



NEXT STEP LEARNINGSM

Presentation Skills

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About This Class

About This Manual

This manual provides conceptual information. Topics are arranged in modular units. This allows you to refer to this manual for self-study or reference, and you can select a unit and start reading at any point.

Units and lessons are arranged in a logical order according to adult learning principles. Each unit ends with a summary of main ideas for your review.

Some units conclude with a section of unit activities. These activities provide you an opportunity to apply the knowledge you learned in the unit.

About the Icons

The manual provides the following icons for special information:

❖ This icon indicates a note of special interest.

⚠ This icon indicates a caution or warning.

❓ This icon indicates a point of discussion.

✂ This icon indicates a brief activity.

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Class Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- establish presentation outcomes.
- determine presentation topics.
- speak effectively and use visual aids during presentations.

Unit:

Establishing Presentation Outcomes

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- establish objectives for your presentation.
- measure the effectiveness of your presentation.
- control the factors influencing your success.
- analyze your audience.

Lesson:

What Do You Want to Accomplish?

When the workshop facilitator calls on you, please stand at your seat and make a brief presentation including the following information:

- your name and employer.
- your job title and a brief description of your responsibilities.
- a particular experience making a presentation in the past.
- what job responsibilities, if any, you have that require you to make presentations.
- what you hope to gain by participating in this workshop.

Before you can begin creating your presentation, you must decide what objectives you want to accomplish. This is known as the outcome of your presentation, and perhaps an easier way to determine your desired outcome is to think carefully about the following question:

What do I need or want to happen as a result of this presentation?

Establishing Presentation Outcomes

Depending on the type of presentation you are making, you may or may not be able to control your objectives. For example, if your manager asks you to make a brief presentation to your company's board of directors, he may specify what he wants you to accomplish down to a point-by-point level. In other cases, you may be given a broad presentation topic, such as for a trade show speaking engagement or a corporate meeting, but the outcome and objectives may be left up to you to determine.

As you begin to formulate your desired outcome and its supporting objectives, you should also think about the purpose of your presentation. There are five basic purposes:

- To persuade
 - To inform
 - To motivate
 - To entertain
 - To inspire
- ❖ Keep your presentation's purpose in mind as you begin to develop your content, because the more you can align your content and techniques with your purpose, the more effective your presentation will be.

Lesson:

How Do I Know if I Accomplished My Objectives?

There are two ways to measure the effectiveness of your presentation:

- Observable outcomes
- Non-observable outcomes

Observable outcomes are those that you can actually see or hear. Observable outcomes can include:

- the audience's agreement to move to the next step.
- acknowledgment that your presentation has met the audience's needs.
- a measurable increase in productivity.
- a measurable improvement in overall performance.
- satisfactory performance on an assessment.

Because observable outcomes are easy to identify and measure, you should use these whenever possible.

Establishing Presentation Outcomes

Non-observable outcomes promote an increase in mental participation by the audience. The best times for you to employ non-observable outcomes to measure your success include situations where you need to:

- expose the audience to a different set of views or perspectives.
 - increase the audience's understanding of your subject matter.
 - present new information or concepts.
 - help the audience see the possibility of additional options.
- ❖ In some situations, you may want to employ both observable and non-observable outcomes as measures of effectiveness. Just make sure the content of your presentation focuses on what you think is most important for your audience to take away from the session.

Lesson:

Am I Accountable for the Effectiveness of My Presentation?

Generally speaking, you are always responsible for the effectiveness of your presentation, but there are many factors that influence your ability to be successful. For example, your preparation and ability to present the material effectively are factors that you can control. Other factors, however, that you may not be able to control include the following:

- How has your audience been introduced to your content and objectives?
 - What attitudes does your audience exhibit toward your content?
 - Who is ultimately responsible for the success of the goals?
 - How does your presentation affect the organization as a whole?
- ❖ The more you can control the factors that influence your success, the better chance you'll have of achieving your objectives.
- ❖ You can control factors that influence your success by taking ownership of an action item or goal, and obtain management buy-in and support for those items for which you can't take ownership.

