

Efficacious Presentation Schemata

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ABSTRACT

Any presentation can be made effective with good planning and a systematic approach. The most important visual in a presentation is not that dazzling animation or PowerPoint slide overflowing with data. The most important visual is the presenter who presents his/her point of view in front of the audience. And when presenting, a large part of the “visual you” is conveyed by the means of the body language. Various studies confirm that gestures, postures, movements, paralinguistic features and facial expressions appreciably help the listeners to grasp what one says. As the audience analysis shows that the body language communication is a very important part of any presentation, one needs to be aware of their body language from the moment one stands up until the presentation is complete. This paper unveils the facets of body language communication during presentation.

Keywords: *gestures, body language, locale*

Human beings are special creatures of God with special features of expressing their emotions and feelings in words and they express their feelings, emotions, and ideas through a process of communication in which they ideate their ideas by encoding those ideas in words and receivers comprehend the ideas by decoding the encoded words and then give feedback. Until and unless this process gets completed the communication cannot be completed. The act of communicating can be broken down into the fundamentals of writing and

speaking. There are hundreds of small social cues that build upon those fundamentals that make any person as an effective communicator. Tone and body language play an enormous role in communicating to others while word choice and even the way people write the letters can convey an unspoken message. Effective presentation skills are a subset of good communication skills. All effective presentation skills may be a result of good communication skills, however, all good communication skills cannot produce effective presentation skills. All these

things are important to learn even for jobs. The following chart by Times of India

Skill survey 2016 clearly states the importance of better communication.

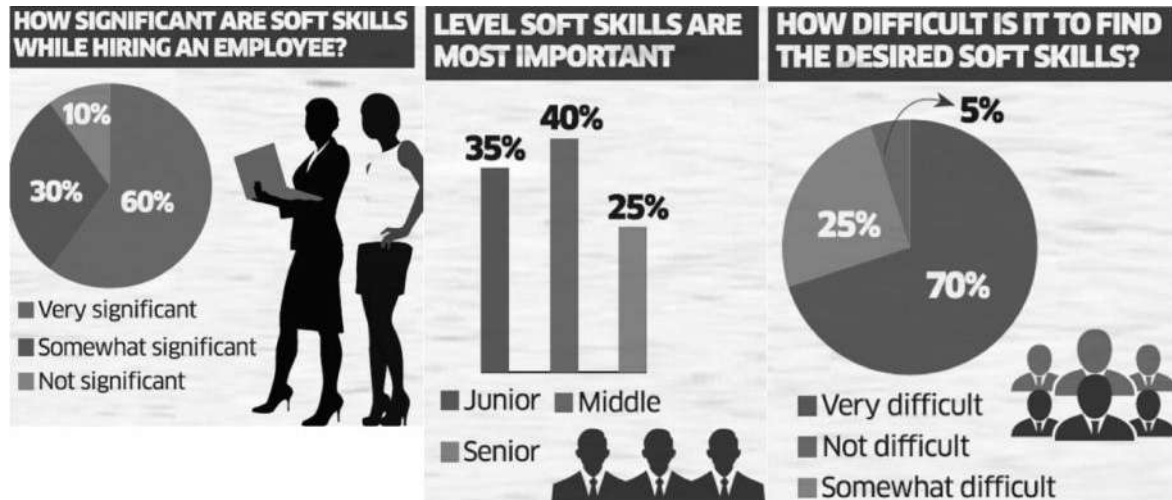


Figure ITOI Skill Survey 2016

Let us make this point more clearly by explaining one of the oldest of all the presentation techniques and this is known since the time of Aristotle. The rule of three was described by Aristotle in his book *Rhetoric*¹ in which he portrays that people tend to easily remember only three things during presentation. We can understand it by taking an example of a kid who goes down to the shop to buy a number of things. The boy remembers only three things out of many things but if a mature woman/man goes to the shop, the same applies with them also but they recollect after putting the efforts to remember all the things. This is the rule of three and keeping this in mind we have to decide which three things we want our audience to remember. So, it can be said that a good presentation does not only require exact knowledge and enhanced matter but also needs proper body language, gestures, postures, eye contact, voice modulation and rate of speech. In other

words, it can be said that the basic three things during presentation are **body language, voice modulation and confidence**. A good level of confidence is boosts the presenter. Once a presenter acquires even the basics of it, they start to feel more confident and positive. In the long run, they will realize that their work personality will also improve.

