

Presentation Tips for Written Events

WRITE: Your Presentation

Your Role & Your Judge's Role

Always plan a presentation with the audience's perspective in mind. In this event, your judge is your audience and he/she has one main role. You, as the presenter, have two roles.

The judge's role is:

1. To be the judge for your event, selecting the winner.

Your two roles are:

1. To be yourself and do the best you can as a competitor!
2. To convince the judge your project is the best

With this in mind, you will be able to prepare an effective presentation.

Your Introduction

When you consider how important first impressions are, there is no reason to have anything less than a dynamic introduction!

As you enter your event area, make eye contact and smile at your judge. You'll read more about your body language later. For now, let's focus on writing an introduction that will be a lasting impression.

You should have the first two minutes of your presentation memorized verbatim. The introduction may roll differently each time you practice which means you may be surprised in the actual event. No surprises! Take control and know how it will roll.

For a team, the introduction may be like this:

You: *"Hello, Mr. Judge. (Shaking hands) My name is Tara Richardson, and I'm a senior DECA member.*

Partner: Hello, (shaking hands) my name is (partner's name). This is also my senior year, and this is our first year in DECA competition. We look forward to presenting to you our Chapter Team Event about (insert project topic). Are you ready for us to begin our presentation?"

Judge: *Yes.*

You: *"Mr. Judge, it's a pleasure to meet with you. As chairpersons on (insert project name), we have prepared a 10-minute presentation about our project to share with you today.*

Partners should always participate equally in the presentation. It is a good idea to switch between each other in every section of the presentation. Hearing from each of you keeps the presentation interactive and interesting. Jumping back and forth every couple of sentences is too frequent, but sharing each topic is a good idea.

Structure Your Presentation

1. Tell them what you're going to tell them. (your opening)
2. Tell them. (the body of your presentation)
3. Tell them what you just told them. (your closing)

These three steps have been around awhile and provide a good blue print for most presentations.

Tell 'em What You'll Tell 'em

After your 'introductory statements,' you should tell your judge what you will be telling him/her. Why? If you tell someone what they are about to hear, they will listen for it, hear it, and retain it. It's pretty elementary actually!

So, you might be wondering, do I just say, "I'm gonna be telling you yada yada yada..."? To some degree, yes.

For a dynamic 60-second schpeel on what you're going to tell'em use these five components:

- Purpose Statement
- Objective
- Position
- End Results
- Next Step or Future Statement

The purpose statement will help your judge stay focused on the key point(s) of your presentation and may sound something like this:

"The one key point (or two or three) I'd like you to remember from my presentation is ____."

Your objective is a defining statement of your reason for presenting, and it may sound like this:

"My objective today is to tell you about the project our chapter conducted on ____ (annual topic) and tell you about the challenges, lessons, and success we had with this project."

A situation overview should come next. Outline any concerns or successes that paint a picture of the current situation.

"Our chapter currently ____ (regarding the project or topic.)

State the end result.

"At the end of the project, we ____."

Propose your next step.

"In the future, ____."

A specific example which isn't related to your project from the book *The Exceptional Presenter* by Koegel is as follows:

"The key point I would like you to remember today is this: We will be unable to grow as a business unless we correct our inventory inefficiencies.

My objective this afternoon is to persuade you to approve the purchase of the Acme inventory software in order to put an end to our inventory crisis.

Our current position is one of reacting to inventory changes instead of anticipating customer demand. We have recently lost two significant customers because of botched orders. We have an additional problem in that our regional offices are unable to communicate inventory fluctuations to a central location.

The end result of our inventory problem is that we're losing customers, and we're losing \$3 million per quarter.

If we upgrade to the Acme software, we will benefit by holding on to the \$3 million per quarter, and our more efficient response time will create greater customer loyalty.

The next step is to approve the purchase of the software this afternoon and have it in place within 30 days."

After the segment of 'telling 'em what you're going to tell 'em, you'll then begin to tell 'em.

Another arrangement puts more emphasis on the objective:

"The situation is as follows. We are using antiquated inventory software. Our response time to customer requests is unacceptable. In addition, our regional offices have no way of communicating inventory status to a central location.

The end result of our inefficiency is that we're losing \$3 million per quarter and we're losing customers.

My objective this afternoon is to persuade you to purchase new inventory software immediately in order to correct this situation.

The three things I'd like you to think about today are 1) Our inventory problem has a strangle hold on our ability to grow as a company. 2) Our existing inventory software isn't getting it done. And 3) We have identified a viable software option that can remedy the situation.

The next step is to approve the purchase of the new Acme inventory software and have it in place within 30 days."

Each opening example is approximately 60 seconds. Write yours and time it. Memorize it.

The Exceptional Presenter, Timothy J Koegel. pp 34-38. Greenleaf Book Press, 2007.

Add an Attention Grabber

If you'd like to add something more to the beginning of your presentation to set the tone and gain attention, consider the following:

- a quote
- a statistic
- a question
- something from current news
- a story relating to the topic
- humor
- a prediction
- a poem or rhyme
- a skit
- an extended pause

For the confident presenters, something above may make the presentation more creative and be reflective of a personal style.