Some other factors that you can at least partially control include the following:

- Setting up the room. Whenever possible, don't use tables or desks, which create barriers between you and your audience, unless the subject matter requires them. Make sure you have enough chairs and that they are set up in a manner to facilitate group participation.
- Knowing the size, characteristics, and ground rules of the room. For example, are you allowed to tape or pin visual aids to the walls? Are there whiteboards or chalkboards and writing implements? Can you darken the room using window coverings? How does the lighting work?
- Checking and double-checking your audiovisual equipment. You can limit the possibility of an audiovisual failure if you know how things work before you begin your presentation.
- Holding a dress rehearsal in the room. Even if you practice by yourself, it is always good idea to do a dry run in the room where your presentation will actually be held.

Lesson:

To Whom am I Speaking?

Above all else, your presentation must meet your audience's needs. If it doesn't, you cannot be successful.

- ❖ By conducting thorough research, you can better meet the audience's needs and lessen the impact of their needs as an influencing factor.

Building an audience profile helps you anticipate the audience's needs. You can start building an audience profile by identifying general demographic information about the audience, such as the following:

- group size
- names
- ages
- ratio of males to females
- job titles
- company representations
- levels of education
- cultural backgrounds

In addition, you should determine:

- if you are presenting new information or not.
- how much the audience already knows about your subject matter.
- if they have definite opinions about your subject matter.
- if the audience expects you to persuade them.
- what the audience hopes to take away from the presentation.
- how they might react to a prompt for audience participation.
- how they might react to a provocative question.
- why the audience members are attending your presentation.
- what the audience's opinion is of you.
- any prior experience the audience has with you or your organization.

Recognizing Audience Types

Be prepared to handle any of three different types of audiences, and if you've done your research, you'll know with which one you'll be dealing:

- Respectful or Friendly
- Neutral or Indifferent
- Hostile

The respectful or friendly audience respects you for who you are. This audience does not question your credibility, but you should still make a strong presentation.

The neutral or indifferent audience does not come to your presentation with any predisposed opinion. You must build your credibility with your content and your ability to make an effective presentation to them.

The hostile audience is predisposed to dislike you or your subject matter. Be prepared to answer several questions and possibly manage conflict.

💡 The following list contains behavior that can irritate the audience and affect your ability to be effective:

- Being late
- Apologizing
- Being unprepared
- Using technology incorrectly or inappropriately
- Being unoriginal
- Using jargon
- Going over your allotted or stated time
- Speaking too quickly or too softly
- Promoting yourself rather than your subject matter

❖ Practicing your presentation helps you avoid such behavior and identify those things that help you succeed.

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- The five basic purposes of presentations are to persuade, inform, motivate, entertain, and inspire.
- Use observable outcomes because they are easy to identify and measure.
- To increase the chance of achieving your objectives, control the factors that influence your presentation.
- Knowing your audience makes your presentation more effective. Build an audience profile before considering how you want to present your information.

Unit Activities

Check Your Skills

Your facilitator will give you a sheet of flip chart paper on which you will complete this activity. Select a topic for your presentation. Spend then next 15 minutes listing the following for your presentation:

- The desired outcome.
- The purpose.
- How you will measure your success.
- What you know about your audience (your classmates).
- The things you can control about your presentation.
- Any unknowns or concerns you may have with regard to your presentation.

When your facilitator calls time, be prepared to share your list with the other workshop participants. Use the space below for notes:

[illegible]

Unit:

What Am I Going to Talk About?

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- determine the subject of your presentation.
- research and gather material.
- identify facts and benefits.
- write a synopsis.
- create a detailed outline and add supporting content.
- add emotion to your presentation.
- write an introduction and conclusion.
- ensure audience retention.

Lesson:

So What's My Theme Song?

To establish presentation continuity, use a theme for your presentation. The theme ties everything together and summarizes the central idea of your presentation.

For example, your presentation might be a discussion of the company's year-end financial reports to a group of potential investors. Your speaking tone and the text on your slides, as well as any other supporting material, must be professional and formal.

