

THE NEED OF LISTENING AND PRESENTATIONS SKILLS FOR MANAGERS

ABSTRACT

Today's corporate world is becoming more competitive hourly and daily. To up straight beyond the upcoming forces became more challenging. There, seeking the art of coloring own strengths is the best medium that can be uplifted. Becoming an excellent spokesperson is the best way to exhibit the own colors to the world. Meanwhile, it makes a superb deal to the managerial roles as well. It is not debatable the vitality of becoming a sharp spokesperson regardless the organization size or to which business in. No doubt, excellent presentations which are perfect or effective are the cells in blood of the organizational body which assist the organization to be alive. Presentation skills do not stand along. It stands with effective communication with the listeners. Because, effective presentations does not happen through a mere transmission of a message, but through the reception as well. According to Harryman et al. listening makes sense of what is heard and requires the individual to constantly pay attention, interpret, and remember what is heard. Hearing is passive; listening is active. The article traces the need and the way of using the twin skill of Presentations and Listening skills by managers.

Key words; Listening, Presentation

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO PRESENTATION AND LISTENING SKILLS



The major component of a presentation is the person who delivers the presentation. Hence, in an organization it can be either a manager of any level or a superior. Superiors or managers cannot be essential leaders unless the followers or the subordinates make enough credibility on

their superiors. Essentially to become a great leader it is needed to become a not better but a best convictional role and a trust worthy being. There, the “words” play a vital role as a sword. If one uses words well, it will hit the target vice versa if a one poorly uses words it will cut him/herself.

This delineates the worthiness of a presentation and the point of dexterity of



using the words. Nevertheless, a presentation does not carry only words.

Further, it runs with visual aids, linguistic skills, nonverbal cues and other materials including the presenter’s mannerisms. It is a battle

with many weapons and the dexterity of the presenter would decide the victory of it. And the challenge of the presentation is to grab the audience during this battle who glared at the presenter.

Presentation reflects the personality of the presenter via every gesture, movement, or even a facial expression that the presenter uses. Hence it is an inevitable factor to know which should be used and which should be avoided.

According to Aziz (1998) presentations are crucial to build and maintain relationships. Further, Aziz (1998) states that organizations that employ effective communicators winning effective presentations would improve the organizational competitive advantage by enhancing core competencies against competitors causing to make a better rapport with the stakeholders.

A Turkish proverb says “**If speaking is silver, then listening is gold**”. Listening is defined as the art of hearing and understanding what someone is saying. Listening is an activity that needs to be excelled physically and psychologically simultaneously. No matter how important listening is, there is very little effect taken to teach listening or most of us put very little emphasis in developing effective listening skills. Unless it is learnt, listening without comprehension does not possess any value. (Raman and Singh, 2006)

Listening involves hearing the speaker’s words, understanding the message and its importance to the speaker, and communicating that understanding to the speaker. The apparent problem is, of all the communication skills, listening is the earliest learned and the most frequently used (Rynders, 1999).

The passive listener is much like a tape recorder. If the speaker is providing a clear message, the listener will probably get most of what is said. Therefore, being an active listener became prudential. Active listening requires the listener to hear the words and identify the feelings associated with the words.

Communication is the most important skill in life. People spend hours utilizing one or more of the four basic types of communication: reading, writing, speaking and listening. The ability to do them well is absolutely critical, not only as managers and leaders but in all of life's roles.

THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION- KEY FACTORS

“Half of the word is composed by people who have something to say and can't, and the other half, who have nothing to say and keep on saying it.” (Frost, 2007)

Frost (2007) states that an oral presentation is relatively formal kind of a talk requiring preparation and some amount of writing.

To develop an effective presentation it is needed to concern on;

- I. The strategy and
- II. The structure of the presentation.

Built presentation based on these two factors should provide a Desire to Response.

Desire  Response

THE STRATEGY OF THE PRESENTATION

Strategy of the presentation directs the presenter to achieve the purpose of the presentation.

The section delineates 03 main aspects to be considered.

I. AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

According to Lesikar et al. (2008) audience analysis is one of the characteristics of a good presenter. They states that there are mainly two ways of analysis the audience.

