Business Presentation Skills

Business Presentation Skills

Speaking & Presentation Skills for Business

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VANCOUVER, BC

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to Business Presentation Skills. This course teaches you how to communicate effectively in business situations. You'll learn public speaking, communication, and meeting management skills.

What you'll learn

Successful students will:

- Present yourself and your work in a professional manner
- Communicate clearly, efficiently and effectively in a variety of contexts
- Create and use analog and digital presentation materials
- Skilfully give and receive feedback
- Participate actively in teams
- Run and manage productive meetings
- Avoid and manage conflict
- Practice reliable research and information presentation skills
- Develop confidence, self-reliance, responsibility, adaptability, project management and problem-solving skills

How to succeed in this class – 7 secrets to success

1. Come to class and participate.

You're expected to attend every class and participate in class discussions and activities. This includes volunteering for activities and acting as a leader to other students. Part of BUSM 1500 is being the audience for your classmates' presentations. In addition to helping your classmates improve their confidence and public speaking abilities, you'll learn from watching other people's presentations.

2. Be supportive and respectful. Public speaking makes most people anxious.

Actively pay attention to presentations, and use body language to encourage the speaker. Don't distract yourself or disrespect the speaker.

3. Check Brightspace regularly.

You are responsible for:

- Keeping up with the course, completing assigned work and submitting before deadlines
- Reading and responding to announcements
- Being prepared and ready to participate in class

4. Check your email daily, or forward it to an account you check daily.

- You are responsible for all email sent to your Langara account
- If you need technical support, contact IT

5. Practice your presentations: This will make a huge difference in your grade and your confidence.

- Practice each presentation at least 10 times
- Practice alone, in front of people and record yourself

6. Be timely.

- Present on the date assigned.
- Submit before the deadlines. Some instructors deduct marks or don't accept late submissions. If you need help or an extension, contact your instructor *before* the due date. Don't leave it to last minute.

Contacting your instructor

The best way to contact your instructor is by email. Your instructor's email address is on the course outline.
   Always write clear, professional emails:

1. Put your course number and section number in the subject line. For example, *BUSM1500-001*

2. Start with *Dear* or *Hello* [Name],
3. Be brief, clear and professional
4. Close with *Thank you, Sincerely,* or *Best regards,*
5. Type your name under that, followed by your student id, course number and section number
6. Fix all spelling, punctuation, capitalization or grammar errors

Click on each item to see the details

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Grades

Grades are not negotiable. Instructors are contractually obligated to assign grades based on performance and production. Please do not place an instructor in a conflict of interest situation by asking them to increase grades.

Excellent, exceptional (A+, A, A-) Consistently distinguished accomplishment in presentations, assignments and class participation

Very good (B+, B, B-) Consistently demonstrates mastery of the subject matter and skills

Meets requirements (C+, C, C-) Satisfactory achievement in demonstrating the skills learned in this course, and sufficient comprehension of the subject

Needs improvement (D) Marginal Performance; completed the course but with below average achievement

Plagiarism

Instructors are contractually obligated to report all plagiarism. All work containing plagiarised content will be penalized and reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity. No exceptions. Please do not place an instructor in a conflict of interest situation by asking them to ignore plagiarism.

PART I
PUBLIC SPEAKING AND YOU

1. Why should I learn public speaking?

Before we launch into *how* to speak in public, let's take a moment to consider *why*. In this chapter you'll learn the many benefits of public speaking and why it's so important to your career.

The benefits of public speaking

Learning to present effectively has many benefits that will positively affect your career, education and personal life. These benefits include:

- Communicating clearly with others
- Increased self-esteem and confidence
- Managing stress
- Improved polish and professionalism
- Teamwork
- Listening skills
- Giving feedback
- Being able to "**think on your feet**"

What are you most excited about learning in this course?

Why are public speaking skills so

important? An incredibly brief history of communication

A time before reading & writing

Long ago there was no writing. Information, culture and history were passed down orally. In other words, people told stories. If you wanted power or influence you had to be a great presenter.

(CC BY-SA 4.0-image by Sharon L. Flynn)

An example of this is Canada's Indigenous peoples, including Vancouver's Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh communities. They had no written language, so they used stories, such as the ones symbolized in these totem poles in Stanley Park, to pass down wisdom.

The rise of written communication

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Then came a major shift – the rise of written communication. The printing press was introduced to Europe in the mid-1400's, which meant that books could be mass produced. The western world became more and more literate over the following centuries, and the influence of written communication grew. Instead of just stories and presentations, reading and writing became a major way of wielding power. If you wanted to influence people, you'd write books or own a newspaper.

Radio, television, and the return to presentations

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The arrival of radio and television marked another major shift – this time away from the written word and back towards presentations. People still read books and newspapers, but radio and TV allowed them to see and hear other people presenting live.

More and more channels grew as we continued this trend away from just words and towards media presentations. In the 1980s and 1990s, if you wanted power, or to influence people, you'd own a TV network.

Today, and new media

This brings us today. People have shorter attention spans and don't want to read as a much. We love to watch content (YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook videos). And all of that content is basically other people presenting – speaking in public. Tons of people are doing it, and in super engaging ways.

In many ways we've come full circle since the ancient days of needing to be a good presenter in order to influence people. The difference today is that instead of influencing small groups, you can reach millions of people.

Because we see so many engaging presentations every day, being able to present well is becoming an expectation – not just on social media, but in real life. Reading and writing still counts, but many situations – including video applications and online interviews – require strong presentation skills.

Presentation skills – the ability to communicate clearly, professionally and confidently – are crucial to compete in today's job market and progress in your career.

Test your knowledge

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2. Why am I so nervous?

Many of us fear speaking in public – some people fear it more than death. In this chapter we'll look at what causes those fears, and introduce some coping strategies to help build your confidence.

Why do we get so nervous?

If you feel nervous when speaking in public, or even just *thinking* about speaking in public, you're not alone. In fact, public speaking is a common fear; some people are terrified just thinking about it.

Most of us can talk to our family and friends without fear, but when facing an audience – especially if it's people we don't know – we get nervous. Why?

Four things contribute to our public speaking fears:

1. Experiences
2. Expectations
3. Biology
4. Lack of practice

1. Experiences

We tend to remember situations in which we have been hurt or suffered in some way; it's our brain's way of protecting us from being hurt again. When we think about presenting, we remember past experiences of presenting. If you didn't know how to present well, maybe you were boring or forgot what to say. Maybe people laughed at you, or you felt embarrassed and ashamed. Your brain will remember presenting as painful and embarrassing – something to avoid.

The good news is that as you create new, positive memories of presenting in public, they'll replace those earlier negative memories.

2. Expectations

We may have beliefs about what will happen when we speak in public. These are sometimes reinforced by past experiences, and can include the following:

I might...

- *Forget what to say*
- *Look nervous*
- *Be boring*
- *Not make sense*
- *Be shy*
- *Be the only bad presenter in the class*
- *Say the wrong thing*
- *Forget how to speak English*

What beliefs do you have about speaking in public?

3. Biology

When faced with a stressful situation, our brain activates the **fight or flight** response, an ancient mechanism designed to protect us from danger. When we go into fight or flight response, our body releases adrenaline, which can cause:

- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Increased heartbeat
- Sweating
- Stomach discomfort, dry throat
- Feeling like you need to pee
- Mind going blank
- Tunnel vision
- Muscles tense or tremble
- Feeling too hot or too cold
- Goosebumps
- Hunching
- Changed perception of time
- Difficulty sleeping the night before your presentation

The fight or flight response is useful if we're under attack and need to protect ourselves, but not if we're delivering a

presentation! These reactions are the exact opposite of what helps us present well. But they *are* normal – even professional presenters experience them. And they don't mean that you're a bad speaker; it's just biology! Luckily there are lots of strategies to reduce or eliminate your fight or flight symptoms.

