Job Aid
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Introduction
Presenting to adults is very different than presenting to children. Time is a precious commodity for working adults. They generally want to do things efficiently and quickly - the path of least resistance.

This includes learning about software where the learning presentation must be clear, concise, organized and to the point in order to make the maximum use of time. Adults also want to know how something will benefit them personally, especially in relation to their job.

The soft skill guidelines within this job aid have been developed from business literature and are specifically designed for adults.

The section on Creating effective presentations is designed to be generic with tips and suggestions that can be applied to a variety of presentation situations. This portion of the job aid includes developing presentations and visual aid design.

For the section on Communication process, this job aid will touch on issues such as interpersonal skills, barriers to communication, giving and receiving feedback and, most importantly, rehearsal and practice.

The final portion of this job aid includes a presentation Activity, Trainer Notes, and a section on Resources.
Creating effective presentations

Presentation purpose and objectives
Determining the purpose and objectives of your presentation will help you to focus on the kind of presentation you want to develop.

What are the objectives of your presentation?
• Why are you giving this presentation?
• What do you want to accomplish?
• What does the audience expect?
• What do you want the audience to understand?
• What do you want the audience to remember?

Types of presentations
The type of presentation that you develop is based on the content of your material, the target audience, and your objectives. Different types of presentations can include training or teaching a skill or topic and sharing information.

Training or teaching a skill or topic
This form of presentation is designed to train or teach a new ability, skill and or trade.

Presentation strategy
• Introduce the skill or topic you will be teaching/training.
• Establish the importance of what will be taught.
• Explain the skill or topic through examples, elaboration, and/or exercises.
• Conclude or review the information presented.
• Suggest ways that your audience can obtain further information to learn more.

Sharing information
This type of presentation is used to narrow an information gap between you and your audience.

Presentation strategy
• Introduce the information you are going to share with your audience.
• Explain how it relates to other information.
• Establish why it is important to share this information.
• Suggest where this information could possibly lead.
**Presentation issues**
No matter what strategy you use, there are some issues you should address to make sure you are supplying your audience with the information they need.

- If there are certain aspects of your topic you will not cover, but could be viewed by your audience as important, you might want to address these things briefly and explain why you are not covering them.
- Determine if you will have to establish the history of your topic in order to clarify things for your audience.
- Decide if you will need to establish how the information you are presenting will benefit your audience.
- If there is an order to what you are discussing, make sure you establish that in the beginning; it will make everything clearer for your audience.
- Always make sure you have proof to support what you are talking about. This will establish your credibility as a speaker.

**The audience**
Knowing your audience is critical when designing your presentation.

- How much does the audience already know about your topic? This will determine how much information you will have to give the audience at the beginning of your presentation.
- Is your audience willing to accept new ideas?
- To how many people will you be speaking? With a small group it might be possible to have a more thorough analysis of your topic. However, a large group often requires a presentation to be more general.

Remember the basic objectives of your presentation must meet the needs and objectives of your audience.
Speech/Presentation development

- Do not assume the audience knows what you mean; always define words or phrases for purpose of clarity. How detailed your definitions are will depend on your audience.
- Consider limitations imposed by time. Many subjects cannot be explained or fully developed in the available speaking time. Under these conditions speeches/presentations must be narrowed and focused.
- Pay attention to the amount of time allotted to each portion of the speech in order to ensure that more weight is given to the more important aspects of your presentation.

Studying other presentations can give you ideas for your own.

Speech/Presentation writing

It is important to say more about less by focusing a speech instead of trying to cover too much. Covering too much will make a speech too sketchy to be effective. It is better to focus your presentation on certain aspects of your topic. Your objective is to organize your ideas and materials into a cohesive presentation, which will make a positive impression on your audience.

Speech writing strategy

- Develop an outline. Outlining your speech will give you a better idea on coordinating a series of points, which have elements in common. Each section of your outline should have only one idea or statement.
- Sequence your presentation outline. This will help give you a structure on which to build.

Review the main ideas to make sure you are in line with the objectives and purpose of your presentation.

Do not give an audience too much information, which will result in them remembering less.
A speech is generally composed of 3 parts:
- Introduction
- Body or main part
- Conclusion.

