

GHANIACADEMY

HEALTH AND FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Presenting
With
Confidence

Course Book

PRESENTING WITH CONFIDENCE

Presented By

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Why You Can't Ignore Your Presentation Skills

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld had this to say about our oft-mentioned fear of public speaking:

"A recent survey stated that the average person's greatest fear is having to give a speech in public. Somehow this ranked even higher than death, which was third on the list. So, you're telling me that at a funeral, most people would rather be the guy in the coffin than have to stand up and give a eulogy."

Many surveys have attested to the extent of our fear of public speaking. This idea, perhaps, first originated in David Wallechinsky, Irving Wallace, and Amy Wallace's book *'The Book of Lists'* which referenced a 1973 Bruskin survey, which said that 41% of the 3,000 American respondents listed "speaking before a group" as their greatest fear, even more than heights, financial problems, or death.

Whether this is still completely accurate or not, it's a known fact that people do not enjoy public speaking. However, it's a key skill that you must master in order to succeed in any kind of business. This is true not only of high stakes presentations, but also in the way you present yourself to your audience.

The Problems We Face with Public Speaking

Many people experience intense anxiety when called upon to present in front of groups. There may be physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, shaking, dry mouth, shivers, or going blank. For some people this anxiety occurs not only in front of large groups but even in front of small, informal groups. In fact, it could be worse in smaller, more intimate groups. This fear can cause some people to avoid giving presentations at all.

As you can imagine, for small business owners and entrepreneurs, this type of fear can be very problematic. It can limit the types of opportunities you have to build your credibility and to pitch your product or service. Luckily, anyone can overcome their fear of public speaking by learning some effective calming tips and by practicing proven presentation techniques.

Even if you are lucky enough to not suffer from this public speaking anxiety, you may be undermining the effectiveness of your presentations by using outdated or ineffective presentation techniques or approaches.

Why Public Speaking Is So Important

Public speaking is vital to any type of business because communication is the foundation of business success. Good communication allows business owners to form meaningful connections with others and influence decision making. It's at the heart of everything we do.

Improving your communication skills will have a positive impact on how you communicate with clients, customers, colleagues, team members, business partners, and even friends and family members.

Learning presentation skills will allow you to appear more confident and collected in front of your audience. It will reduce your anxiety and could make it disappear entirely. At the very least, you will be able to control and channel your anxiety. Even some very good public speakers admit to being nervous when speaking in front of groups, but they know how to keep it from controlling them.

Indirectly, better public speaking skills will improve your sales, your reputation, how you are seen among your competitors and peers, and your standing in the marketplace. If you're more proficient at public speaking, you'll be invited to speak more often, which will turn you into a thought leader in your field.

In this course, you will learn how to:

- Apply public speaking best practices to any situation
- Build a compelling elevator pitch that you can use to quickly introduce yourself and your company
- Create an engaging presentation to position a particular view point or opinion
- Present a sales pitch to help you increase sales of a specific product or service
- Create a plan to continuously improve your public speaking skills

Learning Activity:

1. Think of some really great presentations you have seen (Shark Tank pitches, TED Talks, etc.). What are some methods those presenters used that really impressed you?
2. Similarly, think of some really terrible presentations you have seen. What were some methods those presenters used that undermined their message?

Apply Best Practices to Elevate Your Public Speaking

Good presentation skills are the foundation for effective public speaking for small business owners. Whether you're just getting started or are looking to brush up on your skills, here are the best practices of public speaking to help you elevate your presentation skills across any type of speaking engagement.

At the root of presentation skills is communication. No matter what type of presentation you're giving, the key is to communicate with your audience. In order to effectively communicate with your audience, there are things you need to do before and during your presentation.

Before the Presentation

- Know Your Audience
- Adjust for Size
- Be Flexible
- Observe Timing
- Get Plenty of Fuel
- Voice and Tone

Know Your Audience. Spend some time researching your audience. Try to get as much information about them as you can. Useful information includes demographic details (such as age and gender), number of people attending, and whatever you can find out about their attitudes and feelings.

You should also know your audience's level of knowledge about the subject to ensure that you're not boring them with things they already know or talking over their heads.

Adjust for Size. Adjust your tone for larger or smaller groups. For a group of 50 or over, you can use a more formal tone. Your presentation will be less interactive. For smaller groups, plan to be less formal and to involve your audience more in the presentation.

Be Flexible. Although your presentation may be well planned out and rehearsed, expect the unexpected. Be ready to adapt. You may have prepared a presentation for a large, knowledgeable audience only to discover that you need to talk to a small audience with less knowledge. Be ready to scale back or change your presentation on the fly.

Whatever happens, maintain a sense of humor when things don't go as planned and try to give the best presentation to whatever audience you have.

Observe Timing. Always practice with an eye on your timing to make sure that the presentation stays in the parameters. You need to fit everything you have to cover in the allotted time. When you time your presentation, you may find yourself running short and having to add more.

Get Plenty of Fuel. Your brain needs fuel. Even if the time before the presentation is hectic, make sure you have something to eat. If your brain

doesn't have the nutrients it needs, you're more likely to suffer from cognitive problems such as anxiety or "brain fog." The best thing to eat before a presentation is a protein-rich snack like nuts or eggs. Avoid anything heavy that might slow you down or cause indigestion.

Voice and Tone. When people are nervous, various things happen to their voice and tone. For some people, their pitch rises, while for others their voice becomes flat. Nervousness also tends to cause speakers to use fillers like "um" or make long pauses. Try recording yourself giving the presentation beforehand and listen for these. Keep this in mind and try to control your voice and tone during the presentation.