Take a moment to think about what happens to your body when you're feeling nervous. Imagine that you're about to present in front of a large audience. What physical symptoms do you notice?

4. Lack of practice

If we don't have a lot of public speaking experience, or haven't done it for a long time, it can be scary. And if we don't know how to manage our fears, it can become terrifying. One of the great benefits of this course is that you'll get plenty of chances to present in a safe environment. We'll teach you how to present well, how to manage the fear, and offer lots of opportunities to practice your skills. The more you present, the easier it gets. Promise.

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Coping strategies

These practices help keep your nerves in check before, during and after your presentation.

Practice

Practice is the most effective coping strategy. When you know your content, you're more confident. And because you're not struggling to remember the content, you can focus on delivery. We recommend that you practice any presentation at least ten times.

- Practice delivering & timing your speech: rehearse in front of family, friends, pets, a mirror
- Practice silently on transit or walking down the street
- Record yourself
- Practice until you don't need notes

Before your presentation

Calming techniques

- Take slow, deep breaths
- Meditate
- Visualize success
- Workout earlier in the day to regulate your hormones
- Substitute negative thoughts with positive ones
- Remind yourself that you're only presenting to a few classmates, not thousands of people
- Remind yourself that your audience wants you to succeed

Biology hacks

- Stay hydrated
- Use the bathroom
- Ensure you're cool / warm enough (wear layers or adjust thermostat)
- Adopt power poses, as described by Dr Amy Cuddy in her famous TED Talk

Preparation

- Create a presentation that uses *your* language (don't try to be someone you're not) Speak like you do in conversation; don't be formal or try to impress your audience with fancy words.
- Practice! (At least 10 times is best)
- Familiarize yourself with the setting/room ahead of time
- Familiarize yourself with the equipment ahead of time
- Dress comfortably & appropriately
- Bring water to drink
- Arrive early

During your presentation

- Remember to breathe. If you get anxious, pause and take a long slow breath in through your nose.
- Have water nearby (in a spill-proof container)
- Nobody knows exactly what you're planning to say, so if you stumble, just continue on
- If you feel overwhelmed, try to concentrate on *what* you're saying, not *how* you're saying it

When to seek help for anxiety

It's natural to experience some nervousness when speaking in public. But for some people, significant anxiety makes it really difficult to "press through the fear." If you're feeling distressed, overwhelmed, or have concerns about your wellbeing, please know that there are many resources available. You may want to start by speaking with your instructor, health care provider, or contacting the Langara Counselling Department.

Shame Waves

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https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/ businesspresentationskills/?p=301

Read the article below or listen to the audio

You just gave the best presentation ever. You were calm, confident and engaging. The audience loved you!

But now you're done. Flooded with adrenaline, your brain

works quickly, evaluating your performance — your dreadful, awful performance. In high resolution, your brain replays the errors, the omissions, the failures. Moments ago you were proud, now you're embarrassed.

What happened?

You've been hit by a shame wave. It may feel like you're drowning in shame, but you can and will survive.

What's a shame wave?

A shame wave is a strong, sudden tidal wave of shame and embarrassment that slams into many people right after they do something in public, whether it's giving a presentation or speaking up in class. Shame waves attack beginners and experts.

Where do shame waves come from?

Humans are social creatures. We crave community. Community helps us survive and thrive.

But our community has to accept us or they might abandon us. Public actions – like giving a presentation – are risky. If the community doesn't like our performance, they might not want us. So our brains use embarrassment as a tool to stop us from doing things the community might not like.

Embarrassment keeps us safe, but too much can cause a shame wave.

Why are shame waves bad?

Although their intentions are good — to protect us — shame waves drown us in powerful negative messages. Shame Waves tell us "for our own good" that:

- You're not perfect
- Failure is bad
- Because you're not perfect, you're a failure

Those messages are evil. Failure is a normal, necessary part of learning. We do very few things perfectly the first time — almost everything you've learned took more than one attempt. If you refuse to do things you're not good at, you won't learn. And you need to be a lifelong learner to have a great life.

How do shame waves affect our confidence?

It's human nature to evaluate our own performance. This helps us learn and improve. But shame waves are destructive. Not to be confused with useful feedback, which is gentle, timely and appropriate, shame waves are violent, inconsiderate and hateful.

- Shame Waves damage your self-confidence
- They also damage your learning-confidence — the belief that you can improve at something
- Shame waves can make you give up

Shame waves focus on the negative. Reviewing our performance, we tend to remember only mistakes and

problems. Even if 99% was perfect, shame waves focus on the 1% that wasn't.

Try this simple perspective trick: Hold your hand at arm's length. How big is it? Now hold it right in front of your eyes. How big is it now? Huge, right? It's the same with shame waves; if we focus on the 1%, it feels like *everything* was terrible. Now we feel ashamed, embarrassed and hopeless.

Grab a strategy and enjoy the ride

We need coping strategies to support ourselves. Good coping strategies are like surfboards that help us ride shame waves to safety. Good strategies can decrease the number of shame waves that hit, and the amount of damage done.

Coping strategies can be simple, like taking a few slow breaths. They can be complex, like retraining our thoughts. Here are some useful coping strategies:

Coping strategies

1. Expect shame waves. They're normal; most people experience them. When it hits, just say to yourself, *There's my shame wave, right on schedule*.
2. Remind yourself that your brain's being mean but its intentions are good. Thank your brain and tell it to be nicer.
3. Expect to be imperfect, and to make mistakes. Focus on what you learned from the experience.
4. Think about next time: What will you do better next time?
5. Meditate. Do nothing except sit with the shame. Allow it to wash over you. Don't try to fix it. Just sit and feel shame's heat. Let it blaze and rage until it burns itself out.

6. Breathe. A long, deep, slow breath in through your nose, then out through your mouth. Relax.
7. Tell someone you trust about your shame wave. Talking can help weaken its power. And you'll probably discover that you're not alone.
8. Practice the 10-10-10 rule: How will you feel about your performance in 10 hours? 10 weeks? 10 years? Adjust as necessary.

You'll find that some of these strategies resonate with you and some don't. That's fine. Find what works, and make your own surfboard of strategies. Next time a shame wave hits, grab your coping strategies surfboard and ride to the Beach of Calm Self-Acceptance.

Test your knowledge

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3. What makes a presentation good?

In this chapter you'll learn the two basics of a great presentation: structure and delivery. You'll also see examples of presentations ranging from poor to excellent.

Structure

There are lots of ways to structure a presentation, but we like this one best. It's clear, simple and fits most presentations. This structure has 10 parts:

1. Grabber/hook: A very brief and interesting statement or question that grabs the audience's attention
2. Self-introduction including full name & credential: Who you are and why you're qualified to present this content
3. Thesis: What you're going to speak about
4. Overview of main points
5. Key point 1
6. Key point 2
7. Key point 3
8. Conclusion: Restate the thesis
9. Summary of main points: Restate the overview
10. Call to action: What you want the audience to do

You'll learn the details in Chapter 8: How to structure your presentation.

Delivery

What makes good presenters engaging? What makes you want to watch and listen? Great delivery includes:

- Confidence
- Passion
- Proficient body language
- Eye contact
- Speaking clearly, being easy to understand
- Effective pauses
- Few hesitations or filler words
- Using words and phrases that are appropriate for the audience
- Accurate timing: not going overtime or ending too early
- Smooth transitions between sentences and sections

We'll discuss these skills in detail in Chapter 9: How to deliver your presentation.

4. What skills do I already have?

Great news – you already have some delivery skills! This chapter helps you identify the skills you already have, and which ones to work on next.