The purpose of an introduction is to:
- Introduce yourself (why are you qualified to speak on this subject and who you are)
- Inform your audience what your speech/presentation is about
- Gain the audience's attention
- And give the audience some background information on your subject.

Make the organization of your speech clear to your audience from the beginning by providing an overview of the presentation format. This format can entail presenting the main points you will be discussing via an outline. A presentation outline will keep things in order, put things in a time frame, and help the audience to recall information.

**Body or main part**
The body of your speech is the elaboration of the main topic areas presented in your introduction.

**Conclusion**
The conclusion refers back to the introduction and is your opportunity to review what you have told your audience.
- Wrap up the main points you have presented.
- Answer any questions your audience may have.

**Dealing with anxiety**
When it comes to speaking in public we all want to be confident and favourably received by an audience. However, for most of us, the first reaction we have to speaking in public is fear. This fear is the normal anxiety we feel when we are in a situation where performance is important and the outcome is uncertain.

**Tips**
Give yourself enough time to plan your presentation. Do not procrastinate.

On the day of your presentation, check your room and equipment, think positively, and visualize a successful presentation.
Strategies for reducing stress and controlling speech anxiety
• Accept that it is normal to feel anxious.
• Make sure you are organized in your thoughts by concentrating on what and how you are going to say things.
• Be prepared by having well-organized notes.
• Take the time to rehearse and practice, this will help you feel more comfortable with your presentation material. Rushing will only make you more anxious.

Handouts
Handouts generally refer to the reproduction of images and/or information in the form of printed materials.

The purpose of handouts is to...
• Reinforce important information.
• Summarize information within the presentation.
• Supply support material and data.

Presentation environment
The environment where you present can have a dramatic effect on your presentation. Obviously the best solution is to choose the type of room in which you want to present. However, often when we present in a room environment that is chosen for us, we have to make do. The solution is to make the best of what is available to you.

Room check
When ever possible, check the room where you will be presenting well in advance and arrive early enough to set up the room environment the way you want.

Audience seating
Be aware of where you will be standing in relation to the audience. The objective is to make sure that your audience will have the best view of you and your visual aids.
Noise
It is important to determine if there are any noises or distractions that will negatively affect your presentation.

- An intercom system. Can it be turned down or off so there will be no interruptions during your presentation?
- Noisy equipment. (i.e. phones, machines, printers, etc...). Can the noisy equipment be moved or turned off so they will not create a distraction?

Lighting
If you are using visual aids, you will need to know what the lighting environment is like. The ideal situation is to have lights on a dimmer or the ability to shut off certain lights. For example, you may want some lights on, so the audience can take notes. However, often we find ourselves in a room where the lighting choice is either on or off. If you cannot change the lighting, it is important to determine if your visuals (overheads) can still be seen.

Technology check
If your presentation requires the use of technology (computers, software) always check to see if it is working properly well before your presentation. Checking things out beforehand is better than checking things out when you are in front of an audience.

Time considerations
It is essential to be aware of the available speaking time allocated for your presentation. The time factor will determine how much detail and information your presentation can entail.

Always consider your audience's time. For adults their time is usually limited.

The time of day you will be presenting can effect your audiences' response to your presentation. For example, if you are presenting late in the day or just before lunch, your audience could be hungry and/or tired, which can adversely effect their attention span. In these situations, try to be livelier in your delivery and definitely do not go over your time limit.
Images for projection and display

Include:
- Film and video
- Slides 35mm
- Overhead transparencies or acetates
- Flip charts
- Computers

For this job aid we will only discuss presenting using computers.

Testing legibility of projected materials
1. Make a sample visual using the kind of lettering and or images that you will use in your presentation.
2. Project this sample visual on a screen, stand in the back of a room or at a similar distance as in the room you will be speaking in.
3. Determine if the visual can be seen and read without strain.

Computers
Using computers can enable presenters to use multimedia and graphics to get their message across.

Some considerations when presenting with computers
If you are demonstrating with a computer, the size of your audience will have a profound effect on how you can present.

Presenting to a small group
With a small group it may be possible to present software using only a monitor. Your main consideration is that all members of your audience can see the screen. Be aware that lights can reflect off a screen making it difficult to see the image; always check for this.