Controlling your voice and tone is not only important for improving your presentation, but can also have a positive effect on your body. If you manage to bring your tone down and control it, you may feel more relaxed.

Best Practices During a Presentation



Use a Delivery Style that Matches Your Personality. If you're not naturally a joker, don't use the stage as your first chance to try stand-up comedy. Use a delivery style that plays to your natural strengths. Think of

your delivery style as an extension of the way you communicate with people every day.

Have Fun. You want your presentation to come off as relaxed and not stiff. It's completely possible to be both professional and fun. Make the content of your presentation interesting and try wherever possible to use humor or draw the listeners' curiosity. The bottom line is that if you feel that your presentation is fun, this will rub off on the audience.

Don't Read. It's okay to use notes but don't read from your notes. If you're using PowerPoint, don't simply read off the slides. For your notes or outline, use bullet points, keywords, or headings to remind you of important points to cover. As you practice and give more presentations, you'll get better at this. You'll find a particular style that works for you. If you're not extremely familiar with the subject matter or have trouble remembering key points, practice until the content is stuck in your brain. Anything is better than reading.

Use Facial Expressions. Along with controlling your voice and tone during a presentation, you should also think about your facial expressions. Your facial expressions should mirror what you're saying in the same natural way that they do when you're talking to friends. When you tell a joke, you should be smiling. When saying something serious or sad, you may wear a frown. You can practice your speech in front of a mirror beforehand to practice keeping your facial expressions natural.

Beware of Body Language. Similarly to your voice, tone, and facial expressions, you need to monitor your body language. Many of us make unconscious gestures that detract from speaking such as sniffing, licking lips, adjusting glasses, or twirling hair. You may also have gestures that convey your discomfort or lack of confidence, such as hunching over or

freezing in place. If you're standing up during the presentation, here are some good body language practices to follow:

- Keep your arms at your sides in general and keep your feet hips' width apart.
- Use gestures sparingly unless you're seasoned at giving presentations. You can videotape yourself beforehand practicing your presentation to see whether you're overdoing it.
- You don't need to stand in one spot. When you move around, it shows confidence and control. You don't need to race around the stage, but walk around during some parts of the presentation in a way that's natural.

Calm Your Nerves

Practice a few techniques to calm yourself. You can use these before the presentation and in some cases during. Everyone has different techniques that work for them, but a few that are widely known to be effective include:

- **Deep Breathing** – When you're nervous, your breathing becomes shallow and forced. Practice taking long, deep breaths. This is something you can do whenever you start to feel the anxiety setting in.
- **The Power Pose** – Go to the restroom 15 minutes before the presentation. Spread your arms and legs as wide as possible. This is supposed to make you feel a sense of power that is calming. You can find out more about the power pose in [this TED talk](#).
- **Think of Friends** – When you go up to start your presentation, think of friends or family members who make you feel comfortable. Feelings of affection help to calm us.
- **Go to Your "Happy Place"** – You can also think of a place or activity that's particularly calming and think about this before the

presentation.



Learning Activity:

1. Based on what we've covered, identify the areas that you need to work on when making presentations. Keep note of these since you'll practice them the next time you prepare to make a presentation

Craft Your Elevator Speech

The "elevator speech" is a quick few sentences that introduces you and your company, and provides a couple of key benefits that will entice your listener's curiosity. As a small business owner, you should have an elevator speech prepared. It allows you to quickly and easily convey what your business is about at crucial moments such as meeting a potential client or business partner.

Imagine a situation like this. You're in a coffee shop and you run into a friend who might be a great fit for your offering. You have a few minutes to chat before your friend has to leave and they ask you something like, "How's work? What are you up to these days?" You fumble with your words, wondering where to start and your friend starts looking at the clock and says they have to run. You've just lost an excellent opportunity.

You may have noticed that seasoned professionals have a quick speech that they rattle off at key moments like this. They're not doing this off the cuff. Rather, they've written, rehearsed, and perfected this elevator 'presentation'.

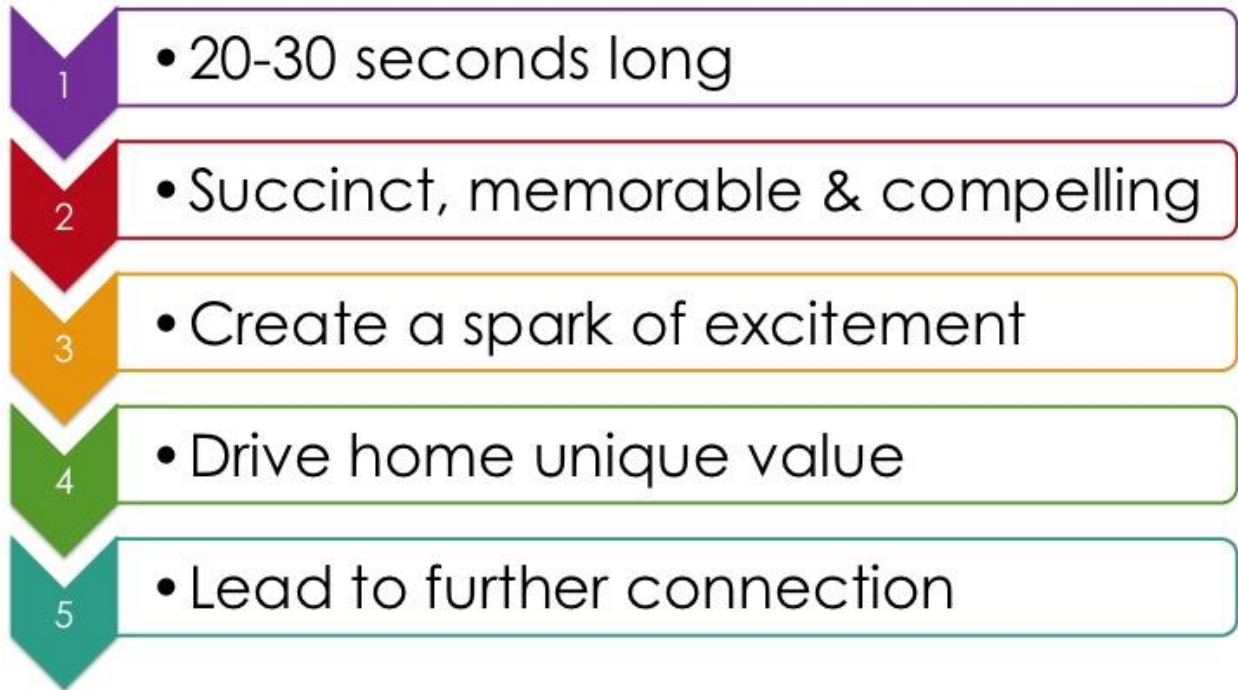
Your elevator speech is an important communication tool that can also be very useful when giving presentations.