- Preliminary analysis
- Analysis during the presentation

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS:

Analyzing the audience before the presentation requires that the presenter size it up – that the presenter search for audience characteristics that could affect how the presenter should present the speech. The size of the audience is likely to influence how formal or informal the speech should be. As a rule, large audience requires more formality.

Personal characteristics of the audience, such as age, gender, education, experience, and knowledge of subject matter also should influence how the presenter make the speech- affecting the words, illustrations, and level of detail that the presenter uses. Like writing, speeches/ presentations should be adapted to the audience. And the more the presenter knows about the audience, the better the presenter adapt the presentations to the

audience.

ANALYSIS DURING PRESENTATION:

The audience analysis should continue as the presenter makes the speech. Feedback is the information on how the listeners are receiving words. Armed with this information, the presenter can adjust the presentation to improve the communication result.

Eyes and ears will give the presenter feedback information. For example, facial expressions will tell the presenter how the listeners are reacting to the message (Response Message). Smiles, blank stares, and movements will give the presenter an indication of whether the audience understand, agree with or accept it. The presenter can detect from sounds coming from the audience whether they are listening. If questions are in order, the presenter can learn directly how the message /desire is coming across. In general, the presenter can learn much from the audience by being alert; and what the presenter learns can help to make a better speech. (Lesikar et al., 2007)

II. DEFINE THE PURPOSE

● **THE PURPOSE (WHAT):**

According to Lesikar et al (2007) the speaker must determine the topic of the presentation. It should support the presenters; background and knowledge, areas of proficiency; the interest of the audience and the occasion of the presentation.

Raman and Singh (2006) states the presenter must brainstorm the main ideas once the topic is clear.

A.) BRAINSTORM MAIN IDEAS -:

Brainstorming is the process of writing down any and every idea that comes into the mind while focusing on a particular topic. The objective is to get as many as ideas possible without being judgmental on it. Then eliminate the ideas which seem less relevant until you end up ideally with two to five which will consist as the main ideas for the presentation.

Further, they stated that once the main ideas are clear it is needed to identify the subtopics of the presentation.

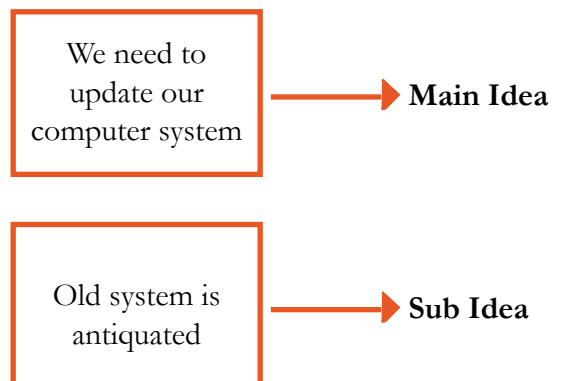
Example:



B.) STATE THE SUB-POINTS -:

Sub points will consist of explanations, data or other evidence to support the main idea. The presenter requires arranging the sub points in a logical way, keeping the objectives and audience in mind.

Example:



According to Raman and Singh (2006) identified ideas and points need to be stated in a way where the audience can understand the benefit of the presentation.

C.) STATE THE BENEFITS –:

It is important to tell the audience the benefits they will receive if they do what you ask them to do. The benefits are usually placed in the body of the presentation. Deriving from the above example

More money in our department will allow for a new computer system that will keep us competitive in our industry

● STATE THE SUB-POINTS –:

According to Dave (2010) depending upon the purpose of presentation to inform, to analyze, or to persuade—one should be flexible enough to adjust to new inputs & unexpected audiences reactions.

The strategy of the presentation directs the presenter the way of structuring the presentation. Presentation strategy is the basement of the structure of the presentation. According to the strategy the presenter needs to choose the best structure for his/her presentation.

DESIGN THE PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

With the identification of the strategy of the presentation it needed to be map. That

roads of the map is the presenter's structure of the presentation. It should consist with;

- Introduction
- Body - -> Point 01, Point 02,
- Conclusion

It is the saying of;

Tell them what you're going to tell them

Tell them

Then tell them what you told them



A.) INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESENTATION

The introduction of a presentation has the same goal as the introduction of a written report: to prepare the listeners to receive the message. But it usually has the additional goal of arousing interest. Unless the presentation arouse interest at the beginning, the presentation is likely to fail.

