

Management Checklist

Preparing Presentations

This is an excerpt from a [Chartered Management Institute](#) checklist providing practical advice and guidance enabling managers to check out how to do a range of tasks quickly and efficiently using concise, tried and tested information.

Introduction

This checklist is intended for those who are required to give any form of presentation. It covers all the stages of preparing a talk, from accepting the invitation to checking the venue, from the point of view of developing an effective style.

Definition

A presentation covers any talk to a group, whether formal or informal, from giving a team briefing to delivering a major speech: the same rules and principles apply.

Action checklist

1. Decide whether to accept

Ask yourself whether you are the right person to deliver this presentation. Do you have enough time to prepare? You may need to allow between 30 and 60 minutes for every minute of delivery. Are you excited enough about the topic to be enthusiastic? Do you know enough to answer awkward questions? If not, say no!

2. Clarify the details

Find out how long you will speak for and the exact subject. Will there be questions at the end? If there are other speakers, what will they cover, and how will you fit in with them?

3. Research your audience

View the audience as customers. Try to gain a notion of their expectations: do they want to be informed, amused or challenged? How many will there be? What is their level and background? Do they have any prior knowledge?

4. Define the purpose

Tailor the presentation to meet the audience needs you identified. Is your aim to persuade, instruct, inspire or entertain?

5. Assemble your material

Assemble anything relevant to your topic: ideas, articles, quotes, anecdotes, references, etc. Accumulate the material over time but don't attempt to organise it while still collecting it.

6. Prepare an 'essay plan'

Structure the material into a rough plan, with a beginning, middle and an end.

7. Write a rough draft

Use the essay plan to sketch a first draft. Write without stopping and don't impose a structure while writing. Aim to outline what you are going to say, say it, and end by summarising what you have said. Try to make only five key points and a maximum of seven.

8. Edit the draft

Review your first draft the following day. Convert the written word to speech and make the text more concrete, simple and illustrative. Shorten all your

sentences and eliminate non-essential ideas and words. Cut any jargon or explain any that is unavoidable. Make sure the timing is right.

9. Refine the draft

Run through the draft several times, preferably in front of someone. Seek feedback and criticism on content, style and delivery. Ask your listener not to interrupt but to make notes.

10. Select appropriate presentation aids

Presentation aids need to:

- √ be integrated: flow from your natural style
- √ move the presentation on: add value to it and summarise what you say
- √ be professional: clear, readable and consistent
- √ be appropriate in tone: full colour slides may not be right for a small informal group
- √ be simple to understand: clearly legible from the back of the room
- √ be graphic where appropriate

11. Rehearse

Practise in your head, in front of a mirror or in front of a partner. Note any mannerisms you need to correct or anything you need constantly to remind yourself of as you talk; keep these on a cue card when you give the presentation.

14. Check the venue

Well before the start check that your visuals, especially text, are visible from the back of the room. Sit or stand where you will deliver the presentation and check that the equipment is working and that you can work the equipment.

The full [Management Checklist](#) is part of a series offered by the Chartered Management Institute, that focuses on issues relating to people management and personal effectiveness. The full checklists are freely available to all [members of the Institute](#). Further information can be obtained by calling (0)1536 207 373 to request a sample of what the Institute has to offer.