Your theme becomes the vehicle through which you convey your point of view. Your point of view is usually a one-sentence statement that is the crux of what you want to say. Consider the following example:

You are the Customer Service Manager at ABC Delivery Company. Lately, you've been noticing some problems with the deliveries. You are tasked with making a presentation to the senior management team at ABC Delivery Company covering the recent problems. Perhaps the issues include the following: your customer service ratings have dropped, your delivery times are slower than they were a month ago, your record keeping methods are outdated, and your employees seem frustrated. Given these conditions, your point of view might be: We must redefine our processes and methods if we are to maintain or expand our customer base.

- ❖ Looking at the whole situation to determine your point of view helps you identify the main points you want to cover.

Lesson:

Where Do I Get My Content?

There are several places you can find interesting facts and figures to help convey your message to your audience. Be sure that the information you gather is specific enough to support your points, instructive so that it helps explain your concepts, explanatory enough to stand on its own, and applicable to your presentation.

Some sources you might want to consider for your research include:

- Reference manuals
- Periodicals
- Subject matter experts
- Past presentations
- Internet
- Management reports
- Government papers
- Videos

Lesson:

Facts vs. Benefits

Creating an exhaustive list of facts builds supporting information and adds credibility to your presentation. Obtain as many fact as possible related to your presentation. You can later edit the list of facts to determine which are the most relevant.

You can increase audience support by explaining the goals and benefits related to each fact. This also helps you prioritize your points and determine which facts and benefits you want to include and which ones you want to eliminate.

The following table contains a facts versus goals and benefits list for the ABC Delivery Company example mentioned earlier:

Facts	Goals/Benefits
Customer service ratings have dropped 15% over the last three months.	An increase in customer service ratings will help us retain our current customer base.
Our delivery times are an average of 30 minutes slower this month than they were last month.	Decreasing our delivery times allows us to make more deliveries, therefore increasing revenues.
We haven't changed the way we manage our accounts in four years. It's not computerized, and there is a very high potential for error.	Computerizing our account management would simplify the accounts payable and accounts receivable functions and decrease the potential for error.

What Am I Going to Talk About?

Facts	Goals/Benefits
Our employees are very frustrated with their jobs. In fact, our turnover rate increased by 50% last month alone.	If we streamline and simplify our processes, our employee morale will go up, therefore decreasing our turnover rates.

Lesson:

Writing Your Synopsis

Before you begin creating your presentation outline, write a brief synopsis (about 250 words) of what you want to say. This helps you take a high-level view and to examine how your initial opinions might have changed.

Writing a synopsis allows you focus on your presentation content and to identify the most important points. Be sure you include all the necessary key points in the synopsis. You can always add more information later.

Lesson:

Do I Really Need an Outline?

Creating an outline helps you organize what you want to say in a flexible framework. The flexible nature of the outline view allows see the presentation organization and determine the proper order of information.

- ❖ If you are using PowerPoint or similar presentation software, you can build most of your onscreen presentation from your outline and then add the graphics to it.

To create an outline:

1. List the major topic headings.
2. Add subtopics.
3. Add supporting information.
4. Review the flow of information.

Organizing Your Presentation

There are several different organizational models for organizing presentations. The three most common are the following:

- Problem-Solution Model
- Sequential Model
- Topical Model

The problem-solution model explains a problem and offers a solution. Use this model when the audience understands the problem at hand and is looking for assistance and guidance.

What Am I Going to Talk About?

The sequential model structures your content categorically, physically, or chronologically. This model works particularly well when teaching tasks that require sequential steps.

The topical model is loosely structured and very flexible. You should use this model when you're making a presentation based on a wide variety of information.

Structuring Your Outline

When structuring your outline, think of your presentation as if it were divided into six parts:

Part	Description
Introduction	This is your greeting to your audience. Tell them who you are, what your credentials are, and why you're speaking to them.
Synopsis	This is when you tell the audience what your presentation is about.
Minor Details	This is when you inform the audience of the approximate length of your presentation, how and when you will accept questions, and whether you're providing handouts.
Body	This is the actual content of the presentation. This contains all your major points and supporting information.
Summary	This is where you reiterate the message you conveyed during the body of the presentation. This part could also include your making a recommendation for the audience to do something.
Conclusion	This is when you thank the audience for their time, ask for questions, and invite comments.