Before we start working on delivery skills, take this quick self-assessment to identify the skills you already have. The self-evaluation starts with the basics, and ends with more advanced delivery skills.

Make a note of the first three skills you haven't already mastered; those are the first ones to start working on. You'll learn more about delivery skills in Chapter 9: How to deliver your presentation.

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SPEAK & PRESENT EFFECTIVELY

5. How to be clear

Clear communication is a simple concept that's the foundation of good presentations. In this chapter, you'll learn how to engage your audience by being easy to understand.

What is Clear Communication and why is it important?

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Tips for presenters:

1. Think from the audience's point of view:

   - What do they need to know?
   - What do they already know?
   - What interests them?
   - How much background info do they need?

2. Avoid bland words such as *really* or *very*. Use strong words instead. For example: *brilliant* is stronger (and more interesting) than *very smart*
3. Speak to the senses: use descriptive words that help your audience see, hear, feel, taste and smell what you're talking about

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Test your knowledge

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6. How to give & receive feedback

In this chapter you'll learn how to give effective feedback that supports and encourages people. You'll also learn how to accept feedback to improve your presentations.

Why is effective feedback important?

Effective feedback helps us improve. You may have heard of the Johari Window, which describes 4 parts of our self-awareness:

1. **Open** What we know about ourselves, and is also known by others
2. **Blindspot** What we don't know about ourselves, but is known by others
3. **Hidden** What we know about ourselves, but is not known by others.
4. **Unknown** What we don't know about ourselves, and is not known by others.[1]

Good feedback helps us learn about our Blindspot – what we don't see about ourselves, but others do.

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1. Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, "The johari window," *Human relations training news* 5, no. 1 (1961): 6-7, http://www.richerexperiences.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Johari-Window.pdf

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Open	Blind Spot
Not known to others	Hidden	Unknown

What makes feedback effective?

Effective feedback has 7 qualities:

1. **Timely** Soon after the presentation
2. **Kind** Help the listener build skills; don't embarrass or shame them
3. **Positive** Tell the listener what to do, not what *not* to do
4. **Honest** Don't lie to be nice. "Great job!" is kind but not useful
5. **Useful** Suggest practical, actionable improvements

6. **Brief** Focus on only 2 improvements (the most important ones). More will confuse the listener
7. **Specific** Be precise and give examples

How to give feedback

There are many ways to give feedback. This simple 3-step method is easy to remember and use:

1. **Keep** Describing the best part, what they should keep doing
2. **Improve** Then describe the most important thing to improve, and why it's important. Focus on 'next time' or 'in future.' For example, *Speak slower so we can understand. Your topic seemed interesting and I'd like to hear all of it.*
3. **Ask** the recipient if they have questions, if what you said makes sense

How to receive feedback

We often feel ashamed or embarrassed when receiving feedback. It's similar to the shame wave described in Chapter 2: Why am I so nervous? Most of us have a really mean inner critic who will start yelling at us for not being perfect. This makes it hard to listen and learn.

Try to silence your inner critic so that you can benefit from the feedback. These strategies will help:

Listen actively.

- Make eye contact with the person giving you feedback
- Take notes – you'll forget what they said
- Summarize what they said
- Ask questions

Be respectful & professional.

- Watch your tone, words and body language
- Look for what's true and what's useful
- Avoid arguing or explaining; try to drop your defenses

Ask questions to clarify doubts and get precise details and examples.

For example:

- "Can you say more about…?"
- "Can you explain that further, please?"
- "What advice can you give me?"
- "How can I build that skill?"
- "Where could I learn more about…?"
- "What do you recommend?"
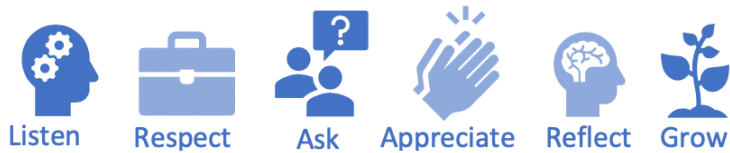
Appreciate the feedback.

- See the good in the feedback and the person who gave it to you
- Thank the speaker and show appreciation for their time and energy
- See how the feedback can help your skills and career

Reflect & grow.

Reflect on the feedback and decide your next steps:

- What did you learn?
- How will you use the feedback to improve your skills?
- What will you do next time?

Listen   Respect   Ask   Appreciate   Reflect   Grow

Test your knowledge

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7. How to speak without preparation

Being able to answer questions clearly, calmly and professionally is a key job skill. This chapter introduces practical tips and strategies to help you sound confident and knowledgeable in interviews and meetings.

What is impromptu speaking?

Impromptu speaking is speaking without preparation, the way we do in conversations, classes, meetings and job interviews. We can't predict what people will say, so if someone asks us a question, we answer spontaneously – without preparation. This is easy and relaxing with friends, but can be stressful in interviews, where we must respond quickly, correctly and professionally.

Impromptu speaking strategies

The most important strategy is **don't panic!** There are ways to buy time and formulate a professional answer. Two excellent strategies are HKCC and BRACE Yourself.

HKCC method

1. **Headline**: Say the most important thing you want the listeners to hear.

   - For example, *I definitely think I would make a strong addition to this team.*

2. **Key Points**: 2-3 key points that support the headline.

   - For example, *I've got the qualifications and experience you want, plus I've worked on many successful intercultural teams. And finally, my ability to speak four languages will help when we interact with global markets.*

3. **Close**: Quickly summarize your headline and key points, optimistically.

   - For example, *I'm excited about this opportunity and the chance to make a strong contribution to your team.*

4. **Call to Action**: Tell the listener what you want them to do, or ask if you've answered their question.

   - For example, *I'd appreciate your consideration.*
   - For example, *Does that answer your question?*

Breathe!

Whenever you feel anxious, pause and take a long slow breath in through your nose. Hold it for a second, then exhale slowly through your mouth. Doing this calms your brain *and* gives you time to think.

BRACE Yourself method

1. **Breathe**. Before doing anything, take a breath and calm yourself
2. **Repeat** the question or prompt (and comment on it if you want to).

   ◦ For example, *You'd like to hear about a weakness I have. That's a great question; thanks for asking.*

3. **Answer**, in 2-3 key points that direct the conversation to what you want to talk about.

   ◦ For example, (if you're asked about your weaknesses, mention one then describe how you manage it) *I wasn't good at time management in the past, so I looked at how it affected my work, and decided to make a change. The first thing I did was create a schedule using my calendar app. Then I started using daily to-do lists. I prioritize the items, then schedule them. And finally, I report to my manager at the end*

of each week, giving her a status update on all my projects. These three strategies have made a huge difference in my efficiency, and also decreased my stress levels.

4. **Conclude professionally** with a concluding statement or question.

   ◦ For example, repeat the prompt: *So that's how I improved my time management skills*
   ◦ For example, use a concluding statement: *In conclusion, it's easy to manage weaknesses by creating good habits.*
   ◦ For example, ask: *Does that answer your question?* or *Is that the information you're looking for?*

5. **Examples** Use related, appropriate examples and stories because they add precision and interesting detail. Also, they're easy to remember even when you're stressed.

Test your knowledge

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8. How to structure your presentation

This chapter teaches you a quick, easy way to create effective presentations. You'll also learn how to use valid resources and avoid plagiarism.

Structure

There are lots of ways to structure a presentation, but we like this one best. It's clear, simple and fits most presentations.

Beginning

In this part of your presentation, you'll capture the audience's attention, tell them who you are, and give them a preview of your presentation.

- **Grabber/hook** (Goes before or after the self-introduction) A very brief and interesting statement or question that grabs the audience's attention. See Grabber Types below for more details.
- **Self-introduction** (Goes before or after the grabber*)* Tell the audience your name and **credentials**. For example: *I'm Minh and I've been a professional presenter for 10 years*.
- **Thesis** The main point or argument of your presentation. Be brief and precise, not general or vague. For example:

I'm going to show you how practicing your presentation 10 times will improve your grade by 20%.

