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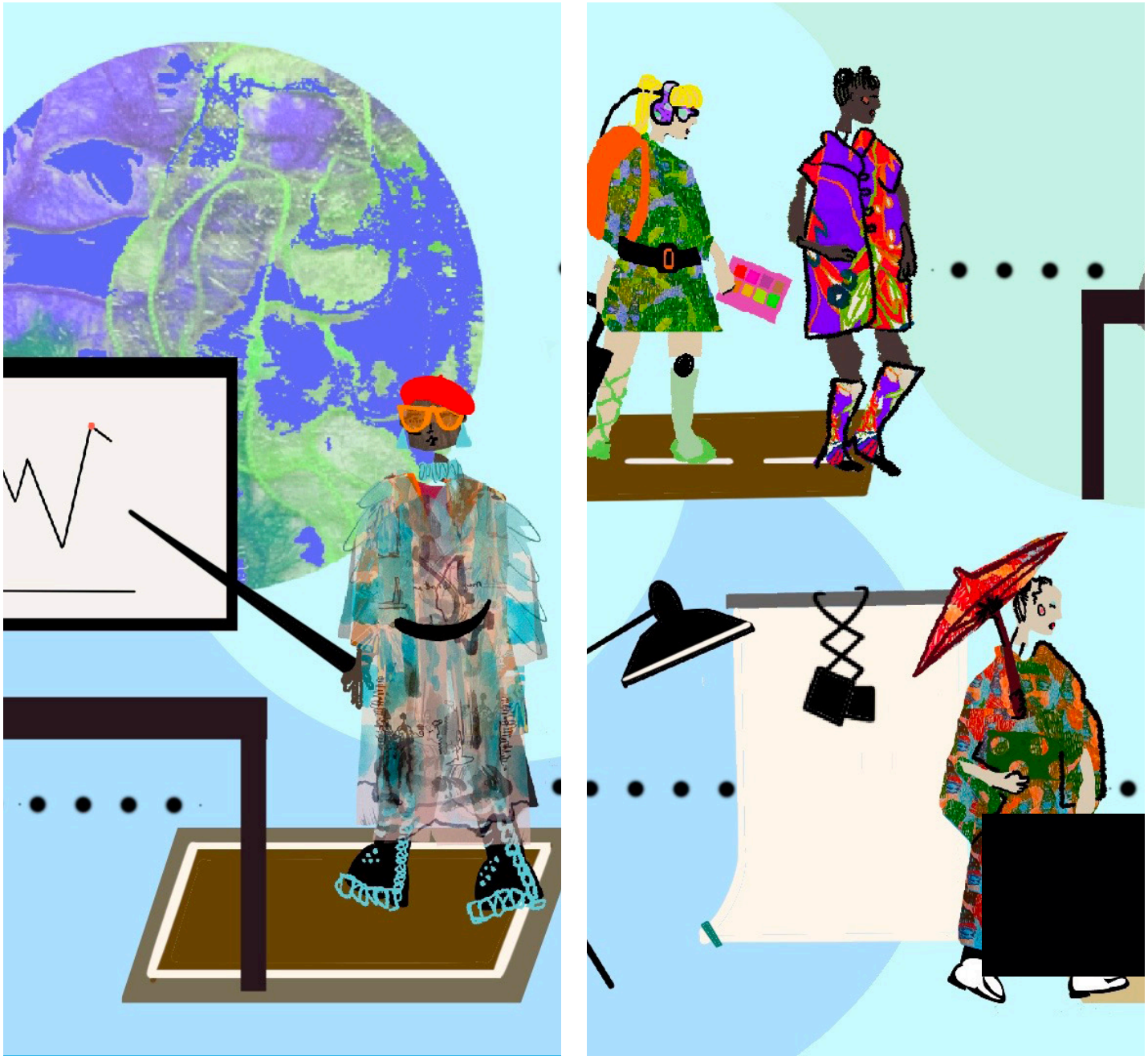


Illustration by Priscilla Fung

Guide to presentation skills

What are Presentation skills?

Presentation skills are the skills that you need to deliver an effective and engaging presentation to an audience. These skills encompass a variety of areas such as the structure of your presentation, the design of your slides, the tone of your voice and the body language you convey.