According to Raman (2006) introduction to a presentation is twofold;

First part of the introduction focuses on establishing the significance of the topic, and building a rapport with the audience. The

presenter can include a background material to establish the significance of the topic and start with a self-introduction. It is important to convince the fact that, the presenter is well aware of what is going to present and qualified to talk about the topic. The audience may otherwise, will not place trust on the content.

Second part of the introduction will focus on getting the attention from the audience. The presenter can use a variety of techniques to get the attention from the audience to start with. Presenter sometimes can use a question, humor, anecdote, quotation or a shocking statement. The importance of using them cannot be misjudged, but, the presenter needs to be very careful in using them, these can be used as long as they are relevant to the content and context.

According to the Dave (2012) an introduction must be brief & should state the subject. It should also capture attention, inspires confidence & preview the contents that follow.

B.) BODY OF THE PRESENTATION

When organizing the body of the presentation, the presenter needs to divide the points into comparable parts. The presenter needs to continue dividing as far as it is practical to do so. When dividing the presentation, the presenter needs to pay attention on time, place or quantity as the basis of division. Because in most of the speeches the presentation is likely to be built around issues and questions that are sub topics of the subject. (Lesikar, 2008)

Further Lesikar (2008) states that it is needed to emphasize the transition between the divisions (Sub topics) since the listener may miss if they are not adequately stressed.

Without a clear transition, the presenter may be talking about one point and the listener may be relating those ideas to the previous point.

According to Dave (2012) depending on the topic & introduction of the presentation, any of the following patterns of organizing the main body can be chosen on chronological, categorical, cause & effect and problem–solution bases.

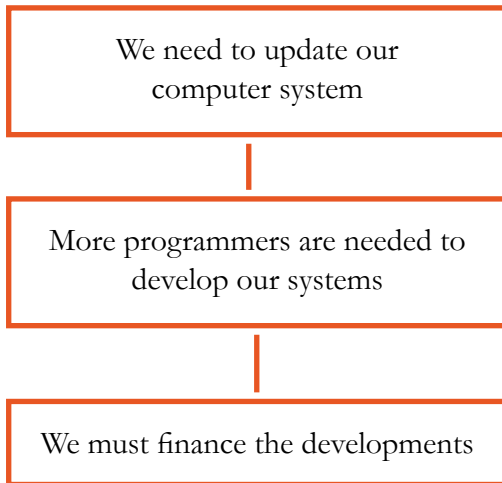
A.) CONCLUSION OF THE PRESENTATION

“A speech is like a love affair, any fool can start one but to end it requires considerable skill.”- Dave 2012 (as cited in Mancraft)

As stated by Raman & Singh (2006) good conclusions always return to material in the presentation. They normally should reference the background material, rhetorical question, anecdote or data that the presenter used in the introduction.

In persuasive presentations the presenter sometimes needs a “call to action” statement in the conclusion. The presenter must tell the audience what they need to do. The conclusion must tell the audience what specific actions they need to take, how to take it and when it must be taken. (Raman& Singh, 2006).

In other words, according to Raman and Singh (2006) preview and review of the main points in the presentation refer to the structure of the presentation. According to the previous elaboration of the example;



All effective presentations make the pattern of organization crystal clear to the audience.

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS MAKE AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTER

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

A large part of the presentation is about how the presenter appears in the eyes of the audience. Therefore, the presenter needs to be concerned on proper grooming. If not that may even lead to turn-off for a prospective client. Many authors claim that it is not only about a business suit. Harper suggests that it is about

“the suit that creases beings to look tatty by the end of the day – and the end of the day could be the crucial time for winning the contact. In a business setting use a pen that has the same class as the suit” (Harper, 2004)

USE A SIMPLE LANGUAGE:

The message needs to be conscious and direct. In addition, the language the presenter uses will be rather more important

too. An impressive and interesting language to match the strong image that is reflecting will always win the heart and soul of the audience. But, there is nothing wrong with keeping the language simple and using short sentences. Such sentences can be colored with light and shade by maintaining the appropriate pace to keep listeners’ interest on the topic. Harper points out that,

“If two presenters talk over each other or appear uncoordinated, they might as well go home” (Harper, 2004).

