Oral communication is a core skill that will be developed through your courses at the Business School. In order to prepare for presentations, we recommend a 3 stage process. First analyse your audience, then examine the purpose of the speech, and then flesh out the message you want to communicate.

Analyse the audience

What is the audience's level of understanding of the subject matter? What do they need to learn from this presentation? What presumptions do they have about the topic? Will the presentation environment be casual or formal?

Analyse the purpose

The purpose helps to determine the content, style, and amount of audience participation. Do you want to motivate or entertain? Inform or analyse? Persuade? Consider the message and develop the main idea. What idea am I trying to convey to the audience? How can I make it interesting?

Plan the Presentation

Develop an outline or structure for the presentation that reflects the subject, purpose, audience, and the time allotted for the presentation. Select the best media to communicate your message in the presentation environment. Anticipate potential problems with equipment. How do I organise my message? What is appropriate length for the audience, message, and situation? What visual support can clarify the message while maintaining listeners' interest? What support documents will the audience need? When should those be distributed?

Develop the presentation

Introduction

Capture the audience's attention and arouse their interest by showing how this subject affects them. Inspire confidence in yourself by explaining your interest in this topic. Provide the framework of the presentation so your audience will know the route the presentation will take.

Body

Adhere to the framework you presented in the introduction as you develop the body. Give the listeners clear signposts as you move from one part of the presentation to the next. In a lengthy presentation, briefly summarise key points when the presentation takes a major shift in direction. Throughout, hold your audience's attention: relate your subject to the audience's needs; use clear and vivid language; and make connections between your subject and ideas to which the audience can relate. Design and present visual aids that enhance rather than detract from the message.

Final Summary/Conclusion

Restate main points and focus on the main message for the audience. Outline the action required. End on a positive note.

Six Essential Steps for Preparing for an Oral Presentation

1. Determine the purpose
2. Analyse the audience and situation
3. Choose the ideas for your message
4. Organise the data and write on note cards
5. Plan visual aids if desirable
6. Rehearse your presentation

Differences between Written and Oral Presentations

- Speaker and audience are visible
- Written texts can be re-read, but oral texts must be grasped the first time
- Written texts can deal with more complex points, as the readers are less distracted
- Oral presentations are more direct and informal - use of 'I', 'we', 'you' and informal language
- Rhetorical questions are common
- Repetition, restatement, and reinforcement are common
- Speaker uses intonation, stress, pause, emphasis and paralanguage (sounds like umm, huh…mmmm…) that convey meaning to the audience
- Speaker can respond to feedback from the audience

Delivery of a presentation

Appearance

Clothes and grooming	Consider the purpose of your talk and how your dress and grooming might impress the audience.
Body posture and movements	Stand upright on both feet with a relaxed not immobile body and move a steps towards the audience or backward or sideways to emphasise a point or get the audience's attention but do not pace backwards and forwards.

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Body language	Use movements and facial expressions as if you were talking to a person in a one-to-one situation. Smile particularly at the beginning of your presentation when you are introducing yourself or your topic and also as you end to show your positive attitude towards the audience.
Eye contact	Look at the audience as if you were trying to involve the audience in a conversation with you. You must look around at different areas of the audience and not concentrate on one or two people or a part of the audience, as the rest of the audience would feel left out.

Delivery of the content

Introduction	Clearly outline what you will be talking about. Use language that is inclusive and appropriate to spoken communication e.g. 'I'd like to talk to you about... I want to explain to you the... My talk will outline the... In this presentation I will concentrate on ...I have organised my presentation into three parts. The first is... to start I will describe ... then I'll ... and finally I intend to ...'
Body	Go from point to point in a logical sequence and use **transitional phrases** such as 'The next important point I want to mention is that... Having described ... I'd like to show some examples... Now I'd like to move on to the importance of ...'
Conclusion	Provide a good summary of what has been presented and use phrases that emphasise the importance of the information such as 'So we've examined the... to sum up let me... To conclude....'
Questions	You might suggest in your introduction that you are happy to answer questions at the end of the presentation. In your conclusion, you could remind the audience that you are willing to answer any questions. In your responses to questions, repeat the question if you think it has not been clearly heard, include all members of the audience in your response and if you do not know the answer perhaps indicate how or where it might be found out or that you will find out for them.

