

PRESENTING IN ENGLISH

how to give successful presentations

Mark Powell

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Presenting in English
How to Give Successful Presentations
Mark Powell

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Cassette Tape

A cassette tape accompanies this book. All material recorded on the cassette is clearly marked. The cassette is available in two editions, one with British pronunciation and one with American pronunciation.

British version	ISBN 1 899396 50 0
English version	ISBN 1 899396 75 6

The Author

Mark Powell has taught English in the UK and throughout Europe. He has extensive experience teaching business English and is a well-known teacher trainer in this field. He is the author of the business English course **Business Matters**.

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Using this Book

1. What makes a good presentation?

Without exception, all good presenters have one thing in common, enthusiasm, both for their subject and for the business of presenting it. Enthusiasm is infectious. Audiences can't help but be affected by it. And the best public speakers always make what they say sound as if it really matters. They know that if it matters to them, it will matter to their audience.

Many things contribute to the success of a presentation – new and unusual content, a clear structure, a good sense of timing, imaginative use of visual aids, the ability to make people laugh . . . and think. But above and beyond all of these is enthusiasm. What kind of language and what kind of techniques will best show your enthusiasm for your subject?

2. How is this book different?

Based on the latest research into business communications, **Presenting in English** analyzes what makes a speaker sound dynamic and enthusiastic. It identifies the key skills employed by all effective presenters. The basics of introducing your topic, structuring your talk and referring to visual aids are dealt with in Sections 1 and 2. The remainder of the book focuses on:

Voice and Delivery As a presenter, the ability to pace your speech and use your voice to create impact is the single most important skill you need. You will be more effective if you are in control of your voice by your use of stress, pausing, intonation, volume, and silence.

Content Language You can't give a good presentation unless you have something to say. Being confident about your content is crucial. **Presenting in English** helps you to identify and organize all the key words and phrases you are likely to need and teaches you how to make simple visuals work for you.

Rhetorical Technique Once you are in charge of both your voice and your content you can start to think about how best to present your subject. Sections 4 and 5 teach you the techniques successful speakers use automatically. Choose the techniques that suit you best and work on perfecting them.

Question Handling Perhaps the most unpredictable part of a presentation is the question session. This may be after your talk or you may invite questions during it. Section 7 systematically teaches you how to field different types of question and deal effectively with the subjects your audience may raise.

3. Using this book

In class If you are an inexperienced presenter, it is probably best to work through the course section by section, making sure you do all the presentations before you move on. Pay special attention to the basic skills in Sections 1 – 3.

If you give presentations in English regularly and want to improve your style, go through the contents list with your teacher first and decide which areas to concentrate on.

When you give short presentations in class, take the time to prepare your notes thoroughly with any visuals you might need. Don't be afraid to read out some of the most important or complicated parts of your talk. As long as you read them well and keep good eye contact with your audience, this can be very effective.

At home If you are working alone, use the cassette as much as possible, as it will give you the vital listening input you need. Play it again at home or while driving.

If you can, get a friend or colleague to listen to you giving short presentations yourself. Try recording some of your talks and compare yourself with the speakers on the course cassette.

A lot of the presentation extracts in the course book contain phrases and expressions which you could use directly yourself. Sometimes whole sentences and paragraphs could be used with only small changes. Make a habit of noting these down for future use.

Try to study regularly if you can. Most of the units in **Presenting in English** are only one or two pages long. Try to cover three or four units a week. Even doing two units a week is better than doing nothing for months and then going into a panic the day before you have to give your presentation! Gradually build up your competence and confidence.

4. Using the cassettes

Many of the input tasks in **Presenting in English** consist of short presentation extracts which are recorded on cassette. Exercises which are on tape are marked like this **cass**

When you have completed an input task, listen to the cassette to check your answers before looking in the key at the back of the book. This provides you with useful listening practice and a model of good delivery as well as the correct answers.

5. How to become a good presenter

1. LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE

Check everything before you are due to speak – room, seating, visibility, acoustics and equipment.

2. KNOW EXACTLY HOW TO START

Plan the first minute of your presentation down to the last detail. Try to memorize your opening words. This will help you to sound confident and in control.

3. GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

Don't waste time on long boring introductions. Try to make at least one powerful statement in the first two minutes.

4. TALK TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Many of the best presentations sound more like conversations. So, keep referring back to your audience, ask them questions, respond to their reactions.

5. KNOW WHAT WORKS

Certain things are always popular with an audience: personal experiences, stories with a message, dramatic comparisons, amazing facts they didn't know. Use them to the full.

6. BE CONCISE

Keep your sentences short and simple. Use deliberate pauses to punctuate your speech.

7. SPEAK NATURALLY

Don't be afraid to hesitate when you speak, but make sure you pause in the right places. Remember, you are not an actor trying to remember lines. A certain amount of hesitation is actually quite natural.

8. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Speak for your audience, not yourself. Take every opportunity to show how much common ground you share with them. Address *their* goals, *their* needs, *their* concerns.

9. TREAT YOUR AUDIENCE AS EQUALS

Never talk down (or up) to your audience. Treat them as equals, no matter who they are.

10. BE YOURSELF

As far as possible, speak to five hundred people in much the same way you would speak to five. You will obviously need to project yourself more, but your personality shouldn't change.

11. TAKE YOUR TIME

Whenever you make a really important point, pause and let the full significance of what you have said sink in . . . before you move on.

12. DON'T MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO BE FUNNY

If you make a joke, don't stop and wait for laughs. Keep going and let the laughter (if it comes) interrupt you.

13. LET YOUR VISUALS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Good visuals are just that – visual. Don't put boring tables of figures and long lines of text on the overhead and read them out. Stick to the main points. Experiment with three-dimensional charts, cartoons, interesting typefaces – anything to catch your audience's attention.

14. NEVER COMPETE WITH YOUR VISUALS

When showing a visual, keep quiet and give people time to take it in. Then make brief comments only. Point to the relevant parts of the visual as you speak. If you want to say more, switch off your projector to do so.

15. DEVELOP YOUR OWN STYLE

Learn from other public speakers, but don't try to copy them. Be comfortable with your own abilities. Don't do anything that feels unnatural for you, just because it works for someone else.

16. ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

The secret of being an excellent speaker is to enjoy the experience of speaking – try to enjoy the experience!

17. WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM YOUR AUDIENCE

When members of your audience ask you a question, it is usually because they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your message across better.

18. FINISH STRONGLY

When you are ready to finish your presentation, slow down, and lower your voice. Look at the audience and deliver your final words slowly and clearly. Pause, let your words hang in the air a moment longer, smile, say *Thank you* and then sit down.

Getting Started

How to make an immediate impact on your audience



"Could you talk amongst yourselves . . . it looks as if I've left my notes in my hotel."

Introductions

How you begin your presentation depends on how formal the situation is. Most audiences prefer a relatively informal approach.

TASK 1

Below you will find two alternative ways of introducing yourself and the subject of your presentation – one fairly formal, the other more friendly. At each stage choose the expression you would feel more comfortable using and highlight it.

FAIRLY FORMAL

Erm, perhaps we should begin.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of . . . , may I welcome you to . . .

My name's . . .

For those of you who don't know me already,

I'm responsible for . . .

This morning I'd like to . . .

discuss . . .

report on . . .

and present . . .

If you have any questions you'd like to ask, I'll be happy to answer them.

or

Perhaps we can leave any questions you may have until the end of the presentation.

How happy would you be taking questions a) during your presentation b) at the end?

MORE FRIENDLY

OK, let's get started.

Morning, everyone.

Thanks for coming.

I'm . . .

As you know, . . .

I'm in charge of . . .

What I want to do this morning is . . .

talk to you about . . .

tell you about . . .

and show you . . .

Feel free to ask any questions you like as we go along.

And don't worry, there'll be plenty of time left over for questions at the end.

TASK 2

Now put together an introduction of your own using some of the expressions you chose above. Remember how important it is to be totally confident about this part of your presentation.

Don't waste a lot of time at the beginning of your presentation introducing yourself, your company and the subject of your talk. Get on with it!