

Presentation Techniques

There are three stages to a presentation: The Introduction; The Information; and The Close.

The Introduction

Here you need to set the scene, establish expectations, gain credibility, catch the audience's attention, make them listen and clearly point out your conclusion.


Scene setting is vitally important at the start of the presentation. The audience may have preconceived ideas about your subject that may be false; they may expect you to cover points that are not relevant; they may not have received any background information or reasons for the presentation. You need to set the presentation in its proper context.

You will need to gain credibility by explaining to them exactly why you or your organisation is giving the presentation. Are you the expert? Are you the representative from your organisation? Have you been trained in the topics covered within this toolkit? Have you first hand experience in dealing with some of the topics?

At the start of your presentation you need to clarify the audience's expectations. How long are you going to take? Will they have the opportunity to ask questions? Is anyone else involved in the presentation? Will they need to take notes or do you have hand-outs and leaflets?

Active listening is vital if the audience is going to remember your messages – they will actively listen if they are waiting for information they feel they need if they are hearing information which directly applies to them. A cold recital of facts, with no attempt to interpret them for the audience, will be neither memorable nor interesting.

Make sure you are familiar with the information contained within each presentation and try when appropriate to ask the audience questions in order to keep them engaged.

Located within the teaching notes are questions that you may wish to ask the audience. These are marked by the symbol 

The Information

There is a golden rule here: don't go into so much detail that you overload the audience; we are not very good at remembering everything that we hear. By contrast, we remember a great deal more of what we see or feel, and most by what we actually do or discuss. As far as possible, visually illustrate the more important details of your presentation.

The presentations contained within this toolkit are designed to make the information easy to understand and to avoid information overload by keeping the facts to a minimum. It is recommended that you consider using various methods to deliver information rather than simply relying on the presentations.

Don't go into areas you feel less confident in – refer the group to other organisations, professionals or resources.

All presentations should encourage questions and discussion because that is when the audience will have a chance to articulate what they have learnt in the presentation.

The Close

A weak ending can undo all the good of the presentation. The close should round off the facts you have presented with a summary that reinforces the key points that have been made.