

# Comparison of oral and written presentation



**ASSIGN  
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**Question**

Mention two different situations (imaginary) when oral presentations would be more effective than written presentations, reasoning why. Explain different principles for making successful oral business presentations.

**Answer**

Presentations mean speaking before public on some formal occasion. It is also known as public speaking. Presentation is done before a select audience. A presentation means “ a formal or set piece occasion with two usual hallmarks- the use of audio visual aids and team work”.

In oral presentation an individual is pitted against a group. Therefore careful preparation is necessary for ensuring success in presentation.

**Need for oral presentation**

- Presenting a new business plan
- Launching a new product/ service
- Making a sales proposal
- Starting a training course
- Conference
- Negotiating a business deal

**Situations where oral presentation is more effective than written presentations**

1. Rey company ltd launched its new microwave in a mall. They give an oral presentation to launch its product.

- They launched their product in front of a large audience gathered at the mall.

- They used a/v's to demonstrate the features and usage of the microwave.
- A lucky draw was conducted to attract the public.
- People were asked to give direct feedback about the product.
- The speaker effectively communicated with the audience leading to an advance order of 500 microwaves.

2. A politician in its rally gave an oral presentation to persuade people to elect him.

- In his presentation he included lots of information from the history what his party did for the general public.
- Usage of bar graphs and pie charts to provide adequate data to the public.
- It helped him in presenting the right image for diverse audience.
- The complex and heterogeneous audience was motivated by his presentation.

In both the situations oral presentation is more effective then written presentation because of the following reasons:

- Oral presentation is flexible where as written presentation is inflexible. A speaker can modify his presentation according to the needs of his audience.
- It is easier for a speaker to check whether the instruction is clear to the audience or not.
- One can personally contact his audience which is not possible in written presentation.

- It is easy to gain attention of the audience in oral presentation where as written presentation may sound boring.
- For a large number of audiences gathered at one place oral presentation plays a better role. Direct feedback is taken in oral presentations.

## **Principles for Making Successful Oral Business Presentations**

### **1. Purpose of presentation**

It is useful to make sure of the purpose of the presentation. A presentation usually has one of four basic purposes: (i) to inform, (ii) to persuade, (iii) to encourage, (iv) to entertain. The purposes are not mutually exclusive; a persuasive presentation informs, and surely benefits by entertaining. But the speaker should decide hand, what is to be the main purpose of his presentation, so that the presentation can be properly composed.

### **2. Audience Research**

Every communication must be in a form and style which suits the audience. The tone and the matter of the presentation depend on the nature of the audience. Analysing the audience, age group is an important factor. Different age groups respond differently to presentations.

- Children love to listen to stories and appreciate dramatic presentations Emotions of joy and sorrow can be aroused through stories; ideas have to be built up from familiar surroundings.
- High school children like to be treated as adults; they can appreciate sincerity and are not very critical. Visual aids are effective.

- College student (teenaged) audiences are responsive to new ideas; they appreciate an honest, straight forward approach and can be of interests and a progressive attitude; they like new projects.
- Young adults are the most sophisticated audience, having wide range ideas but are also very critical.
- Middle-aged audiences are conservative and do not like new ideas; they have more knowledge and experience of life, but they are not enthusiastic about changes or new ideas; they listen with interest but do not easily accept.
- Most old people have no interest in changes at all; they like to be reminded of the good old days, but they are interested in information about what is going on in the world.

Besides age, there are other factors which the speaker must know about his audience. Socio-cultural, educational and economic background obviously affect what the audience will understand and accept. Educated people of any age-group are naturally more critical; rich people do not favour social changes, while the poor are interested in change.

All the above mentioned factors determine how a speaker should plan and do the necessary exercise in collecting, arranging and shaping the material for his or her presentation. He or she should remember what his or her audience expects from him. Effective speaking depends upon the speaker's grabbing and sustaining the interest of the audience. He or she should know how to organise his or her matter that the concentration required for understanding and comprehending a specific component of the presentation is put in by the audience. The language component that the speaker makes

use of to encode his message thoughts, ideas and views must match the choice, taste, interpretative and analytical acumen of the listeners. The speaker should know that any matter not following these conditions if put across his or her audience will result in the lack trust of the audience • the speaker followed by a lack of concentration and of interest effecting noise and unrest. A speaker remains conscious of these factors and accordingly prepares his or her material for presentation.