The elements of a perfect elevator speech are:

- It's 20 to 30 seconds long. In other words, it's short enough to deliver on an elevator ride.
- It's succinct, memorable, and compelling.
- It should create a spark of excitement about what you're doing, or

about an idea or proposal you're working on right now.

- It should drive home the unique value of your business, your idea, or your offering.
- It should lead to further connection between you and the person you're delivering it to.



The Steps to Creating the Perfect Elevator Speech

Step 1 – Start with what you do. Describe what your company does. Focus on the problem your company solves and the main benefit it offers those who use it.

Step 2 – Go back to what you do and make it unique. For example, if your store sells Southwestern style jewelry, say something like, "We have the largest selection of Arizona gemstones." What is the thing that most sets

you apart from your competitors? If you're not sure, go to your customers. What do they praise you for most or why do they use you and not a competitor?

Step 3 – Ask a question. Prepare an open-ended question that will engage the person you're talking to. An open-ended question is one that cannot be answered with a simple one-word answer. Examples of good open-ended questions would be:

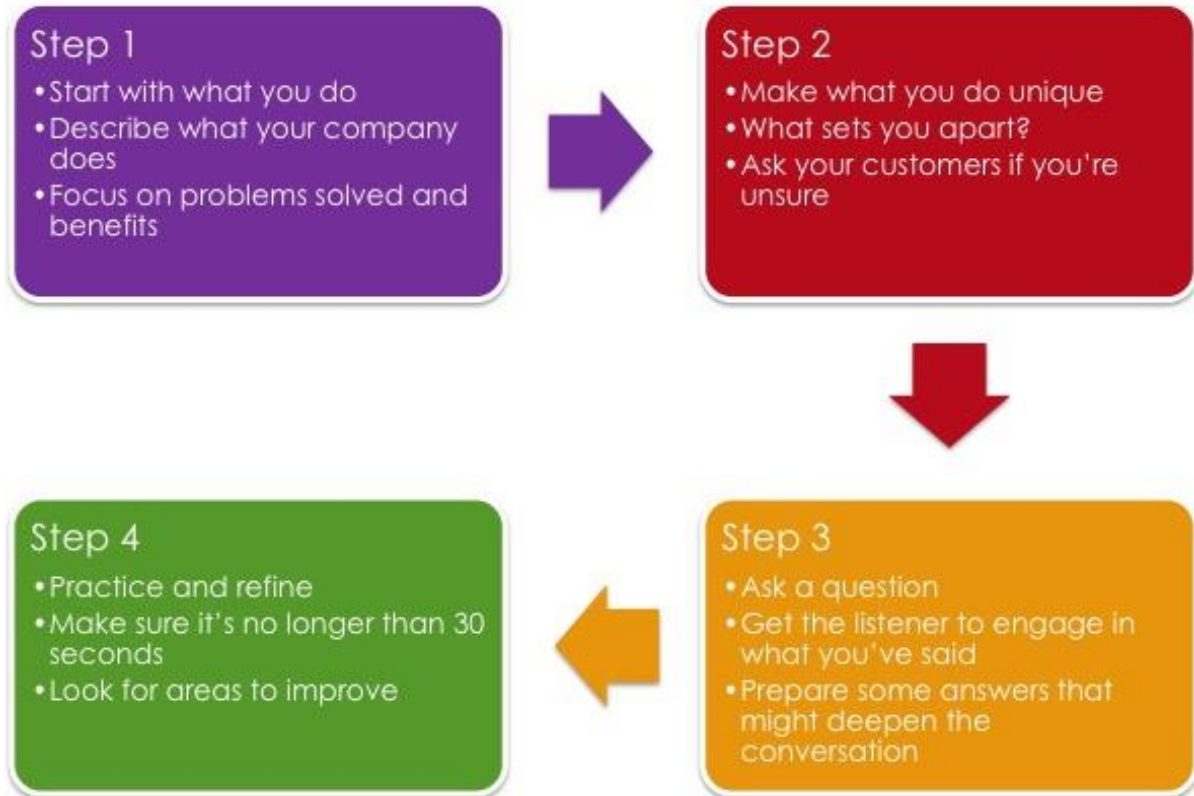
- "You seem interested. What part of what I just said is most interesting to you? "
- "How do you solve this problem?"
- "What priorities might you have in this area?"

You're trying to get the listener to engage in what you've said thus far and create a new opportunity to meet their unique needs. Prepare some responses to their answer that might deepen the conversation. For example, if they express interest, you might go into more detail on what you offer. If they explain their unique problem to you, you can offer a solution.

