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SECTION

Teleprompter Presentations

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How to Read Your Presentation Like a True Professional
(And Stop Sounding Like Charlie Brown's Teacher)



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Reading with Style

The four basic ways you can deliver your presentations include speaking from notes (extemporaneous), at the spur of the moment with minimal preparation (impromptu), reading (something you wrote), and memorized (remembering verbatim what you wrote). Speaking from notes is usually best, but there are times when you'll want to read – especially if you need to say something carefully and precisely. Reading is a good way to present the facts, review policies and respond to legal issues.

A common problem that often arises is that the tone of the presenter's voice becomes dull and monotone. In order to avoid these mind-numbing effects, the presenter often has a desire to "ad lib"—which is sometimes successful, but not always.

These are eight effective techniques for reading with style—and not sounding like Charlie Brown's teacher:

- 1. Remain aware of your facial expressions, gestures and body movements.** Some presenters have a tendency to pull awkward faces or move strangely while presenting. Be aware of your hand positioning. Do not tap the lectern while you speak, and avoid crossing your arms behind your back or folding them in-front of your chest. Such behavior can often bother an audience and take away.
- 2. During a presentation your feet should remain about six inches apart.** By keeping your feet close together you are more likely to reduce any swaying motion that may occur. Make sure to listen for a tendency towards monotone speech patterns.
- 3. Find a good pitch range.** You will find that when a presenter uses a narrow pitch their connotations sound more intellectual. To deliver a more emotional presentation the presenter should use a wider pitch range and make their vowels sound longer. A presenter should place emphasis on consonants while speaking. This will help to bolster a presenter's position as an authority on the issue being discussed.
- 4. Tone of voice is important.** A presenter should use a natural, conversational tone that would be appropriate at the dinner table. Talk "with" your audience and not "at" them. Make it seem as if you are discussing the issue with them.

5. **Talk to the audience and do not lecture your manuscript.** Just because you are reading a manuscript does not mean you should not be making eye contact. The more eye contact you make the more personal the presentation will be. Eye contact will help hold the attention of the audience.
6. **Eye contact.** A common mistake made while delivering a presentation is to make eye contact at an inopportune moment. When should you make eye contact with your audience? Your eyes should be upon the audience as all opening and closing remarks are made. You should also be looking at the audience at the end of all questions and declarations. Look down only to pick up the beginning of a sentence. Look out at the audience to deliver it. During pauses make eye contact with a specific member of the audience. Nearly everybody makes the mistake of starting a sentence looking down at the lectern, looking up frantically in the middle, and then diving back down for the last couple of words in the sentence.
7. **It would be helpful to keep track of your position with your finger.** Print the presentation on single sided pages, and make sure the document is already spread out before you when you begin to present.
8. **When turning pages it is important to slide them.** Do not staple the document together or place it in a binder. Never flip or turn the pages during a presentation.

10 Tips for Making Your Speech Easier to Read

There is nothing worse than working extremely hard on a presentation only to trip over your own tongue during the presentation itself. By perfecting your layout to compliment your presentations skills you can avoid embarrassing slip ups and present your material to the best of your abilities.

1. When typing the presentation make sure that each sentence is typed as if it was its own independent paragraph.
2. Each sentence should be double spaced.
3. The spacing and font used to type the presentation should be large and easy to use. 1/3 or 1/2 inch spacing is a good size and the lettering should be between 24 and 26 point font.
4. Do not write the presentation in all capital letters. It is easier to read both capital and lowercase letters together.
5. The pages should all be single sided. Do not print on both sides of the paper you are using.
6. To be on the safe side, number all of the pages in the presentation. It is best to number all four corners just incase you drop your presentation or the pages get mixed up.
7. End a sentence on the same page it began. Insert a page break if you must, but avoid "orphans."
8. Before delivering the presentation it is best to practice aloud. This allows the presenter to:
 - Identify any troublesome words or transitions in the presentation.
 - Test the naturalness of the presentation.
 - Become familiar with the material. The presentation should be practically memorized by the time of the actual presentation.

9. Make any additional markings on the paper that will allow the presentation to be more effective.
 - Use colored pens or pencils.
 - Make notes in the margins if necessary.
 - Highlight places where emphasis should be placed on specific verbs or adjectives.

10. Conduct your presentation in front of a mirror to practice eye contact.

A Short, Powerful Way to Improve Your Reading Delivery

The following exercise is a good way to find out which reading techniques work best for you. It is important to understand what works best for you as a presenter. Practice makes perfect.

Pick two or three individual documents, such as newspaper/magazine articles, reports or even scripture and prepare them as if they were your own speeches. You'll quickly find out which techniques are making it easier to deliver your message.

How to Quickly Organize your presentation

Most presentations that are read can be organized by using a simple formula. If you've already prepared your presentation, then skip the last two sections and practice your delivery. Yes, I know there are occasionally exceptions to this rule. But MOST presentations work fine when they are structured in three speech parts (introduction, body, and conclusion) and one mechanical tool (connections):

1. Introduction (10%)

The introduction is where you set the tone and the stage. You have to get your audience to focus on your topic and excite them enough to listen to you for the next few minutes. Most effective introductions have five parts:

- **Attention-getter:** Ask a question, state an unusual fact, tell a joke—just get their attention first. But make sure your attention-getter actually has something to do with the topic of your presentation. If it isn't related to your big idea, save it for some other presentation.
- **Establish credibility:** Does everyone in your audience know who you are? Do they know what your background is, what research you've completed or believe you actually know what you're talking about? If not, you may need to take a few moments to convince them that it's worth their time to listen to you.
- **Presentation objective:** What is your big idea? In one sentence, can you summarize the point of your presentation? If not, you haven't focused it enough or made it simple enough for your audience to understand.
- **Preview:** What is your agenda? What points are you going to be going over? Give your audience a mental roadmap of how you're going to back up and prove your big idea. Sometimes, listing your main points on a PowerPoint slide or flipchart helps keep both your audience--and yourself--on track.
- **Benefits of Listening:** Every person in your audience is tuned to their own radio station: WIIFM (What's In It For Me?). If it isn't crystal clear, tell them. Sell your presentation a bit.