### **3. Preparation of the Text of the Presentation**

In the preparation of the subject matter for the presentation the very primary concern of the presentation is the determination of the objectives of the presentation. What as speakers do we want to do? Do we want to persuade the listeners to believe in us or to do what we want? Do we want to teach them what we presume to be taught to them? Do we want to stimulate their thinking by raising issues that require their pondering? Do we want to inform them which we think they should know? Finally, do we want to entertain our audience like a comedian creating humorous elements in our presentation? These are all general objectives of our presentation. However, the text of the presentation itself determines its specific objectives. After preparing the text for the presentation we should check whether it meets the pre-determined objectives or not. A presentation will turn out to be ineffective unless we pay attention to its texture and structure.

A presentation should be able to catch the attention of the listeners. This can be done by telling them what they should expect to listen from the speaker. The speaker should start his presentation by giving the plan of his presentation, so that the listeners can follow the sequence. To attract the

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attention of the listener, a speaker could begin with questions like: “ Do you know how many people live below the poverty line?” “ Did you read today’s newspaper?”

#### **4. Structuring the Subject Matter**

A presentation has three fundamental parts; the introduction, the main body and the conclusion. This kind of structuring of the text of the presentation helps the speaker ways:

- Establishing the relationships among ideas.
- Developing the complete argument.
- Lightening the text as per the time constraint.
- Providing the audience a grip on the subject matter.
- Emphasizing the significant ideas of the theme.
- Stimulating the audience to learn what he or she thinks.
- Registering the important concepts with the audience.

For a forty-five minute presentation a speaker should keep the number of main points to five to six points. After the decision regarding the audience, objectives and the collection of the ideas, the structuring of the text depends upon the time constraint. For providing a clear picture to the audience about the subject matter the speaker has to limit the number of main points to five or six points. Before going to the introduction of the text of the presentation or an oral presentation, we should concentrate on the main body of the text. In fact the composition of the main body determines the nature of introduction as well as the conclusion.

## 5. Language and Style

The style of oral communication is different from the style of written communication, in any language. This difference must be kept in mind while drafting a presentation; the style of a presentation must be as simple and direct as the style of conversation. Words used in common everyday talk are the best for use in a presentation. Besides, the following tips should be considered by the speaker:

- Some words which are quite suitable for written communication must be avoided in oral communication: French and Latin words and phrases like *raison d'être*, *sine qua non*, *inter alia* are likely to cause misunderstanding. Many people mispronounce these phrases, and even if the speaker pronounces them correctly, most people are not sure of their meanings.
- Technical terms which are understood only by people who belong to particular professions should be avoided. If they are absolutely necessary they should be explained.
- Words which are likely to give offence to members of the audience should not be used. It must be remembered that a public presentation has an audience beyond the people who are present; the presentation may be reported in the press and may be printed in full in the house magazine. If the speaker uses words like widows, blind, agitators, lame, old maids, or socially unpleasant words, some sections of the audience may feel hurt or displeased.



- Repeating phrases like as you know, you see, you know, can be irrital
- Also using the same adjective too many times becomes boring to listen
- Such mannerisms of presentation must be rigorously avoided.

## **6. Environment for Speaking while Making Presentation**

For effective speaking the venue or the place of delivering the presentation plays a very important role. The speaker must be aware of the size of the room he or she has to deliver the presentation for an oral presentation. Sometimes the rooms are large and echoing. Speaking in such rooms requires less resonating sound. The voice should be a little muffled following the lower notes. However, it5Poity have the required power. For the acoustically treated rooms the resonance of the voice in an oral presentation has an absolutely different kind of impression on the audience. The speaker should also check his or her voice in the rooms; find it out on his or her own, whether it reaches the last listener sitting at the back row. He or she should also find out how the delivery of the •voice is. Has he or she practised with the microphone? The room should be well-ventilated and well-illuminated. There should not be any distractions to both the speaker and the listeners. The distractions like noise and any other interruptions should not be entertained.

The seating layout also determines the voice flow, voice reverberation. Every seating arrangement has its merits and demerits. There are various seating arrangements available. When the audience sits in rows like that in a theatre, there is difficulty in eye contact between the speaker and the listener. The environment is very formal. The horseshoe pattern of seating arrangement is more informal and it helps in increasing participation. The

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curved rows too hinder proper eye contact. People sitting around tables make it very informal unless the audience is divided into groups for formal intercourse.

### **7. Timing for the Oral Presentation**

The efficient speaker arranges the text of his presentation in such a way that till the end of the presentation the listeners do not get restless. Also the time of day affects the audience. The afternoon hours hardly make any listener interested to listen to a presentation. But yet an efficient speaker may try to make that session interesting. For keeping to time an efficient speaker takes care of the concentration problem that the audience has with regard to time. Initially the concentration level is not much. After time duration it reaches its peak, and then it starts falling. The end of the presentation again increases the concentration level. However, the span of moderate concentration level may be attained by various concentration enhancing practices. Similarly, the speaker also has a specific time duration when he or she is in his or her sound physical and mental state.