Adding Supporting Content to Your Outline

After creating your outline, you can add supporting content to the outline. Be sure to include the facts, explanations, summaries, and transitions.

Organizing Facts

While there are many ways to compile your supporting information, one of the easiest methods is brainstorming. To brainstorm, list everything that supports or refutes your point of view then categorize your list into three groups:

- Essential
- Non-essential but important
- Nice-to-know

Essential information provides the strongest support for your presentation and the greatest benefits to the audience. Non-essential, important information adds additional support but can be omitted due to time constraints. Nice-to-know information is optional and can be covered if time allows, or distributed as handouts.

After assigning each item to one of the three groups, you can begin adding supporting content to your outline. As you add the items from your essential and non-essential groups, remember to add an explanation for each new concept. You can also help your audience's level of understanding by relating points to one another and information the audience already knows, and by reminding them of the connections between your main points and your point of view.

When you present your arguments, make sure you support them thoroughly, because you build credibility with your audience by helping them understand your reasoning. It's also very important to reiterate the benefits of your arguments to the audience so that they know why this point of view is important.

Providing Periodic Summaries

Before changing topics, provide your audience with a brief summary. Repetition increases your audience's retention of the material you are covering. The more times you state the important facts, the better your chance of them remembering it later.

You can also use periodic summaries to lead your audience to a specific conclusion and increase retention. Remember that the goal of your presentation is to reach your desired outcome and have your audience support your point of view.

Making Transitions

When moving from one concept to another, your audience may become confused if you do not provide them with a logical transition from one point to the next. Even if your presentation seems organized logically to you, the audience may see the flow different than you. Help them along by saying things like:

"In order for us to understand how our record keeping methods must be changed, we must look at the impact those changes will have on other departments. Let's start with Accounts Payable."

"Once you have established a schedule for a driver, you should enter his schedule in the database, which we'll talk about now."

If you have trouble writing transitional statements, consider the possibility that those points might not be in logical order and need to be rearranged.

If you include challenging or sensitive information in your presentation, you may:

- question the audience's beliefs.
- lead the audience to think about something unpleasant.
- convince the audience to come to new conclusions.

While including information of this nature may strengthen your presentation, it can also hurt you if the audience resents being questioned or forced to consider an alternative. Be careful when you include sensitive or challenging information, and make sure you don't undermine your ability to reach your desired outcome.

If you choose to include challenging or sensitive information, you can minimize the negative impact by directly calling attention to it. For example, if you were to discuss sexual harassment in your presentation, you could state at the beginning of the point that you understand that this may be a difficult topic for some people.

- ❖ By aligning yourself with your audience, you build credibility and show your openness to accept other views on the subject matter. Your openness might also lead to your audience's willingness to accept new concepts.

Lesson:

What About Emotions?

Adding emotional impact to your presentation engages the audience and makes your presentation more interesting. Emotional impact also prevents your presentation from being dry and uninteresting.

- ❖ Building the level of emotional impact from the beginning of a point all the way through the end of the point, increases the audience's willingness to accept your solution or idea.

One way to build emotion is to start by addressing existing frustrations or anger by pointing out things that cause these emotions, such as:

"I know that our record keeping systems are archaic and very frustrating, and I know that you have to do a great deal of rework each time a mistake is made..."

Then you can build on the emotion you just created by honing in on the problem and increasing the urgency of the situation by asking a question like:

"How much money do you think this organization loses in one year because of mistakes that are made as a direct result of our outdated systems?"

Finally, you can acknowledge your audience's own emotions and spark lively audience participation by making a statement like:

"I know that employee morale has been low lately, and I think you have good reason to be concerned about the situation. Some of the changes we're considering to help improve this environment include..."

Lesson:

Beginnings and Endings

When your outline reflects the majority of the content of your presentation, you're ready to formulate your introduction and your conclusion. Write the introduction and the conclusion last, and make sure to consider your entire presentation to determine the best way to make your statements. Both of these are critical to your success, because your audience will most often remember the first and last things you say. This is called the Primacy Recency Theory covered in the next lesson.

