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## UNIT 6 SALES PRESENTATION

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### Objectives

The objectives of the unit are to:

- define what is a presentation and describe types of sales presentations,
- describe the structure of a presentation,
- identify in detail each of the variables affecting effective presentation strategy and
- elaborate how to develop appropriate presentation skills.

### Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 What is a Presentation
- 6.3 Types of Sales Presentations
- 6.4 Typical Structure of a Presentation
  - 6.4.1 Opening or Introduction of a Presentation
  - 6.4.2 Body of Presentation
  - 6.4.3 Ending of Presentation
  - 6.4.4 Question and Answer Period,
- 6.5 Planning the Presentation Strategy
  - 6.5.1 Define the Purpose
  - 6.5.2 Analysing the Audience
  - 6.5.3 Developing Message
  - 6.5.4 Determination of Presentation Method
  - 6.5.5 Deciding the Presentation Media
- 6.6 Presentation Skills
  - 6.6.1 Personal Aspects
  - 6.6.2 Non-Verbal Behaviour
  - 6.6.3 Oral Delivery
- 6.7 Principles of Effective Presentation
- 6.8 Summary
- 6.9 Key Words
- 6.10 Self Assessment Questions
- 6.11 Further Readings

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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"You can have excellent content with good presentation technique and win the business. You can have good content with excellent presentation technique and win. But you may not have ever heard of a poor presentation skills and good or excellent contents winning anything".

Poor presentations are consistently losers irrespective of purpose or the business for which a presentation is made. We will draw some lessons from winning presentations and some from losers to help you to plan your business presentation successfully.

In our daily routine we speak more often than write. A majority of us still have not overcome the fear of a speaking to a group. Each one of us have stage-fright. It is a matter of degrees that it varies amongst individuals. Yet an oral presentation is an important part of the business routine and each one has to deal with such challenges successfully. There are industries in which sales presentations are the most important marketing tools. Pharmaceutical industry, information technology industry, advertising agencies, insurance sector are some examples of the same where success in business depends on the success in presentation.

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### 6.2 WHAT IS A PRESENTATION

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A presentation is a commitment by the presenter to help the audience to do something for solving a problem. An interesting thing to note is that in a presentation commitments are made by the presenter and the audiences are making judgement, simultaneously. The presenter advocates and audience evaluate, to render a verdict. In terms of content and structure, presentations and speeches have a good deal in common with formal reports - many of them are oral version of a written document.



## 6.3 TYPES OF SALES PRESENTATIONS

Typically, all sales people use one of the following types of sales presentations.

### **Canned Presentation**

Canned presentations are those presentations where text of the presentation is carefully worded, tested and finally written down. Each sales person is expected to memorise it and strictly follow the contents in the defined order, while making a presentation.

This presentation method is most commonly used in non-technical product selling, like, Pharmaceuticals, telephone selling, door to door selling, etc.

The specific advantages of this technique are that one can finish the presentation in a short-time and still have a successful close. The other advantage of this method is that it requires lesser time in training the field sales personnel.

The disadvantage of such technique is that the prospect has limited participation. He might view it, as a high pressure selling and defer taking a purchase decision.

### **Planned Presentation**

It is, no doubt carefully planned and organised but still it has a personal touch of the individual making the presentation. In this method, the training department provides just a format and the individual sales person then writes explanations, descriptions and illustrations.

The advantage of this presentation method is that it appears more conversational and less formal, as the sales person is using his own wordings. As a result, in this presentation method the prospect also gets involved and his doubts and questions can be carefully handled.

### **Audio-Visual Presentation**

For such presentation the sales persons heavily depend on the AV aids. These aids range from charts, slides, video films, prototypes, computer based presentations to the use of actual product. In advertising industry, computer software industry, such presentation methods are used. In these presentations the speaker or the sales person takes the back seat and the prospect's attention remains centred around the AV aids.

Such aids are typically used, not only to gain the attention but in the absence of these it might be difficult to explain or demonstrate.

Take for example, in door-to-door selling of vacuum-cleaners or photocopying machines, where the actual product is used as an integral or central 'character' of the presentation. In the absence of which the sales person might find it difficult to sell.

### **Problem Solving Presentation**

This is a two-step presentation method. The first stage is to study the individual prospect's needs and the second is suggesting a proposition. Thus helping the prospect to solve the problem. Such method is commonly used in insurance sector where the insurance agent asks the prospect about the requirements and accordingly, he proposes a specific policy, its advantages and benefits.

