

The Insurance Marketing Department Ltd

Sales and Marketing guides

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Topic: Making a presentation, some practical tips.

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Guide 2 considered reasons why making presentations can be a valuable way of increasing long term business and investigated the key points of administration, to ensure the event is set up properly and runs effectively. This guide will look into the question of how to make the presentation itself.

There are several different ways of speaking to large groups, from a formal fixed presentation standing at a rostrum and following a script precisely, to walking about at the front of the room, talking in an impromptu manner. There are no rights and wrongs; no method which works for everyone. But the following thoughts should give you some ideas from which to build your own personal style.

It is well worth preparing a complete script for your presentation. By doing so, you are considering all the topics you wish to cover and, hopefully, preparing yourself for questions. You are also able to decide what kind of visual aids you are going to use. These can range from brochures and leaflets to display and/or give out, through flip charts and acetates, to the most modern

projection systems. The use of visual aids is important for two reasons. Firstly, they break up the presentation, giving changes of pace, and offer variety to the audience. In addition, they also give the audience something to look at other than yourself; this can be particularly helpful for less experienced presenters. Some find it helps and try to use more than one type on each occasion.



However busy you are, take time to prepare

Many people find that actually reading from a script makes their presentation feel stilted and uninteresting. It may be better only to use this method when there is a precise – and usually short – message to be imparted. It is helpful at press conferences!

At the other extreme, learning the script verbatim is time consuming and there are many who have great difficulty in learning great screeds of text by heart. Fortunately, there is no reason to do so, because there is a third way, can be just as effective.

Having prepared your script and accompanying visuals – many people like to draft in PowerPoint – you can then translate the key points for

each slide onto small cards. A useful hint is to hole punch the cards in the top left corner and secure them with a binding ring. This looks professional and, should you drop your cards, they will not get out of order. You may worry that the audience would be put off by the cards, even considering that the speaker has incomplete mastery of the subject, but, in truth, most people don't even notice you are holding anything. Understanding the subject is the key to making any presentation, but using cards reminds you:

- what specific points you wanted to cover; and
- in what order you will do so, so that your visual aids fit.

With so many people using computer projection systems, it is too easy to forget that acetates are a cheap alternative. What's more, the good old flip chart still has its uses. In a number of situations, it is well worth while to consider taking a break from the computer and turning to a flip chart, where you create an 'instant' example before the eyes of the audience. This has the advantage of reminding the audience that you really do know what you are talking