Your introduction should set the tone for your presentation, and it should also:

- generate interest in your subject matter.
- capture the audience's attention.
- highlight your theme and major points.
- preview your desired outcome.
- emphasize how the information is beneficial to the audience.

Your conclusion should be direct, clear, and concise, and it should also:

- reinforce the main points from your presentation.
- reiterate the conclusion you want the audience to reach.
- acknowledge that your desired outcomes have been met.
- push the audience toward taking the next steps to support your desired outcomes.

Lesson:

Will They Remember What I Say?

There are many ways to help your audience remember your message. This lesson covers four major audience retention tools, but you can use them individually and together to increase your potential for success dramatically.

Primacy Recency Theory

Primacy Recency Theory relates specifically to cognitive information processing, and is based on two ideologies:

- Audiences remember most easily the concepts you present first.
- Audiences remember most easily the concepts you present last.

There is significant evidence that either can be used effectively, but it's up to you to examine your material, your presentation style, and your audience's needs to determine the best placement of your key points.

Repetition

Possibly the single-most effective way to help an audience remember what you say is to repeat it several times throughout your presentation. The easiest way to remember how to do this is to follow a simple, three-step approach:

- Tell them what you're going to tell them.
- Tell them.
- Tell them what you just said.

You can use this approach at different points in your presentation. For example, your synopsis, body, and summary represent the three steps.

Clear and Understandable

Make sure your material is clear and understandable. The better the audience understands the material, the more likely they are to remember it. You can increase clarity and retention by relating new concepts to information with which the audience is familiar. You can also use simple, concise statements, and explain words or jargon the audience might not otherwise know.

- ✴ Avoid including too much information in your presentation. It is better for the audience to ask for more rather than reaching “information overload” status.

Illustrate Your Points

Verbal illustrations help your audience understand key points by providing additional information to clarify or demonstrate the application of a concept.

Effective verbal illustrations include the following:

- Comparison
- Contrast
- Example
- Analogy
- Simile
- Metaphor

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- Themes tie your presentation together and summarize the central idea.
- Be sure that the presentation information you gather is specific enough to support your points, instructive so that it helps explain your concepts, explanatory enough to stand on its own, and applicable to your presentation.
- As you gather information for presentation content, keep a running list of the facts you want to include.
- Writing a synopsis makes you focus on what you want to say.
- Creating an outline helps you organize what you want to say in a flexible framework.
- Building the level of emotional impact from the beginning of a point all the way through the end of the point, increases the audience's willingness to accept your solution or idea.
- Write the presentation's introduction and the conclusion last, and consider your entire presentation to determine the best way to make your statements.
- Primacy Recency Theory postulates that audiences most easily remember the topics you present first and last.
- The single-most effective way to increase the audience's retention of your key points is to repeat them several times throughout your presentation.

- To increase the audience's retention of the presentation, make sure your material is understandable to your audience.
- Verbal illustrations help your audience understand key points by providing additional information to clarify or demonstrate the application of a concept.

Unit Activities

Check Your Skills

Your facilitator will give you several sheets of flip chart paper on which you will complete this activity. Use the presentation topic from the first activity. Your overall presentation should last no more than 10 minutes. Spend then next 30 minutes developing the following for your presentation:

- Determine your theme.
- Write a brief synopsis of the subject matter.
- Create a detailed outline, including two key points.
- Add supporting content.
- Write an introduction.
- Write a summary.

Be prepared to share your synopsis with the other workshop participants. You can use the space below for notes:

[illegible]

[illegible]

Unit:

So How Do I Say What I Have to Say?

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- use effective speaking skills.
- appear comfortable and confident.
- use visual aids.

Lesson:

Mastering Effective Speaking Skills

A good speaker combines many skills to deliver a powerful presentation, including:

- speaking extemporaneously.
 - using appropriate language.
 - articulating words carefully and correctly.
 - pacing the presentation to the subject matter and the audience.
 - controlling vocal quality and inflections.
 - controlling nervousness.
- ❖ Mastering each of these skills individually is tough enough; putting them all together takes a lot of practice.

