

How to improve your presentations



The Professionals' Marketing Tool Kit part 2

1. Planning

Start planning by asking important questions like:

- Why am I making this presentation?
- What do I want to achieve?
- Who'll be in the audience and what do they know already?

Only once you have the answers should you start planning what you want to say and how to structure your presentation.

PowerPoint is one option but there are others. You could produce a 4-page brochure and use this to structure a conversation. The first page could be your agenda, the 2nd and 3rd pages could showcase studies and client testimonials (proof that you can do what you say you can) and the final page could be your team sheet and contact details.

Or use a 'show and tell' approach with relevant videos or photographs. For example, if you're talking about Intellectual Property, you could show real hand bags side by side with fakes to illustrate 'passing off'.

Rehearse plenty and in plenty of time (it will show if you haven't practised) and ask for feedback from colleagues.

On the day arrive early to make sure your equipment is working and, if necessary, to move furniture to make the environment more engaging (round tables or horse shoe layouts work best).

2. Production

If you're using PowerPoint, consider the content - use flow diagrams, organisation charts or images (but not clichéd clip art!). This will maintain interest and clarify your points and will make the presentation memorable.

Use minimal text on your slides. Your presentation is **NOT** your script!

Use good quality images which illustrate the points you are making.

PDF your slides so they don't move around on the day.

Your hand-out should never be the same as your slides. It's better to use image based slides for impact (and to hold your audience's interest) then back them up with a more detailed supporting document as the hand-out.

Use as few words as you can and make the font as large as possible

To make them as easy as possible to read, use dark text on a white background.

3. Presentation

The person doing the presenting should be comfortable doing so - and that doesn't mean the job should always go to the most senior person. Leverage your team's skills, find the natural best presenter.

Similarly although you may have 4 or 5 fee earners in the presentation, it doesn't mean they all need to present. Choose the 2 strongest presenters and split delivery between them.

Avoid too much technical information and under no circumstances use jargon or legalese! To hold your audience's attention use everyday language and examples your audience will recognise. You can provide all the technical information afterwards in your hand out.

Be mindful of body language and what it says about you and the messages you're delivering - it's not just what you say, it's the way that you say it.

Start strongly, end strongly. People are more attentive at the beginning and end of a presentation, so these elements need to be first class.

A good attention grabbing technique is to ask the audience a question at the beginning - it will help get them engaged from the off.

Set out the structure of your presentation at the outset; demonstrate you understand the audience's situation and show how you're going to tackle the issues they face.

Maintain eye-contact. Look at your audience and don't read the slides on your laptop or look at the screen. Use cue-cards if you must, but it is better if you don't.

Don't be monotone, try to vary the pace and volume of your presentation and add pauses for effect if you can.

People's concentration spans are limited. Typically people can only handle 20-40 minutes. If you are presenting for longer you need to use different media:

- Videos
- Pictures
- Stories, anecdotes and examples

Add intervals if you can; it'll keep your audience fresh.

4. And finally ...

... everything counts! Even the slickest presentation can be undone by a bad experience on the day or, more specifically, with poor follow up.

Avoid that by asking yourself:

- How will I make sure I'm accessible after the event?
- How can I invite/handle questions after people leave?
- How do we give the best possible impression of your firm while they're in your office?
- Does your marketing material exude quality and support the perception you want to create?

Can we help your professional service firm grow?

Size 10½ Boots work solely with the professional services.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your marketing or business development please call us on 0115 977 9817 or email claire@tenandahalf.co.uk and book your FREE initial 45 minute consultancy.



www.tenandahalf.co.uk
info@tenandahalf.co.uk