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Content	The content of the presentation should show the speaker's thorough knowledge of the topic.
	Particularly in a presentation **based on research and sources that the audience may be unfamiliar with,** the sources for the information should be clearly shown in any visuals and handouts or spoken clearly to the audience during the presentation to avoid *plagiarism.*
	Each idea or point mentioned in the presentation should be supported with evidence, examples or explanation. It is important that the topics are well prepared and that not too much, or too little content, is attempted in the time given.
Visual Aids	After the speech content is planned the use of visuals is carefully considered. Visual aids must be useful for the audience to help them understand. They appeal to the visual listener/thinker. The audience must easily see them so that colour, font size of words (no smaller than font size 16), size of diagrams and complexity of information must be considered. Visual aids must be introduced into the speech at appropriate times using introductory phrases such as 'In the following PowerPoint presentation there will be three diagrams that.... The first diagram illustrates... The overhead transparency I will show you gives a summary of ...'
	The speaker should give the audience enough time to look at the visuals and understand them. Visuals must be accurate (spelling, grammar, numbers, and statistics.) They must be fully referenced if the information is from a source unfamiliar to the audience. You should write full details as they were for a bibliography or reference list at the bottom of the slide.
Handouts	If handouts are given out to be used during the presentation, it is very important that their use is fully explained. Make sure the audience can find, and is looking at, any information that you want to emphasise.
	The handout could be a copy of an article or contain illustration of information written by you that will be discussed during the presentation. Always remember to cite your sources in the handouts for information you have researched to avoid *plagiarism.* Do not give too much information in the handouts, otherwise the audience will read rather than listen and

Notes	You should try to put your notes in point form and use them as reference points to remind you of the structure of your speech. They are not read out word for word as it is expected that you will talk naturally about a topic you have prepared and know about. Notes are on neat cards and their use is not to be too obvious to the audience.
Voice	Avoid a monotonous voice. Use pace, volume and stress important words to make the speech more interesting for the audience.
Time	Always speak to the time given. Rehearse the speech to identify whether timing is correct. Remember the average speech rate is about 120 – 200 words per minute so plan your speech content for the number of words that match the time length of the speech.
Language	Remember the audience must understand you. Consider language that is appropriate vocabulary for the topic and language that you are comfortable using and can pronounce. Also remember to use transitional phrases as they help the audience know what is happening and they make your speech sound 'immediate'. Remember, you are there talking to an audience full of living people not the back wall of a room or the carpet.
Attentiveness to audience	Remain attentive to what the audience is doing and respond to their indications of interest or confusion. If they seem inattentive consider rephrasing your information and talk directly to them using comments such as 'This next example is interesting because…' 'This next statistic surprises me because…' 'The slide shows the model I have been talking about in clear detail. You will notice that…' You may have to think as you are speaking of ways to explain or keep the audience's attention.

Team Presentations

Planning and rehearsing a team presentation is very important as the team can consider for example who would be the best person to introduce the presentation, how to organize a smooth delivery and whether timing is accurate. In a team presentation the first speaker may introduce themselves, state the main intention of the presentation, and then introduce the members of their team outlining briefly, and in order, what each speaker intends to speak about. The first speaker may then present their topic and then at the end invite the next speaker by name to come forward to speak. At the beginning of their part, each speaker may briefly explain again what they intend to speak about, and after finishing their part they will then invite the next speaker to present. This keeps the audience well-informed about what is happening and allows for a smooth transition from speaker to speaker.

Evaluation Checklists

Use this checklist both as a reminder before you present, and as an evaluation when you have finished.

Organisation	Content	Delivery
• enthusiastic introduction • clear introduction, body and conclusion • strong conclusion • clear points • adequate, relevant support/evidence • clear linking devices • appropriate timing	• question adequately answered • main areas of topic covered • relevant material • main points covered adequately • appropriate and strong evidence **Visual Aids** • clear, not too cluttered • easy to read • relevant • appropriate	• clear voice and well-projected • clear enunciation • speech not too fast • interest and enthusiasm • pauses between points **Audience** • appropriate body language • appropriate feedback • audience involvement

Quality		
First impressions Speaker appeared confident and purposeful before starting to speak Speaker attracted audience's attention from the outset		
Presentation structure ▪ *Introduction* Title/topic made clear Purpose of presentation clear Organisational framework made known to the audience Unusual terms defined adequately		

▪ ***Body of presentation***		
Main points stated clearly		
Sufficient information and detail provided		
Appropriate and adequate use of examples/ anecdotes		
Discussion flowed logically		
▪ ***Conclusion***		
Ending of presentation signalled adequately		
Main points summarised adequately/ ideas brought to fruition		
Final message clear and easy to remember		
Coping with questions		
Whole audience searched for questions		
Questions addressed in order		
Questions handled adeptly		
Full audience addressed with answers		
Speaker maintained control of discussion		
Delivery		
Speech clear and audible to entire audience		
Talk given with engagement and enthusiasm		
Presentation addressed to all parts of the audience		
Eye contact with audience throughout presentation		
Speaker kept to time limit		
Good use of time without rushing at the end		
Pace neither too fast nor too slow		
Visual aids and handouts - if appropriate		
Visual aids well prepared		
Visual aids clearly visible to entire audience		
Speaker familiar with own visual aids (e.g. OHT's, diagrams etc.)		
Effective use made of handouts and visual aids		
Handouts well-prepared and useful		
Assessor's comments: was this an effective presentation?		

This example of an assessment schedule is a useful guide; however if possible check with your lecturer/tutor for any specific assessment criteria that they may have.