



TriMetrix®HD Presenting

Presenting

Communicating effectively to groups.

Why is this skill important?

Presentations and reports are ways of communicating ideas and information to a group. Unlike a report, a presentation carries the speaker's personality better and allows for immediate interaction between all participants. A presentation is a fast and potentially effective method of getting things done through other people.

Delivering a presentation puts you on display. Your audience needs to see evidence of decisive planning and leadership so they are confident in your position. Delivering a presentation also allows you to ask questions and initiate discussion. It may not be suitable to hold a discussion during the presentation itself, but it does allow you to raise issues and present problems. Presentations can also be fun. They are your chance to speak your mind and to tell people what you think. While you hold the stage, the audience is bound by good manners to sit still and watch the performance.

People with good Presenting skills know how to use their voice. They are able to draw an audience in by lowering their voice, and make a point by raising it. They vary the pace to help maintain the audience's interest. Good presenters understand how their body communicates different impressions to an audience. They use eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and posture to get their message across. They are also active listeners. Good presenters not only inform their audience, but also listen to them.

Great presentations require planning, but experienced presenters know how to structure the presentation. In contrast, individuals that haven't mastered their Presenting skills need to learn how to listen to their own voice. They may not have learned to control volume, tone, pitch and/or pace. They also may need to work on their body language. For example, looking at the floor or ceiling communicates disinterest and should be avoided.

What are skills associated with Presenting?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Presenting:

- Organizes information to be presented in a succinct, logical sequence.
- Presents information in ways that make abstract or complex concepts clear and understandable.
- Effectively utilizes language, word-pictures, stories, metaphors and humor.
- Utilizes a wide range of non-verbal communication or body language such as speech inflection, voice modulation, eye contact, facial expressions and gestures.
- Implements a variety of visual and auditory devices to capture and evoke the audience's senses, participation and interest.
- Projects authenticity, confidence, conviction and passion.
- Appeals to and engages the heart and mind of the audience.
- Tailors presentations to the interests, needs and wants of audiences.
- Establishes and delivers content objectives.
- Communicates in ways that elevate audience awareness and understanding.
- Communicates in ways that enlighten, educate, challenge and persuade the audience to think, believe or behave in a specific way.
- Is recognized and relied upon as an effective spokesperson.

How do you develop your own skills in Presenting?

- Be prepared! Learn about your audience and tailor your presentation to address them.
- Do not read from your handouts!
- Use visuals (pictures, graphs, tables, props, etc.) whenever you can.
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. Plan to rehearse your presentation out loud at least four times.
- Make sure that one of your rehearsals is in front of a really scary audience, such as family, friends, partners or colleagues. They will tell you quite plainly where you are going wrong as well as provide you with the support that you need.
- Rehearse against the clock.
- If you fail to prepare, you are prepared to fail!
- People tend to remember lists of three things. Structure your presentation around threes, and it will become more memorable.
- There are three parts to your presentation – the beginning, the middle and the end. Plan what you will do in these three parts. The beginning is ideal for an attention grabber or ice breaker. The end is great to wrap things up or for a grand finale.

- Speak to the audience and not to visual aids such as flip charts or presentation slides. Also, don't stand between the visual aid and the audience.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough for all to hear. Do not speak in a monotone voice. Use inflection to emphasize your main points.
- Listen intently to comments and opinions. By acknowledging their ideas rather than dismissing them, you indicate to the audience that their ideas, comments and opinions are worthwhile.
- Circulate around the room as you speak. This movement creates a physical closeness to the audience.
- List and discuss your objectives at the beginning of the presentation. Let the audience know how your presentation fits in with their goals.
- Arrive before your audience arrives and be the last one to leave.

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Activities

Activity 1: Designing a Presentation

Think of an idea or topic you currently wish to address in the workplace. With that idea in mind, answer the following questions before you present your idea to the people you wish to convince.

1. Who is your audience?
2. What is the purpose of the presentation?
3. What does the audience already know about the subject?
4. What is the main point of what you want to present?
5. What is the audience's attitude towards me?

With this information in mind, carefully develop your presentation.

Once you have developed the presentation, practice presenting it to someone you trust and is knowledgeable about your organization. Ask for feedback and ideas about improving your presentation or ideas.

Activity 2: Review of Your Skills

Ask someone you trust to observe you as you present your new idea or topic to others (such as the one you planned for in Activity 1). Have him or her take notes and give you feedback on how you handled the following:

1. How was your voice quality (volume, tone, pitch and pace)?
2. How was your non-verbal communication (eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture and body orientation)?
3. How was your listening? Did you finish other's sentences? Did you answer questions with questions?
4. How well was the presentation prepared/structured? Was it arranged in sequential order? Were the main points delivered in order of increasing importance? If problems were presented, were solutions also suggested? Were ideas listed from simple to complex?
5. Were visual aids used effectively?

Activity 3: Observing Others

Make a point of observing people in your organization who are particularly good at presenting.

1. What techniques does each person use when presenting?
2. How do they present themselves?
3. How do they present their ideas?
4. How do they handle questions and comments during the presentation?
5. What do you like best about how they present new ideas or topics?

