

GIVING A TALK

Part of your job may be to talk to groups of visitors or potential customers, or to schools or community groups.

Public speaking is a valuable skill. As with most of the skills you use in your job, the more often you do it the better you will be.

Many people are nervous about talking in front of an audience, and try to avoid it as much as possible. The best way to build up your confidence is through working through these three steps:

- Preparation
- Practice
- Presentation

PREPARATION

Work out what you have to do, and why. Preparation means 'doing your homework'. Before you even start to prepare your talk, find out about:

The audience

- How many people will you be talking to?
- Where from?
- What ages are they?
- Do they understand English well?
- Do they know much about your job/ the topic already?

The subject

- How long are you expected to talk for?
- What about?
- What is the reason for your talk?

The setting

- Where will it take place (outdoors/indoors)?
- What distractions might there be (noise, other people around and so on)?
- Will you be able to use visual aids such as slides, photos, maps, a whiteboard and so on

Plan the structure

Once you know who you will be talking to, for how long and what about, you can start to plan your actual presentation.

Your presentation should have:

- A brief **welcome** to the people there, introducing yourself as the speaker and your topic
- An **introduction** that explains what you will be talking about, in what order



- The **'body'** of the talk with all the main information you want to give your audience
- A **summary** at the end that briefly goes over what you have covered and asking for questions

To give an interesting talk, make sure:

- You are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about your topic (you may have to do some research to make sure you get all the facts right)
- It has a clear focus that the audience can understand
- There is a logical progression through the main points (a beginning, a middle and an end)
- You know what message or information you want your audience to take away with them

Write it down

If you have not done many talks before, write down everything you want to say so you can practise it. If you are more confident you might just make notes or write down key words on small pieces of card to prompt you.

Make sure:

- You will be able to cover all the points you want to make in the time available
- The language is suitable for the age and type of audience.

Think about whether you can use any visual aids such as slides, photos, maps or samples to pass around to help you.



PRACTICE

Once you have put together what you want to say in your talk, it's time to practise, practise, practise.

Practising your talk will help you to:

- Check the length to make sure it fits the time you have been given
- Check that it sounds interesting and is in the right order
- Make sure you have covered all the points that you have mentioned in your introduction
- Try out different tones of voice, the volume and the speed that you talk at
- Gain confidence in speaking out loud and listening to your own voice.

Ask a friend or family member if they can pretend to be your audience and give you some feedback. If no-one else is available, stand in front of a mirror and practise.

If you will be using visual aids, practise with them too.

Try not to just read your notes. The more you practise the more you will be able to manage without them.

If you still feel that you will need notes on the day, get them down to just a few key words on cards to prompt you. Use big print that you can read easily.

You need to be looking at your audience, not at your notes, when you give your talk, so the more you practise and build up your confidence the better you will be on the day.

Whaia te iti kahurangi ki te tuahu koe me he maunga teitei
Aim for the highest cloud so that if you miss it, you will hit a lofty mountain



PRESENTATION

The best talk is a well-prepared one. This means practising beforehand and then following these tips on the day:

- Be early – make sure the room/space is set up the way you would like it to be
- Have everything you need – this means your notes, any visual aids and anything else you may need (your glasses or contact lenses if you need them, a glass of water and so on)
- Wait until everyone is ready and quiet before you start
- Take a deep breath to calm yourself if you feel nervous
- Stand comfortably but don't slouch – your voice will come out more strongly if you stand up straight
- Speak clearly and slowly. Start by introducing yourself and your topic
- Look people in the eye – focus on one or two people and check back from time to time to see that they still look interested
- Smile and look interested – if you look bored or nervous your audience might start to feel the same way
- Don't fiddle
- Pause between each section or main point so the audience has time to 'digest' it
- If you have handouts, keep them until the end so people don't read them while you are still talking
- Enjoy yourself and take pride in what you can do!



KEY POINTS

- There are three key steps to giving a successful talk: Preparation, practice and presentation
- Find out: Who will I be talking to? What about? Why? Where? For how long?
- A good talk includes: A welcome; an introduction; the 'body'; a summary
- Develop a logical structure so the audience understands where you are going
- Make notes but practise a lot so you only need brief 'prompts'
- Ask a friend, family member or workmate to be your 'pretend' audience, and use their feedback to polish up your talk and your presentation skills
- Use good visual aids to illustrate your talk
- Arrive early, check that you have everything and take a deep breath before you start
- Make eye contact with your audience and 'check in' with them often
- Enjoy yourself! The more talks you give, the better and more confident you will become

WORDS TO REMEMBER

- Confidence** *Self-belief, comfort with oneself*
- Digest** *Take in, take on board, absorb*
- Distraction** *Interruption, disturbance*
- Enthusiastic** *Keen, excited, passionate*
- Feedback** *Opinion, advice, comment on something*
- Focus** *Theme, central point*
- Knowledgeable** *Well-informed, clued up*
- Logical** *Sensible, commonsense*
- Prompt** *Reminder, something to help you remember*
- Progression** *Steps, sequence*
- Structure** *Organisation, make-up, construction*
- Summary** *Summing up, outline, precis*
- Visual aid** *Diagram, illustration, chart*
- Volume** *Loudness*

Think of a talk you have been to recently. What did you think made it work or not work for you? Based on what you saw and listened to, what would you do or not do if you had to give a talk or present some information to a group of people at work?



This fact sheet will be useful when you are being assessed for **Unit Standard 1307** *Speak to a specified audience in a predictable situation* (Level 3, 3 credits) or any time you have to give a talk, at work or in a social situation.

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