Presenting to a large group
Demonstrating a computer application to a large group requires an image, which is much larger than a monitor screen. To do this, you will need to be able to project the computer image onto a larger screen.
Creating visual aids (overheads)
The purpose of a visual aid (overhead) is to supply impact and enhance what you are saying.

Determining what visuals to use is effected by...

The content of your presentation
- Will a visual add to your presentation and enhance what you are saying?
- Will a visual make the purpose and objectives of your presentation easier to understand?
- Will a visual make what you are saying easier for the audience to follow?
- Will a visual convey to your audience what you want them to learn?

Resources
- The equipment you have access to.
- The facilities that are available to you.
- How much time you have to put together your visuals.

Other considerations
- Can the point and or concept you are trying to make be put into a visual form?
- Will a visual fit into your presentation and complement the other visuals?

Visual aid design considerations
Visually should only include words, images, graphs, and charts that directly relate to what you are talking about.
- Overall design of a visual should not be crowded. Too much visual or verbal information will result in your audience losing interest.
- Visual aids should be clear and simple without unnecessary details. Complicated visuals with too much information can be confusing for an audience.
- It is essential that every bit of information on the visual aid is large enough for all of the audience to see (i.e., make all details large, put lines in bold, and use contrasting colours).
- Only use simple lettering, unambiguous terms and symbols that the audience can easily understand.
• Keep in mind that you want your visuals to focus the audience's
  attention where and when you want it.
• It is not necessary to have a visual for everything you say.
  Having too many visuals can result in information overload for
  your audience.

Using images
The objective of visual aids is to be visual. Using visuals with only
  text can become boring so whenever possible use images (i.e.,
  pictures, charts, and graphs) to illustrate what
  you mean. Images are more interesting than
  text and can be remembered by an audience
  long after your presentation is finished.

Be conscious of good design
Make sure the elements within a visual
  complement and work together to bring your
  message across. This applies to text as well as images.

Use emphasis to draw attention to important aspects of a visual
  through arrows, colour, font size, and or object/image size.

Arrangement
It is important that the arrangement of the images and/or text is
  designed in such a way that it will effectively grab the audience's
  attention.

Arranging things in geometric shapes (i.e. oval, rectangle triangle)
  or letters of the alphabet can be used as an underlying pattern to
  display images on a visual. These are common shapes and will help
  make your images look organized within the visual.

Colour
Colour can accent essential information for the audience by
  creating a mood or emotional response towards your material.
• Consistency with colour can help make things more clear, for
  example, the same background colour can be used for each
  section of your presentation (i.e. blue for statistical information
  and green for research).
• Letter colouring should contrast with the background. This helps
  with legibility and draws attention to written words.

Tip
Too many colours can make an image confusing to look at.
Text on visuals
No matter what visual aid you decide to create, if you are going to use text, there are a number of things that need to be thought about and planned.

Some considerations when using text...

Limit the amount of text
- Having too much text on a visual will make it difficult to read.
- If you want verbal information on a visual, it is generally best to use a maximum of 36 words with 6 lines and only 6 words per line.
- Text should be brief in order to get your main points across and help your audience to remember the information. This also applies to text with images (i.e. pictures, charts, or graphs). However, a projected visual with only one or a few words is too brief and is a waste of time.

Format and organize text
- It is best to put text in point form. Keeping your points brief will make it easier for your audience to read the information. A speaker can always elaborate on the text information that is presented on the screen.
- If you are listing things on your visual, using numbers can make the information better organized and easier to follow.
- Headings on each visual can help organize the material and give the audience something to associate with your points.

Typeface
Do not use lettering that is too detailed to read easily. It is pointless to use something that may be beautiful to look at, but difficult to read. Instead try to use simple lettering styles.

Font size
Do not use a font size that is too small. It is pointless to have text that your audience cannot read. It is best to experiment with different font sizes to determine which is easier for the audience to read.
Presenting with visual aids
- Rehearse your presentation with the visual aids you are going to use. Running your presentation through from beginning to end will give you an idea on how long your presentation is and give you the opportunity to make any necessary changes. Whenever possible, rehearse in the room you are going to speak using the same technology.
- When presenting make sure your entire audience can see the visual aid.
- When speaking always face your audience not the visuals.
- If possible, once you have finished with a visual, remove it to maintain the audience’s attention on what you are saying.
- Do not present a visual aid before you are ready to talk about it. Seeing a visual before it is discussed can be distracting to an audience.