Speaking Extemporaneously

Some people think of extemporaneous and impromptu speeches as one in the same. When one gives an impromptu speech, it is largely unprepared, and the speaker is working from little or no notes. An extemporaneous speech, on the other hand, is very carefully prepared, and the speaker works from a very organized framework, or outline, rather than from a script. This style of speaking tends to be conversational in nature, which allows the speaker to build a rapport with the audience.

Perhaps the easiest way to learn to speak extemporaneously is to start by working backward. Begin with a fully scripted speech. Practice giving that speech in front of a mirror, moving smoothly back and forth between your notes and eye contact with yourself. Gradually move backward from full sentences to phrases, then from phrases to ideas, then from ideas to single words in a carefully organized format. As you become more comfortable with this format, you can eliminate the scripting phase and start by creating an outline from which you can work.

When you're speaking extemporaneously, the point is not to memorize your speech. Chances are you'll sound as though you are reading from a script anyway, and you might even omit something important. You also don't have to rely solely on your outline to help you move through your speech. If you're using visual aids, make sure they are set up in a way to prompt you to talk about all your important topics.

Using Appropriate Language

Sometimes how you say your message is more important than the message itself. When you write your speaker notes, follow the rule of the six Cs to ensure that the language you use is appropriate:

- **Clear**—easy to understand, simple words
- **Concise**—to-the-point, short sentences, one idea at a time
- **Concrete**—ideas that make sense, examples to back them up
- **Consistent**—similar words and tones throughout
- **Correct**—facts that can be validated
- **Colorful**—words that add emotion and variety

So How Do I Say What I Have to Say?

Also remember to avoid non-words like uh, umm, er, and ah. These words are fillers and pauses and can lead to your audience drawing a false conclusion or questioning your credibility, knowledge of the subject, and preparation. For example, a speaker who fills pauses with “umm” makes it seem like the speaker does not understand the subject well enough to discuss it.

- ❖ Also avoid jokes and clichés, particularly if you do not know how your audience will react to them.
- ❖ Quotations can be good icebreakers and introductory material, providing they are appropriate to the subject matter.

Articulation

When delivering a presentation, enunciate and articulate each word independently of one another. As you practice your presentation, pay attention to each word and how it flows to the next one. For example, if you were to say, "Give me," it might sound like "Gimme", which might give your audience the impression that you were speeding through and did not care about speaking clearly.

In addition, focus on those words that sound powerful. Some consonants, called plosive sounds, can help you emphasize specific words. Plosives are spoken by exploding the sound from your mouth. Try saying the following words and feeling how they sound:

- Bat
- Dad
- Gag
- Joust
- Place
- Time
- King
- Chunk

All of the opening consonant sounds in these words are plosives. Use them to your advantage to draw attention to particular points.

Finally, you should avoid speech disfluencies at all times. A speech disfluency is any negative speech trait that hinders the flow of communication from the speaker to the audience. Speech disfluencies include:

- improper pronunciation.
- improper word usage.
- repetitive word patterns.
- mumbling.
- slurring.

- ❖ Practicing your presentation helps you avoid speech disfluencies and builds your confidence.

Pacing the Presentation

Most speakers average between 175 and 190 spoken words per minute. Effective speakers vary their rates of speed depending on their subject matter and audience. If your subject matter is especially complex or new material, you should probably consider slowing down your speech and adding a few long (four to five second) pauses along the way. For simpler or review material, one to two second pauses between topics should be sufficient. This gives your audience a chance to think about what you've just said before you move on to the next point.

Controlling Vocal Quality And Inflections

The way you sound to your audience is based on several characteristics, including:

- volume
- pitch
- power
- inflection

By managing each of these characteristics, you can help your voice to sound more appealing. As you rehearse your speech, practice projecting your voice. This does not mean for you to shout your presentation to your audience. Instead, it means that you should speak from your diaphragm, which increases your volume slightly and makes your voice sound more powerful. The pitch of your voice should be natural, but audible. If your voice normally has a very high or very deep pitch, practice altering your pitch for your presentations. By altering the power of your voice, you can convey strength, authority, confidence, and comfort to your audience as you need to.