Tell 'em

Use the same framework for the body of your presentation, going into more detail as time allows. How much time on each aspect of the project will depend on what you want to highlight.

Use stories, examples, quotes, and facts to make your presentation memorable to the judge.

As you bring your project to life in the presentation:

Be creative!

Be organized!

Be enthusiastic!

Don't Dilute Your Presentation

Your presentation should be loaded with factual, confident statements.

You're trying to make an impact, so don't dilute your message with qualifying words such as "sort of" or "kinda". For example:

"We need to move on this"... not ... "I think we need to move on this".

"It's time to begin" ... not ... "I guess it's time to begin".

"I secured the interview" ... not ... "I sort of secured the interview".

"We need to change the training" ... not ... "maybe we should change the training".

There are times when "I think" and "I guess" are appropriate but be wise when you use them.

Tell 'em What You Told 'em

What you say last will be remembered most so make sure you memorize your presentation to the end so you can deliver it with power!

DO NOT just finish with a blank stare at the judge expecting him/her to know you're presentation is complete. Instead, after finishing what you plan to tell 'em, ask if there are questions from the judge. "This concludes my presentation. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time." After answering the judge's questions, finish strong with a final purpose statement.

"Thank you for your time. We hope we have shown you the hard work we have put into this project as well as the impact our DECA chapter has made."

As you shake the judge's hand a final time, smile and say with gratitude, "Thank you Mr. Judge (insert judge's name) for your time as a DECA judge today."

Make An Impression

Using Visuals

Believe it or not, the simpler, the better. Professional, yet simple will have the best WOW factor for the judge.

Visuals are an enhancement to your presentation, but they shouldn't be the focus of your preparation time, or your presentation. Your judge will be focused on you, your confidence, and your content. How well you use your visual aides are a part of the points you can earn, but it is HOW well you use the visuals, not how fancy they are.

One method of deciding what should be highlighted visually is to give your presentation several times without visual aides. As you present, you'll probably notice that a visual aide would help explain certain things or enhance the impact of certain components of your presentation.

A good rule to follow: Only put something on a visual if it enhances the concept. Often, a picture is literally worth a 1,000 words. Sometimes, a chart or graph can show a dramatic statistic, but adding a graph to your display boards for every question on a survey isn't necessary. Create boards which are easy to read from the judge's point of view.

Create your boards to help tell your story; think outside the box.

Don't forget to practice with your visuals aides. Set-up and take-down need to be smooth. (Believe it or not, some competitors admit they've never used their easel or tri-stand to hold their boards as they fumble around trying to get organized. Don't let that be you! Another important note: Don't forget to take your visuals with you to competition!)

Body Language

Your stance while you present or listen as your partner presents is important. Hands at your sides is a very good base position. Don't be a concrete statue but instead return to this base position after gesturing and other movements.

- Clasping your hands in front is appropriate at times but not all the time.
- Clasping your hands behind you is awkward and isn't professional.
- Hands in your pockets is a little too nonchalant.

- Hands on hips is challenging.
- Arms crossed is a defensive posture.

If you are seated, scoot up to the table, sit up straight, and keep your hands on the table.

Gestures

Gestures are a great way to add interest into your presentation. There are five gestures from *The Exceptional Presenter* that author Timothy Koegel explains how to use effectively.

The **"Claw"** is the hand movement many meteorologists use to show regions on the map. It is the hand extended, with fingers together, thumb out. When to use it:

- "We can eliminate that possibility."
- "Let's set that aside for the time being."

Use Numbers 1-5 for emphasis on a point.

- "If you remember only one thing ..."
- "We have three objectives ..."

Shift hands side to side or up and down to **Show Comparisons**

- "Our customer base has grown from 1000 to 1500."
- "The cost has decreased from \$100 to only \$50."

Move hands to **Show Action** from Verbs

- "Our goal is to increase our revenue while decreasing our expenses."
- "We will expand ..."

When **Using Timelines & Pinpointing Dates**

- "We will offer incentives from January until May."
- "The start date is December 15."

Hold your gestures for 2-3 seconds to be distinct.

After gesturing, place your hands back at your sides.

The Exceptional Presenter, Timothy Koegel. pp 74-81.

Presenting With Power

It's a landslide vote. Confidence is key. If you feel confident, you'll agree with the lists below. The question is, how do you look the part if you are nervous and not feeling overly confident?

Here are Do's for your presentation to help you appear confident :

1. When you enter a room, do it with purpose, walking as if you know where you're going.
2. Stand with good posture.
3. Stay focused with good eye contact, not staring but looking at the person you are talking to as you would a friend.
4. Have a sincere smile, not cheesy, but pleasant and warm.

Here are Don'ts:

1. Don't back up as you speak.
2. Don't lean, or rock, or shift from side to side.
3. Don't mess with change in your pocket.
4. Don't twirl your hair or fidget with an earring or necklace.

If you're a bit nervous, that's okay. Nervous energy can be exhilarating!

Watch the Confidence module again.

Practice, practice, practice... and Good Luck!

Tell yourself, "I CAN DO THIS!" and then, do it!