

In's and Outs of Giving Presentations

One of the most difficult tasks for many people is public speaking. This is primarily due to stage fright which results in shaky knees, sweaty palms, and butterflies in your stomach. This fear arises from unknown elements such as an unfamiliar environment (room, lighting, audio system) and a strange audience. Now that we have some idea of the factors causing stage fright, let's look at what we can do to minimize it.

- 1) Familiarize yourself with the setting (visit the presentation room, check the lighting, audio-system, and devices that are needed for your visual aid.)
- 2) Never give someone else's speech.
- 3) Do not write your speech, but prepare an outline and then practice by discussing each point out loud.
- 4) Don't focus on yourself but concentrate on the message.
- 5) Maintain eye contact with your audience.
- 6) Express yourself in a way that is natural.

When you are preparing for a presentation you must consider the following in your preparation:

- 1 – Title and objective: The title must relate to the message that you would like to pass on to your audience. The objectives are the goals of your project.
- 2 – Audience: In your preparation you should consider your audience. Two important factors to consider are :
 - a) Their background (are they students, scientists, businessmen, etc?)
 - b) Why are they participating in the presentation?
- 3 – Organization: Having an organizational pattern in mind based on logic will simplify the preparation of your presentation. For example, you can organize it by dividing it into a number of categories. It can also be organized as problem – solution. In this organizational pattern, the problem is described and then goals and solutions are presented.
- 4 – Method of Presentation: Never read your presentation to your audience because it is unusual, unnatural, and insulting. Always have well prepared and well thought out visual aids; and stay on time.

Delivering your presentation:

The majority of people have stage fright and to overcome this feeling that may result in a poor presentation is:

Preparation

you must know your subject matter and have prepared well for your presentation.

Some other factors that will help you to overcome these fears – dress well, and have a few first opening sentences written down. The following are different parts of your presentation:

- 1 - Opening of presentation: This is a very important step of your overall presentation and will determine how well it will go. There are a number of different approaches to opening a presentation by
 - a) recognizing people involved in the project,
 - b) posing a question to your audience,
 - c) telling a related story.
- 2 - Body of your presentation: This part of your presentation should include your data, evaluation, and interpretation of data. The body of your presentation should be supported by well-prepared and well thought out visual aids.
- 3 – Conclusion: Is the section that you should review key points, repeat benefits, and finally give your recommendation(s)
- 4 - Answering questions: When answering questions, you should listen with full attention to the questions posed (direct eye contact) because this will suggest your interest in the question raised. Compliment the question with statements like “good point”. Repeat the question by stating the intent of the questions. Then answer the question and ensure their satisfaction with your answer by asking them, “Does this answer your question?”