

## Presentation Tips

Some of these tips may be useful as you prepare to give your presentations, we hope so, but they are only suggestions. The most important thing is to be yourself and stay calm.

### 1. Prepare – Prepare – Prepare

Unless you are a very experienced presenter it is likely to take you several times longer to prepare the presentation than to actually deliver it, e.g. a 30 minute presentation can easily require 3 hours or more of preparation.

It has been said that Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail. As with many tasks, thorough preparation will make all the difference.

If possible, arrange to see the room prior to the day of the presentation as it will help you decide if you are going to walk around or where to stand, etc. You should also note where power points are if you plan to take any equipment with you, (e.g. an extension lead may be needed).

### 2. Give some statistics – but not too many

It could help to give some idea of the scale of what you are talking about, e.g. the total prison/detainee population, the female population, lifer population, etc.

### 3. Visual Aids

The saying ‘A picture is worth a thousand words’ can apply to presentations. Using some form of visual aid will reinforce your message. We remember visual images up to five times longer than audible only.

It may be a simple poster or chart, but all will help. It may be a PowerPoint presentation, but avoid the gimmicks such as flash messages or sound effects, which can really annoy an audience.

Bullet points on overhead slides, or PowerPoint presentations, should prompt you to talk about that topic, they should not be sentences or stories.

The main tip here is **DO NOT READ THE SLIDE TO THE AUDIENCE** - they can normally read as well as we can.

### 4. Handouts

Handouts are a useful way to reinforce your messages. They also show that you have spent time preparing for the presentation. Often a hard copy of your presentation will be the most appropriate handout. Remember to check that they include your contact details so that the audience can contact you in the

future. DO NOT DISTRIBUTE HANDOUTS UNTIL AFTERWARDS – or the audience will be reading along with you. Remember also to take a supply of the key message cards, information leaflets and pens, if available.

## **5. Avoid Jargon**

If you use abbreviations/acronyms on your slides or in your talk, explain them in your presentation. Failure to do so will ensure that at least some of the audience are trying to work out the abbreviation they didn't understand 3 slides back, rather than listen to you now. Another part of the audience is probably playing 'buzzword or jargon bingo'.

## **6. Share your plan with the audience**

It's a good idea to give your audience an outline of what you are going to do and how long you plan to take:

- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Tell them, (this is the meat of your presentation)
- Tell them what you have told them, (a brief summary)

Say at the start of the presentation if you would prefer to take all questions at the end rather than during the presentation.

## **7. Involve the audience**

If possible try to involve the audience, perhaps with a short quiz at the start:-

- What is the prison population of England and Wales now?
- Why do we send people to prison?
- How many prisoners are unlikely ever to be released?

## **8. Nervous?**

Nearly all presenters admit to being nervous before a presentation. It is quite natural and actually helps us to perform better. Remember that, on most occasions at least, you will know far more about the topic you are presenting than anyone else in the room. Few, if any, in the audience would like to swap places with you.

## **9. Appearance**

Rather like an actor on the stage, you will be on display so make sure you are comfortable with your appearance – Look good = Feel good = Do good!

Be there early, allowing yourself time to settle after the journey. On occasions we can be asked to give a talk after a meal or refreshments, in which case a

spare tie for gentlemen can be useful in case of a close encounter with edible matter! Don't forget to clean your shoes – the audience will notice if you have.

Alcohol and presentations don't mix well. The best time for a drink is afterwards, not before. Alcohol can be smelt at long distances and also has the effect of reducing the enthusiasm in your voice.

#### **10. The eyes have it**

Keep in touch with your audience by maintaining good eye contact with them. Avoid 'picking' on any particular person, scan the whole audience.

#### **11. It's the way you tell 'em**

Try to vary the voice so as to avoid a monotone delivery. It is not unusual to find that the mouth dries up during a presentation so a glass of water within easy reach can be a good idea.

#### **12. Notes are for support/backup**

Try not to read from your notes, it is better to speak naturally. However, they can be used if you freeze or lose your way but this is unlikely if you have prepared well.

#### **13. Audiences rarely complain if a presentation is too short**

Do not try to stretch the presentation. When you have said what you want to say – stop. Any audience can become bored very quickly.

**RELAX – ENJOY – IT DOES GET EASIER**