Similar methods are also used in management consultancy assignments relating to all functions or high-tech customised products.

Having understood the various types of presentation methods being following in different product categories, we appreciate the relevance of it in the sales job. Let us now systematically discuss the structure of a typical presentation, presentation strategy and the skills required at the end of each speaker.



## 6.4 TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF A PRESENTATION

It is a problem for a person to structure the presentation appropriately so as to clearly decide from where to start and where to end. A presentation has four parts: opening, body, closing and question and answer. It is suggested that in a presentation first, tell what you will tell, secondly, actually tell them and thirdly, tell the audience what you have told them.

### 6.4.1 Opening or Introduction of a Presentation

The opening of a presentation is very important. It is in the first a few minutes you gain or lose the audience. The major purpose of the introduction are:

- To catch the audience attention and arouse their interest
- To relate the speakers' purpose with the audience interest
- To build the focus for the contents

Although these points appear so simple, but spending say ten per cent time of your presentation on this phase of the presentation would help you considerably in providing clarity to your audience.

### 6.4.2 Body of Presentation

The body of the presentation should relate to the selected important points (3-4) you want to make. You want the structure of your presentation to be clear and you don't want to lose the audience's attention.

At Times, during your presentation you realise that you have started losing audience. From their body-language you are able to make out that they are not with you. Some of body positions suggesting their lack of interest are shown in figure 1

**Figure 1: Audience Lack of Interest Reflected in Their Body Language**



SECRETIVE GLANCE AT NEIGHBOUR'S WATCH  
- ASSUMES THAT IT WILL NOT  
BE NOTICED - SHY, SNEAKY ATTITUDE



PRETENDED YAWN  
ATTEMPT TO DISGUISE A LOOK AT  
WATCH



FIDDLING WITH WATCH OR MOVING HAND OVER  
WATCH FACE REVEALS PREOCCUPATION WITH TIME  
OR ANOTHER APPOINTMENT BUT RELUCTANCE TO  
OFFEND BY LOOKING BLATANTLY AT WATCH



OPENLY LOOKS AT WATCH  
UNCONCERNED ABOUT IMPACT OF ACTION  
ON OTHERS



These situations are, in fact, difficult to handle. Because, in such situations, there is no point in keeping the presentation continued. You have to adopt a strategy to gain their attention. Some of the suggestions for gaining audience attention are as follows:

- Emphasising structure and help the audience follow your presentation by summarising your remarks as you go along and by Emphasising the transition (links) from one idea to the next.
- Holding the audience's attention not only by relating the subject to the audience's needs or by using clear language but by introducing variety in your speech or presentation.
- You may pause for questions and comments as it shifts the audience from listening to participating.
- Visual aids can be used to provide clarification and stimulation.
- Variety in your tone and gestures will help in breaking the monotony of your voice.
- Consider the use of humour. Sometimes humour helps in steering through difficult situations.

It is interesting to observe that when you are going deeper into the subject, the audience start drifting away from you. It is rather difficult to retain the audience attention through-out the presentation, unless you make deliberate efforts. The above stated points are some of the suggestions which can help you in retaining your audience or customers.

#### **6.4.3 Ending a Presentation**

As the audience's attention peaks at this stage it helps in further clarity. The final summing is not a place to introduce new ideas. It is suggested that you should begin your conclusions by telling listeners that you are about to finish. They will make one final effort to listen to you, intently. It is also suggested that during the concluding stage restate the next step. Some presentations require the audience to reach a decision or to take specific action. In these cases the summing must cover the specific action to occur and who would be responsible for doing what. Take for example, in a sales presentation sales person may be required to ensure on-time delivery and installation. Thereafter, the final installment of the payment will be made by the customer.

Your final words should round up the presentation. You want to leave the audience with a satisfied feeling, feeling of completeness. It is, therefore, important that you should always end on a positive note. Your final remarks should be enthusiastic and memorable.

Irrespective of whether you accept questions, as you go along or you defer them till the end, this phase of a presentation is most important. It is only helpful in providing better clarity but also in removing some misconceptions, if any, among your audience, about your product or company.

#### **6.4.4 Question and Answer Period**

Majority of the speakers avoid or discourage this period, without realising that providing opportunity for questions and answers, facilitates interactions. The thumb rule is to encourage questions throughout, in a smaller group and ask a large audience to defer questions until later. But do provide time for this stage as it shifts the audience from listening to participating.

