

Business Presentations : Get To The Point

by Graham Davies

You must get to the point quickly.

In the soundbite 90's, audiences are turned off by platitudinous pleasantries

("Before I start my presentation, I would first of all like to say what a great privilege it is for me to etc.).

You have to grab their attention.

If you are going to grab - and keep their attention, you must prepare precisely using a step-by-step approach.

1. Analyse The Audience

Find out:-

- * The social mix and gender split
- * What they know about your subject
- * What they need to know

This is your starting point.

2. Establish a Destination

- * What do you want the audience to understand or feel at the end of your presentation?
- * What do you want them to know?
 - Define this precisely
- * Write it out in full for your own reference. e.g. "At the end of my presentation I want them to believe that Big Borka golf clubs are the best buy for them."

3. Define The Message

- * The message is the reason that your audience should want to travel to your destination.
- * More time and effort should be spent on refining the message than on any other part of the preparation process.
- * It should tell the audience what is in it for them and relate to their needs.
- * You should be able to write out the message as a single, precise sentence.

e.g. "Big Borka golf clubs are the best clubs for you because they allow you to hit the longest possible distance at the lowest possible price." OR "We should stop using Avocado Computers immediately."

If you only had ten seconds in which to make your presentation, the message is what you would say. Your audience must remember the message when they walk out of the door.

- * Write the message out in full.
- * Pin it on the wall in front of you.
- * Never forget it.

If you do not have a clear message, you cannot create a clear presentation.

5. Define The Key Elements

- * Decide what facts you have that support the message.
- * Is the information relevant and necessary? - Stick to the point.
- * Decide which are your 3 (OK maybe 5) most important elements.
- * Ruthlessly edit any irrelevance.

6. Create An Opening

- * Grab them. Surprise them.

"70% of the world's resources are used by 30% of the world's population. There is plenty to go around; the problem is unfair distribution."

- * Get straight to the point: State your message right after the opener. Then include the key elements.

7. Create A Closer

- * Summarise your key elements and re-state your message.

".....and so for reasons of cost, efficiency and environmental damage, we cannot allow the situation to continue. We must find an alternative to Avocado Computers immediately."

8. Practise

- * Once the script is prepared In full, practise the presentation until you are totally familiar with it.

Go through each of the 8 steps.

Remember - no presentation has ever failed because of too much preparation.