

**Train the Trainer**

**PRESENTATION TIPS**

**FORWARD**

Some of you may have a good deal of experience conducting presentations and training sessions; some may have little or none. The following “Presentation Tips” will prove useful for those who wish to improve their techniques, and even more useful for those who are just getting the hang of it. All of the tips can be applied to your current duties conducting FOI training, and the informative advice can be applied to any form of presentation or training session.

Presentations can range from informal “talks” at staff meetings, to presenting lengthy, complex, critical information to an audience in an auditorium. The principles of preparing for and delivering a good presentation are essentially the same in all cases.

To many, the thought of delivering a presentation to a group of people is nothing short of fearful. Peter Urs Bender humorously remarked that the following are the worst human fears, in order of magnitude:

1. speaking in front of a group
2. dying
3. speaking and dying in front of a group

Don’t fret. Everyone is capable of developing presentation skills - it just takes practice.

The following presentation tips will help you create, organize and deliver your presentation with professionalism and ease.



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### **THE VERY BEGINNING**

You've been asked to give a presentation. Get organized early and ask some important questions such as the following:

#### **Who**

- What is the name and purpose of the branch or organization that is to receive the presentation?
- Who is the Program Manager? What is his/her phone number?
- How many participants will there be?
- Is attendance mandatory?
- What is the male/female ratio?
- How do the participants usually dress at such an event?

#### **When**

- What is the date of the presentation?
- What time of day is the presentation?

#### **Where**

- Where is the location of the presentation?
- Where is it, exactly?

#### **Facilities**

- Is size and seating configuration adequate?
- Can the room be darkened for slides or overheads?
- What equipment is available? (i.e. overhead projector, flip chart and chart paper, white board, table-top lectern, microphone, etc.)
- What is behind the speaker's position - windows, doors, wall?
- If there are any problems with the sound/audiovisual equipment during the presentation, who will be the trouble shooter?



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### **What**

- What exactly is the agenda for this event?
- What is the specific subject matter being requested?
- What does the person making the request want to achieve through this presentation?
- Are there any political hot spots for the event that you need to know about?

### **FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE**

What will your audience expect to gain from your presentation? Will your presentation satisfy a need, solve a problem or provide information?

Your audience may impact the purpose for your presentation and guide you in developing your content. Generally, there are three different purposes to making a presentation. The purpose might be to inform, persuade or to entertain. Sometimes, presentations may include a combination of informing, persuading as well as entertaining, for example:

General Purpose	Specific Purpose
Inform	At the end of this presentation, the audience will have a greater understanding of the FOI Act and it's impact on their work
Persuade	At the end of this presentation, the audience will comply with legislative requirements of the FOI Act.
Entertain	At the end of the presentation, the audience will be more receptive to all aspects of the FOI Act.

### **Main Ideas**

Your audience may also impact the content of your presentation. Ask yourself: “What do you want your audience to ‘walk away with’ or remember at the end of your presentation?”

Once you’ve asked yourself these questions, you can develop some main ideas for your presentation. Main ideas are general statements and are what people say when you ask them



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“What was the presentation about?”. They do not provide any detail. You should begin to refer to these, at least in your own mind, as “learning objectives.”

### **Supporting Ideas**

Details are important when developing back-up and support for your main ideas. For example, if one of your main ideas is “collection, use and disclosure of personal information”, you now need to add some detail to this main idea to explain and expand on the concept. One of your supporting ideas may be to describe the legislated requirements regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. A discussion around informational self-determination and fair Information practices may be applicable under this main idea as well as a discussion around the roles and responsibilities of staff who handle personal information. Other supporting ideas may include protection and retention of personal information. Finally, you may choose to conclude this main idea with one or more examples of situations where public bodies are authorized to collect, use and disclose personal information.



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### **PRESENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Once you have determined your main and supporting ideas, you now have the framework and a direction for your presentation. Now all you need to do is research your supporting ideas and put it all together in a structured and organized manner.

There must be a logical order and clear relationship among your ideas. People's ability to concentrate is limited. Research indicates that most people's attention span is about 10 to 15 minutes. This attention span drops rapidly when listening to a poorly organized presenter. Basically, you need to tell the audience what you are going to say, then you need to say it, and finally, you need to tell them what you said.