By corroborating with Aristotle's point of view of remembering three things one should commemorate three things during presentation which are: Body Language, Voice Modulation & Confidence. First impression is the last impression; this traditional saying is always true. So, the goal of a good presentation should be to make the audience and auditors mesmerized. This goal can be achieved by the means of a bit of toil and planning as presentations can be made flourishing with good planning and a systematic approach. The most important

visual is you. The most important visual in a presentation is not that dazzling animation or Power Point slide overflowing with data. One should not parrot the slides as these slides should be used as cue. As Microsoft itself emphasizes that PowerPoint doesn't give presentations – PowerPoint makes slides. The presenter's comments should be more compelling than the slides. A presenter should keep in mind the following things:

- Do include 50% white space in each and every slide
- Do make it obvious which section of your outline you're in
- Do make each slide stand on its own which generally conveys a main point for each slide
- Do use animation but it should not be overused because it makes difficult and annoying to navigate for the audience
- Don't forget to add meaningful labels, titles, captions, etc. to graphs
- Don't use dark background and light colour of fonts
- Don't include period if anything is being written. Bullet points are incomplete sentences which should not carry periods

The most important visual is the way one presents one's point of view in front of the audience. And when presenting, a large part of the "visual you" is conveyed by the means of the body language. It is well fact that gestures, movements, and facial expressions help the listeners to grasp what one says.

We need to understand the need and demand of audience by which we can prepare the things accordingly. While analyzing the audience a presenter should analyze the following things:

- Who is my audience?
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Education
 - Occupation
 - Cultural background
 - Social status
 - Economic status
- What is their purpose to listen

This analysis gives an idea about the linguistic competence, academic background, beliefs, values and opinions and interests and attitude. All these things help in change, mould and reorganize arguments in a way that suits the audience.

It is well known fact that only a small percentage of communication involves actual words: 7%, to be exact. In fact, 55% of communication is visual (body language, eye contact) and 38% is vocal (pitch, speed, volume, tone of voice). So, the first and foremost thing for effective presentation skill is body language. Many recent studies have shown that people react most positively when a message is delivered alongside good body language. It can be better understood with an example:

Let's assume Mr X is going somewhere and he forgets the proper address. He asks a person that how to reach here. The stranger says, **the left turn is right turn** without using the gesture.

Mr X gets confused where to go because he comprehends this statement in two following ways:

- The upcoming left turn is right turn
- The turn which he has left is right turn

This statement could give better clarity by using the gestures. Otherwise, poor body language can send mixed messages and turn off an audience to what you're trying to convey to them as stated in above example. Effective presentation skills dictate the body language which helps the audience to follow what you are saying and keeps their attention; sometimes too much usage becomes overly confusing and annoying at times. In order to master effective presentation skills that involve your body, it's a great rule to make natural movements and anything that does not come or feel naturally should be avoided. Confucius deliberates, "I hear and I forget.

I see and I believe, I do and I understand." A presenter should try to involve his/her audience during any presentation by asking questions, using humours, pictures etc.

It is the human nature that s/he should be felt special during the conversation by giving the proper attention. They want to feel as though a presenter is speaking to them directly or that they are the most important

person in the room during the conversation. As eye contact is a powerful communication tool and it enables to connect with audience and their attention. But major question is that how much time we should keep eye contact to the audience? A good presenter can only look into someone's eyes for at most three seconds before either person glances away. Although eye contact shows intimacy but longer direct glance becomes more intense. So, our survey, during a professional speech, look directly into someone's eyes only for about a second. There are some cultural differences regarding eye contact. In the United eye contact is as basic and expected a form of non-verbal communication as the firm handshake. This is not true in other parts of the world. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, people avoid direct eye contact as a sign of respect.

Even within a country, people of different cultures use eye contact differently. African-Americans use more eye contact when talking and less when listening. People from Arab countries use prolonged eye contact to gauge trustworthiness. So, one should consider these cultural differences when using eye contact with your listeners. As somebody has said that the way you look at someone can make a big difference in regards to how you are perceived.

It is a real fact that breaking eye contact is a surefire way to break the connection. To attain proper attention of audience during presentations, A presenter should mentally split the room into three parts. Address

some of your comments to one side of the room, turn your attention to the middle, and then look to the last section. Try to identify one person in each section and direct the comments towards that person. The people surrounding that person will think you are making direct eye contact with them. Maintaining eye contact throughout your presentation requires preparation. Don't let anything come between you and your listeners. Crossing your arms, standing behind a lectern or chair, or talking to someone from behind a computer monitor all are the examples of blocking, which prevents a real connection from taking place. By this very fact, it is sure that the most important visual in a presentation is not that dazzling animation or PowerPoint slide overflowing with data but the most important visual is the way one presents one's point of view in front of the audience. The way that a presenter moves his/her body and limbs will also have a major influence on how the audience perceives. When presenting a presenter will normally be standing, and an ideal stance is with feet close together and the weight evenly distributed between them. We should not stand in one position, but try to inject movement as we speak. This helps to add a natural animation to our presentation as the audience have to adjust their gaze to follow us rather than stay looking at a fixed position. By developing a practiced way of moving we can add a confident and professional air to our presentation style.

