

# The **Business 2.0**

## PRESENTATION SKILLS – STRUCTURE

With any kind of presentation, to a small meeting or an audience of hundreds of people, the most important thing is to create **rapport** with the people we are speaking to. It's our job as presenters to make it relevant and engaging, and for the audience to feel it was really useful.

Remember that people generally **take in** very little of what we say. Bill Clinton thinks he's lucky if the audience take away two or three key points. We need to help the audience take away what's important. So this help involves clear, structured, relevant content, delivered with a confident style that matches the objective of the message.

We'll talk about delivery in a later session. Here, we're dealing with structure, and preparation.

If you accept the basic **premise** that what matters is what your audience need, not what you want to say, it isn't that complicated.

Once I know what my topic is, I need to think about my objective or purpose. What do I want to happen as a result of speaking? The clearer I am about my purpose, the more focused and memorable my presentation will be.

Even when the topic appears to be informative rather than **persuasive**, there's always a reason why I'm telling you, and I need to be clear about what it is. If I'm giving a talk on how to access the intranet, the purpose is that I want you to use it. So to get your support and attention, I need to tell you what you'll gain. This is the hook that makes people want to listen.

Okay, so I know what I'm talking about and why. And now: Who am I talking to? Clearly who is in the audience will affect my presentation. What will be relevant and important to them? What level do I **target** it at (are they **amateurs** or experts; specific or general; what kind of language might appeal to them?). As you prepare your presentation keep your audience in mind.

Finding material. If you have time, look everywhere for material. This is a speaking exercise not a written report, so if you want the audience to listen, make it interesting. Current affairs, great **quotes**, amazing statistics, music, pictures, video clips... keep it alive and **varied**.

Right. Now to plan the structure of the presentation. First of all, I think about what is essential for the audience to remember. I define my key messages and sort the other material in order of importance using the word EDIT as a guide. We already have E for **essential**, so now I add in D for desirable – any supporting material that adds value to one of my key messages. And then, I for interesting: if I have time to include it, I will. T is for time-wasting, or **trivial**, or terrible: just bin it.

# *The* **Business 2.0**

It's like telling a good story. Remember to have a clear beginning, middle and end. There are many ways of structuring the information: I might use past, present and future. I might use situation, challenge, solution. I might move from the personal to the global. Whatever I choose, I am bringing it to life for the audience and making it relevant and varied as I go, finding hooks that will appeal both logically and emotionally so they want to keep listening right to the end of the story. .