Try to structure your presentation into three sections:

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. tell them what you are going to say | Opening - 10% of time |
| 2. say it                              | Body - 80% of time    |
| 3. tell them what you said             | Closing - 10% of time |

Now you are ready for the presentation day.



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### **BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR PRESENTATION**

**Plan to arrive early (at least 30 minutes early), and before participants arrive, check the following:**

#### **ROOM SET-UP, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL**

The arrangement of the tables, chairs, equipment and lighting can impact the way your presentation will be received.

#### **Room Set-up**

How is the room set up? Does it look chaotic when you walk in? What needs to be done so that when people walk in the room they will know that this presentation will be professional? Will everyone be able to see you without straining? Does the seating arrangement allow for interaction? Especially if you have a large audience, people will rely on lip reading to support what is heard.

Semicircular seating arrangements are ideal for comfort, interaction and line of sight. An oval board room table is great to arrange seats around if participants need to take notes or work on course material. Desks and chairs can easily be rearranged into a semicircle. If the room has chairs and tables, try to move them slightly to create a u-shape. Advantages of semicircular seating arrangements are as follows:

- Everyone can see the presenter without straining necks or moving the body in awkward positions in order to see over heads or between bodies.
- Everyone can see everyone else. If discussion and interaction are desirable, then it is vital that people can interact easily and feed off of body language and facial expressions. Also, when someone is talking, the rest of the group won't have to strain to see, read lips or hear the person.
- The presenter can easily interact and make contact with everyone, even if it is just eye-contact (name cards or place cards for participants are an excellent idea).

Don't worry too much if there is nothing you can do about a poor seating arrangement. Try to move around more to maximize interaction with the audience and tell participants to choose a different seat when they come back to relieve straining muscles, eyes and necks.



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### **Equipment**

*How many overhead projectors does it take to ruin one presentation?  
Only one*

Is all the equipment there and working? Are you comfortable using the equipment? Do you know who the contact is if a light bulb burns out in the overhead projector? If you are going to be miked, do a sound check. Expect minor problems and be prepared for them.

**Create an atmosphere that is conducive to interaction - get rid of the podium and don't hide behind the lectern.**

People want to see your face, expressions and read your body language. It is impossible to connect with the audience or read the reactions to your presentation if you are “out of the picture”, hidden behind a lectern. As a presenter, you need to be aware of and take care of your audience's needs. Keep your audience awake by talking to them, asking them questions, moving towards them and making eye-contact. You need to be an integral part of your presentation, not just a narrator.

Have some type of visual for participants to look at as they enter the room and settle in which will inform them that your presentation will be different. For example, you could display:

- a funny quotation or interesting, thought-provoking saying on the overhead
- a nicely done color flip chart
- a fact and myth display

Visuals build anticipation to your presentation and hook people's interest from the very beginning.

Other ways to create an interactive, friendly atmosphere include:

- familiarizing yourself and the participants with safety/housekeeping items such as location of exits and washrooms.
- beginning the session **on time**.
- greeting people as they come in the room.
- engage in casual conversation (create allies) but don't start giving your presentation.
- demonstrate positive, open body language even if someone challenges you.
- introduce yourself to others if you are on a panel.
- introduce yourself to several members of the audience using a firm handshake.
- being available during breaks.



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### **con't.**

- Making eye-contact.
- Having participants fill out name tags so that you can call them by their name.
- Listening to the question and then answering - do not anticipate the rest of the question as this will lead to a confused answer for the person asking the question.
- Keeping distractions to a minimum, such as squeaky doors and flickering lights. If you arrive early enough, there is usually time to do something about it.
- IMAGINE SUCCESS.

## **Materials**

Be sure to have handouts as people love to take stuff away with them. Also make sure to assemble the lesson plan, handouts, overheads, etc. in the order you will use them.

## **Flipcharts**

### **Tips For Preparing Flipcharts**

- leave a blank top sheet (to keep charts hidden until you are ready to show them)
- use broad, felt-tipped markers
- use black, dark blue, purple, dark green - use red to highlight
- use the top area of your flipchart for greatest visibility
- title your flipcharts
- number your flipcharts
- no spelling mistakes
- leave lots of white space

### *Arranging The Environment For Flipcharts*

- remember that flipcharts are useful for up to about 30 people
- use a sturdy, heavy duty stand
- ensure your chart is secure on the stand
- set up flipchart as close to the audience as possible
- check visibility for audience ahead of time - will everyone be able to see your flipchart?