Step 4 – Practice and refine. Once you have your mini-speech crafted, you should start practicing it. First, time it to make sure it's no longer than 30 seconds. As you practice, look for areas where you can improve. Start practicing it with real people and refine. For example, you may have a few open-ended question ideas. By practicing your elevator speech with real people, you may discover that a certain question yields more responses. Conversely, you might find that different questions are good for different types of people.

Here is an example of an elevator speech:

"I left corporate sales training and started my own coaching practice. I specialize in helping people communicate more effectively. Using my research-driven approach, my clients have been able to increase their sales by 25%. How about you? Are you still working in sales? Does your team struggle with how to build sales presentations?"



Top Communication Tips to Help You Master Your Elevator Speech

- No matter how you refine your elevator speech, make sure it stays about 30 seconds long.
- As you get comfortable delivering your speech, you should create different variations. Some can be longer than 30 seconds. You might create versions that are suited to certain people (potential clients, old friends, potential business partners) or situations (networking events, presentations, bios).
- The purpose of your elevator speech is to begin a relationship with the person, so design it to transition into a follow-up with them later.

Learning activity:

1. Using the 4-step process, craft an elevator speech. You may ultimately need a couple of versions; for example, an elevator speech to introduce your company vs. a short pitch to introduce a new product or service you are launching.
2. Practice makes perfect. Rehearse it until you can speak effortlessly. Additionally, ensure you can answer anticipated questions.

Build Your Engaging Presentation

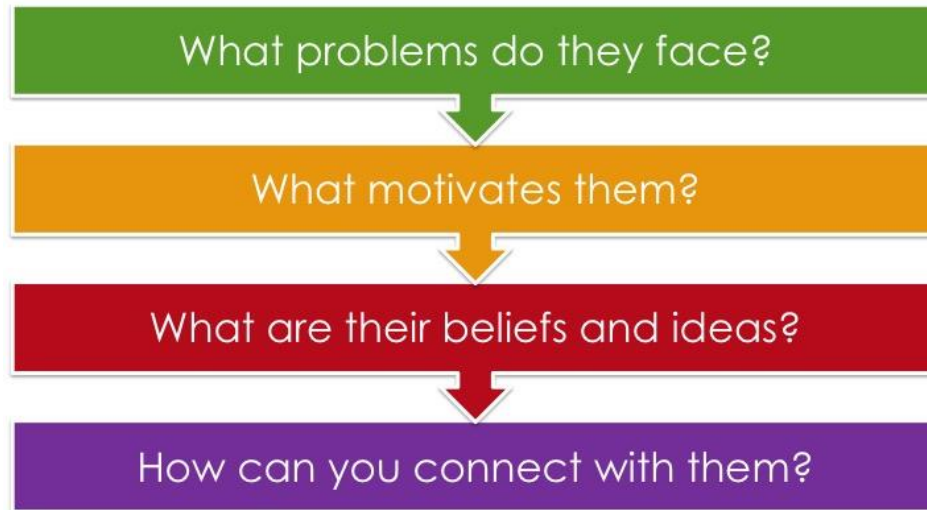
Some presentations present information that's simply objective and factual. Others are designed to call the audience to perform some action. If your presentation involves selling or building a compelling case in support of some idea, you need to use elements of persuasion.

However, engaging presentations may not involve selling or calling to action directly. You may simply hope to encourage the audience to consider your point of view.

A good example is TED Talks. TED Talks present new and unusual ideas. They are often about sharing a certain perspective. It's the same situation when you're invited to talk. You're not necessarily pitching a product or service, but instead, positioning yourself as an expert or thought leader in a particular field.

In order to be engaging, you need to know your audience. Earlier, we talked about the best practice of understanding your audience in order to create a good presentation for them. When it comes to engagement, you need to understand your audience's mindset. Questions you should ask to reveal this information include:

- What problems does your audience face?
- What motivates them?
- What are their beliefs and ideas?
- How can you connect with them and win them over to your side?



Another important thing to know about your audience is their objections and obstacles. When you present a new idea, the members of your audience will often find ways to reject these ideas. For example, if you're presenting about the allergen test kit market and you say that the domestic market is highly competitive, you should know that the next thing your audience will think is, "Well, then there's no way we can gain a share of that market." Your next slide can then demonstrate how this is possible.

When you're making an offer, it's also important to know what objections are in the prospect's mind. This is an important strategy in sales. When a sales person is trying to sell to a potential customer, the customer subconsciously tries to think of reasons not to buy or the risks involved in buying. Try to figure out what these are so that you can address them in your presentation before they're ever voiced by your audience.

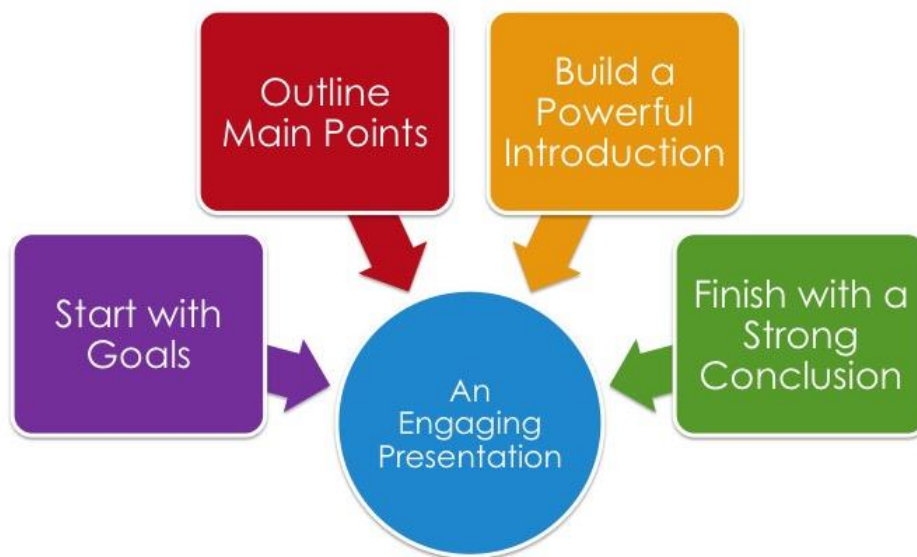
A powerful persuasion technique that wins over audiences is to demonstrate your knowledge about them. This is very powerful in establishing credibility and expertise. Near the beginning of a presentation, a speaker will often say, "I know some of you may be thinking X or Y; I totally understand that.