#### **Some tips for Handling Questions:**

Given below are some categories of questions. You may decide in which category the question falls and then take action accordingly. Although it is not possible to remember these tips, but by practice you learn to handle critical situations:



Sr.No.	Type of Question	How to Handle
1.	Confused Question	Reformulate/Paraphrase the question. Ask the questioner to restate the question. It also gives you time to think and it can be followed by all. Be clear, a confused question can never be answered.
2.	Hostile Question	Don't be defensive or hostile. Rephrase it and unload emotions from it to understand the message.
3.	Two-part Question	Separate the parts and prioritise them before answering.
4.	Off Topic Question	Suggest the audience that you would not handle an off topic question.
5.	Can't Answer Question	Admit it and say that you would answer it later. You may not be authorised to take a decision about the question. Take time from the audience, check with your superior, and get-back. <sup>j</sup>

### Activity 1

Try to recollect a presentation you heard or you made yourself. Identify the contents of that presentation, under opening, body and closing. Check, if they were appropriately arranged or not.

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## 6.5 PLANNING THE PRESENTATION STRATEGY

Developing a strategy for delivering an oral message is just as crucial as developing a strategy for a written message. You have to put information in an easily understandable form. For maximum impact, therefore, it is important that one must define the purpose, analyse the audience, construct or develop the message with due estimate of time and appropriate length, decide on the most appropriate style and media for presentation. These are some of the important variables, which one has to keep in mind to develop an appropriate strategy for a presentation.

### 6.5.1 Define the Purpose

The first reason of failure in a presentation is not thinking through the purpose of the presentation and focussing it sharply. The amount of audience interaction varies from presentation to presentation, depending on the speaker's purpose. Often a speaker accomplishes more than one purpose simultaneously. The purpose of a presentation could vary from informing, persuading, exploring to changing behaviour/attitude etc. The specific purposes for a presentation are:

- To motivate: you do most of the talking and the audience essentially plays a passive role. You control the content of the message and the audience listen. Here the challenge is not to giving information but giving in a manner for a response.
- To inform or analyse: A group of people meet to hear the oral equivalent of a written report, then members of the audience offer comments or ask questions. Typically when a medical representative meets a doctor, the purpose is to inform about the new formulation his company has launched in the market.
- To persuade or collaborate: The most interaction occurs when you aim to persuade people to take a particular action or to collaborate with them to solve a problem or reach a decision. You generally begin to provide facts to increase the audience's understanding of the subject. You offer arguments in defence during discussion and



you invite audience to express their needs. In this audience interaction process, therefore you have little control, so one has to be flexible to adjust to an unexpected reaction. Most sales persons, involved in door-to-door selling (like, Eureka Forbes etc.) must have this purpose when they call on a household.

### 6.5.2 Analysing the Audience

Your choice of a strategy for composition your purpose must take into account those who will be attending it. The nature of the audience affects your strategy for achieving your purpose. You should know your audience and size them up in advance. You must look for characteristics that will affect your speech e.g., audience size, sex, age, education and knowledge. More specially, consider the followings in as much detail as possible.

- a) First consider the size and composition of the audience. A small group may be drawn into a decision making process. A homogeneous group benefits from a focussed presentation; a diverse group requires a more generalised approach. So be sure of the size of the group to which you are going to address.
- b) Consider likely reactions to your speech or presentation. The reactions to your speech could be hostile, receptive, indifferent. It is easy to talk to a receptive group. It is also possible to convert indifference into interest. It is quite challenging to convert hostility into support. But be clear that whether the audience care about the issues you will discuss and how much they already know about your subject.
- c) Finally, you need to take a cold hard look at their relationship with you. Do they already know you? Do they respect your judgement?

The answer to these points would help deciding the best way to organize your material.

#### Activity 2

Assume that you are working for an organisation in "Information Technology". You think that a particular medium size company might have the requirements of your company's hardware, software and maintenance services. What specific information you would require about this company to develop an appropriate sales presentation.

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### 6.5.3 Developing Message

A message should be carefully developed with a view to generating a desired response. It is, therefore, important that while developing messages one should define the main idea, construct an outline and estimate the appropriate length. A number of times a speaker is required to carefully choose the words, particularly while handling sensitive subjects. In such situations if you loose control on what you speak, your message will not be understood in the right spirit. It is, therefore, important that we define the main idea and construct a concrete outline around the identified idea. Then collect sufficient information which should be adequate for the available time you have to make the presentation.