### **8. Preparing Notes for the Presentation**

For the presentation in an oral presentation if the speaker writes out the complete presentation and learns it by heart when exact presentation is delivered it sounds stilted. In fact an efficient speaker though prepares the whole text of the presentation; he or she never learns it by heart. He or she reduces it to short notes and puts them on cards. These short notes are nothing but key words. Cards do not shake even if the speaker is nervous. The speaker does not require the papa weight to keep his or her papers as

he or she can hold the cards very easily. The cards should be prepared by the speaker in his or her own handwriting as during a presentation or in an oral presentation if the speaker is not able to understand key item because of its illegibility, the complete oral presentation may be ruined. In the cards he or she should write the expected time duration that he or she may require while dealing with that specific point. He or she should clip the cards together by numbering them. On each card he or she may write some messages regarding making eye-contact with the audience, making no mannerisms, slowing down when speaking fast, stressing on key words, modulating the voice etc., so that they remind him at every step and the presentation is delivered successfully.

### **9. How to Begin a Presentation?**

There are various ways of beginning presentation; the aim is to catch the attention of the audience. One may start with a question, a startling fact, a prominent statistics. One may begin with an anecdote or story, thus, “ Ladies and Gentlemen, I am reminded of a story”. One may make some personal references, expressing one’s great pleasure in being invited to speak and so on.

A well planned introduction motivates and stimulates the listeners.

Simultaneously it generates confidence in the speaker. The impact of an impressive introduction is as follows:

- It grabs the attention of the audience.
- It establishes rapport with the audience.
- It earns the trust and belief of the audience in the speaker.

- The preview of the main body in the introduction removes all anticipation and draws the audience to the presentation.
- The introduction showing the speaker's personalisation of the topic generates a feel in audience about its significance.
- It creates the first impression of the speaker among his or her audience. A well-knit introduction creates a favourable impression resulting in a greater attention of the audience to the speaker's presentation.
- An effective introduction effects a smooth transition of the audience to the main body of the presentation.

The speaker should not start with an apology or with a self speaker doubt. The speaker may choose from the following methods in the introduction to involve the audience in his or her presentation:

- By relating an incident to grab the attention.
- By making a statement to arouse the curiosity.
- By presenting facts to arrest thinking.
- By giving statistics to startle him or her.
- By asking questions to make them start pondering over it.
- By giving a friendly look to make them feel happy and energetic.
- By making an intriguing or a surprising statement to frighten the audience.
- By quoting an eminent person to generate interest of the audience in the subject matter.
- By telling a story to motivate them to think its significance.

- By paying a compliment to the audience to flatter them to listen to the speaker.

#### **10. How to End an Oral Presentation?**

The conclusion of the presentation leaves the final impression on the minds of the listeners. A well-conceived conclusion not only signals the end of the presentation but also reinforces the central idea in the mind of the listeners. A good presentation may lose all its impact if the conclusion is loose. A strong ending leaves the audience brooding and cogitating the presentation they have just heard. The techniques to draw an ending of the presentation are :

- By giving verbal clues like “ Let me end by saying”, “ Before I conclude, “ One last point”, “ In conclusion”, “ To sum up”, “ To conclude”, etc.
- By our manner of delivery decreasing the pitch of the tone to lower notes.
- By slowing down the articulation of words and phrases.
- By going back to the story or incident with which the speaker started his or her presentation.
- By making a summary of the presentation.
- By quoting an eminent personality. The presentation should not end with the expressions like “ I think that’s all I had to say”. In fact the conclusion should make it clear to the audience what they should do next. The conclusion should generate the last thought in the minds of the listeners regarding the issues taken up in the presentation.

### **11. Question-Answer Session**

The ending of an effective presentation or an oral presentation depends upon how well the audience has participated in it. For audience participation there should be separate question answer sessions duly planned. The large audience may be divided into groups and separate sessions may be arranged at the end the talk. However, all this should be done keeping in mind the time constraints. The speaker invites questions from the audience. The questions should be expected after the audience is given some time to think. The speaker, after getting the question, should first repeat it and then answer it as concisely as pool but the answer is not known to the speaker, he or she should not make a guess a invite if any of the audience to offer the answer. The speaker should give to all groups to ask questions for clarification. The efficient speaker usually remains prepared with answers to the anticipated questions on his or her talk.