Visual aids are only there to aid and enhance your speech. A visual aid does not have to be self-explanatory. You, as the speaker, can always verbally add information increasing the value of the visual as a means to communicate. The objective is to have something that will help you to get your point across.

Presenting technology
- When presenting technology, either software or hardware, always use an outline that presents the material in a logical sequence.
- The presentation should, whenever possible, build on your audience’s knowledge of the topic.
- It is also recommended to have an activity, which will help the audience to understand how the technology can be used.
The communication process

Interpersonal skills
Interpersonal skills reflect our ability or inability to interact and communicate with others in constructive ways. How effective our interpersonal skills are will determine the success of our social and work interactions.

In face to face situations, the basis of interpersonal communication is the ability to:
• listen
• assist each other
• interact congenially with other people.

It has been found that ideas and topics are facilitated more readily when discussions are as concise and specific as possible. This can be achieved through ‘checking understanding’ or what is also described as ‘active listening’ whereby when someone has finished what he or she is saying the individual listening then condenses the information and reiterates the important points back to the speaker. Achieving this necessitates being able to focus on what is being said by mentally reformatting the speaker’s words in order to understand the specific points of the discussion.

Non-verbal communication
In face-to-face situations there is generally a great deal of communication taking place through non-verbal language (e.g., body language, tone of voice, facial expressions) even though the dominant mode of communication is speaking. This non-verbal communication is taken for granted in face-to-face conversations, but communicating is more than speaking and listening. It is these non-verbal elements of communication that can provide a great deal of information and can be an important means of learning.

Nonverbal cues can differ dramatically from culture to culture. An American hand gesture meaning "A-OK" would be viewed as obscene in some South American countries. Be careful.
Barriers to Communication

Information overload
Information overload is a frequent problem with technology because of the ease that this medium enables information to be generated. This situation occurs when too much information (data) is provided than what is actually needed.

Dealing with information overload
Focus on providing specific information. This requires editing down data, making it concise and well organized. It is always best to determine what the receiver of the information needs to know. If the information people are receiving is considered needless, they will tune out.

Language
There are a wide number of sources of noise or interference that can enter into the communication process. This can especially occur when people don’t know each other very well and do not understand the sources of error. For example, in a seminar environment, it is even more common since interactions involve people who do not know each other; communication is also complicated by the complex and often conflictive cultural differences. The following suggests a number of potential sources of noise:

Choice of words or language
What the presenter uses to transmit a message will influence the quality of communication. Because language is a symbolic representation of a phenomenon, room for interpretation and distortion of the meaning exists. Meaning has to be given to words, and many factors affect how an individual will attribute meaning to particular words. It is important to note that no two people will attribute the exact same meaning to the same words.

Perceptual biases
People attend to stimuli in the environment in very different ways. We each have shortcuts that we use to organize data. Invariably, these shortcuts introduce some biases into communication. Some of these shortcuts include stereotyping, projection, and self-fulfilling prophecies. Stereotyping is one of the most common. This is when we assume that the other person has certain characteristics based on the group to which they belong without validating that they in fact have these characteristics.
Interpersonal relationships
How we perceive communication is affected by the past experience with the individual. Perception is also affected by the organizational relationship two people have. For example, communication from a superior may be perceived differently than that from a subordinate or peer.

Cultural differences
Effective communication requires deciphering the basic values, motives, aspirations, and assumptions that operate across geographical lines. Given some dramatic differences across cultures, approaching areas such as time, space, and privacy in cross-cultural situations has the potential to increase the opportunity for miscommunication.

Giving and receiving feedback
When working with others, many of us are reluctant to accept feedback, which we may perceive as negative. However, before deciding to accept or discard feedback, it is important to inquire as to why the feedback is being given before making a decision.

- Focus on behaviour not the person. It is important that we refer to what a person does rather than to what we think he is. Thus, we might say that a person "talked more than anyone else in this meeting" rather than that he is a "loud-mouth."