At times, you collect a whole lot of information but you fail to put it together in an appropriate order. There are specific guidelines available to arrange the material in suitable order. It is suggested to follow the "Inverted Pyramid" structure. The suggestion is that you should start with the most important point and then go down to the least or, start with conclusion and go down to back-up information or start with a general statement and go down to specifics. Any one of these options would guide you in sequencing the information.

Although it appears simple but actually it is not. One has to decide and compartmentalise information in various groups, sequence them and then present.



Having decided the sequencing of information for developing an appropriate message, the next step is how to deliver it. Knowing your abilities, time available for preparation, audience size, etc., would influence your presentation method.

#### 6.5.4 Determination of Presentation Method

We may follow any of the following presentation methods depending on our own abilities, subject, purpose, etc.

1. Extemporaneous	Extemporaneous presentation is that which is prepared in advance and delivered afresh. The exact wordings are figured out, as the speaker goes along. It combines prior organisation and spontaneity. The audience prepare an outline, may write down, at best, full opening and closing sentences, and prepare visual aids to promote a set sequence of thoughts and contents.
2. Impromptu	Impromptu is that when you are given no time to think and organise. You never know when your superior will ask you for a two minute update on your field experiences of the previous day.
3. Memorising	Memorised is a presentation which is learnt by heart. If a link is broken while speaking the whole presentation gets affected. Typically in Pharma-selling canned presentation are used.
4. Reading	Reading is yet another method. In paper reading it is said that even the speaker looks at his notes for 35% of time and for the remaining 65% to the audience, it is still a paper-reading. In business this method is followed least.
5. Speaking from Notes	Speaking from notes is similar to the first method with a difference that the speaker has his points, with explanations written down and he speaks from the notes. To prepare these notes normally reference cards are used which the speaker can hold in one hand.

There is no hard and fast rule suggesting in which situation what method should be used. As a speaker it is up to you to decide which method is the best suited for you in the given situations. But you must practice it in advance before making a presentation.

#### 6.5.5 Deciding the Presentation Media

In an oral presentation which is an interactive medium, you can choose from a wide range of audio-visual (AV) materials. Here also you require carefully planning. A number of times, a presentation gets killed because of over emphasis on AV material. Always keep in mind while selecting any AV material that to what extent the selected media would help supplementing or reinforcing your message. You can select audio-visual material out of a large variety, ranging from, brochures, leaflets, slides, prototypes, actual product, audio tapes, video material, computer based aids, etc. Preparing or it is suggested to follow the following guidelines for selecting the best suited media:

- Do not cram information if you have too much to say, may be you should write it out, separately.
- Keep only relevant material as irrelevancies create distractions, and confusions.
- Organise and break up your material into small modules. Dis-organised compels the audience to concentrate on finding the structure of your presenting, rather than listening to you.
- Visualise your ideas as much as possible. Understanding, remembrance and clarity are the highest in the picture form.



- Use as few words as possible. Use only those points which the audience can understand, and don't write complete sentences.
- Make the pictures and letters bright enough to be visible from a distance. Make the letters bright enough and think enough to be read by all. Use light colour for background. Use dark or bright colours for pictures or letters to improve visibility.
- Make the sound material audible, pleasing in tone, varied and synchronised with visuals.
- Finally, before the presentation check particularly the audibility, risibility and readability of your AV material, if possible, in the actual place of presentation.

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## 6.6 PRESENTATION SKILLS

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All preparations on the 'structure' and 'strategy' of your presentation will have limited impact on your customers or audience if you don't have the right presentation skills. For example, it is very important that you should be able to have control on yourself. The moment you rise to speak you convey some signals to yourself, which might decide ultimately the success or failure of your presentation.

### 6.6.1 Personal Aspects

A logical step in preparing a presentation is to analyse yourself. You are an integral part of the message. You should seek following characteristics:

- i) Sincerity is vital. Project an image of sincerity by being sincere to yourself, to your subject and to your audiences.
- ii) Thoroughness - giving the listeners all they need.
- iii) Confidence in yourself is important so as to gain your audience's confidence. You must earn the confidence of your audiences. Project the right image, and talk in a strong, clear voice.
- iv) Friendliness - help your communication effort by creating the right environment.

