

Oral Communication Resources

Presentational Speaking

Planning

Presentation Preparation

An ethical presentation is based upon solid research and knowledge about the issue under discussion. In order to make your information effective, understand your content well enough to discuss it knowledgeably both formally and informally. Thorough and focused research will help you discern what is appropriate for your purpose, your discipline and your topic.

These pages only provide a place to start. They cover Planning, Organization and Support, Revising, Presenting a Previously Written Paper, and Dealing with Nerves. Do not expect a formula. Creating an effective presentation requires thought and judgment. Use these pages as guidelines, and modify these suggestions to fit the way you work. There are many texts on public speaking, so look them over. The *Speaker's Handbook* by Jo Sprague and Douglas Stuart is an especially useful resource book.

Planning

- How will you need to adapt to your listeners?
- What do your listeners know about your topic?
If they don't know much, you will need to educate. If they know a lot, you will need to provide new information, a different perspective, or show them how to use their knowledge.
- Why is your topic relevant or significant to these specific listeners?
In other words, why should they care? What needs do your listeners have regarding the topic? What concerns should they have? What information, explanations, evidence, or arguments do they need in order to care?
- What attitudes are they likely to have toward your topic? Will they be interested?
- What is your most appropriate goal with this audience?
To reinforce existing knowledge? To add new knowledge? To show them how to make their knowledge relevant?
- Are they indifferent? If so, show why your topic matters.

- Are they hostile?
Identify common concerns and show them how those concerns are relevant to them. Your goal should be to reduce hostility, not eliminate it.
- What attitudes are they likely to have toward you or toward the organization you represent? Will you have to overcome negative expectations about you, your topic, or your organization?

What outcomes do you want with these listeners?

- What is your general purpose?
For example, do you want to persuade them to see things in a particular way, or do you want them to understand a new concept? Perhaps you intend to encourage them to take action to support something they believe.
- What specifically do you want your listeners to think or do, as a result of your presentation?
For example, you may want them to understand how to do a linear regression. You may want them to vote. You may want them to be disturbed about human rights abuses. Clarify for yourself what you want to accomplish with your audience by undertaking this presentation.
- What are your personal purposes?
For example, you may want to get a good grade, or to convince people to support a cause, or increase your credibility with your boss, or establish your expertise in order to get promoted. Be clear with yourself about the personal stakes involved with this presentation.