In fact, I spent most of my life thinking that way. But then..." This also builds powerful rapport which keeps the audience listening and engaged.

Finally, if you've watched TED Talks, you know that most of them revolve around some kind of story. Stories are much more engaging and much easier to understand than hard data, scientific facts, and statistics. Storytelling is timeless and universal. It will help you to connect with your audience.

This isn't to say that you should avoid facts. But too many facts and too much objective data can make a presentation dull and hard to digest. Facts and statistics should be used to effectively augment a presentation.

How to Build an Engaging Presentation



Start with Goals. First, identify the goal for your presentation. Frame it as, "What action do you want listeners to take." Rather than an actual action, such as buying something or signing up for something, it could be something

less material, such as "to understand the importance of X" or "to see X from a certain perspective."

Outline Main Points. Next, outline your main points for the core content of the presentation. You did this when you wrote papers in high school and college.

Start by coming up with the "thesis" or main idea of your presentation. Then, list the three or more points to back up the thesis. You then create a paragraph for each idea to explain and prove the point. Usually a paragraph has a main sentence that states its main idea, followed by two to three supporting sentences. More support is okay, but you don't want too much as you can bore your audience.

Build a Powerful Introduction. The introduction is critical because it sets the tone for the entire presentation. The purposes of your introduction are:

- To grab your audience's attention.
- To connect with your audience. Show that you know them and you have similarities with them in terms of background, ideas, experiences, problems, etc.
- To establish credentials and show the audience you're knowledgeable about your subject (in other words, why should they listen to you).
- To explain the goal, topics you're going to cover, and key points that you'll be covering.

Finish with a Strong Conclusion. Make sure you wrap up your presentation with a strong conclusion. The conclusion should remind the audience what you told them. Summarize the main points without restating them verbatim. It should also contain a call to action explaining what you would like the audience to do next.

Preparing Your Presentation's Slides

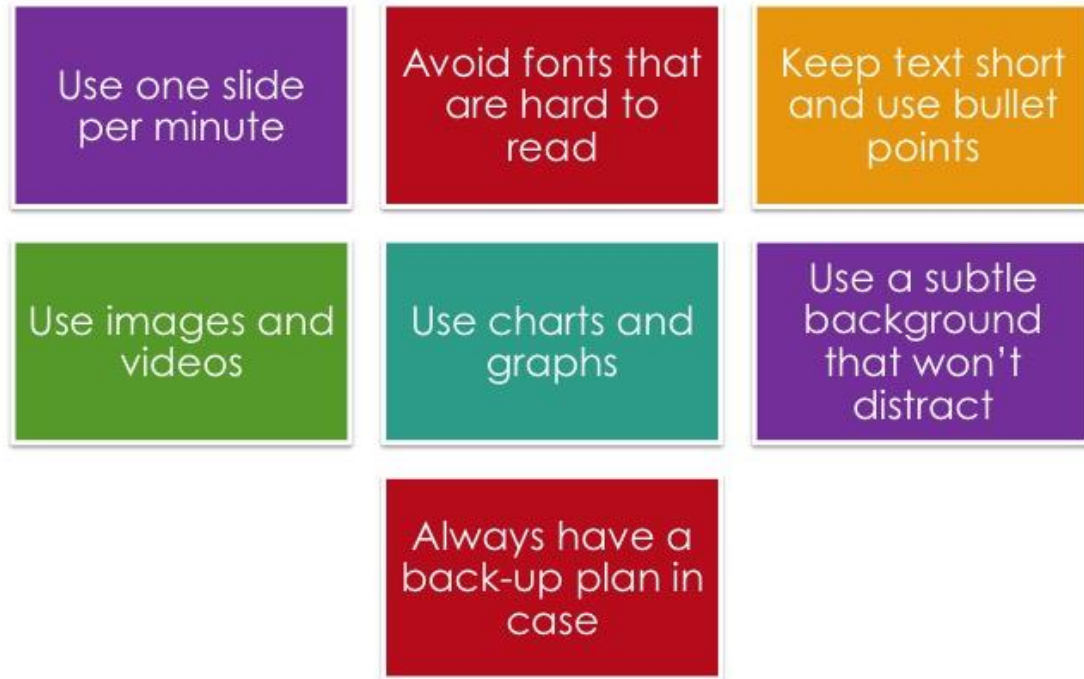
Most people prepare their presentations using PowerPoint or another slide creation software. It doesn't matter which software program you use, just choose a program that's simple and don't get bogged down in the technological details. Ask someone to help you if it's going to slow you down.

If you've never used a slide preparation software program, it might be easiest to plan it out on paper first. You can write an outline slide by slide, and then convert your ideas to the slide deck. Keep text sparse on your slides. Only present key text and data, and include images to keep the slides interesting wherever possible. Visually represent data wherever you can.