- **Overview of main points** Briefly outline the main points that you'll cover in your presentation. To help your audience, do list these in same order that you'll deliver them later on. For example: *First, we'll talk about what makes presentations great, then I'll share some data on how practice affects your confidence and performance, and finally we'll look at how to practice.*

Body

In this part of your presentation, you'll deliver the detailed information of your presentation.

- **Key point 1** A major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points
- **Key point 2** Another major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points
- **Key point 3** The final major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points

Ending

In this part you'll remind the audience of what you told them, and tell them what to do next.

- **Summary of main points** (Can be merged with your conclusion) Clearly restate your three main points in the same order you delivered them. It's the same as your overview but in past tense. *First, I described what makes presentations great, then I shared data on how practice*

affects confidence and performance, and finally we looked at how to practice.
- **Conclusion** Restate your thesis in past tense. For example: *I'm showed you that practicing your presentation 10 times will improve your grade by 20%.*
- **Call to action** Give your audience clear, active and compelling direction, based on what you told them. For example: *Practice your presentations ten times and start collecting those A-plusses!*

Grabber types

Remember that the grabber's job is *grabbing* the audience's attention, so it must be surprising, fascinating or intriguing. It must also be related to your presentation's topic. Here are some descriptions and examples:

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You can also mix and match grabbers. For example, you could show an image and ask the audience to guess what it is.

The length of your grabber is relative to your total presentation time. For a 2-minute presentation, it should be quite brief – maybe one sentence. For a 16-minute team presentation, a 45-60 second grabber would be appropriate.

Outline your presentation

The fastest way to create a successful presentation is to start with an outline.

Use an outline, not a script; this will allow you to be more natural and let you look at the audience or camera. Reading is a guaranteed way to make your presentation boring.

The easiest way to create your outline is to work in this order:

1. Determine your thesis and write this as a full sentence
2. Determine your 3 Main Points
3. Add key supporting points for each of your Main Points
4. Complete the other parts – introduction, grabber, call to action, etc.

Working in this order is fast because it's easier to create the conclusion and grabber when you've already decided on the content. Also, after you have the main structure it's easy to add details, examples and stories that make your presentation interesting and convincing.

Another benefit of outlining is that you can use the outline as your presentation notes.

Test your knowledge

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https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/
businesspresentationskills/?p=69

9. How to deliver your presentation

In this chapter you'll learn how to deliver a presentation. We'll look at voice and body language skills that keep your audience engaged and inspired.

Delivery

Excellent presenters use many delivery skills. Don't worry about being perfect at all of them; start by working on the three skills you identified in Chapter 3. When those skills feel improved, choose three more to work on.

Voice

Volume Speak loudly enough so that we can hear you. Good volume also makes you sound confident

Clarity Enunciate your words, and avoid mumbling, so the audience can easily understand what you're saying

Tone Match your tone to the content. Typically, tone goes higher when we are unsure or are asking a question, and goes lower when we are stating a fact or being authoritative

Pace Speak slowly enough to be understood, and vary your pace to add interest

- Choppiness – Speak as fluidly as possible, avoid hesitations

and unusual pacing

- Speed – Speak smoothly and confidently, but a little slower than in normal conversation. In multicultural situations (where we might not be familiar with each others' accents) speak even slower, and watch your audience to make sure they understand you.
- Pauses – Listening can be tiring. Brief pauses let your audience absorb information. You can also use pauses to add emphasis or anticipation.

Vocal variety Vary your tone, pace and volume to add interest, emphasis and clarity. For example, speak a little faster to add excitement or anticipation, or speak a little louder to show emphasis. Some cultures and languages tend to be more monotone, so some students may have to work a little bit harder to ensure they vary their tone.

Body language

Professional posture Good posture supports your voice, and makes you look professional and confident (when we're nervous we tend to hunch and cross our arms). Face the audience most of the time, and avoid turning your back on them to look at your slides.

  Manage your movement Repetitive body movements, such as tapping your foot or swaying, can also distract the audience. If you're presenting in person, slowly move around the physical space, such as moving towards the audience, or from one part of the room to another.

  Use gestures Use gestures to add interest, emphasis, and help explain what you're saying, such as indicating part of a slide or demonstrating an action.

Eyes & face

Make eye contact most of the time Eye contact shows confidence and helps everyone in the audience feel included. Look at all parts of the room. Secret tip for shy presenters: look at people's foreheads – it has the same effect as eye contact. If you're presenting online, this means looking at the camera. If you're using notes should be point form – not full sentences – that you can quickly glance at, not read.

   Manage your facial expressions You can show passion and emotion through facial expressions. But be careful, sometimes presenters show how nervous they are by having a look of worry on their face.

Passion

Your passion will engage the audience. Show your enthusiasm, energy and interest through appropriate use of tone, pace, volume, facial expressions, gestures, and body language.

   Your level of energy can be infectious, and inspire the audience. Even if your topic is serious, like mental health or a tragedy, you can still convey conviction and interest in the subject matter. Conversely, without passion, you can make even the most fascinating content boring, and cause your audience to disengage.

Words

Filler words Fillers distract the audience and make you seem nervous, unprepared or professional. These include *uhh*, *umm*, *like, you know,* and any other words or noises that are not

actual content. Real words like *and* and *so* can also be used as filler words.

Vocabulary Use words and phrases your audience understands; language that is appropriate for them. Will they understand abbreviations, acronyms, slang and jargon?

Transitions Use transitions to connect sentences to each other, indicate that you're moving to the next major point, or in group presentations, that you're moving to the next speaker.

Timing

Make sure the length of your presentation matches your audience's expectations. If your presentation is a lot shorter, the audience (and instructor!) might be disappointed; if you go overtime they might resent you.

Pro Tip

After each presentation, make a note of 3 things that you did well, and 3 things you want to improve.

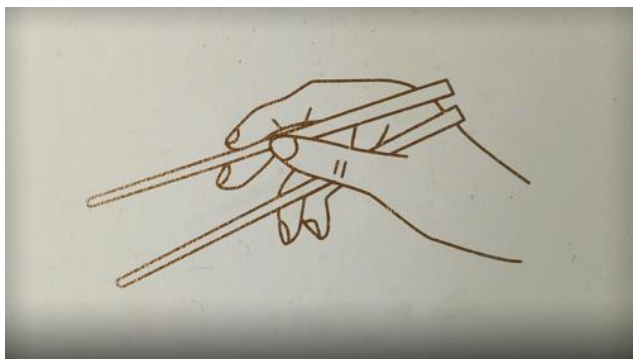## If you have a speech impediment or accessibility needs

If you have a speech impediment, visual impairment, hearing difficulty, physical disability, or other health issue, there are many resources available. You may want to start by speaking with your instructor and contacting Langara Accessibility Services.

If you stutter, you're not alone. Many famous people have found ways to become great presenters while managing their stutter, including President Joe Biden, James Earl Jones (the voice of Darth Vader) and Nicole Kidman. Some basic coping strategies include speaking slowly, managing stress and thoroughly knowing your material. Additional resources are available from The Canadian Stuttering Association.

Test your knowledge

Watch each of these videos and test your understanding of the presenter's skills.

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What did you notice?

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10. How to present online

While many of the basics remain the same, presenting online is different than speaking in person. In this chapter, we'll look at tools and strategies for successful online meetings and presentations.

Presenting online is different than presenting in person. You need to think about tools and lighting, as well as structure and delivery.

