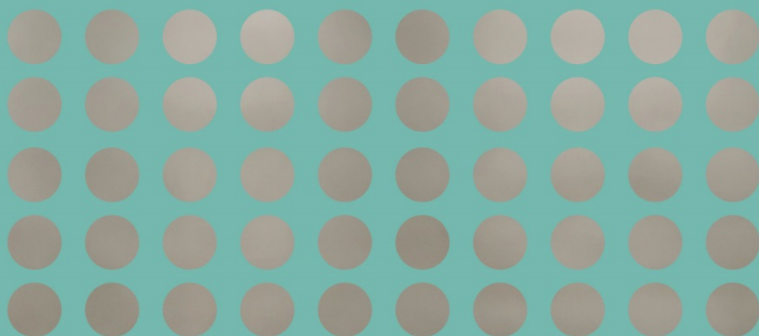




# The Art of Presenting Successfully

A COMPLETE GUIDE

By Pavlos S. Pavlides  
BBA, MPAD





# Copyright

© 2015 by Pavlos S. Pavlides

Reproduction, copying or use of the material in this book is not permitted without the written permission of the copyright holder.

Pavlos S. Pavlides

[pspavlides@gmail.com](mailto:pspavlides@gmail.com)

ISBN 978-9963-2225-0-6

## Acknowledgments

A big 'thank you' to my family and especially my wife Marina for her patience and support. I would also like to thank Melanie Efstathiadou for the design of the cover.

# Table of Contents

<b>Copyright</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Preface</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>The elements of Presentations</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>The Presenter</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Build your self-confidence .....	11
Appearance .....	12
Body language .....	13
Voice .....	14
Eye Contact .....	15
<b>The Topic</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>The Objective</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Assess the presentation .....	18
<b>The Audience</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Handle the audience .....	20
Answer questions .....	21
<b>The Venue</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>The Tools</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Audio-Visual Equipment .....	24
Handouts .....	24
<b>Building and delivering a presentation</b> .....	<b>25</b>
The script .....	27
The Slideshow on PowerPoint .....	28
Examples of slides .....	31
<b>Presentation Checklist</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>43</b>

## Preface

Have you ever wondered what really makes a presentation successful? Is a fancy presentation with impressive slides, lots of special effects and sounds a successful one? The question you need to ask yourself is whether the presentation got your message across! If your audience received your message the way you meant to, then your presentation was successful.

This e-book is designed to provide information in a concise and easy to read format to anyone who needs to prepare a presentation, whether formal or informal.

The information flows in a logical sequence of actions to guide you through the process of making an effective presentation. There are 'dos' and 'don'ts' based on information gathered from many sources and filtered using my personal experiences.

I hope that you will find it useful!