Although these four points appear as four different things. But they do relate to each other. For example, if you are 'sincere' you would do a thorough preparation for your presentation. If you are 'thorough' you would feel confident. And if you are confident, you would be more open and friendly with your prospects or audiences. Therefore, these personal aspects should be well taken care.

### 6.6.2 Non-Verbal Behaviour

In any presentation non-verbal also plays a major role to supplement your message. Let us take up some typical examples to identify the variables elements of non verbal communication.

Although, it is not all that easy to suggest a definite set of 'Do's' about your body language during presentations, however, one can easily identify some 'Don'ts'. If you carefully notice the six body language shown in figure", you may realise that, typically, most speakers make some of these mistakes. Let us analyse each of the six situations in some detail, for better clarity about them.

- i) **Reader** is a person who doe snot make eye contact with the audience and only concerned about his material. Such speakers fail to establish any wave-length with the audience.
- ii) **Weakling** is a speaker who does not know the utility of Lactorn, which is fact, is the support for the speaker's materials and not the speaker himself.
- iii) **Gripper** is a speaker who does not make any attempt to supplement the message; rather he/she is only bothered about the verbal part of the message.



- iv) **Musician** is a speaker who does not adapt the gestures to the contents of the presentation but continuously relaying these, which does not relate. The suggestion is that one should bring some variation in the gestures.
- v) **Bon-Voyager** is a speaker who is overdoing the gestures; as a result the presentation becomes more theatrical. The suggestion is that in a typical business presentation the hands should not go above the shoulder level.
- vi) **Pacer** is a speaker who is, although relaxed but still not too sure about movements, postures and gestures. The suggestion is that think before hand, about how to stand, where stand, where to move to, how often to move, etc.

Figure 2: Non-Verbal in Presentations



READER



WEAKLING



GRIPPER



MUSICIAN



BON VOYAGER



PACER

The above illustrations must have given you some idea about the importance of non-verbal forms, including body language. Let us now examine each element of the non-verbal communication in the context of a presentation.

### Posture

Sagging shoulders, dropped head forward and sloppy casualness are indicative of depression, while standing upright with square shoulders and head held high are indicative of confidence. Your outward appearance mirrors your inner mood.



Posture may also be adopted to the size of the audience. An informative talk to a group of 50+ size would demand more formality, postural variety, particularly during transitions, to suggest a change in topic. An address to a group of 10-12 managers working under you, could be given while sitting in the edge of the chair. However, all formal presentations in advertising industry or I.T. industry are typically given while standing.

To avoid side-to-side rock some women even prefer low heels for longer duration presentations. Choice of a comfortable pair of shoes helps avoiding conveying a negative, allat-ease impressions because your shoes are bothering you. Giving thought to such minor details can help you in making a winning presentation.

### Movements

While presenting a topic, your physical movements can help you in the following ways:

- To hold attention: Lectern restricts movement. Rather than moving back and forth it is suggested to move left to right to gain attention of the audience, sitting on both sides. However, don't move continuously, like a caged lion.
- To get rid of nervousness: Movement helps decreasing stage fright in the beginning of your talk and the way you walk upto lectern or podium, tells something about you non-verbally to the audiences. Do you move with assurance, determination and enthusiasm? However, over-enthusiasm is also not productive.
- To suggest transitions: In writing, the cues for transition are headings, words, numerical hints. In speaking, the cues are physical moving yourself, a directional shift in the posture helps, the audience to follow the transition.
- To increase emphasis: In writing we underline, we use italics, capitals, exclamation etc. While in speaking a movement towards the audience, accompanied by a gesture, can imply your stressing a point.

The above discussion clearly suggests that plan your movements and don't just walk around when you make a presentation.

### Gestures

Gestures relate to movements of fingers, palm, wrist, arm, elbow and shoulder. Here are some examples of situations where gestures can help you.

1.	To emphasise	Clenched fist of one hand hitting the palm of the other hand emphasises the point you want to make.
2.	To point	The index finger calls attention of the audience
3.	To reject	Hand may go on a side in an act of rejection.
4.	To describe	You may communicate and describe everything through hands. Even an approximation of the verbal message through gestures is worthwhile than non.

From the last three illustrations, in figure lit can be inferred that planning of gestures, apart from postures, movements, are all important. If gestures are important, as you donot want to look like the `gripper' or the `weakling' there are some suggestions.

The first suggestion is that start involving only one hand but with variations. In the figure 3 options have been illustrated. Each gestures have specific meaning to convey. For example. `the air pulse' can be used when you are about to open the various issues relating to a problem, `the raised forefinger' can be used to emphasise, `the air grasp' can be used for summarisation, etc.