Apps

You can choose from different apps, including: *Zoom*, *FaceTime*, *Skype*, *Webex* and *MS Teams*. When deciding which one to use, consider the following:

- **Security** Some workplaces or institutions have restrictions on what apps you can use, due to security and privacy concerns
- **Familiarity** Try to choose the app that's most familiar to you and your attendees
- **Ease of use** Choose an app that's easy to use
- **Fees & limits** Some services have fees or limitations. For example, in MS Teams you can only see a maximum of four people at time, and free Zoom accounts limit your meeting time and number of participants

- **Features** Make sure the app has the features you want, such as polls, surveys, reactions, whiteboard, chat, an option to phone in, and conference vs. webcast (2-way vs. 1-way communication)

<mark>Pro Tip</mark>

Download the online meeting app you'll be using onto a second device, for example your phone, in case your main device crashes.

Equipment

You've chosen the app you'll use. Now you need to think about the equipment you'll need, including audio, camera & lighting, device and internet connection.

Audio

Clear audio is key for online presentations. If the audience can't see your video clearly, they can still follow by listening. But if the audio isn't clear, your message is almost guaranteed to be lost. Here are some tips to ensure your audio is clear:

- **Use headphones, earbuds or a mic** This helps isolate your voice from background noise, and prevents **feedback**
- **Minimize background noise** Close windows and doors, turn off anything making noise, put pets away, and ask

anyone nearby to keep their sound to a minimum

- **Mute yourself when not speaking** This is especially important if you're an audience member, or are part of a presentation but aren't actively speaking

Camera & lighting

Your camera and lighting should create a polished, professional visual. Here's how to do that:

- **Centre your camera & raise it to eye level** Put your camera or device on a book or cardboard box if you need to
- **Put your camera near your screen** This helps you seem to be looking at the audience
- **Clean up! Or use a virtual background** What's behind you counts. Make your background tidy and professional (we'd rather not see your dirty laundry or roommates wandering around in their underwear). Some apps let you use a virtual background.
- **Avoid backlighting** Have more light in front of your face than behind it. Otherwise the audience can't see your face. (You might look like a secret agent who's hiding their identity!)

Devices

Various devices can be used to connect to online presentation platforms, including smartphones, tablets, and computers.

- **Laptop & Desktop applications are best** These typically have more features and stability than tablet and mobile

versions

- **Keep devices & apps up to date** To ensure security, reliability, and availability of all features
- **Close non-essential apps** This helps your device run more efficiently and reduces the possibility of lagging or crashing
- **Be empowered** Plug your device in or make sure the battery is fully charged

Internet connection & wifi

Having a great presentation and a great hardware setup won't matter if you can't connect to your audience due to poor internet connection. Some best practices include:

- **Do a speed test ahead of time** Many platforms, like Zoom, recommend minimum bandwidth speeds for various meeting types, typically starting at 2.0 Mbps for a single screen
- **Reduce bandwidth hogging** If someone else in your home is streaming video or online gaming, your connection speed will slow down
- **Ensure wifi strength** If you're far away from your router, the wifi connection may be poor. Move closer to the router or use a hardwired connection

By Anna Shvets. Free use authorized without attribution via Pexels.com

Best practices for online presentations & meetings

Professionalism

Oops! By now many of us have laughed or cringed at the "Zoom fails" videos we see online. They're entertaining, but many people have been fired, embarrassed, or damaged their professional reputation because of unprofessionalism in online meetings. Make sure you remain professional!

- **Don't let your tech embarrass you** Clear your desktop and any unnecessary open windows or browser tabs. Turn off notifications (do not disturb mode). Always assume that your mic and camera are live
- **Set your environment** Alert housemates, put pets away and tidy your physical background. Never attend meetings from bed

- **Dress appropriately** You probably don't need to dress formally, but it's important to wear appropriate attire
- **Pay attention to the meeting** Act as professionally in an online meeting as you would in person. This means no sleeping, browsing, facebooking, cooking, vaping, driving, or anything else that competes for your attention. Keeping your camera on is a great way to show that you're paying attention
- **Connect 3 minutes early** Punctuality is very important

Pro Tip

Many online meeting platforms allow you to set your name and a professional picture in your meeting profile. Use a small professional **headshot**, and change your name to what you want people in the meeting to call you.

Attending a meeting

Even if you're not running the meeting, you still need to be professional.

- **RSVP** Reply to all invitations – let them know if you plan to attend
- **Prepare your tech tools** Update or download any required apps. Do a practice call with a colleague or friend if you're unsure of the app or your equipment
- **Use the mute button** Always keep yourself muted when you're not speaking. Know how to unmute yourself quickly

(some programs like Zoom allow you to hold down the spacebar to temporarily unmute yourself)

Hosting a meeting

Great news! Your boss asked you to host a meeting with some important clients. But how? Here are some tips.

Before

- **Choose the app** See the app section above
- **Decide the agenda & structure** Is this a formal meeting or more of an informal discussion? How long will it be? What items need to be discussed? Who will be speaking or presenting? How long will each speaker have? Will you share the agenda ahead of time?
- **Send invites with clear instructions** Make sure you invite all speakers and participants well in advance of your meeting. Invite the audience as soon as possible too. Send reminders a week before, and the day before. Include the meeting link, instructions on how to connect, and offer help to anyone who needs it.
- **Plan and practice** If possible, get a colleague to act as co-host. Decide who will admit people, start the recording, take notes, watch the time, watch the chat, show visuals, share polls, create breakout rooms, manage tech problems, etc. Whether or not you have a co-host, do a practice a day or two before the event.

During

- **Start the meeting** As the host, you'll start the meeting at

least 5 minutes early. Wait 2-5 minutes after the official start time to allow for late arrivals
- **Welcome** Warmly welcome everyone, introducing yourself and any guests that attendees may not know. In smaller meetings, you may introduce all of the attendees.
- **Provide agenda & norms** Remind everyone to stay muted unless speaking. Do you want to invite people to comment and ask questions during your presentation, or should they wait until the end? Do you want questions asked verbally or in the chat?
- **Keep it as brief as possible** Online meetings are tiring so be efficient and respectful of everyone's time and energy
- **Take notes** You or your colleague can take notes during the meeting, or you can write a brief recap immediately after

After

- **Thank and summarize** Send the guests and attendees a thank you and brief summary of the meeting. Include next steps, action items or information on the next meeting

---

Pro Tip

Tech problems happen. No matter how prepared we are, sometimes things just don't work.
Don't panic! If the problem is minor, just keep going. If it's major, stop and address the issue. Thank everyone for their patience.

Test your knowledge

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11. How to make slides & visuals

If your presentation includes slides and images, they must be clear, compelling and well-organized. In this chapter you'll learn the basics of visual design, where to find great images, and how to storyboard your presentation.

Getting started

Before starting on your slides create a **storyboard** that's based on your presentation outline (for details on outlines see Chapter 8: How to Structure Great Presentations). The storyboard helps you organize and plan your **slide deck**, including the order slides appear and what text or images you'll include on each slide.

We recommend using sticky notes to create your storyboard, with one sticky note representing one slide. Sticky notes help you organize your slides because they're so easy to move around, edit and delete. They'll save you lots of time!

