

# Brilliant Presenting

*"Most people would prefer to be lying in the coffin than giving the eulogy."*

- Jerry Seinfeld

A lot rides on your presentation skills; so here are 10 absolute keys to success...

**Audience:** Think deeply about who your audience are, what they want or need, and what you want them to think, feel or do as a result of your presentation?

**Be you:** Your most useful presentation skills are the skills you already have; focus upon refining and improving these abilities; don't try to be someone else or to change your style radically - you won't come across as genuine and/or natural

**Structure:** As a minimum use the 'Newsreader Technique' of 'Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you have just told them'

**Give examples:** Don't talk in pure theory, abstract concepts or 'management speak'; illustrate your ideas with practical examples that your listeners can relate to, thus communicating the 'meaning', connection and relevance of your message to them

**Observe and adjust:** Look for the audience's, and individual reactions to your ideas and respond to their signals; ask for feedback and invite questions as you progress; if what you're doing isn't working try something else; adapt and flex

**Ditch the PowerPoint:** Or at least ensure it's just a 'support' to your presentation, NOT the presentation itself; PowerPoint is best for graphics, pictures, cartoons bar charts etc, if your presentation comprises 30+ slides of bullet points scrap it and start again!

**30 second rule:** Never speak for more than 30 seconds without actively involving your audience in some way, such as gaining a verbal or physical response from them

**Use metaphors and analogies:** "It's like pushing peas uphill with a fork"... or "We can only shoot the crocodiles closest to the boat"... are far more engaging communication tools, conveying more powerful images and feelings than bland statements

**Exude enthusiasm and conviction:** Be expressive, enthusiastic and engaging; if you can't be these things then you should not be presenting; you're wasting your audiences time and you might as well send them an email or a written report!

**Use nerves:** The day you're not nervous about presenting is the day you should give up! A certain amount of 'nervous edge' is vital for a good presentation, giving you energy, focus and adrenaline to keep you sharp; control excessive nerves with deep, slow breathing and positive visualisation before the presentation, and use your body movement (walking around and gesturing) to channel excess energy during the 'performance'!