A presenter should also focus on gestures; a form of body language, are also a part of

overall visual picture. There are visual reinforcements of the words and ideas a presenter is trying to communicate to the audience. Gestures include hand, arm, and head movements and can enhance the presentation or detract from it. It is an aid to, not a substitute for the expression of ideas. One should be sparing with gestures and one should give attention to certain points like arms and hands should move in a flowing and relaxed manner, at that time the gestures should be consistent with the ideas being expressed, hand gestures should be supported with your head and body movements, one should not be artificially repetitive with gestures. One should not forget that nodding the head and smiling are the effective ways to emphasize what you are saying.

The most important thing to accomplish these features is that one should have ample of confidence which can be attained by having faith in oneself. The emphasis should be on the sharing of ideas, not on the performance. Strive to be as genuine and natural as you are when you speak to family members and friends. Another important factor for confidence is knowledge. Nothing influences a speaker's mental attitude more than the knowledge that he or she is thoroughly prepared. This knowledge leads to self-confidence, which is a vital ingredient of effective public speaking.

The second most important thing for communication is how one speaks. It can be better understood by an example of river and canal to emphasize on the variation in speaking in fact about intonation, stress and

pause. The difference between a presentation with variety and one without it is like the difference between a river and a canal. If you are floating down a river, it offers you different surprises at every bend. You may go from farmland to valleys to forest, just by floating along a river. A canal, on the other hand, is a man-made channel that is straight and not very interesting. By this we want to convey that variation in tone can avoid monotony and it will allure the audience. Tone has as much if not more impact on the way people interpret what you are saying, as your word choice does. Any message said in an inappropriate tone can quickly lead to confusion and your audience reads into what you are saying and derives a mistaken meaning. Being able not only to select what you say carefully to avoid any double meanings, controlling how you say them is one of the major effective presentation skills. Effective presentation skills should not only help you communicate with the people around you but they should do so in a way that is appropriate for presentations, which can be very different from casual conversations or intimate exchanges which all have a set of skills themselves. In presentation, choosing the correct words, the perfect grammar and the best sentence structure is not going to win us any speaking awards. In English, we need to use tone, stress and the art of silence. We often face some problems regarding voice and tone which are wrong pronunciation in which sound of pronunciation is major thing which happens because of Mother Tongue Influence i.e. MTI. It plays a vital role as

words like 's' and 'sh' 'j' and 'z' and too many sounds are there. Mispronunciation leads to wrong interpretation as example:

She sells sea shells on sea shore.

Just imagine and think by replacing sound of 's' with 'sh'. So, one should learn proper pronunciation and then try to learn to put proper pause & stress on particular words as there is a popular saying in Hindi that:

Maaro mat, jane do & Maaro, mat jane do

In this sentence pause after *mat* and pause after *maaro* creates major difference so one should take care while speaking. In a presentation, there is an introduction, followed by a series of main ideas with supporting examples or illustrations. To finish there'll be a conclusion. Now think of the thread (theme, main idea) linking it altogether. It is similar to a road. We are taking our audience on a journey. Our *speech is the vehicle* carrying them along and *our mouth is the driver*.

As the driver *we make choices*. We can whirl them through so fast the scenery blurs. While we're busy negotiating a series of complicated hair pin bends at full throttle, we're gazing out the back window trying to work out what they've missed and where they are. One by one your listeners get dizzy. Then they close off their ears and sit quietly waiting for the ride to stop.

Or by contrast we can proceed *so cautiously* that our passengers want *to get out and walk*.

The third and final set of critical presentation skills is appearance. It is a sad fact that even today everyone makes judgments and decisions based upon how something or someone looks. If we fail to dress the part it will take even more work on our part to win back the audience and starting at a disadvantage is not a good idea. While it's important to be able to relate to the audience and the topic of our presentation, it's also important to always dress up just a bit more than necessary. While we'd never want to wear a suit and tie to a presentation about surfing, we also don't want to show up wearing swim trunks. Finding a good middle ground between the two extremes is part of the appearance presentation skills and it will help our presentation be taken more seriously.

Above all with these three assets of communication any human being can deliver good presentation but before this he clarity and follow the aims of presentation which are : to persuade, to inform, to motivate and to entertain. These can be attained by proper planning of writing. For the success of any presentation the audience

also plays a vital role.

During a presentation the beginning is ideal for an attention grabber or for an ice breaker. The end is great to wrap things up or to end with a grand finale. Basically, it defines our character as a mature professional. Anyone who understands the basics of presentation skills and knows how to put it into proper application is a good indication of a potential asset. Conducting a presentation is a talent and a skill. So it should not be perceived to be a typical practice because this characterizes a person as a true professional. This skill enhances our ability one step up the ladder of success in the aspect of our career.

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