In the example below you can see that you don't need to be an artist or expert to make an effective storyboard.
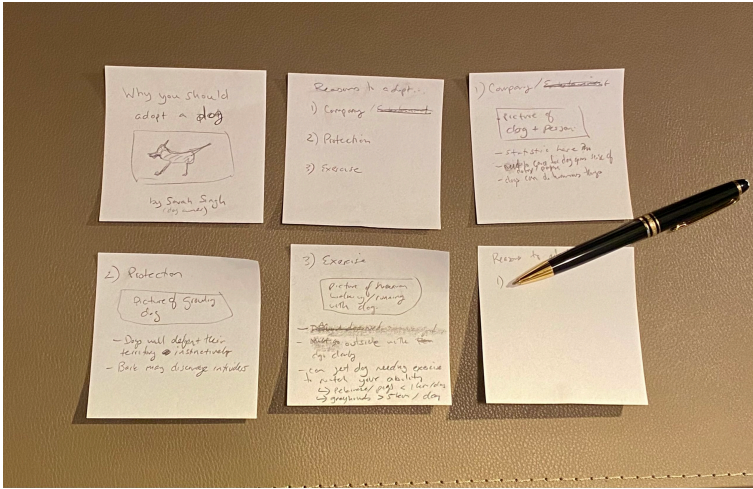
Image courtesy Christian Westin

Creating slides

When making slides, make sure to include these five elements: organization, titles & text, visual design, content and user experience.

Need help making slides?

Langara students have access to free peer tutoring. The tutors can help you with PowerPoint, Google Slides and other apps. They won't create your presentation for

you, but they can help you get started, and answer specific questions.

Organization

Your slide deck must be logically organized to match the order of your presentation. Make sure that information is presented in a logical way. For example, if you're talking about something that happens in a sequence, make sure it's in the correct order in your slides. And present information based on its importance. The size and list format of key points, sub-points and sub-subpoints should be consistent with their importance.

Titles & text

Consistent Throughout your slide deck, titles and text should be consistent in title & text size, shape, placement, bullet & heading hierarchy, and formatting. If any of this does change, it should be an intentional design choice that reflects the presentation. Be especially careful with team projects – it's easy to lose consistency when more than one person creates the slides.

Brief Your slides are not a script. If you include too much information on them, your audience will be reading, not listening to you. Slides should reinforce your key points, highlighting only the most important information. Share the rest verbally – anecdotes, smaller details and extra information.

Pro Tip

There are two great ways to help you keep slides brief: The

1-6-6 Method recommends that each slide have a maximum of 1 idea, 6 bullet points, and 6 words per bullet. The **1-3-5 Method** is similar: it suggests 1 idea, 3 bullet points and 5 words per bullet, per slide

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Fonts Your audience might have less than perfect vision or a small device, so make type easy to read. If you're not sure which font to use, avoid fancy decorative fonts and use a standard font like Arial, Helvetica or Times. Unless you're a trained designer, limit the number of fonts you use to about three per slide deck.

Use high-contrast colours for text, such as black on white, or white on navy blue. If you're placing text on an image, use a solid background colour in the text box.

We recommend using at least size 32 for your text. If you're using a font size smaller than 32, test your slides to make sure text is visible from the back of the room or an a small device.

Spelling & grammar Checking your spelling and grammar! (Most presentation apps include spell-check tools.) Typos and grammar errors make you look sloppy and unprofessional.

Animations You can use the app's animation tools to move objects and text on, off or around a slide. You've probably seen slides with bullet points that appear one at a time. Animations are useful when you want to gradually reveal information. For example if you want the audience to focus on one point at a time, or when you want to ask a question before showing the answer.

Limit the number of animations you use, and avoid whimsical or unnecessary ones – they can make your slides annoying and unprofessional.

Transitions You can use transitions, like fade-in or fade-out, when you're moving from one slide to the next. To avoid distracting your audience, don't use too many different types

of transitions, and avoid overly dramatic transitions. Just like animations, a little goes a long way.

Visual design

You don't have to be a designer to make professional slides – most apps include professionally-designed templates, or you can start with a blank slide. Whichever you choose, make sure the visual design supports your content and strengthens your message. Slides should relate to each other visually: colours, layout, text and images should be consistent.

Consistent All slides should have a consistent design as though they were created by one person, not cobbled together from multiple sources. If any of this does change, it should be an intentional design choice that reflects the presentation. Be especially careful during team projects – it's easy to lose consistency when more than one person creates the slides.

Alignment Keep slides looking clean and professional by aligning various text or image elements. For example, text is almost always left-aligned (except captions and titles). Space text and images so they're balanced and visually pleasing. PowerPoint shows alignment markings to help with this.

Branding Branded elements make your slides look professional. You can use your brand's colours and logo on the title page, and/or at the top or bottom of each slide. Your branding may include fonts, text size and colour. Whatever you choose, make sure all text is easy to read and not distracting.

Images Human brains love images! Include images in your slides to add interest and explain key points. Make sure every image is high quality, high resolution, relevant and appropriate, large enough to be easily seen from afar, not stretched or distorted, and free of watermarks. (More about watermarks in *Using other people's images* below)

Single images are generally better than collages because you

want slides to be uncluttered. No matter how cute they are, *don't* include images that are unprofessional or unrelated to your subject – such as emojis, minion pictures, and bad clip art.

Charts & graphs Well-displayed information can enhance your audience's understanding and help to convince them that you're a professional expert. Charts and graphs are fantastic ways to show data, describe relationships, and help your audience understand a key point. Make sure the labels and titles are large enough to be easily read, and remove unnecessary details; you can verbally explain details and background information. If your presentation includes handouts, you can show the basic chart or graph on screen, and add a more detailed version in the handout. See *Which chart, or visual should I use*? below for examples and additional guidelines.

Content

Complete Your presentation should include at least one slide for each key point. Make sure the most important information of your presentation is on your slides.

Makes sense Information presented is well researched & makes sense. Your content should also be interesting or exciting.

Fits audience Assume that your audience is smart like you, but doesn't have specialist knowledge. Take the time to explain anything that the majority of people might not know.

Citations and references For facts, quotes, or other statistics, you may want to include your source on the slide, especially if it adds credibility. Otherwise, sources (including for images) are listed in 1) the notes section; and 2) in a list of sources at the end of your presentation.

Authorship Include your full name at the start of your slides.

You may want to include your name and contact information on your last slide.

Engages the left & right brain Audience members engage and remember better when you engage the "left brain" – logic, facts, science, numbers, and hard data – and the "right brain" – emotion, colour, artistic and sensory information like music, videos, and other media.

Audience experience

This element is a bit different from the ones above because it focuses on the live integration of your slides and your presentation.

Slides enhance the presentation Remember that you're the star of the show, and your slides are there to support your live delivery. For this reason it's important to ensure that you don't use the slides as a teleprompter – always practice and know your entire presentation and slideshow thoroughly.

Number of slides is reasonable As a general rule, 1-2 slides per minute is appropriate. Practise delivering your presentation to ensure you're not rushing through too many slides, or forcing the audience to stare a the same slide for several minutes.

Agenda / overview Longer or more complex presentations often include an agenda or overview slide. Shorter presentations typically don't use them.

Animations & transitions executed When practicing your presentation, remember which slides have animations or transitions, and practice advancing your slides at the right time. Sometimes presenters get caught up in their content and forget to move the slides ahead. This is especially common during online presentations.

Using other people's images

You can use your own images in your presentations. You can also use downloaded images, but be careful to use copyright-free images, and credit them properly.

Many images that you see online are copyrighted, meaning you can't use them without the creator's permission. A lot of those images have watermarks to make sure people don't use them, or pay to use them. Don't use watermarked images—it's illegal and unethical. A watermark looks like this:

Image courtesy Lucinda Atwood

Where to find images

Many high-quality images are freely available online. Here are some places to find them:

1. Burst
2. Pexels
3. Unsplash
4. Pixabay
5. Flicker – Creative Commons license
6. Google: Enter your search words and click *Search*. Then click *Images,* and *Tools* (underneath the search bar). Then click *Usage Rights* and select *Creative Commons Licenses*.

How to give credit

Always give credit to the creators of anything you didn't create – including images, charts, graphs, video, audio and gifs. You don't need to credit anything you made, but you might want to include a note so your instructor knows it's your creation.

