Presentation skills seminars

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Module 1

STRUCTURE

Key objective

Learn to create a logical, coherent and motivating script for a presentation.

Audience

People with some or no experience in creating presentations.

1. Why structure matters

People complain that presentations are either boring and confusing—or entertaining but meaningless. How can we address this problem at the level of structure?

2. Four presentation genres

What do we mean when we say "presentation"? Do we mean something that is designed primarily to inform (lecturing), entertain (comedy), persuade (sales)—or make the audience think for themselves (Socratic dialogue)? How do we integrate those conflicting goals? What body language would better support what goal?

3. The anatomy of presentation

Four key parts of a presentation: 1) Establishing contact, 2) Motivation 3) Exposition 4) Closing. Questions we should answer to get a working structure. We should start from a problem—but not all problem formulations are the same.

4. Case studies

Structure: an unlikely secret to charisma. Things we can we borrow from Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos and McKinsey consultants in terms of structure.

Module 2

DESIGN

Key objective

Learn to create legible, easy to understand and aesthetically pleasing slides which help the presentation rather than obstruct one.

Audience

People with basic knowledge of Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple Keynote.

1. Design fundamentals

Design goals and priorities: aesthetics, usability and cost considerations. Why good design always begins with empathy. Fighting information overload with design.

2. Typography

Using font sizes, styles, indents and principles of good composition to solve the problem of "too much text". Creating visual hierarchy to communicate priorities. Fundamentals of typographic illustration.

3. Pictograms and photographs

Using pictograms, drawings and photographs to illustrate key concepts. What's a "good illustration". Combining illustrations with text.

4. Diagrams

Creating hierarchical, process and relational diagrams. Solving the problem of "how many blue boxes you can have on one slide before it's too much"?

5. Data visualisation

Working with bar/column charts, line charts, pie charts. Why good chart design begins with a good header. Creating focus points. Removing "chart junk".

Module 3

FEEDBACK SESSION

Key objectives

Practice presenting, learn to give and absorb constructive feedback.

Audience

People any experience in delivering presentations.

1. What's a "good presentation"?

How do we judge the presentation? How do we make the feedback useful? Discussing the evaluation criteria.

2. Presentations

Participants should come to a seminar with a draft 7-12 minute presentation, preferably with slides. About 1.5 hours will be reserved for any additional preparation that might be needed.

3. Feedback

Trainer-moderated feedback session. What really worked, what can we "steal" from the speaker? What didn't work and how we can correct that? How we can make the feedback helpful rather than hurtful?

4. Analysis

What are the top three things we should all stop or start doing? Distilling typical mistakes, great discoveries and small life-hacks.

Module 4

CREATING A DIALOGUE

Key objective

Improve the quality of contact with the audience.

Audience

This is an advanced material for those who know how to tell a story but still want to improve.

1. What is contact

From physical theatre to presentations, six things every actor (or speaker) should be able to do: take hold (get attention), push (assert), pull (ask questions), reach (ask to imagine), let go (close the presentation) and pause (well, pause).

2. Body language of the audience

Facial expressions and body language is a way the audience talk to the speaker. How do we read the messages and respond to them.

3. Asking questions

Four reasons to ask questions to the audience. Explaining with questions v. explaining with monologue: which works when? Planning the questions, reacting to the answers.

4. Answering questions

Difference in approaches for small group v. large group. Which questions should not be answered. Reacting to the intent rather than to the surface formulation. Cooperative answering: what would I answer to a friend? Even if I don't know the answer how can I still be helpful to the person and the group?

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