Figure 3: Gesture With One Hand



AIR HOLD



AIR GRASP



RAISD FOREFINGURE  
BATON



HAND PURSE



HAND BEND



AIR PUNCH

The second suggestion is to use both the hand to supplement your message. For example, 'the hand scissors' can be used when you are rejecting a point, 'the palm side' can be used to suggest the magnitude of the problem, 'the palm in front' can be used to explain. 'the palm up' for opening of the discussions and 'the palm down' for closing, as shown in figure 4

Figure 4: Gestures With Both Hands



HAND SCISSORS



HAND CHOP



PALM FRONT



PALM UP



PALM DOWN



PALM SIDE



## Eye Contract

It is suggested that you should have eye contact with your audience. Although, it is not possible to have eye contact with each and every person sitting amongst the audience but it is suggested that you may identify, select persons sitting spread across amongst the audience and establish eye contact with them. Don't look at one person all the time. Eye contact helps you in gaining confidence in yourself and it also conveys to the audience that whatever you are saying, you are very sure of it.

## Facial Expressions

It is said that rather having a "cheese" smile all the time, your facial expressions should be natural. It is also said that the smile which comes on your face actually originates in your brain on recollecting something pleasant. You can easily build rapport with your audience using good, natural pleasant facial expressions.

From the above illustrations let us now refer to some common observations, as shown in figure 5.

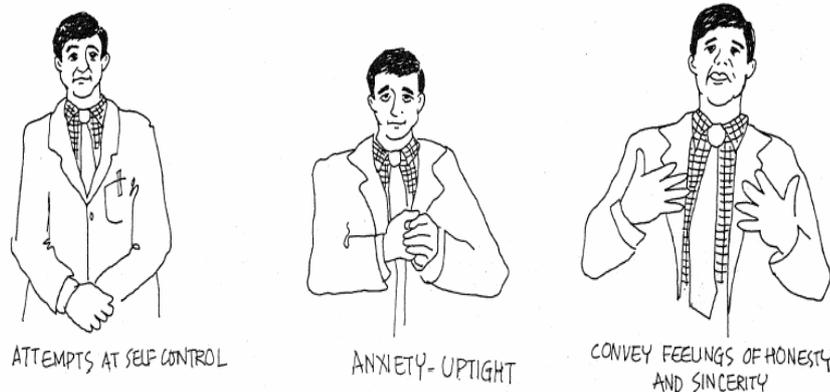
You must have experience yourself, if you are nervous, the gestures don't flow out of you and you try to bring control to yourself. Here the facial expression also reflects seriousness.

If you are confident your facial expressions correspond with the contents, gestures are natural and illustrative and you maintain a definite eye contact with your audience.

You might have also seen in a presentation that people respond differently to questions. There are some who reflect dominant attitude through their facial expressions, position of hands while others, with the same non-verbal communicate openness, and enthusiasm to respond.

With the help of these illustrations we have tried to explain to you that in any presentations, your body-language is an integral part of your presentation. We have also seen that how one can plan the body-language for the presentation. If you are able to incorporate only 20 percent of the above, you would still notice a marked improvement in your presentation skills. Therefore, each speaker must give due attention to his or her non-verbal, the way they give to the verbal contents.

Figure 5: Non-Verbal During Interactions With Audience





CONFIDENT, FRIENDLY

AGGRESSIVE, DOMINANT SMUG  
ATTITUDE

OPENNESS, ENTHUSIASM, READINESS

### 6.6.3 Oral Delivery

How confident you appear through your voice, how effective you become through the use of your voice, how successful you emerge, by speaking clearly and holding the attention of your audience are the issues related to the oral delivery. Every aspect of the oral delivery, i.e., rate, pitch, volume, vocal quality, etc., all are important.

- i) **Pitch:** It is highness or lowness of your voice. Voice too high or low can add to word value. A monotonous voice may drift the audience away from the speaker
- ii) **Rate:** It relates to the number of words released per minutes. The purpose is to synchronising speaking with listening pattern of the audience. The rate should also relate to the subject matter. Often you might have felt that if you speak a sentence at a higher rate you can create a better impact.
- iii) **Volume:** It relates to the loudness or softness of the voice and by contrast in volume one can give emphasis on the spoken words.
- iv) **Vocal Quality:** It is difficult to define it but we come across so many words to describe voice quality. Some of these words which describe voice quality are: Throaty, loud, vibrant, dynamic, moving, weak, strong, harsh, shrill, effeminative, gentle, clear, flexible vibrant, colourful, etc.
- v) **Pronunciation:** It should be your constant endeavour to find out the right pronunciations of each word. You may not get any advantage for correct pronunciation but you are certainly at in disadvantage when it is incorrect. You would be surprised to know, how carefully your audience are observing your mistakes, and on every mistake they drift away from you.