Tips for Building Slides

- **A Slide per Minute.** As a general rule of thumb, you should show one slide per minute. If you're telling a story, you may stay on one slide for a long time and this may mean fewer slides.
- **Font Size and Style.** Avoid narrow or fancy fonts that are hard to read. The best to use are Calibri and Arial. Make sure that all text is large enough to be seen by people in the back of the room.
- **Limit Text.** Keep text short and use bullet points wherever possible. Limit each slide to 3 bullet points maximum. Never read content off of your slides. They are for your audience's reference but they should mainly be listening to you.
- **Images and Videos.** You can use images and videos to convey messages rather than just text.
- **Charts and Graphs.** For complex ideas or quantitative data, use charts and graphs. Use text sparingly and create charts that are easy to understand at first glance.

- **Background.** Use a subtle background that won't distract from your slides' content and make it consistent throughout your presentation.
- **Back-up Plan.** Always have a back-up plan just in case there is a technological breakdown like a projector, audio, or mic failure. Keep a print copy of your slides and notes in case you aren't able to use the projector or PC.



Learning Activity

1. Think of some engaging presentations you have given or heard. What were some strategies that worked really well? Did they use any stories as part of their presentation? How were they able to predict objections? As well, how did they connect with the audience?
2. What types of upcoming opportunities do you have to present a persuasive presentation? (Key note, TED Talks, etc.)
3. Prepare your presentation using the framework in the workbook.
4. Practice-You'll now start incorporating not only the nuts and bolts of building a presentation but also apply the tips from the first module on presentation skills. With your engaging presentation built, video tape yourself. Make it as realistic as possible. If you would normally stand during your presentation, then be sure to record yourself standing rather than sitting. After recording, watch yourself and use the rubric in the workbook to make notes.
5. What surprised you about your recording? What were your strongest areas? What are areas you need to work on?

Create Your Persuasive Sales Presentation

A good sales presentation can help you earn more money directly. With a good presentation and the skills to pull it off, you can get your message to many people and effectively communicate your product or service's unique value to them.

The best practices here are not only for giving a presentation but also for a meeting where you're presenting a product or service to a prospect. The basics of communicating your ideas are the same here.

Know Your Audience

Just as we've said before, knowing your audience is always the first step to a good presentation. In the case of a sales presentation, it's important to deliver key messages that will speak to the needs of your potential buyer. Your message needs to be customized to appeal to them and in order to do that, you need to know them well.

In addition to the types of information we've already covered, it's also good to spend some time with your prospects and get to know them before your sales presentation. Ask your prospects questions ahead of time so that you can tailor your message to them.

For a sales presentation, it's also important to know your competitors well. Research companies that are offering similar products as yours, know your industry well, and gain an understanding of your position in the market in

relation to your competitors. You can learn about other companies through their own materials such as annual reports, brochures, catalogs, social media channels, newsletters, etc. Get to know them wherever possible.

The Right Attendees

All of the research in the world isn't going to help you if you don't have the right people at your sales presentation. The right attendee for your sales presentation or meeting is a decision maker and prospect. In other words, this is the key person in a company who has the power to make the decision to buy. You're not delivering your sales pitch to a subordinate who has to then go and report to the decision maker. There is nothing worse than planning and executing a good sales presentation only to discover that the person/people in your audience are in no position to buy.

In most cases, you'll have a contact who you are in communication with. You need to explicitly ask them who makes the buying decisions and ensure that they will be present. In the elevator speech example before, the contact person you're talking to may be a sales rep, but you need to ask for the sales manager or whichever other person has the budget and authority to make purchases. Ask explicitly: "Who should I invite to the meeting who will be making the buying decision?"

Focus on Solving Problems

Your sales pitch should provide specific solutions to problems you know or have confirmed that the client is struggling with. With your knowledge of the competition and their offerings, show the prospect how your product or service uniquely solves these problems. Make the problems and solutions as specific as possible.

To use the coaching example above, imagine that you get a meeting with a friend who works in sales and his sales manager. Even though you may do all kinds of coaching, you need to narrow your focus to respond directly to their current problem, which is that they want to increase their sales productivity by 25%. Your message will resonate with the prospect if you offer a clear, specific solution.

Prepare for Objections

There is nothing worse than doing an amazing presentation only to be thrown off-guard by questions that you fumble with or can't respond to. As part of preparing for a sales presentation, you need to make a list of questions or concerns that you may hear from the customer. If you have actual questions or concerns customers have already expressed to you, this is even better. There are four main types of objections; budget, authority, need, and time.

Budget: To use the coaching example again, a prospect might say, "We don't have the budget for sales training." Your answer might be something like, "The coaching will easily pay for itself in increased sales performance." You would then break down the math specifically for them and show them rather than telling them: "With a team of 5 increasing their sales by \$10,000 per week each, you'd be ahead by \$X."

Authority: Your prospect may object that they don't have the proper buying authority. The way around this is to make sure that you've chosen the right attendees, as mentioned previously. If not, you've wasted an opportunity and a great deal of time, but maybe you can use the opportunity now to get the person to put you in touch with a decision maker, and then start the process again.

Need: A common objection is that the prospect doesn't feel they need the product or service. They may say something like, "We just completed a training initiative last month. I'm not sure our sales team needs more training just now."

At this point, you could reinforce their need for your product by citing data and asking questions. You might ask them how they are measuring their effectiveness and point out that training alone doesn't guarantee any improvement. You might say, "What we're talking about today is going to have a measurable impact on your team's revenue targets and help you meet your sales goals." Again, drive home the specific and unique benefit the prospect will receive from using your product or service.

Time: Time objections are also common. Your prospect may say, "Our sales people are very busy. I don't think they will have time to do more sales training." In this case, explain to the prospect why right now is the right time. Generally speaking, an increase in sales performance is always welcome. You might point out that the holiday season is right around the corner, so this is the perfect time when their sales team is closing out their year and planning their sales targets for the next year.

