Lecture: Professional Presentations
Speaker: Dipl.-Psych. Holger Walther

In the three-hour lecture you will be familiarized with a basic model of a lecture/presentation which will enable you to design presentations of any type in a professional manner. Besides, you will be acquainted with the use of media that can appropriately support what is being said.

This script has been designed to help you while listening to the lecture. You are invited to add your own notes, for which ample free space between the lines has been left.

Reference literature:

Reden im Studium
Pabst-Weinschenk, Marita
Frankfurt a.M.: Cornelsen Scriptor, 1995
€ 14.80

Präsentation – Ziele, Konzeption, Durchführung
Arbeitshefte Führungspsychologie, Volume 21
Montamedi, Susanne
Heidelberg: Sauer-Verlag, 1993
€ 11.80

1. What is a Presentation?

Definition

Typically, a presentation is a short lecture designed to present research results for discussion or for decision making.

Two Principles

1. A lecture is not a monologue (even though there is only one speaker). It is rather a kind of dialogue which attempts to involve the listeners' thinking.
2. Comprehensibility is a priority: simple and short sentences rather than written language should be used. It should be clearly structured, coherent and stimulating.

2. Presentation is Communication

- WHO (function, role)
- says WHAT (message, content)
- to WHOM (recipients)
- in WHICH WAY (verbally/nonverbally: signs, signals)
- by which MEDIUM (sense: e.g. visually); (modality: e.g. colourful; handouts)
- with which INTENTION
- with which EFFECT.

3. Basic Model of a Presentation / Lecture

3.1. Preparation

3.1.1. WHO is speaking?

Make yourself aware of the function and the role in which you are speaking and the implications of it, e.g. the level and the purpose of the presentation, your greater experience or expertise.

Obviously, it makes a difference whether you are speaking as a student in a seminar or as a politician on TV.

3.1.2. TO WHOM am I speaking? (audience orientation)

Make yourself aware whom you are speaking to. Why does the audience want to listen to you?

1. Who are the people in my audience ? (names, departments, age, make-up)
2. What scope of action does the audience have? (issues of hierarchy, responsibility, decision making competencies)
3. What does my audience want? (attitudes, views, values, targets)
4. What does my audience know? (professional background, information needs, expertise, previous experience)
5. What are my audience's interests? (professional background, specialisms, expectations)
6. Who are the decision makers in my audience?

3.1.3. What is the AIM of the presentation?

Formulate it, and then ask:

What is the purpose of the presentation?

Which doubts must be dispelled?

What kind of action do I want the audience to take?

What kind of impression do I want to convey?

Which spontaneous emotions do I want to arouse?

Which arguments can support my reasoning?

3.2. Working on the Content

3.3. Structure of the Presentation

3.3.1. Opening - Preliminaries

Welcome, introduce yourself (if necessary), give the reason of meeting, outline the problem

3.3.2. The value for the audience

Try to satisfy their actual needs by giving an overview of the presentation, arousing interest or curiosity (Does it make sense to listen?), attracting attention (Oh, that sounds interesting!)

Tips:

- "You have come a long way to listen to ..."
- "In the course of my lecture I am going to show you a picture / photo from which you can see..."
- "Last time we heard of... Today I want to..."
- "I (wholeheartedly) agree with Mr/Ms..."
- "Perhaps you have just asked yourself..."

3.3.3. Introduction into the subject

Formulate the general idea, a statement of great significance, key aspects, the theory, research results with the relevant aspects. The audience's interest / curiosity is to be intensified; they may even be surprised.

Tips:

- "Do you happen to know...?"
- "What is actually understood by...?"
- Use quotations, metaphors, key sentences and phrases, images and pictures, make points.
- Wrong: Explaining what will not be said and how complicated work was. - Come to the point straight away instead.

3.3.4. Argumentation

Elaborate and consolidate what has been said before. Structure, facts and results are to be presented. The questions you as the speaker raised yourself are being answered in this part.

Tips:

- Don't just name facts, results, etc. but make them, for example, the answer to a rhetorical question.
- Illustrate facts, results, etc. by way of example (because examples are comprehensible and accessible to everybody and induce an internal image).
- Constantly give orientation: indicate at which stage of the presentation you are ("We now come to point 3.").

3.3.5. Closing a presentation

Successful closings are summaries, conclusions, restating initial theses, giving a final example as a piece of evidence, deriving a compromise from what has been said, calling for action, telling a joke, thanking the audience.

4. Use of Media

Those parts of the content that you consider to be particularly important are to be illustrated or visualized. They will be kept better, if a multitude of senses are addressed (vision, emotions, even smelling and tasting). This has to be done simultaneously. Thus, lecturing is to be paralleled by visualization.

Tip:
Use the media with a specific aim. Simple things do not need to be visualized.

In the course of this lecture you will have sufficient time to gather information on the various media. The media, their advantages and disadvantages and some technical information are shown on a number of posters.

- **the (black)board**
- **the overhead projector**
- **the pin board**
- **the flip chart**
- **the slide projector**
- **tapes** / **videos** /**films**
- **handouts**
- **posters**
- **powerpoint presentations**
- **models** / **experiments** / **objects**

5. Nonverbal Behaviour

Information can be put across by nonverbal behaviour just as well as by verbal communication. More often than not the mere content is not particularly persuasive, which is why the audience may rely on other aspects of interaction such as:

- **posture (body language)**
- **eye contact**
- **gestures**
- **facial expression (mimics)**
- **volume and tone of voice**
- **physical contact (haptics)**
- **breaks**
- **paralinguistic utterances ("mh")**
- **proxemic signals (the use of distance)**
- **material signals (appearance, equipment)**