

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## PRINCIPLE 3:

### STRATEGIES FOR GETTING LISTENERS TO WORK WITH YOU BY BUILDING AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION INTO YOUR PRESENTATION

**T**hese are some strategies for getting listeners to work with you by building audience participation into your presentation. This does not mean merely asking a question and having them call out. Your audience should become actively **involved** and **interact** with each other. The more they connect, the better they can learn and the more meaningful your presentation will be to them.

You need to organise your **venue** beforehand with audience participation in mind. An arrangement of rows of chairs, one behind the other, does not lend itself to this. Set up the room so that it will be easy for people to connect with each other and with you. Have just enough seats so that people can't fill up the back rows and leave the front rows empty (have spare chairs stacked at the back of the room so that they are readily available if required). Leave enough room so that people can move around easily. **Posters** with relevant images, icons, phrases and quotes on the wall and background **music** and a **slideshow** relevant to your topic on automatic feed as they enter set the right tone for an interactive experience.

The use of a **flip chart** is ideal for audience participation. PowerPoint, although very professional, tends to make presentations one-sided because comments and feedback from the audience cannot be incorporated. The presentation is set up beforehand and most of the time will continue regardless of contributions from the audience. Using a flip chart changes all that. It immediately signals that there's room for flexibility and that the audience can play a part. With a larger audience, the same effect can be achieved by writing on a **tablet**.

For the most effective audience interaction, break the large group into smaller discussion groups. It forces the participants not only to think about your message but also to connect and collaborate with others, and to apply the new information. It also increases the energy level in the room. Breaking up into small discussion **groups** ensures that everyone becomes involved in the topic. Bear in mind, though, there will always be a minority that will not participate in group activities. Don't make an issue of this. Invite them to join in and if they don't, then let them be observers.

Allow the group just enough time for lively discussion and then have **feedback** from each group. The main points can be summed up on the flip chart for the rest of the audience. At this stage some inter-group discussion may ensue. You need to keep this under control so that everyone can hear what is being said.

If your audience has had to listen passively to your presentation, it could be difficult to rouse them into asking **questions**. If you can comfortably handle being interrupted, then encourage the audience to ask questions as they arise, instead of waiting until the end. They will probably have forgotten the burning question they had wanted to ask and be ready to take a break and grab a cup of coffee.

When you wind up your presentation, instead of telling the audience what they have learned and what action they have been inspired to take, get a **commitment** from them – by sharing it out aloud, writing it down on a card or sharing it with the person sitting next to them.

*“Off-the-cuff” should mean well planned and practised*”

**Stephen Keague**

End of Sample

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