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### *Positioning Yourself When You Use Flipcharts*

- stand facing audience with flipchart at your side
- do not block audience's view of the flipchart
- do not turn your back

### *When You Use Flipcharts*

- introduce a flipchart before revealing it
- read the flipchart aloud before elaborating on points
- expose each flipchart only when it is needed
- be consistent with what you are saying and what is on flipchart - must be congruent
- do not do the "flipchart shuffle"
- when tearing off flipcharts, tear up and away, not down
- remember to have pre-ripped strips of masking tape if you will be posting flipchart sheets
- if a flipchart wrinkles when you turn it, take time to fix it, otherwise it can distract the audience
- store your flipchart in a map-tube print side out so paper curls properly when unwrapped

## **Overheads**

### **Tips for Creating and Using Overheads Effectively**

- 1 main idea per overhead; 6 words per line; 6 lines per overhead; 4 overhead per 10 minutes
- title your overheads
- number your overheads
- use consistent layout, color and readable font - e.g. 18 point
- no spelling mistakes
- leave lots of white space
- if overheads are 'busy' (contain a lot of information) use overlay technique to break up information
- use frames - "cheat" notes
- keep overheads in a binder, in order, for easy transport and retrieval



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### *Arranging The Environment When You Use Overheads*

- position screen in a corner to ensure audience can see you and the screen
- rule of 2 & 6 - no viewer should be closer than 2 times the height of the screen nor farther away than 6 times the height of the screen
- check in advance - projector plugged in; positioned properly; spare bulb; projector focused, etc.

### *Positioning Yourself When You Use Overheads*

- always face the audience
- maintain eye contact
- do not walk between projector and screen
- you and overhead are positioned properly if you can read it while facing the audience

### *When Using Your Overheads*

- introduce your overhead
- do not speak until you have eye contact with the audience
- while writing on or turning overheads stop speaking
- speak in a strong, clear voice to overcome projector noise
- use on/off switch to direct the audience's attention to you or the overhead
- never read your overhead to your audience - people can read much faster than you can speak and will be bored

### *Pointing/Masking When You Use Overheads*

- use a swizzle stick, or pencil/pen as a pointer
- leave pointer on item for a few seconds to draw attention to it
- use pointer to review to overhead information if you refer back to it
- avoid fast movement when pointing - movement is magnified on screen
- use "masking" to conceal/reveal information



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### *Reducing Glare When You Use Overheads*

- place overhead on screen before projector is turned on
- slide next overhead under current overhead
- turn projector off during questions from audience
- never leave the projector on without a overhead on the screen - “blinding light!”
- never leave an overhead on display that is inconsistent with your words or the questions/comments from audience as it is confusing to see one thing, yet hear another; turn it off or place paper over projector screen



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### **DURING THE PRESENTATION**

#### **Introductions**

Keep the introduction short. Give enough information to connect you with your audience. You may think that the introduction is the critical point that will make or break your presentation. It isn't. Virtually no-one remembers or absorbs what was said during the beginning of your presentation. Of course you don't want to do anything to offend the audience at this stage, or any stage, because once you've offended a listener you have lost them for the rest of the presentation. The importance of the introduction is to get the audience to settle in and focus their attention "on the stage".

During your introduction, you may want to include the following types of information:

- thank the person who introduced you
- thank the audience for coming to listen to the presentation
- establish your credibility - explain your experience, share your interest in the materials being presented but do not flaunt your credentials (this is especially important for a hostile group)
- present your agenda (the main ideas)
- set out any expectations from the audience (i.e. when will you answer questions - during or after presentation? Will there be any breaks, etc.)
- give a time frame for your presentation
- tell the audience what you hope they will gain, learn or understand at the end of your presentation - go over your learning objectives for the audience
- provide a transition statement to move into the body, e.g. "Now let me explain a little bit of history behind the FOI Act."

Do not come across as arrogant and having all the answers.

Once you have the audience's attention, you can ease into the body of your presentation.



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### **Body of the Presentation**

Follow through on presenting your agenda (main ideas) but add supporting ideas. It is important to stick to the same order of presenting material that you presented in the opening. Keep a copy of your agenda visible or occasionally refer to your agenda on an overhead transparency to let people know exactly where you are.

The structure of the body of your presentation could look like this...