2. Body (80%)

The body of your presentation is typically 3-5 main points, arranged in some way (see "10 Ways to Organize Your Presentation" below).

These 3-5 main points are what's needed to explain, excite or motivate your audience toward your big idea. Each point should be backed up with evidence or proof that is typically in the form of:

- **Examples:** Specific “for instances” as cases in point. Make sure you use real examples that have actually happened. Hypothetical examples can cause you credibility problems and leave you open for attack.
- **Analogies:** Compare one thing that your audience knows well (four bases in baseball) with something that they aren't as familiar with (four steps in the sales process). Be careful what you compare, because these two separate items are really never alike. A hostile audience might attack by blasting the connections you are drawing and say that the two items have little to nothing in common.
- **Testimony:** Experts or witnesses words. I've found that most executives are very interested in what their customers have to say. The same concept coming from someone else doesn't carry the same weight. Who is saying the quote, matters. So, find people your audience believes or respects and use their words to sell your ideas.
- **Statistics:** Percentages, means and other numbers. People are often persuaded by numbers—especially when they come from credible sources or were arrived at through a disciplined or scientific process. Make sure you explain what the numbers mean and keep them simple.
- **Graphics/visual aids:** Pie charts, bar graphs, visual models and other drawings or pictures. These items can bring life to your presentations and help you quickly add impact and excitement.

10 Ways to Organize the Body

1. Chronological: Past, Present, Future
2. Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Present (this is where I am)
 - Past (this is where I was)
 - Path (this is how I got here)
3. Problem/Solution
 - State the problem, need or deficiency
 - Explain the solution, detail the process, describe action taken or end result
4. Topical
 - Organize by topics/themes related to a central idea
5. Experiential Order
 - First
 - Second
 - Third
6. Advantages/ Disadvantages
 - Pros
 - Cons
7. Cause to Effect or Effect to Cause
 - Because... this is what happened...
 - This is what happened..., because...
8. Compare/Contrast
 - Oldest/youngest
 - Similarities/differences
 - Any extremes
9. Escalating
 - Small to large
 - Inexpensive to costly
10. Acronyms

3. Conclusion (10%)

Don't start your wrap up with, "One more thing I forgot to say." If you have more evidence, put it in the body of your presentation.

Instead, begin your conclusion with these important words: "In conclusion..." These words let your audience know that you're about to wrap things up.

Next, restate your presentation objective and summarize your main points. They don't have to be in the exact words that you began your presentation with, but in words that are similar so that you remind everyone of where you've been and what you've been trying to cover during your presentation.

Finally, end with something vivid. Tell a story, close with a joke, use a moving plea. Do something that's related to your presentation and ends it on a high note. If you can tie your conclusion in with your introductory story or example, even better.

4. Connectives

The "glue" of your presentation is something I call connectives. They're simple tools that help your audience transition from one point to the next.

- **Transitions:** Bridge two points or two sections. "Now that I've just talked about X, let's focus on Y."
- **Internal preview:** Gives an overview of what's coming up. Just as you previewed your entire presentation during the introduction, it is helpful to preview long or complicated sections of your presentation. "There are three parts of this point I'd like to cover..."
- **Internal summaries:** Reviews the points that were just covered before moving on. These are previews in reverse. They simply quickly remind listeners what you covered and work nicely in front of transitions. "So we can see that there are three parts... Now let's focus on..."
- **Signposts:** Verbal directions that make it easier for your audience to follow you. Signposts can be numbers, phrase, acronym and other formats. They are one of the simplest techniques for turning a disorganized presentation into a sharp, well-crafted speech. (First... Second... Third...)

Speaking Preparation Checklist

Knowing a few specifics about your presentation room, environment and expectations can go a long way in making sure your presentation is a success. Make sure you have the answer to each of these questions:

- Who will introduce me? To save embarrassment, either send a copy of your resume to the person who will introduce you or write your own introduction.
- Is anyone else speaking in the same program? What is their topic? How does your topic differ from theirs? What are their names?
- What are the names and titles of the special guests?
- What is the proper attire? Casual, business or formal.
- Does the meeting room have a public address system?
- How large is the room?
- Is there a place for you to stand and set up your materials?
- Can everyone see my visual aids?
- What kind of lighting is available at the lectern?
- How is the room arranged? Chairs arranged in a standard auditorium manner communicate more formality. Chairs arranged in a circle communicate less formality. The "U" shaped arrangement is most common for training sessions.
- Are all personal items, such as name tags, information packets, and favors ready to be passed out?
- If you need an electrical outlet, does it work? Do you need to find an extension cord?
- Will any food or beverage be served? Is it ready? When will it be served?
- Do you have access to backup equipment if yours fails?
- What color is the room? Will everyone be able to see you? Should you wear a different color of clothing?
- Will I have a set time to speak? Is dinner scheduled just before or after you speak? Will you have to stop exactly on time or can you run over if you need to?
- What is the climate of the room?