

PRESENTATION SKILLS

How many times have you had to get up in front of a group of people that you may not know and talk about something you probably know even less on knowing all eyes are on you and you are being judged on your performance???

Presentation skills are important throughout our career – it may be that you are at college having to do group presentations or you are working giving regular talks/presentations to clients and/or colleagues. In addition, having to give presentations as part of an interview for a new job are becoming increasingly popular as part of the selection process used by organisations.

It can be daunting having to make presentations, particularly if you have been given a specific time frame – ten minutes for some presentations is not a great deal of time! However, with preparation, the art of giving presentations on a regular basis can be made easier.

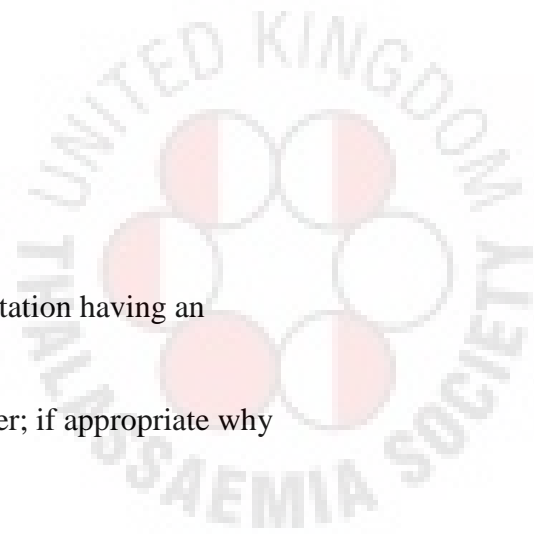
Some tips which may help you through the process:

Research and background preparation:

- Think about what the topic is that you have been given. What are you trying to achieve ie what is the aim?
- Who will be in the audience? Can you target your presentation to meet their needs and interests?
- Research and brainstorm all the points you want to get across so that you can prioritise and decide what is more important.
- Think about how much time you will speak for and how much you will allow for questions at the end

Panning/organising the presentation

- Think about how you will be delivering the presentation – will you have media equipment such as the use of powerpoint or overhead projectors
- Will you give a copy of the presentation to the audience to read whilst you deliver or will you give out a copy at the end?
- Will you have speaker notes on cards for yourself?



Delivering the Presentation

- To help you plan and deliver, think about your presentation having an introduction, a middle and a conclusion

Introduction section –

- Introduce yourself and what the presentation will cover; if appropriate why this is relevant

Middle –

- These are your main points and any key phrases you want to use with any examples or even anecdotes to explain your key messages.

Conclusion –

- This is an opportunity for you to summarise and reiterate your main points referring back to the introduction to make sure you have covered your aims
- Ask if there are questions and don't forget to thank the audience!!

Coping Strategies:

- Always smile even if you do not feel confident. Body language often can be more revealing than words.
- Use a clear voice and make sure that you are speaking loud enough for all to hear but not so as you have to shout. Think about the tone you are using and vary it according to the importance of the words you are using (but not too much!!)
- Eye contact is vital with all your audience during the presentation time. Don't keep your vision on just one person
- If you are using the computer, make sure you have practiced using the equipment first
- Make sure you do not crowd your slides with too many words if using them
- Have key words on the slides but you can elaborate the point when speaking about it. You want the audience to listen to you and not get lost in trying to read the slide.
- Practice, practice and practice – get a friend to listen to you or even stand in front of the mirror while you practice – you will be able to see your mannerisms that you are using. Don't rush the presentation – use pauses to break up the presentation where appropriate
- Try and see if you can get to the room you are using at least twenty minutes before to set up and practice if you need to

Finally:

This is your chance to make an impact – believe in yourself and your ability to deliver in a confident manner and you will start to enjoy making presentations – you have the audiences’ undivided attention for that short space of time – make the most of it!!!