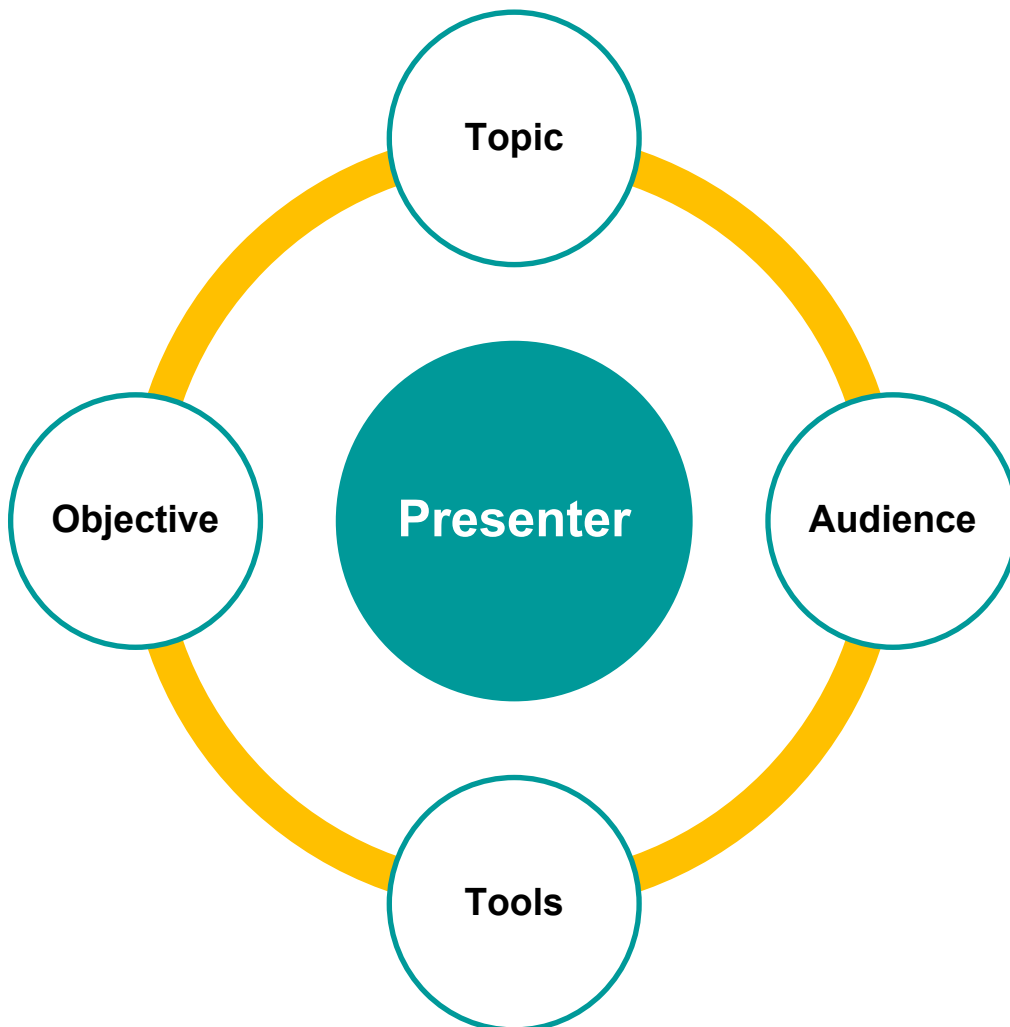
The Author

# The elements of Presentations

A presentation consists of the following interrelated elements:

- Presenter
- Topic
- Objective
- Audience
- Tools

A presentation cannot exist if any of the above elements is absent. However, the presenter plays a focal role for a successful presentation. The presenter is the orchestrator that will coordinate and organize. A lot depends on his or her public speaking skills, on the thorough knowledge of the topic and the attention she or he will give to details.



In the sections that follow, you can read an analysis of each element with useful tips on how to eventually deliver a successful presentation.

## The Presenter

Your performance as the presenter will determine whether one presentation will be successful or not. The audience attends your presentation because they expect to gain from your knowledge and your expertise. The knowledge you have on your topic will not be helpful to the audience unless you relay your message clearly.

Your ability to communicate effectively and to wisely use or handle the other four elements of a presentation is crucial.

An effective presenter should demonstrate public speaking skills which are defined as the act or process of making speeches in public and the art of effective oral communication with an audience (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).



When we say ‘public speaking’ we do not necessarily refer to formally speaking in front of a large audience. Public speaking

can take many forms, from talking to a group of colleagues to presenting financial results at a Board of Director’s meeting. No doubt, at some point of time, you will find yourself in the need to speak in front of an audience. It is really astonishing to note that public speaking causes many people fear that they cannot easily overcome. I have seen very successful professionals in their field who could barely speak in front of an audience.

Good public speaking skills are essential in every aspect of life, professional or personal. Just think about the positive impression a good speaker makes as opposed to an average one!

The ‘bad’ thing about public speaking is that you do not know when you will need it. It could be at a family gathering, at a friend’s wedding or at work.

In this section I refer to public speaking in the professional and academic environment. Good public speaking skills are a definite plus when you try to build a professional image. A sales meeting or presentation, a training, a briefing to your superiors, a presentation of an academic project are only some examples when may need to use your skills.



Communication is the core of public speaking. Communication is a two-way process. To achieve effective communication you need to get your message across and at the same time to be able to receive feedback from the other party. According to the 7 Cs theory, communication, written or oral, must have the following characteristics:

## **Clarity**

---

**Makes understanding easier**

**Enhances clarity of message**

- Define the purpose of the communication.
- Emphasize on a specific message or goal at a time.
- Do not try to convey too many messages in one communication.
- Use appropriate and exact words.
- Ideas should be clear and not subject to assumptions or different interpretations by the audience.

## **Conciseness**

---

**Better comprehension by the audience**

**Makes the message more appealing and more apparent**

- Use the appropriate number of words.
- Avoid the excessive use of adjectives.
- Avoid the use of unnecessary expressions or 'filler words'
- Avoid different forms of repetitions.

## **Coherence**

---

**Your message will make sense.**

- Check the relevance of your points.
- The communication should be consistent in tone and flow.

## **Concreteness**

---

**Gains the confidence of your audience.**

**Provides a clear and lively picture to your audience.**

- Be precise.
- Be focused.
- Support your message with appropriate amount of facts and figures.

## **Correctness**

---

**Enhances the impact of your message.**

**Increases your credibility.**

- Make sure your communication is free of grammatical and syntax errors.
- Proof read your written communication. Do not rely only on the spell checker.
- Use appropriate and understandable technical terms.
- Check the accuracy of facts and figures used.
- Use appropriate language-avoid jargon.