There are some suggestions to help you in enhancing your non-verbal while you speak to a group. These suggestions are:

- Sincerely like your audience
- Know your subject thoroughly in order to appear confident
- Be well dressed (not overdressed)
- Look your listeners in the eye (Not too long at any one) and talk with them
- Avoid excessive, meaningless, gestures and nervous movements
- Keep calm
- Remain objective, no matter what the provocation
- Speak clearly and pleasantly, make sure that you can be easily heard



### Activity 3

Observe in any one presentation the non-verbal of the speaker under postures, Movements, Gestures, Eye Contact, Facial Expressions, and Oral delivery. Against each item give scores out of ten. Check your evaluation with another person.

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## 6.7 EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION: SOME PRINCIPLES.

Ron Hoff, a hard core advertising professional, head of Ron Hoff and Associates, based on his presentations to the clients, has suggested some basic guidelines for effective presentation. Let's discuss these, eight, real-life principles of presentation that make a measurable, meaningful difference in the success of your presentation.

Rule	Description
1	In preparing your presentation, may be you should start about halfway through.
2	Content is always the first requirement of any presentation. Once content breaks down, delivery is never far behind.
3	It's impossible to be too clear.
4	Keep in mind that your audience is going to remember about one quarter of what you say.
5	Participation by your audience will help them remember you and your message, but "handle with care". Participation can backfire.
6	Nervousness is not all bad, but it can become serious when your audience becomes more concerned about your nerves than your subject.
7	Eye contact is the strongest force in your favour during a "Live" presentation.
8	"People may lie, but body language never does".

Source: Ron Hoff, "How to Make Your Next Presentation a Winner", In, *Strategic Advertising Campaigns* by Don E. Schultz. (Illinois: NTC Business Books, 1996).

### 6.7.1 Start Ralf Way

In preparing your presentation, may be you should start about halfway through. There isn't an audience in the world that hasn't said to itself, "When is the presenter going to stop talking about his business and start about mine". So instead of "Opening Remarks", why not structure your outline to begin with, "an issue of direct concern to my audience". The sooner you can stop being self-conscious and start being audience-conscious, the better your chances of winning a positive verdict.

### 6.7.2 Plan Out Content

Content is always the first requirement of any presentation. Once content breaks down, delivery is never far behind. If you don't know your subject, your voice is going to tighten. If you don't believe what you are saying, your gestures are going to be halfhearted. If you get a question that catches you unprepared, your body language is going to answer for you. How much substance do you need in order to feel supremely confident about your next presentation? The answer is, have in your head about seven times as much information as you are likely to use in your presentation. Know your subject better than anybody in the room and your delivery may not be magnificent, but it will carry conviction - and that's better than empty theatrics any day.

### 6.7.3 Clarity

It's impossible to be too clear. Many presentations are so muddled that members of the audience say to themselves, "What in the world is that person talking about?" or, "What on earth am I doing here?"



Here is a simple but effective exercise: Ask yourself "If I were going to put a fifteen-word headline on my presentation, what would it say?" Isolate the meat of what you want to communicate and make sure you say it - clearly, prominently. Also ask yourself, "What do I really want my audience to do as a result of this presentation?"

#### 6.7.4 Partial Receptivity

Keep in mind that your audience is going to remember about one quarter of what you say. A surprising number of presenters will assume that once a statement is made, the audience retains it. In reality, an average audience retains approximately 25 per cent of a presentation if the verbal content is given visual reinforcement (slides, charts, videotapes). If the presenter is simply standing there, going through a manuscript, flooding the atmosphere with words, he or she will be lucky to have one tenth of the total message retained by the audience.

So what do you do about it? May be you would like to "tell them what you are going to tell them - tell them - then tell them what you told them", i.e., put your proposition up and keep referring to it. It is not that audiences have poor memories, it is simply that presenters assume that audience have perfect memories.