Prepare your responses to these objections and rehearse them just like the rest of your sales presentation. If you waver while answering these objections, you may plant a seed of doubt.



Strategies for Handling Objections

If a prospect tells you that they're not interested, don't try to argue with them. Instead, tell them you understand how they feel. You might say something like, "I know how you feel. Many other customers have said the same thing. But once they saw the actual results, they were very pleased and they then made the decision to move forward."

When a prospect raises an objection, never interrupt them. Listen well to what they have to say. Ask for more details and get as much information as possible. What they're telling you will inform you on how to proceed from here, so it's vitally important.

Ask for clarity and offer choices. With the budget example above, where the prospect says the training is too expensive, you could ask whether the cost per employee or the costs associated with traveling are what's prohibitive. Then, be ready to offer choices to help them overcome these costs.

Try to get to the center of the truth. Get the detailed information you need to make an offering. For example, if the prospect says they'll think about it and get back to you, you can ask for clarity: "When you say you'll think about it, what specifically do you need to think about? Is it the cost, the timing, your needs?"

Every sale should be a win/win. When talking to prospects, you might want to compromise in order to reach the best solution for both of you. For example, you can offer to do the training virtually in order to cut costs. Create a win/win and always drive home the point to the prospect that you're trying to create the best situation for both of you.

Use Stories

At this stage of the sale, you can use stories again. However, this time you're not using stories to engage your audience, but to convince them of your credibility and the efficacy of your offering. Leverage the power of case studies and offer contact information for past clients as references. Talk about people who have used your products and offer data and other specific results.

Listening

In many sales presentations, you will focus all of your time on what you have to say. You will be focused on your pitch. However, the best sales presentations are a back-and-forth where you do some talking but also some listening. As a good rule of thumb, you should be listening 70% of the time and speaking 30% of the time.

Listening is important because you need to know exactly where the prospect is coming from. You also need to gather information from them so that you know what they need and what you need to clarify. You can modify your message based on what the prospect says.

You also need to confirm your understanding of the prospect's situation. In addition to ensuring that your understanding is accurate, this also shows the prospect that you're taking the time to listen to them and meet their needs.

Look for opportunities to ask for more information. For example, if you say, "I understand your sales team is struggling to meet an increased quota," you could then launch into a pitch for your product. But you could also take the opportunity to ask, "Can you tell me a little bit more about that? What specific challenges are you facing?"

Good listening allows you to stay focused on the prospect's problems so that you can provide the right solution.

Pauses

There will be pauses during your negotiations. Learn to be comfortable with pauses. A pause means that the prospect is thinking over your proposal. If not, they would immediately say something to show that they're not. A

pause can be your chance to jump in and provide the prospect with more useful information.

Touching a Nerve

Most people have a long list of problems they're looking for solutions for, but there will be one that is right on 'the nerve'. This is the main problem that's causing them the most trouble, and it's at the forefront of their mind. If you can find this primary issue, address it and provide the right solution, you'll increase your odds of a sale.

The main problem is often an emotional need rather than something practical. To use the coaching example above again, you may discover through asking questions and listening that the sales manager to whom you're pitching your coaching services wants to get a promotion. In this case, you can frame your solution not only in terms of the numbers (increased sales) but as the one solution the sales manager has been looking for which will win them the promotion. You can do this subtly by telling a case study: "I have one client in particular who actually saw a 30% increase in sales. As a result, he jumped from sales manager to director in two months."

It can take a great deal of asking and listening to uncover this sweet spot but generally speaking, attending to it closes the deal.

Call to Action

At the end of your presentation, you want to continue to drive the conversation with clear next steps. Never wait for the client to make the call to action. For example, at the end of your meeting, you might say, "As a

next step, I'd like to share with you a training plan that will help your sales team increase sales by 25%. What's your schedule like the week of X?"

If you let the prospect drive the call to action, it's more likely to fall flat with something like, "We'll get in touch with you if we decide to move forward." This is not a very promising prospect. In the world of sales, it's a death sentence. Your sale just withered and died. You need to plan to have a clear call to action for the next steps.