VISUAL AIDS:

According to Harper (2004) images that are included in presentations can make or break a presentation. The authors suggest that, one should use images which gives a meaning to the content, and do not distract the content appearing or the presenter while it is being delivered.

PHYSICAL ACTIONS:

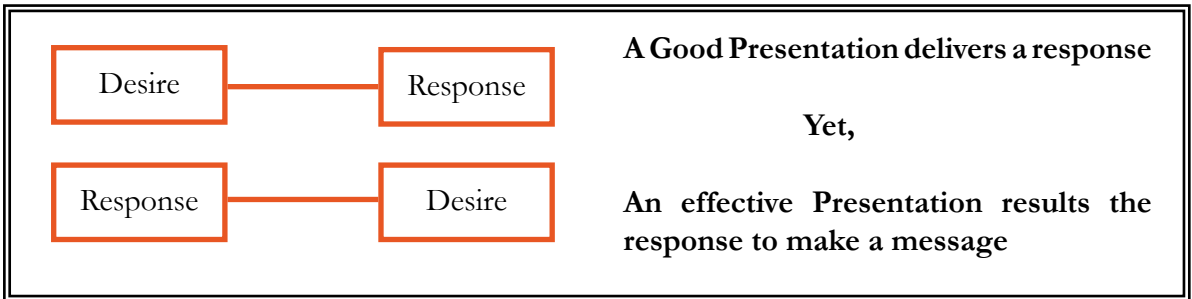
(Osada, 2004) states that the body language is another equally valid are in delivering an effective presentation. Eye contact, gestures, postures, facial expressions all will contribute to deliver a good presentation. The audiences feel more attentive when appropriate eye contacts are being maintained. It will be a powerful cognitive message. The presenter should not underestimate his/her ability to persuade an audience with the eye contact.

RELATIONSHIP WITH *DESIRE* AND *RESPONSE* IN AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION

Good presentations always deliver a desire which leads to a response. It gives a message to the listeners as discussed in 1.2

sections. Yet, to be an effective presentation the response should give a desire or message in return.

techniques which assist us in utilizing our listening. Time to its fullest extent, as described ---



THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION- KEY FACTORS

As stated by Gregory (1999) listening is a skill that underlies all leadership skills. It is the key to developing and maintaining relationships, decision making and problem solving. An ancient sage once said,

“We have been given two ears but one single mouth, in order that we may listen more and talk less.” (as cited in Rynders, 1999)

Atwater (1992) noted that success at all levels of management may depend on how well they listen to detailed instructions or to feedback from the staff. Of all the sources of information to help a manager know and evaluate the personalities of their department members, listening to the individual employee is the most important (Hunsaker and Alessandra, 1986).

ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

There are several active listening

---by Newkirk and Linden (1982). They are:

Paraphrasing, reflection, neutral technique, clarifying and summarization.

The first technique, paraphrasing, is restating the own words what the speaker means. This is valuable in testing the understanding of what the speaker means and lets them know that listeners are actively listening.

Reflection is slightly different from paraphrasing in that listeners tell the speaker what the listeners believes their feelings are rather than the content of the message. This is particularly important when the speaker expresses strong feelings.

The neutral technique encourages the speaker to continue talking. A simple nod of the head or **“uh-huh”** are usually effective signals that we are interested and listening.

Clarifying is the technique used when we need more information of a specific nature. It usually takes the form of a question.

The final technique is summarization. This involves combining the speaker’s thoughts into a concise statement which focuses on the speakers key points. This is particularly valuable in a group discussion where several statements

from different people need to be combined (Newkirk and Linden 1982).

Active listeners do not only pay attention to details. They use other sensory stimuli such as sight, voice, and feelings to listen better. They will not jump into premature biases or criticize people before listening. It is not always easy to develop one's listening skills unless s/he is actively trying to improve it. (Scarnati, 1998)

Scarnati (1998) identifies thirteen important points in an active listener.