- present main idea followed by supporting ideas
  - restate main idea
  - ask for questions
  - make transition statement
- present main idea followed by supporting ideas
  - restate main idea
  - ask for questions
  - transition statement
- present main idea followed by supporting ideas
  - etc...

### **Maintaining Interest**

The biggest challenge during the body of your presentation is thinking up ways to maintain the interest level. Even as adults our attention spans are short. Everyone will be daydreaming at some point in your presentation. The trick is to keep the attention for as long as possible and to get your audience back quickly if you lose them.

Try to include attention-getting techniques throughout your presentation to keep the attention of the audience and to ensure you have their attention when you want to make or stress a point.

Some attention-getting techniques to include:

- props
- posters
- pop quizzes
- stories and real-life examples
- humor
- voice inflection
- stage movement



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- asking questions to the audience
- reminding them of a post-test
- gesturing
- using a quotation
- audience participation

Both verbal and non-verbal communication is important to maintaining interest from your audience.

Be sure to articulate and pronounce sounds and words correctly. Poor articulation and mispronunciation can leave listeners feeling aggravated and confused.

## **Answering Questions**

The most important thing to remember to effectively answer a question is to **listen to your audience's questions and comments first before thinking of your response**. It is only by listening that you can provide an answer that will have meaning and shows the audience that you understand. You do not need to agree with the comment, but listening reflects your desire to **understand** the comment.

Most people prefer to ask a question when they think of it, rather than waiting until the end. The benefit of you answering questions throughout your presentation is it involves the audience, can provide clarification or eliminate misunderstandings that otherwise would continue in a person's mind throughout your presentation. Confusion can interfere with a person concentrating on the rest of your presentation.

### *Before You Answer A Question*

- make eye contact with the person
- focus on him/her when they are asking the question
- move towards the person
- repeat the question so the rest of the audience can hear it; makes the person feel significant and gives you thinking time
- rephrase the question if you are not clear what is being asked
- build rapport and say, "That's a good question." or, "I'm glad you asked that."



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### *Answering The Question*

- begin the answer by focusing on the person who asked it through eye contact
- then move away from the person both in eye contact and physical proximity (unless you are seated)
- make eye contact with the broad audience
- answer the question clearly and briefly
- finish up by making eye contact again with the person who asked the question
- if appropriate, ask, “Did I answer the question for you?” or “Does that help?”

## **Types Of Questions**

Most audiences are not hostile and when they ask questions, are genuinely interested in learning more or understanding a point.

When you ask, “Are there any questions?” give your audience some time. It usually takes a listener a moment to collect his/her thoughts, formulate a question, and for some listeners, the courage to ask the question.

One fear presenters have is asking the question, “Are there any questions?” and hearing a deafening silence! One method to overcome this is to say, “One question that people often ask is....” This approach will often relax your audience and encourages questions.

### *Techniques To Use When People Ask Questions*

- acknowledge the person and the question
- say, “that’s a good question/point”
- begin answer by making eye contact with questioner, address audience, then finish up with questioner
- welcome difficult questions (or at least appear to welcome them!)
- hold your ground and don’t back down with hostile questions
- answer the question
- if you don’t know the answer, say so
- keep your answers brief
- check back with the person to see if your response has answered their question



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<b>Types Of Questions</b>	<b>How To Respond</b>
A Person may:	
need clarification	give an example
ask a technical question	answer simply and briefly
ask an anticipatory question	give simple answer, or explain that you will be providing detail later in presentation
go on a tangent	be tactful and gear person back to topic
misunderstand	be tactful, take blame, correct misunderstanding
see drawbacks to content	be assertive, acknowledge drawback, then talk about upside which outweighs drawback
need convincing	give more supporting ideas, or revisit original supporting ideas
zinger - dilemma A or B	don't get boxed into the "dilemma corner", not an either/or situation, say so
zinger - picking a fight	don't fall into their trap, person wants to destroy your credibility, keep calm, firmly acknowledge differences, or find the part of the hostile question/comment that you can build on
zinger - question about someone else/area of responsibility	don't speak/respond for something outside your control or responsibility
zinger - set-up - "Are you satisfied with...? Then what about what happened..."	never admit perfection, always room for improvement, deflates zinger



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### **Rate of Delivery**

Pay attention to the rate in which you are speaking. Speaking too quickly makes it difficult to keep up, so people will stop listening. Speaking too slowly lulls people into inattention. You need to vary rate of delivery. Slow your rate when the words are difficult or express a complex idea, you are reading a quotation or generalization, or when the words deserve special attention. Speed up your rate when you are reading a list to make a point, but you do not want people to remember individual items.