Closing

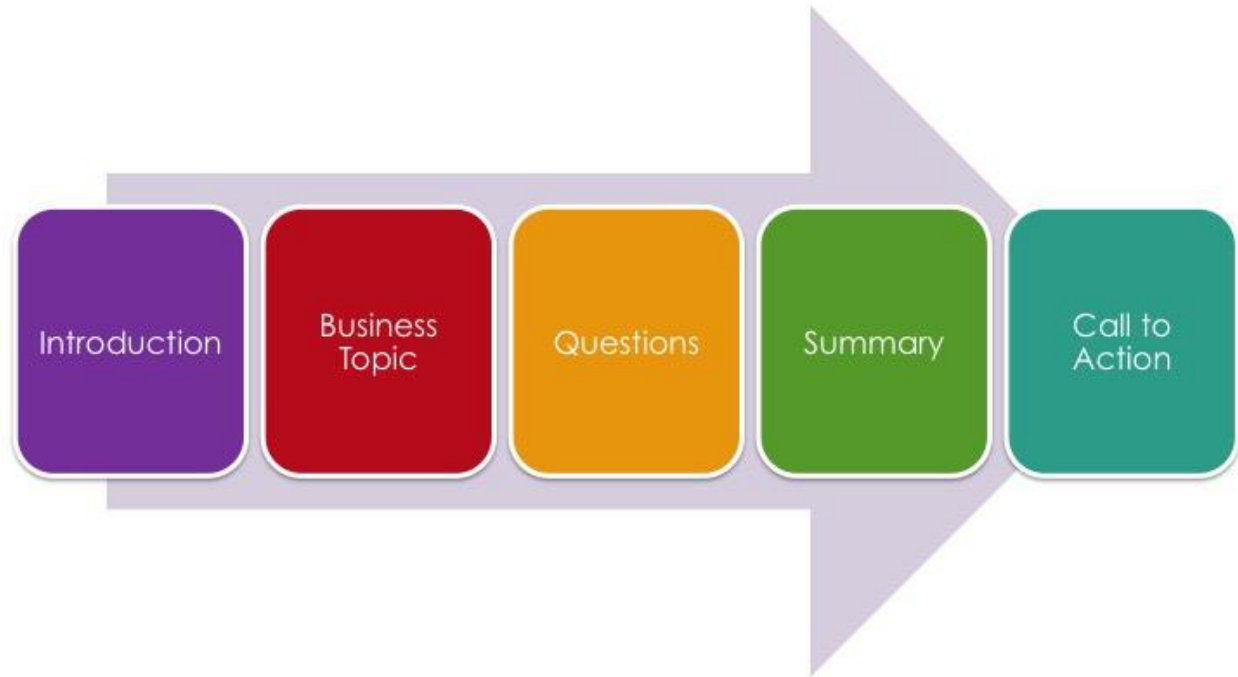
Don't forget to actually ask to close the sale. In many sales presentations, the salesperson forgets to come out and ask for this, instead going straight to a call to action. Although the call to action is important in a sales presentation, you need to explicitly ask to close the sale. Some people struggle with this because it feels unnatural. Come up with a way to do this that feels natural for you. For example, if the sale is going well and you feel that the prospect is ready to buy, you can say something like, "So, how about if we set this up now?"

Notes

Take notes during the presentation and meeting when you're not the one talking. If you're using PowerPoint, have a pen and paper hand to jot down notes. Write down any information that may be important now or in the future. This helps you keep track of important information and also shows the prospect that you care about what they're saying.

Planning Your Sales Presentation

A sales presentation includes the following elements:



Introduction: The goal of the introduction is to build rapport. This should be a back and forth dialogue. Has the prospect been in the news lately? Do you know any people in common? Do you have common interests like sports or music? Take a little time to build rapport. This is important but it shouldn't take a great deal of time.

Business Topic: This is the main part of your presentation. It shows the client how you can uniquely solve the particular problem they are suffering from. You should plan to have three major selling points about the product or service that will help them solve their problem.

Questions: Make sure there is sufficient time to talk. You should have a section in your presentation where you ask questions to help you better understand your prospect's needs, and to validate and confirm your understanding.

You should deliberately script your questions ahead of time but also plan to improvise when you learn new information. Your questions should be open-ended rather than "yes or no" questions.

Don't be afraid to ask direct questions about motivation to buy, their process of buying, budget, decision-making process, and other things you need to know. Small business owners are often afraid to ask questions that are so direct, but you need this information if they're willing to give it.

Using the coaching example, you might ask, "What's your annual training budget for your sales staff? What types of ROI are you getting out of that training? What's the typical turnaround time for buying decisions?" This is how you get straight to the heart of what you need to know in order to make the sale.

Summary: Near the end of the presentation, summarize the key points of the presentation. These should be the points you consider most important to your prospect in terms of how your product or service uniquely solves their problem.

Call to Action: Have a clear call to action to help you close the sale or move closer to closing the sale.

Learning Activity:

1. Use the template in the workbook to build a sales presentation for one of your products or services.
2. Practice - Videotape yourself alone or with a trusted friend. Make it as realistic as possible. Given that you won't actually be in front of a prospect, you can also involve a friend, colleague, spouse, or some other trusted person. If you would normally stand during your presentation, then be sure to record yourself standing rather than sitting. After recording, watch yourself and use the rubric in the workbook to make notes. You can also have your friend take notes and provide feedback.
3. What surprised you about your recording? What were your strongest areas? What are areas that you need to work on?

Conclusion and Next Steps

How you communicate with your clients can take your business from good to great. It's essential that you can give smooth, confident presentations with all of the proper planning to make them effective. You can use the communication strategies you learned and practiced through this course in a variety of situations to help your business.

Practice is the key ingredient. As you go about mastering the skills in this course and working through the activities, things may be difficult the first time. Few people are excellent public speakers or presenters naturally. Everyone gets there by practicing and preparing. Rehearse your presentations, elevator speeches, questions and responses to objections, and then rehearse them more.

In this course, you:

- Learned public speaking best practices and how to apply them to any communication situation
- Built a compelling elevator speech that you can use to quickly introduce yourself and your company
- Created an engaging presentation to position a particular viewpoint or opinion
- Learned and implemented the best practices for improving your sales presentations

While all of the material of this course is still fresh in your mind, book some sales calls with prospects. Look for venues where you can perform your engaging presentation. Look for local chapters of toastmasters, upcoming conferences, and opportunities to speak at colleges or universities.

Also, look for opportunities in your everyday life where you can practice your elevator speech. Start trying it on with people you meet at coffee shops, restaurants, parties, networking events, and anywhere else possible. Tweak your elevator speech to discover what really works and what doesn't.

Get yourself out there and start sharing with the world what you have to offer.

Learning Activity:

1. Review your notes from the learning activities in this course and write down your next steps. Include the following, where relevant for you, and attach deadlines to your 'to do's':
 - a. If you have not already done so, record or work with a friend to get feedback on your presentations.
 - b. Schedule into your calendar some time to put yourself at places where you can refine your elevator speech.
 - c. Research and find some opportunities for you to present your engaging presentation at an upcoming event.
 - d. Schedule some sales presentations with prospects.