1. Concentrate on listening to the other person from their point of view. Pay attention and keep an open mind. Listening requires physical as well as mental energy.
2. Listen first for the major points and then listen for the facts that give them credibility. Pinpoint the key facts. In a brief format, make notes of the key facts.
3. Keep your mind on the speaker and don't let it drift.
4. Make and maintain eye contact. Let people know they have your full attention.
5. Let the person talk. You know what you are thinking but you don't know what the other person is thinking. Withhold judgment until the speaker is finished.
6. Be observant. Nonverbal messages are often as important as verbal messages. Focus on the area around the eyes and hands. They are the most expressive area for sending nonverbal messages.
7. Occasionally, provide summary feedback

with a recapitulation statement to make sure the person said what you think she or he said (i.e. what I hear you saying is...). Ask for details and clarification as needed. Otherwise, be frugal with your questions.

8. Minimize distractions and interruptions. (I.e. phone calls). Unless necessary, don't interrupt the speaker.
9. If possible increase the comfort level by removing physical barriers such as desks, table
10. Control your emotions and be objective. Learn not to react to the meaning of emotionally charged words. You want to receive a message, not argue a point.
11. Listen for meaning beyond the spoken words. Sometimes meaning is found between the lines and not in what is said.
12. Demonstrate patience. Many people are not articulate and have difficulty expressing ideas.
13. Reschedule the meeting if you run out of time. Don't keep glancing at the clock. It's a dead giveaway that you are not listening. (Scarnati, 1998)

EMPATHIC LISTENING

Rynders states (as cited in Steven Covey 1989) the subject of empathetic listening:

If I were to summarize in one sentence the single most important principle I have Learned in the field of interpersonal relations, it would be this: Seek first to Understand, then to be understood.



This principle is the key to effective interpersonal communication.

Empathy is the ability to understand someone or something from the other persons perspective reports Axley (1996). It is the sincere and sustained effort to get outside ourselves and into another person's head and heart, to appreciate how and why another person interprets things and to fully understand something the way that person understands it.

Atwater (1992) identifies three things a listener can do to convey empathy. First, **show our desire to understand the person.** Second, **reflect the person's feelings or felt meanings.** Third, **pace the person's sensory and nonverbal behavior (p.56).** rd. as if stepping into the speaker's own shoes" (p. 57).

STEPS IN EMPATHIC LISTENING

According to Lucia (1995) this technique can work either between the two persons in conflict, with a third person acting as mediator, or even in a group.

Be Attentive/Focused:

Sit facing the person directly. Be aware

of the body language, keeping it in a relaxed position. Lean your body toward them and maintain eye contact. Pay attention to both the speaker's and your non-verbal communications.

Respond:

Listen patiently to what the other persons has to say, even though the listener may believe it is wrong or irrelevant.

Restate/Summarize:

Restate the person's feeling briefly, but accurately. Encourage the other person to continue talking.

Clarify:

Elicit more information about the person's perspective by drawing him/her out with clarifying questions.

Reflect Feelings:

show that listener understand the speaker's point of view without agreeing with them.

CONCLUSION

Listening and Presentations skills are twin skills which are inevitable for a manager. They create a sharp manager and a good leader. Communication skill developed based on these two pillars and whenever and wherever a person can develop a good communication skill is able to develop a better rapport with others. The relationships are the water for the plant of success. Every person talks and listens.

But the problem lies with the way

of doing it. Enhancing a better mannerism on communication skill may difficult to commence at a sudden. But it is a process of development. Therefore, the managers should aware how they practice these twin skills for the betterment of the organizations. Managers are the personalities who act as leaders within the organizations.

Hence, it is inevitable to act the liaison role, spokesperson, disseminator role, negotiator role and other management roles. All these roles cling to the hands of speaking and listening. Therefore, before jumping to conclusions it is vital to practice these twin skills in order to create better relationship with other which led to achievement of the organizational goals, objectives and ultimately the vision of the organization together. The statement of **“together achieves all”** would be implemented in the organization by simply practicing these twin skills by the management of the organization.

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