- Take into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback. It should be given to help, not to hurt. We too often give feedback because it makes us feel better or gives us a psychological advantage.
Dealing with feedback issues
Being able to give and receive feedback is essential for effective communication. How feedback dialogue is understood and accepted will depend on how it is given.

- Instead of responding to problems with ‘that’s wrong’ or ‘fix it’ individuals should express specifically what the difficulty is and describe how to deal with it.

- It is also advisable for individuals to speak in a ‘passive voice’ by saying things such as ‘perhaps this could be expanded’ and ‘might it be possible to’. Using what is called a passive voice removes putting blame on another individual and instead focuses on the work itself.

- If negative feedback must be given, try whenever possible to do it person (or if not in person over the phone). Giving what might be perceived, as negative feedback is not an easy situation with which to deal. Therefore, to ensure something will not be taken personally, it is essential to always try to focus and stress that the feedback being given is only to create improvement for the project.

- Try not to take each other for granted by finding reasons to appreciate contributions instead of chastising each other for problems. The more individuals value what they are doing the more likely they will be willing to deal with feedback difficulties.

Rehearse and practice
You must rehearse and practice before you deliver your presentation. Rehearsal can tell you if you have mannerisms which are distracting and practicing will help you to feel comfortable with your material.

Perform your presentation in rehearsal as you would before a group. Practicing in front of a mirror, a friend or associate, audiotape or videotape yourself presenting can give you vital feedback on your performance.
Voice
Elements of a speech can effect the importance of ideas through force, rate, and pitch of the voice. The flexibility of the speaker's vocal delivery can add to the presentation setting. The frequent use of 'um' or 'you know' when you speak can be annoying to an audience and distract them from what you are saying.

Speaking in a monotone voice
Speaking in the same tone of voice without varying the pitch or level of speaking can be boring for an audience. The need for variety and flexibility in speaking is vital and will add interest to what you are saying.

Speaking too fast or too slow
Generally when we are nervous we speak quickly. If you are aware of how you are speaking, it will help you to control this. Your speaking pace should reflect the ideas being expressed. The objective is to speak at a comfortable pace for you. Remember: It is important to pause. Pausing allows time for presented ideas to be comprehended by an audience. If you speak without pausing the audience is never given a rest.

Speaking too loudly or too softly
It is important to be aware of our speaking volume. It is OK before you begin your speech to ask the audience if they can all hear you.

Body gestures
It is important to remember that we communicate with our bodies as well as with our voice. Try not to engage in gestures that will distract an audience, such as:
- Wringing your hands (because of nervousness).
- Keeping your hands in your pockets.
- Nervous pacing.
- Not moving at all.
- Leaning on a podium for the entire presentation.
- Constantly gesturing with a pen and or pencil.
- The habit of shuffling your papers or clicking a pen.
- Keeping your arms crossed (can indicate defensiveness).
- Inappropriate laughter (can show anxiety).

Always face your audience standing up straight, but relaxed. Be conscious of your posture.

Be aware of your body gestures that may draw attention away from the ideas being presented.
Eye contact
It is important to make eye contact with your audience. Maintaining eye contact with your audience involves the audience in the presentation.

Communication via technology

Netiquette issues
Netiquette is a form of on-line etiquette that users of on-line computer communication are expected to conduct themselves. For positive communication environment to occur, it is essential that people maintain awareness on how they are communicating on-line. This means paying more attention to the way things are said, especially when feedback is being given.

- One breach of netiquette occurs when people begin arguing, accusing, and insulting each other on-line. Referred to as flaming some situations can unfortunately get quite nasty. Flaming can often start with a simple misunderstanding in communication that gets blown out of proportion or when an individual deliberately insights a problem that results in conflict.

- Another netiquette issue that is important to be aware of is the use of upper and lower case text. Generally upper case text is viewed as shouting as if someone is angry or annoyed.

Communication issues on-line
It is essential for individuals to always be aware that they are communicating with people not computers. Communicating through technology is more complex than face-to-face situations requiring more attention to social interactions. Social problems often occur because many people when using electronic communications will expect it to be the same as if they were communicating face to face.

- One problem found with text-based computer-mediated communication is that participants seemed less aware of how their interactions can affect others on-line. This is described as a ‘decreased awareness of audience’. This makes it important for individuals to always be aware of how they are communicating and interacting with others on-line.