1. List all your image credits on one blank slide
2. Make it the last slide in the **deck**
3. Select that slide and click "Hide Slide" so it won't show during your presentation

A Chicago style citation for images can use *any* of these formats:

> **Photograph by [creator's name] from [URL]** *For example:* Photo by wsilver from https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/photos/ 73d7b905-f5ee-4571-8056-6ccfd4e450cb

Or:

> **Image courtesy of [name of the organization] from [URL]** *For example:* Image courtesy of wsilver from https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/photos/ 73d7b905-f5ee-4571-8056-6ccfd4e450c

Or:

> **[Title and embedded URL of the Creative-Commons-**

licensed image] by [creator's name] is licensed under CC BY [license type] *For example:* More Puppies by wsilver is licensed under CC BY Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

# Which graph, chart, or visual should I use?

You can easily make charts and graphs for your presentation, using Excel or Google Spreadsheets. Add the data to the spreadsheet, then decide which type of chart or graph to use.

No matter what type you use, always include a title, clear labels, and high-contrast colours that are visible to all users. For example, many people can't see the difference between red and green, so avoid using them together.

Here the most common types:

Pie chart Shows percentages – portions of a whole. The total segments should add up to 100% or a complete whole. Pie charts are excellent for showing relationships. In the example below we quickly see that Staff Salaries are a huge portion of the company expenses.

Projected 2021 Company Expenses
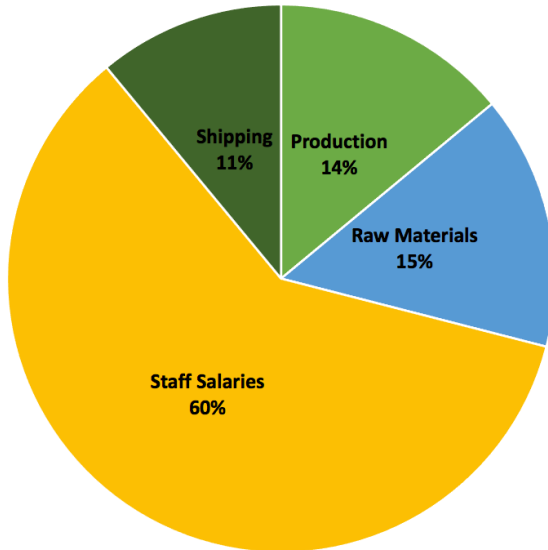
Bar graph Allows comparison between different values, and can show changes over time (if the difference in values are large). The horizontal and vertical axis must always be labelled. This graph show that the number of Business students is expected to rise, while the number of Marketing students will decrease.

Projected Student Registration By Program
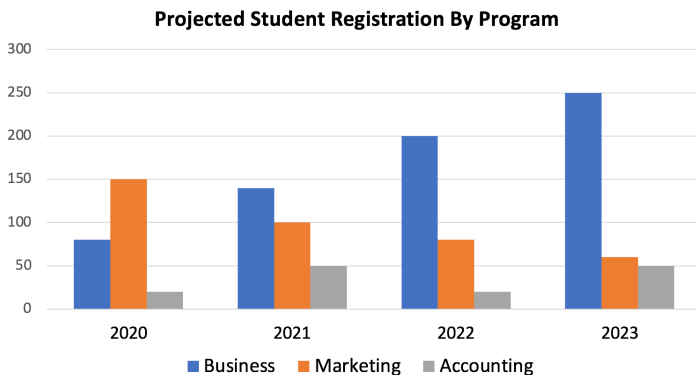
Line graph Shows a trend or progress over time. They can show small changes over time better than a bar graph. Note that the example below shows the same data used in the chart above, but emphasizes the trend of business registrations growing, marketing registrations declining, and accounting registrations remaining low with a bit of fluctuation. This would better if you wanted to focus on changes over time.

Projected Student Registration By Program
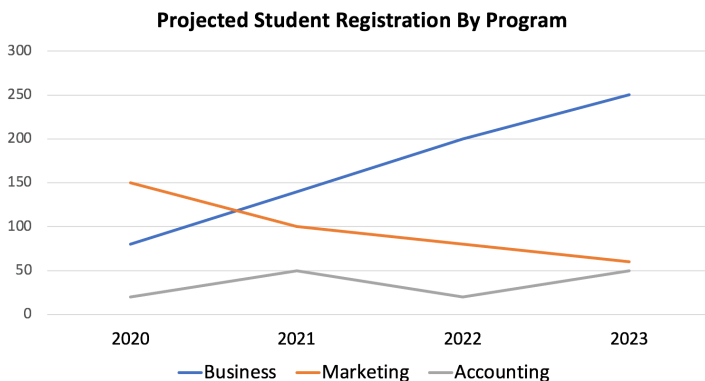
Heatmap chart Uses colour to convey the magnitude of certain values. Examples include a risk management heatmap showing low, medium, and high risk based on the likelihood

and impact of various outcomes, or an atlas heatmap as displayed below. Because heatmaps depend only on colour – not shape or size – be very careful to use colours that all users can see.


Conference Participants

Which chart? An example

Imagine that our team is excited to share the success of our recent marketing campaign to promote bluebell flower sales during the month of March. Here are two ways we might display the data. Look at both and note your response: which one is easier to understand? Which do you prefer to look at?

Example 1

	January	February	March	April
Bluebells	20.4	27.4	90	20.4
Redbells	30.6	38.6	34.6	31.6

Example 2

Flower Units Sold in First Quarter of 2021
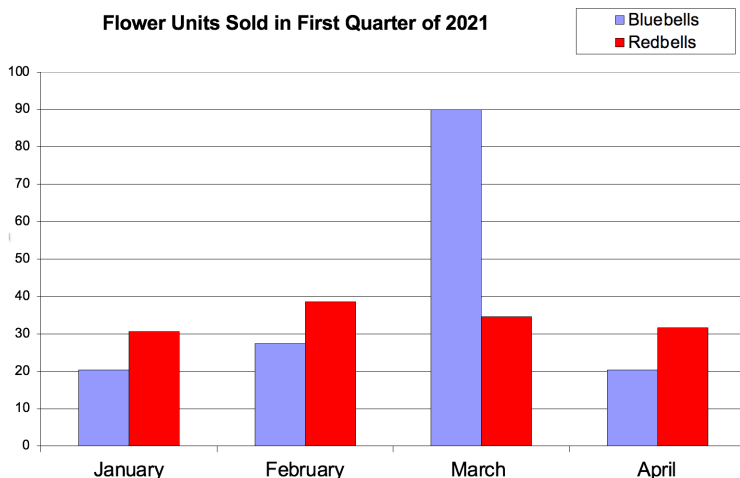
Example 1 is harder to read because it's not visual. There are lots of percentages, no hierarchy or colour, and the heavy lines compete with the content. It's not easy for the viewer to quickly understand the information. This example also lacks a title or legend (a description of what the data is conveying).

Example 2 shows the same information, but in a way that's easy to quickly understand. This version emphasizes the dramatic success of our marketing campaign, which boosted sales of bluebells during March. Also notice the inclusion of a title, legend, clear axis labels, and colour coding – all of which help the audience's understanding.

Test your knowledge

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12. How to present as a team

Believe it or not team projects can be fun and rewarding. In this chapter we'll look at how to make team projects efficient and successful.

Teamwork is a huge part of most jobs, so being able to work well with others and manage team projects is an essential skill that will enhance your career. In school, team projects help you learn key teamwork and project management skills.