You can use vocal inflections to add interest to your presentation. For example, when you ask questions, your voice should go up slightly at the end of the question. Likewise, when you emphasize a point, your voice should go down slightly at the end of the statement. If you are simply presenting facts, however, it's better not to add too much inflection, as you might sound sing-song.

- ❖ If you have questions about how you sound in a presentation, try audio- or video-taping yourself and then listening to or watching the tape. Take special note of the things you want to change and work on them one at a time. You could also ask a friend to listen or watch and have him give you feedback.

Controlling Nervousness

Fear of public speaking is normal, but you can control your nervousness. First, you should identify the things that make you nervous. Then begin working on each one by desensitizing yourself. If, for example, your fear is of using technology-based visual aids (like PowerPoint), then practice making brief presentations with the technology tool on a regular basis. Ask a friend to be your audience and have her critique your performance.

You should also practice deep breathing exercises. Deep breathing helps you relax both before and during a presentation, and it can also help you slow down if you find that you're speaking too quickly. Stop, take a deep breath and a drink of water, and then move on.

- ❖ Some other tips to help you control your nervousness include the following:
 - Get a good night's sleep the night before your presentation.
 - Be prepared!

So How Do I Say What I Have to Say?

- Create your own pre-presentation ritual to help you relax.
- Visualize yourself giving a successful presentation.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and sugar.
- Drink lots of water.
- Do not worry about making mistakes.

Lesson:

Do I Really Look That Funny?

The way you appear to your audience often influences your ability to be successful just as much as what you're saying. The following tips on non-verbal communication can help you appear both professional and comfortable in front of your audience:

- Be yourself!
- Smile!
- Stand up straight. Don't lean on the podium or slouch.
- Keep your hands in a neutral position.
- Avoid gestures that call attention to your hands.
- Keep your gestures above the waist and use them to emphasize key points.
- Make your movements deliberate, but not so slow that they are awkward.
- Dress professionally, but comfortably.
- Keep good eye contact with your audience.

Lesson:

I Can't Draw – Can I Still Use Visual Aids?

There are perhaps thousands of different things you could use as visual aids in a presentation. Some of the more common ones that you might want to consider include:

- flip charts.
- cards.
- overhead transparencies.
- pictures.
- graphs.
- slides.
- videos.
- products.
- demonstrations.
- handouts.
- wall charts.
- reports.
- props.
- whiteboards.

While visual aids can add texture to your presentation, remember that the visual aids are not the presentation. You are. The visual aids are merely a tool to help increase your audience's retention of the subject matter and to keep them interested in your presentation.

When you begin thinking about the visual aids you want to use for your presentation, think specifically about your subject matter and your audience. For example, if you're presenting to the Board of Directors about a proposal to upgrade a software package, you're probably better off using on-screen slides, bound handouts, and a whiteboard. But if you're working with a peer group to map out a new procedure, you might be better off working with flip charts and handouts. If you're working with a particularly large audience, provide them with handouts so they are not straining to see the visuals at the front of the room.

As you're speaking, make sure you are synchronized with your visual aids. You don't want to be talking about a topic that was three slides ago, do you? The easiest way to stay in synch is to introduce each slide or visual aid as you go. Give the audience a few seconds to view the visual, and then begin speaking. In addition, make sure you face the audience, rather than the visual. And, unless it's absolutely necessary, don't stand in front of the visual.

- ❖ When you're creating your visuals, keep them simple and consistent. Add color for emphasis, but don't be too outlandish. Again, simple is better. When in doubt, use fewer words and more graphics. Make sure anything you create is large and legible. Use your visuals to create impact, and use your spoken word to convey your message.

For Your Review

To summarize this unit, you have learned:

- An extemporaneous speech means that the speaker works from a very organized framework, or outline, rather than from a script.
- Sometimes how you say your message is more important than the message itself.
- When you give a presentation, it's very important to enunciate and articulate each word independently of one another.
- Effective speakers vary their rates of speed depending on their subject matter and audience.
- To sound more appealing, manage the volume, pitch, power, and inflection of your voice.
- To control nervousness, identify things that make you nervous and desensitize yourself to them.

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