Types of Presentation

An Informative Presentation

An informational presentation is a common request in business and industry. It is the verbal and visual equivalent of a written report, so should be kept brief and serve to present specific information, for specific audiences, for specific goals or functions.

An Instructional Presentation

An instructional presentation gives specific directions or orders. It covers your topic thoroughly to ensure your audience comes away with new knowledge or a new skill.

An Arousing Presentation

An arousing presentation is to make people think about a certain problem or situation. It communicates to the audience's emotions and intellect so that they will be receptive to your point of view. The use of vivid language is required in this type of presentation to project sincerity and enthusiasm.

A Persuasive Presentation

This specific type of presentation encompasses a goal of convincing the audience to accept a point of view. The speaker presents in a strategic way to encourage the audience to accept all or part of the expressed view.

A Decision-making Presentation

This presentation is delivered when a decision needs to be made, and you want to make the best decision. You know that you need input, so you have asked a couple of subordinates or colleagues to present you the options. In other words, you can set the specifications for the presentation.



Amber Duke-Cohan during her Internship at Superdrug
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Presentation Delivery Skills

These are the key skills required to deliver a presentation effectively.

- Verbal Communication: The ability to speak and articulate in a clear, concise, and logical way in front of an audience.

- Written and Visual Communication: The ability to utilise visual content on slides or visual aids to support and prompt dialogue. Content should be brief, clear, and engaging to the audience.

- Leadership: The ability to take charge, as the audience looks to you for guidance, they want you to lead them and guide them into a higher state of knowledge, awareness, emotion, action. You are in charge.

- Adaptability: The ability to adapt is an important presentation survival skill, this is because regardless of preparation, it is possible for your presentation to go off in an unexpected direction - especially when involving your audience.



Alys Tomlinson © Amber Duke-Cohan
during her Internship at Superdrug

- Organisation and Time Management: The ability to plan and deliver your presentation, by organising the visual aid, flow, purpose, and content to fit the time constraints, whilst ensuring you achieve your objective.

- Self-Awareness: The ability to identify your strengths and development areas and lead your presentation with your strengths.

Structuring your Presentation

A structure provides a logical flow to your presentation. This provides the audience with all the presentation clearly. Clear structure is vital to ensure that your presentation is organised, indicate your confidence in the topic and gain the audience's trust. When they engage, they will be more likely to listen to you.

Structuring your presentation will also help you become more comfortable following its flow. There is a natural structure to presenting and the following structure formalises this process.

- Purpose: To determine your purpose ask, "What are the main points I want my audience to take away from my presentation"? This provides focus for you and the audience is clear on what they will gain listening to your presentation.

- Audience pre-assessment: It is important to identify the characteristics, knowledge and needs of your audience so that you are delivering the 'right' presentation to the 'right' audience. Know who your audience is, what they want/need to know and what their background is. This step is done before the presentation or throughout.

- Opening your Presentation/Bridge: This is also known as the hook. It is designed to grab the audience's attention and provide them with a reason to be interested in the presentation.

- Body of Presentation: This is the major portion of the presentation. It is necessary that it connects directly to your purpose or bridge. Cover enough points to achieve your purpose (no more) and be sure to support your points clearly and concisely.

- Closing your Presentation: This is the final impression that you will leave with your audience-make sure it is a strong one. Connect back to your purpose and let them know where you have been. Leave your audience with a clear understanding of your points.

Presentation Techniques: 10 - 20 - 30 Rule

10 Slides

By having a limit of 10 slides, you will be managing the cognitive load for your audiences. They can easily follow the flow of your presentations. It also challenges you to design and organise your presentations, by choosing what is important and leaving out unnecessary content.

20 Minutes

By giving yourself a limited period to deliver your presentation, you are challenging yourself to leave out unnecessary details and focus on the important stories that will convey your message. Even if your session has been allotted more time, you can devote the remaining minutes to discussions, questions, or any technique that involves audiences with your presentation.

30-size Font

Depending on the room and screen size, most audiences will be able to see text that are at least 30-size font. When designing your presentation, keep in mind that anything you show must be visible to everybody in attendance, especially those in the back.



Anna Maglione, In the studio © Alys Tomlinson

Keep in mind that these rules are guidelines, so are very subjective and each situation is unique. Apply them as a guide within the planning of your presentations. Other circumstances may come, and you may need to be flexible, whilst keeping the presentation organised and concise.