## **Completeness**

---

**Enhance the reputation of the organization**

**Persuade your audience**

- Establish what your audience expects from the communication
- Convey all the facts and figures so that the audience can make decisions or take action.
- Be ready to provide any additional information if required.

## **Consideration**

---

**Helps you to gain the trust of your audience**

**Creates a positive attitude towards the communication**

- Take into consideration the characteristics of your audience, their views, background, educational and social level.
- Respect your audience.
- Be friendly and honest.
- Be positive and optimistic.

## Build your self-confidence

Self-confidence is the cornerstone for a successful presentation. Even if you believe that 'you don't have it', it is in your hands to succeed by consistently using exercises to boost your self-confidence and to follow some useful guidelines.

- Think positively about yourself.
- Keep repeating to yourself that the presentation will be a huge success!
- Be well prepared. Use a checklist to ensure that all the preparations have been made.
- Allow reasonable time for the audience to settle down before you start. If needed, ask for quiet.
- Eliminate tension by using simple techniques like using a stress ball and taking a series of deep breaths.
- Familiarize yourself with the arguments of your presentation.
- Do not apologize to the audience for being inexperienced! Why are you there then?
- Keep calm and move on if you missed your point or forgot what you wanted to say! Move on to the next point and return to the missed point later!
- Do not hide behind a lectern or a desk. It implies a 'physical' apology.
- Read your material over and over again and get used to hearing your voice.

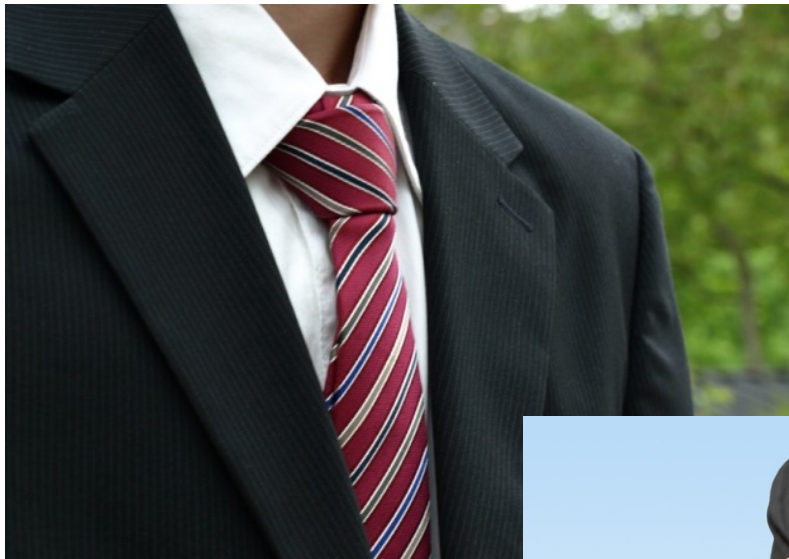


**Practise! Practise! Practise!**

## Appearance

A proper appearance will give a good first impression to your audience and will be vital for the success of your presentation. First impressions are sometimes hard to change. By the time you begin your presentation, the audience will have formed a positive or negative idea about you. How can you make a good first impression then?

- Dress appropriately, business-like and smartly.
- Do not wear clothes or accessories that are distracting for the audience.
- Avoid extravagant hair styles.
- Hide any 'perspiration problem areas.'
- Do not overdo it with makeup or perfume.
- Make sure that your clothes are well-fitted and properly ironed!
- If applicable, make sure your tie is at the right length and the knot is well made.
- Hair is brushed and tidy.
- Make sure your shoes are polished.



## Body language

Believe it or not, our body is a means of communication. How we stand, the gestures we make and facial expressions transmit messages to the audience. So it is important to have in mind some important guidelines in order for the body language to work in your favor.



**Use an open and relaxed posture.**

- Begin your presentation by holding a balanced stance, keeping your body upright and your hands relaxed on the side.
- Smile genuinely!
- Use an open and relaxed posture.
- Use hand gesture to welcome the audience or to emphasize your point.
- Use open gestures that move away from your body towards the audience.
- Adapt your posture to the kind of presentation, formal or informal.
- Do not hide the flipchart or the presentation screen with your body.
- Avoid turning your back to your audience.
- Do not take a defensive position like crossing your hands on your chest
- Do not overdo it with hand gestures, they indicate nervousness and eventually they become a distraction.

## Voice

Your voice is critical to the success of the presentation. The volume, the pace and the pitch of your voice are equally important as all the visual messages you will be transmitting during your presentation.

