

A

Types of presentation

Here are some examples of business presentations.

- a **press conference** – the chief executives of two companies tell journalists why their companies have merged
- b **demonstration** – the head of research and development gives a presentation to non-technical colleagues about a new machine that the research and development department has just completed
- c **product launch** – a car company announces a new model
- d **workshop** – company employees do practical exercises on time management
- e **seminar** – a financial adviser gives advice to people about investments

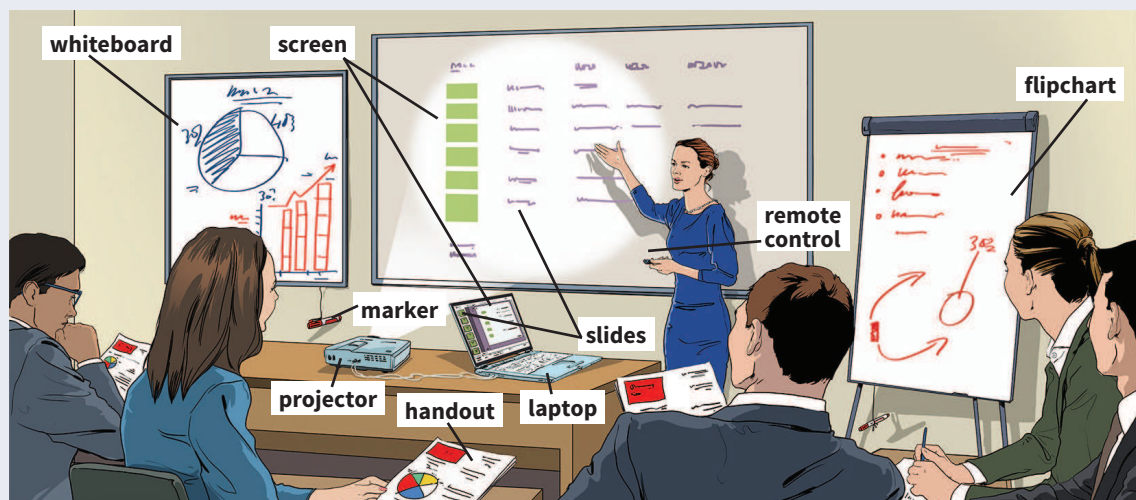
B

What makes a good presentation?

A presentation, and the **presenter**, the person giving it, are usually judged by:

- 1 The way the presentation is **organized**:
 - The **ideas** and the **visual aids** (pictures, charts and data designed to help people understand or remember particular information) are **clearly structured** – easy to follow
 - how the information is mixed with **interesting examples and stories** – people want to hear how the presenter relates personally to the subject
- 2 The way the presentation is **delivered**:
 - **rapport** with the audience – members feel that the presenter understands them
 - **eye contact** – the way the presenter looks at the audience
 - **loud enough** voice
 - **variety** in your **tone of voice** – it's important not to speak in a monotone and to vary the **speed** that you speak at
- 3 The way the presenter **feels** about the topic, the audience and himself/herself:
 - **confident** and **relaxed look**
 - **enthusiastic** about the topic
 - **positive attitude**
 - **interested in** the audience and getting them **involved** – participating in their minds

C

Presentation tools and visual aids

Exercises

60.1 Match the presentation types in A opposite with things that people say in them below:

- 1 Each group has a series of problems faced by a company. I want you to suggest solutions.
- 2 Now is the right time to get out of company shares and invest in property.
- 3 The combined resources of our two organizations will allow us to achieve great things.
- 4 The X300 has the most advanced features of any car in its class.
- 5 As you can see, this prototype is far in advance of anything we have done before.

60.2 Look at B and C opposite. Then read the article and answer the questions.

Newsonline

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Making Sure You Get The Message Across

Your mouth is dry, your voice trembles, your hands shake and you can hear your heart thudding – yes, you are making a presentation. No matter what job we do, most of us will sooner or later have to make one, whether it is delivering a goodbye speech, explaining a project to bosses, or trying to get new business.

Khalid Aziz, of the Aziz Corporation, which teaches senior executives to communicate, says: ‘About 60 per cent of the effectiveness of a spoken presentation is nothing to do with the words. It’s to do with style, confident body language and the right speed of delivery.’ Management consultant Terry Gillen says: ‘Your presentation should have a main theme, a single powerful message. It should have a clear structure, with each point leading to the next. Human brains automatically try to organise information received, so if your presentation does not have a structure, your audience will create its own. Attention will wander and listeners may get the wrong idea. And if you structure your presentation, it will be easy for you to remember.’ But Mr Gillen warns: ‘Reading from a document, whether it’s the whole speech or detailed notes, sounds formal and stiff, and switches the audience off.’

Presenters should encourage passive and active audience participation to personalise the message and keep people listening. Mr Gillen says: ‘Use phrases such as “What would you think if ...” Encourage them to ask questions or, if you are demonstrating something, get them to join in. They’ll do this only if you look friendly and smile. Make eye contact and maybe enter the audience’s territory rather than staying stuck behind your desk.’ He adds: ‘The audience want to enjoy the presentation and are more likely to do so if the presenter also appears to be enjoying it. Nerves and anxiety often show. Audiences notice uncomfortable body language and hesitant speech.’ Mr Aziz says: ‘Minimise panic by steering clear of coffee for at least two hours before. Practise and rehearse, and visit the venue to remove the fear of the unknown. Beware of complex visual aids which confuse and distract attention from the message, and add extra information with your voice.’

NatWest corporate manager Deborah Buckle, 32, learned to ‘Present with Passion’ after attending one of Khalid Aziz’s courses. Deborah, of Surrey, says: ‘Knowing your stuff is not enough. You have to enthuse your audience. I also learned that, unless you’re careful, the message received is not always the one given.’

Comment Like

- 1 Which points in B opposite does Khalid Aziz refer to?
- 2 Which point in B does Terry Gillen refer to?
- 3 Is reading from a prepared text a good idea? Why? / Why not?
- 4 For Terry Gillen, what are four ways of getting audience involvement?
- 5 For Khalid Aziz, what are two ways of avoiding panic, and one way of using visuals well?
- 6 What is the most important thing about presentations for Deborah Buckle?
- 7 She says that ‘the message received is not always the one given’. Where is this idea referred to previously in the article?

Over to you

- Do you ever give presentations? What type are they? Who are the audiences?
- In your experience, what makes a good presentation?