#### 6.7.5 Encourage Participation

Participation by your audience will help them remember you and your message, but "handle with care". Participation can backfire. You, the presenter, can ask your audience to do almost anything. Most audiences are surprisingly agreeable. They will do almost anything. Nonetheless, a few words of caution.

- Study your audience carefully before you get up to present.
- Look for the most animated people in your audience to be your participators.
- Never force anybody to participate if you detect even a hint of reluctance
- Never allow anybody to look bad.

Participation by your audience can nuke your unforgettable but just make sure that it does not backfire.

#### 6.7.6 Control Nervousness

Nervousness is not all bad, but it can become serious when your audience becomes more concerned about your nerves than your subject. Nervousness is the number one problems of people who make important presentations in advertising, or in any other business. But nervousness (sometimes known as "stage freight"), is not all bad. There are ways to deal with it, and some of them can actually work.

- i) Take a brisk 2-minute walk, It can be around the block, through the halls, or anywhere you want to walk. Exercise of any kind breaks the strain that creates nervousness.
- ii) Look at yourself in a mirror and check your appearance. Nothing's out of place and you look like you want to look. That reduces anxiety.
- iii) Next, take five deep breaths. Deep breathing always calms the nervous system. Ask anybody who has hypertension, about the results of deep breathing.
- iv) Tell yourself that your presentation has one goal only: to genuinely help the audience. That uncomplicates your mind and keeps the focus clear.

#### 6.7.7 Eye Contact

Eye contact is the strongest force\* in your favour during a "Live" Presentation. When you make your next presentation, you will know whether you are making eye contact or not because you can see your audience. Here are three fundamentals on eye contact that will benefit your next presentation:



- i) Don't set any specific length of time to maintain eye contact with one person. Stay only as long as it is comfortable for both people.
- ii) Eye contact should be broken by natural pauses in meaning -- between phrases - or thoughts. Eye contact usually breaks most comfortably at punctuation points.
- iii) There is a big difference between staring at people and eye contact. Staring is intimidating, confrontational. Eye contact reduces the distance between people. It reaches out, asks for understanding on a one-to-one basis.

### 6.7.8 Body Language

"People may lie, but body language never does." Body language, once you have learned how to read it, is going to tell you more than what your audience will say. You can rate people by their body language, and use your ratings to apportion the amount of time you spend with each member of your audience. Obviously, you will want to work a little harder -- with eye contact and participation techniques -- on the person who is scoring low on your body language scale.

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## 6.8 SUMMARY

To summarise the discussion on the structure of a presentation, we can say that the first thing in any presentation is the preparation you do in advance. You research the information, club the information under subtopics, subheads etc., sequence these subheads appropriately. You identify specifically what you would say in the opening section of your presentation, you decide the core i.e., the main body and you also plan your closing remarks. You have not started speaking to your audience but you have spent considerable time in preparing. In fact, those who overlook this phase they find it difficult to make a winning presentation.

While developing any presentation you have to progress very systematically. Each of the strategic variables should be considered in as much detail as possible. Knowing your purpose, understanding of audience, development of a message, identification of presentation method, and integration of various media are all important in development a presentation strategy.

In addition, there are eight golden rules, although sound and simple, but you need long years to fully practice them. Body language is fascinating. And you can practice just about anywhere. Even if you make a commitment to follow these rules to the extent you can, you have already improved your presentation ability.

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## 6.9 KEY WORDS

**Presentation:** A presentation is a commitment by the presenter to help the audience to do something to solve a problem.

**Presentation Structure:** It relates to the three main phases of a presentation, opening, body and closing.

**Presentation Strategy:** It is a mix of all the presentations variables, like, objectives, audience profile, message contents, media available, time at the disposal, which are adjusted to achieve a success.

**Presentation Skills:** These are the abilities of an individual in making successful presentations.



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## 6.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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1. What do you understand from the 'structure of a presentation'? Do you need it in a sales presentation? Discuss.
2. What presentation strategy you would adopt if you have to sell personal computers, door-to-door?
3. "why overall appearance and body language are important, when to a prospect your contents are more important than anything else"? Discuss.

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## 6.11 FURTHER READINGS

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1. Ron Hoff, "How to Make Your Next Presentation a Winner", In, *Strategic Advertising Campaigns* by Don E. Schultz. (Illinois: NTC Business Books, 1996).
2. R.L. Bhatia, *Development Presentations Skills*, (New Delhi: Wheeler Publishing, 1994).