Teamwork skills

Being a productive part of an effective team requires these skills:

- Understand group dynamics
- Flexibility: accept and adapt to others and their contributions
- Respect: support your teammates' diversity, perspectives and contributions
- Give kind, useful feedback and accept feedback graciously
- Contribute proactively and positively
- Be a leader but allow others to lead when appropriate
- Plan for and manage conflict

Project planning

Planning can make your team project successful and enjoyable. Create an effective team with pre-project planning:

1. Read the project assignment and rubric or grading plan
2. Create or join a team based on similar grade goals, ways of working, amount of time you're willing to invest, and team organization / leadership style. Avoid joining a team just because your friends are on it.
3. Organize your first meeting. Everyone must attend.
4. Create a team charter or have a process conversation (details below).
5. Record your plans: team organization / leadership; working style; roles & tasks; deadlines, etc
6. Schedule the project, working backwards from the due date. Allow time for personnel or tech problems.

Process conversations

Process conversations make teamwork more productive and less frustrating. They're simple conversations where you discuss and agree how your team will function.

Process conversations are strengthened when the outcomes are documented and saved to the for later reference. Create one central place that all teammates can access and store all your files and decisions there.

Strong process conversations answer questions such as:

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`https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/`
`businesspresentationskills/?p=43`

At the end of your team process conversation, make sure to ask if there's anything else: What else do we need to discuss?

The 5-finger vote

Sometimes a simple *yes* or *no* isn't enough. The 5 finger vote gives useful nuance to discussions and decisions.

Instead of asking *yes/no* or *for/against* questions, ask team members to vote with their fingers. The scale is:

Number of fingers	Meaning:
5	100% support the idea or action
4	Strongly agree
3	Slightly in favour
2	Mildly disagree
1	Strongly disagree
0	100% disagree

For example, your team is trying to choose a topic – will it be topic A, B or C? So you take a 5 finger vote. Most members are: 3 fingers for topic A, 5 fingers for topic B, and 2 fingers for topic C. Topic B is the clear winner.

Or you can add up all the fingers and use the total to decide. For example, *That's 12 fingers for topic A, 19 fingers for topic B, and 7 fingers for topic C. Topic B's the winner.*

Team Conflict

Conflict is almost inevitable in teams of busy, stressed students. Do your best to avoid conflict by:

- Supporting each other (Remind yourself that you'll all do better if you cooperate)
- Communicating clearly and frequently, ensuring that everyone is clear on expectations
- Using a team charter or process conversation
- Being open-minded and respectful
- Addressing concerns or frustrations early

Teams that prepare for conflict can deal with it quickly and effectively when it happens.

During the presentation

Introduce each other & remember transitions

Introduce each other at the start of your presentation. You can take turns introducing a teammate, or designate one person to act as the host, and introduce everyone. (Make sure you know each other's names and how to pronounce them!)

If you have a host, they can handle the introductions, thesis, overview, transitions and conclusion. This adds consistency to your presentation and helps the audience understand what's happening. If you're not using a host, ensure that you practice strong transitions from one teammate to another. For example: "*Now that I've explained the reasons you should have a*

LinkedIn profile, Sharika will explain how to make your LinkedIn profile."

Keep time

It's also a good idea to designate one teammate as timekeeper. They can make sure you don't go overtime, and help make sure all teammates have an equal chance to contribute.

Present as a unified team

A team presentation is very different from an individual presentation. One of the biggest problems we see is team presentations that don't feel unified. You've got a team, present like a team!

For this reason, it is important to ensure that everyone is aware of what their teammates will be presenting, and know when transitions are meant to occur.

It is also important to show that you're paying attention to teammates when they are presenting, and avoid fidgeting, talking, looking bored, or turning off your camera (just because you're not talking doesn't mean that you disappear). You can suggest to the audience that your group is doing a good job by nodding when a teammate delivers a strong point.

In some less formal presentations, you may decide to interact with each other: have a conversation, interview each other, argue two sides of an issue, or have some teammates demonstrate what's being described.

Maybe some teammates can demonstrate or hold visual aids.

In online presentations, teammates can be working behind the scenes while others are presenting. One person might be

handling the tech, another might be watching the chat, and another might be controlling presentation slides.

Plan the Q&A

If you're including a Q&A at the end of your presentation, decide how your team will handle it. You might designate which teammate will answer different types of questions, or your team might take turns answering.

At the end of each answer, ask the other teammates if they have anything to add. See more details in Chapter 13: How to handle audience questions

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Test your knowledge

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> *https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/ businesspresentationskills/?p=43*

13. How to handle audience questions

Most audiences want to ask questions during or after your presentation. In this chapter we help you prepare for and respond to audience questions.

While it's not always possible to anticipate exactly what might be asked, these steps can help you skilfully address audience questions.

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1. Anticipate & practice

List possible questions that your audience might ask after your presentation. They might include these types of questions:

      Query – wanting more information

Clarification – wanting to make something clear
Confirmation – wanting a yes or no response
Challenge – wanting to disagree / argue with what was said

Then draft answers to the questions you listed, and practise delivering your answers.

You might not have guessed the exact questions you're asked, but the practice gives you some ready answers that are easily adapted to the questions that you do get asked.

If this is a team presentation, assign teammates to answer specific questions or types of questions. For example, in a team presentation on defunding the police, Teammate A might answer questions about the law, Teammate B about social impact, and Teammate C about retraining.

2. Encourage

Sometimes it can be scary for an audience member to ask a question. So as a presenter, it's important to warmly encourage the audience to ask questions. Also, as presenters, we might look very serious or unfriendly, but just because we're nervous or trying to think of a good answer to someone's question. So make sure to warmly encourage the audience:

- Let them know that you'll be glad to answer questions
- Smile while asking if there are questions, and while answering
- Thank the audience member for their question "*Thanks for asking. I'm so glad you noticed that" or s*ay something like "*That's a great question! I'll be happy to answer it.*"

3. Listen & repeat

It's important to carefully listen to the question asked, and then to repeat it. There are three benefits to repeating the question:

- Ensures that you properly understood the question that was asked
- Lets all of the audience members hear the question (people behind the questioner might not have heard)
- Gives you time to think and formulate a good answer

4. Answer

The final step is to answer the question, speaking clearly and making eye contact with the whole audience. Conclude by asking the audience member "Does that answer your question?" or "Is that the information you're looking for?"

What if you don't know the answer?

You can say, "*I'm not entirely sure, but I'd be happy to do some research and get back to you.*" Be careful though – if you do this more than once or twice, you might seem ill-informed.

  In an informal, collaborative meeting you could ask if anyone else has an answer.

Test your knowledge

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Additional Resources

Are you enjoying public speaking and presenting? Want to continue learning? This section includes resources to support your journey.

Clubs

If you want to learn more and continue to improve your speaking and presenting skills, we recommend joining Toastmasters. Toastmasters is a worldwide organization, so you're likely to find a club near you. Langara has our own club for students, staff and faculty.

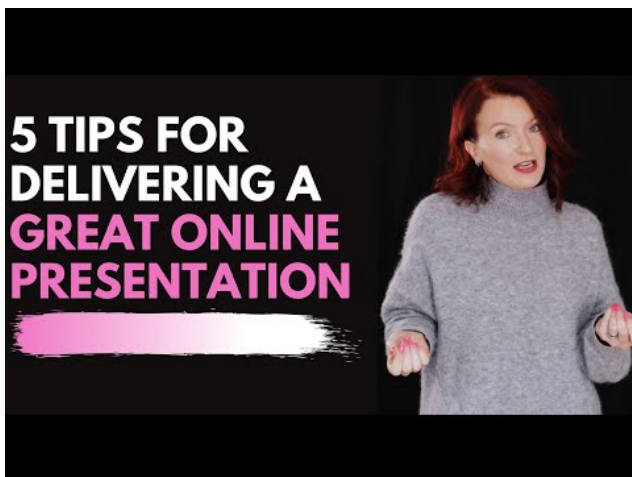Langara Toastmasters Club

Find a Toastmasters club near you

Videos

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