- In other situations learners (users) will believe that the message they sent is perfectly clear and it will result in an expected response. However, difficulties arise when users of electronic communication make incorrect assumptions about what they believe is being said. This can occur irregardless if the user is experienced or inexperienced with e-mail or other forms of computer-mediated-communication.
A toastmasters presentation!

Participants are asked to reflect on the major points with which they have been presented and to think how they would more likely apply those principles in a presentation of their own.

Explain rules of the activity:

Participants put in practice what they have just learned. They are asked to think of a topic they would like to present to the rest of their colleagues.

Following this, a volunteer (ideally) will stand in front of the group and he/she is given 5 min. to deliver a short presentation/speech of his/her choice.

Once time is up, the audience will judge the quality of the presentation/speech based on what they learned about effective presentations. It is important to note that the group should pay attention to the quality of feedback they will be giving so it is useful to the receiver.
When presenting technology, it is essential that you have taken the time to thoroughly explore the software.

**Presentation checklists**
Here are a number of checklists to help you organize your presentation.

**Presentation development checklist**

- Develop and define the purpose of your presentation.
- Develop and define the objectives of your presentation.
- Determine who your audience is and what their needs are.
- Develop main points or ideas of your speech.
- If necessary, develop and plan for handouts.
- If necessary, develop and plan visual aids.
- Elaborate main points of your speech.
- Develop an introduction.
- Develop the conclusion.
**Environment checklist**

Check the room where you will be presenting.

- Will you be speaking over any noises in the area you cannot control?

- Where will the audience be sitting? Is the seating arrangement appropriate for your presentation? If possible, arrange the seating so that your audience will have the best advantage to see and hear your presentation.

- What is the room lighting like? If you are using media, you will need to know where the light switches are. If you need the lights dimmed you may want some lights on, so the audience can take notes. If the lights must remain on, will your visuals still be able to be seen?

- If your presentation requires the use of technology, check to see if it is working properly.

- If you have handouts, will it be easy for your audience to access them with as little disruption as possible?
**Presentation preparation checklist**

- Practice your presentation via stand-up rehearsals with your visual aids.
- Think of possible questions your audience might ask.
- Make sure your date, time and location to present is confirmed.
- Make sure you have enough handouts.
- Be prepared and think through your presentation noting what you will need and what could go wrong. Develop ideas on what you will do if something goes wrong. Rehearsal is important in order to work out any problems before you present. Whenever possible rehearse in the room in which you are going to speak.

**During the presentation remember**

- Make voice and eye contact with your audience.
- Pay attention to your body gestures.
- When using visuals always explain and refer to them. Talk the audience through the visual aid pausing to let them absorb the information.
- Make sure you are not standing between the audience and the screen.
- Always face the audience when speaking. Turning away makes it difficult to hear you.
- Once you have finished with a visual, remove it. Leaving it on while you are talking about something else will distract your audience.
Resources

1. Interpersonal Communication Skills: Learn To Be A Better Communicator -and Watch Life Get A Lot Easier
   Author: Debra Smith            Price: $21.95
   Sold at Chapters Club Price: $19.76
   Audio Format | ISBN 1559774886
   Published in January 1996 by Monarch Books Of Canada

   Comments about the book: Creating a "feedback loop" that promotes cooperation, it teaches listeners how to solve problems without blaming, it presents ways to clear up mistaken assumptions, how to listen in a way that relaxes people, how to use small talk to come across as warm and genuine, and much more.

2. Inter-Act: Using Interpersonal Communication Skills
   Author: Verderber             Price: $6.95
   Published by ITP Nelson

   On this site, you’ll find lots of info and tips on developing presentations skills. For example: constructive feedback, developing your skills; developing communication skills: Listening Skills and many other interesting topics.

   Even though this is for a technical presentation, it contains interesting information and tips about basic presentation skills and group management.
5. People Skills
   Author: Robert Bolton   Price: $10.40 US
   How to assert yourself. Listen to others and resolve conflicts.

   You will find several reviews on the Web site:

6. The Communication Skills Book
   Author: Patrick Fanning (Contributor), Matthew, McKay, Martha Davis (Contributor)
   List Price: $15.95   Amazon’s Price: $12.76 U.S