**Start speaking confidently!**

**Be enthusiastic!**

**Speak clearly!**

**Use simple words and concise sentences!**

- Introduce yourself and make an initial connection with the audience by asking if they are sitting comfortably, whether the room temperature and lighting are right, whether they have a good visibility.
- Keep a natural pace, neither too fast nor too slow-the audience will have a difficulty following you.
- Add life to your presentation by varying your pace as it progresses.
- Do not vary the pace for the sake of it.
- Involve your audience by asking questions such as ‘the chart shows us that...’
- Pause between the main points
- Vary the volume, the pace and the pitch of your voice when you want to emphasize a point, draw attention or convey enthusiasm.
- Set the volume of your voice so that you can be heard.
- Use tactful, relaxed and confident humour to break the ice or ease tensions.
- Make sure there is water available within easy reach. A warm drink before the presentation will help ease your voice.
- Avoid reading from your notes. Instead skim through if needed.
- Do not fade out the volume of your voice at the end of the sentence.
- Do not mumble! If it happens, treat it with confidence!
- Do not use humour if you are not confident that it will work! Do not overdo it with humour; you are not a stand-up comedian!

## Eye Contact

Eye contact is a powerful tool! Establish a connection with your audience so that they keep following the presentation. Losing the eye contact will most probably mean losing the audience.

- Initially, establish eye contact with a member of the audience that looks friendlier or more interested.
- Establish and maintain eye contact with all the members of the audience.
- Use eye contact to engage with the audience and to get their reaction and feedback.
- Do not neglect the members of the audience sitting in the back rows.
- Do not avoid eye contact with 'unfriendly' members of the audience.
- Do not look vaguely around the room.



Use eye contact to engage with the audience.



## The Topic

The topic of the presentation is what you are going to talk about to the audience. The topic may be given or chosen. Whatever the case may be, you as the presenter should have a thorough knowledge of it by the time you will be presenting. The audience will be expecting to receive a value from the presentation of an expert in the specific field. Knowledge brings confidence. The better you know the topic, the more confident you will be as a presenter.

- If the topic is given by the presentation organizers, make sure that you understand it fully. Ask for clarifications.
- Find up-to-date information especially on topics that have rapidly changed over the last years, for example technology related issues.
- Use relevant and updated numerical data.
- If your source is old, confirm the validity of the information before using it.
- Colleagues can be a good source of information which is often underestimated.
- The internet is an ocean of information. However, you should be careful as regards the reliability and credibility of the sources.
- Look at the bibliography of a relevant book or a journal. This provides you with more reference material.
- The objective of the presentation will determine the depth of the required research.
- Organize the relevant research material. Write the ideas in a logical order of questions and issues arising from the topic (or in the form of a 'mind map').
- If you have many sources (printed or electronic), prepare an index with the title (website if applicable), the information or data contained, the section or page it is located so that you can easily retrieve it.

### Sources of information

The sources of information are categorized into primary, secondary and tertiary on the basis of its flow from its source. It particularly refers to the traditional printed publications. Internet has changed this in terms of both the time to access and publish information as well as access to information that until recently was beyond reach such as some government publications.

#### Primary

- Reports • Theses • Emails
- Conference proceedings
- Company reports • Some government publications
- Unpublished manuscript sources

#### Secondary

- Journals Books • Some government publications
- Newspapers

#### Tertiary

- Indexes • Abstracts
- Catalogues • Citation indexes • Dictionaries
- Encyclopedias
- Bibliographies



## The Objective

Just after setting the topic of the presentation you have to think about its objective.

Ask yourself the following questions and note the answers. This exercise will help you to identify the objective.

- Why am I making/why have I been asked to make this presentation?
- What do I want to achieve? Do I have any personal goals?
- Why has my audience come here?
- What is my audience expecting of me?
- What do I want my audience to know after the presentation?
- What do I want my audience to do after the presentation?
- Is the audience expected to make a decision after the presentation?
- Is the audience expected to action after the presentation?
- How will my presentation support the corporate targets or strategy?

Rethink each answer you have written down. Sometimes a spontaneous answer does not cover the full depth of the question. By the end of this 'self-examination' process you should be able to identify a clear, specific, realistic and attainable objective for your presentation.

Having in mind the objective(s) of the presentation at every stage will help you to remain focused and to avoid the pitfall of wasting time, effort and resources working towards the wrong direction. If necessary adapt the style and type of your presentation to meet your objective.

Put yourself in the shoes of a guide who has been asked to lead a group of people. Whether you use a GPS receiver or a traditional map, you need to identify three elements:

1. The destination.
2. The current position of the group.
3. The route you will follow.

When you are a presenter you will do exactly the same thing. You will first identify the destination-where you will want your audience to be after the presentation.

Then you need to identify what is their position now-the level of information or knowledge they have at the moment.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

