Writing a Business Presentation

Vocabulary words to learn:

conclusion	***call to action***
verbal presentation	***appendices***
background credentials	***external market***
coherent and seamless	***case studies***
diagrams	***summarize***
proofread	***anecdote***
key phrases	***bulleted list***
beat around the bush	***clear and concise***
jargon	***favourable response***

The strength of a business presentation depends a lot on how it is written.

A business presentation is an opportunity to inform, demonstrate, persuade, and sell your ideas to an audience; that audience may be from your own organization or from outside your company.

In either case your presentation needs to be clear and focused and have an obvious ***conclusion*** or ***call to action***.

Whether you are preparing a report, or a script for a ***verbal presentation***, the starting point is writing a sound and logical outline.

Be clear about whom your audience will be and their likely level of knowledge. Assuming that your audience will know certain facts can be a recipe for disaster if they don't. But if they do, you risk boring them. If you are uncertain, aim for the middle-ground and prepare additional material (as ***appendices***) in case you need it to explain certain points.

Decide exactly what your purpose is in making the presentation. For example, depending on whether you want to inform or persuade, you may wish to include different types of information and a greater or lesser amount of detail. You may need to include ***background credentials*** for yourself and your organization if you are preparing the presentation for an ***external market***.

Prepare an outline structure. This will be heavily influenced by the time or length available to you. Start by listing the one key point that you want to get across. Now decide on a maximum of three to six other significant section heads to support and elaborate on this. Decide at the outset how these points fit together logically. Aim for a ***coherent and seamless*** flow from one area to the next throughout.

List explanatory bullet points under each of these section heads. This is where you can provide more or less detail depending on the time or length available. Again, try keep to a maximum of three points under each. Any more and the audience will start to lose interest.

Add examples to demonstrate each concept or area. Real-life ***case studies***, stories and research findings bring your presentation to life and help people engage with the facts. Refer back to the point you are illustrating at the end of each example.

Introduce ***diagrams*** and models to ***summarize*** information, practices or theories. Use them as a focus for further explanation. They will help people see how different aspects of information fit together.

Write an introduction and summary. Only prepare these once you have written the rest of your presentation. The introduction should highlight the key points of what your presentation is going to cover. The summary should refer back to the content. It should also act as a final reminder of what you want the audience to take away from your presentation.

Provide references and contact details. Depending on how and where you are presenting you may wish to use your written presentation as the basis of a Microsoft Powerpoint presentation. If so, provide printed copies of the presentation or your written paper to the audience.

Tips

- Ask a colleague or friend to ***proofread*** your written presentation to check for errors.

- Once you have written your presentation, try to ***summarize*** it in one paragraph without referring back to it. Now compare that with what you had intended to say and check that there is a good match.

- Use plain English and simple sentence construction. Define key terms so that the audience is clear exactly what you are talking about.

- Use an interesting fact or ***anecdote*** at the very start of your presentation to capture people's attention.

- Write ***key phrases***. Avoid using long sentences in your business presentation. Identify your objective, the things you want to market, the strengths you want to

focus on, and the audience you will be presenting to. After doing these, you can write down the key phrases that are relevant to your presentation. It is best to present these key phrases in a ***bulleted list*** for easy and quick reading.

- Write in a Formal Business Tone. Do not write in a casual, conversational tone. Instead, write your presentation in a business tone with due consideration for your audience. This makes it look professional and it instantly boosts your image. Some knowledge of business writing will be useful in this aspect. If you need to improve your business writing, you can also use business writing software.

- Be ***clear and concise***. Do not ***beat around the bush***. Be direct and to the point. Explain your points clearly and avoid excessive use of adjectives. You must also refrain from using too many punctuation marks, as this may make your presentation look disorganized. Avoid using ***jargon***.

- Avoid grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Make sure that your business presentation is devoid of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. These kinds of errors, when spotted in a business presentation, immediately give the reader or the audience a negative impression. This will lessen your chances of getting a ***favourable response***.