### **Volume of Delivery**

Your voice should be loud enough for all listeners to hear you easily but not so loud that people are uncomfortable. Vary the volume to emphasize and to maintain and/or retain attention. A change in volume can signal that what is being said is important and can also recall wandering minds.

### **Pauses**

Pausing can be an effective tool to maintain attention. Not only does pausing give the presenter time to breath, glance at a note card or to think about how to express the next point or answer a question, it also gives listeners time to think about what was just said.

### **Body Language**

Body language helps you to connect with your audience as well as maintain listener's attention by providing movement and can provide emphasis for important points you want the audience to remember.

Eye contact and facial expressions help to build trust and rapport with your audience and demonstrates confidence. Look at your audience but don't stare. Look at one person or group of people, then slowly move your head to another person or group. Look at the person who asks a question, especially if it is a hostile person or a tough question. Smile when appropriate and relax your facial muscles.

Hand and body movement should be open and visible to the audience to convey honesty and openness. Find your 'own space' and return to it, if you move around. Let your hands drop naturally to your sides and use one or both hands for emphasis. Avoid crossing your arms.



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Stand straight with your weight evenly balanced and don't use the podium or table for support. Be sure to remove any change from your pockets to eliminate the temptation to play with coins.

### **Know Your Material**

Create a mental or written outline of what you would like to cover in your presentation. Memorize bits of your presentation so that you do not need to read from notes at all times. Having bits of your presentation memorized allows you to speak naturally with your audience and, in turn, your audience will be impressed. It is also much easier to practice bits of information than it is to memorize an entire presentation. Try to choose bits of information that will naturally lead into other parts of your presentation or bits that will trigger more information you would like to present. Once you've memorized these parts, all you will need to remember during your presentation is the first or a key word and the whole bit you memorized will come back to you. You can even jot down key words onto a cheat sheet or note page as a way of remembering the bits you have memorized. When you change a slide or overhead page, glance down onto your cheat sheet and no one will even know that you are using notes.

### **Learn to Control Stage Fright**

I don't think anyone has ever died from stage fright, but, I'm sure a lot of people would rather die than be on stage.

A few things to know about stage fright is that you never appear to the audience as nervous as you think you do and you probably know more about what you are presenting than anyone in your audience. You're the expert; that's why you've been asked to present. The other thing to remember about stage fright is that it usually goes away very quickly once you start your presentation. In essence, as soon as you get over your introduction, which likely no one will remember, you'll be feeling much better and more confident.

Some ways to reduce stage fright include:

- being extremely well prepared
- looking at the friendliest faces in the audience
- breathing deeply, evenly and slowly
- joining a public speaking club such as Toast Masters
- practicing with smaller groups
- anticipating hard and easy questions



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- practicing bits of your presentation so that you can say parts of your presentation no matter how nervous you are
- visualize and assume success
- focus on your message and not on what the audience may be thinking about you
- look at people directly in the eyes
- smile
- talk to people before the presentation
- ensure the equipment works before you begin

Remember, like everything else, the more you practice the better you get. Every presentation you do, you will be more comfortable until soon you can't imagine why you were so nervous.

## **Ending of Presentation**

Contrary to the introduction of your presentation, which, by this time, most of your audience has long forgotten, the closing may well be the most remembered part of your entire presentation. The closing, therefore, is the place to make an impression. Spend time selecting and practicing your closing so that it is motivational, thought-provoking, challenging or humorous. If you leave your audience laughing, thinking, excited, happy or applauding, there's a good chance that your audience will leave with an extremely positive impression about you. The closing can be as simple as a quotation or as touching a story as long as it's enough to have a lasting impression on the audience.

During the closing of your presentation, you may want to:

- let the audience know you are coming to the end of your presentation by giving "verbal cues" (I have given you an overview of the FOI Act. Some major points to remember are \*\*\*\*\*)
- state what you want your audience to do with this information - action required? acceptance required?
- thank the audience, organizers, etc...
- graciously accept applause - say "thank you."
- stay in vicinity in case participants want to ask any questions
- be accessible and open
- don't cut into any other speaker's time

***"No one ever lost credibility by being interesting"***

*Tom Antion*



*Information and Privacy Training Series - Conducting FOI Training Sessions*