

Presentation Tip Sheet

At Midsize Enterprise Summit, Boardroom Sessions represent a significant portion of the event - an opportunity to meet privately with a small group of senior IT executives at one time. You can use these valuable sessions to introduce products, sell the benefits of a service, and test market new ideas. We encourage you to design innovative and interactive presentations, and in this Tip Sheet we touch upon the basics of planning, creating and delivering exceptional ones.

Central Region
Sept 10-12, 2003
Austin, Texas

West Coast
March 7-9, 2004
Salt Lake City, Utah

East Coast
April 18-20, 2004
Nashville, Tennessee

Planning and Preparation

Great presentations don't just happen; they require careful planning and preparation. But, before you develop your presentation, there are 3 vital questions to ask: Who will be attending the sessions? Why are they here? What is my main objective?

To begin, be prepared to address an executive-level audience who is attending the Summit with specific IT issues in mind. Summit attendees bring solid business experience combined with strong technical expertise. We highly recommend that your company representatives consist of senior sales and marketing management, as well as members of your technical team. Arm yourself with the knowledge that will strengthen your presentation, and help you to meet the needs of this audience.

Next, determine exactly what you want them to gain from the sessions. If you're unclear as to what you want to accomplish, your audience will certainly not be able to determine it. Create the overall message of the presentation and formulate a practical strategy to execute within a 30-minute time period. Include time to encourage questions and feedback from the audience, so you have an opportunity to clarify any confusion, gain insight into their thinking, and reinforce your key points.

Remember that IT executives will spend two-and-a-half days with a variety of technology vendors. Keep your presentation simple and to the point - tell them exactly what you have to offer, how your product or service applies, and where the benefits lie. You may also want to be prepared with a master schedule to set specific times to meet with individuals during Exhibit hours. Let everyone in the room know where to find you, and give them an incentive to stop by.

*Please be on time, and estimate setup and teardown of your presentation materials within this timeframe.
Boardrooms are continuously scheduled 30-minute sessions.*

Creating Visuals and Handouts

Make an outline to help you decide what information to include and the logical order of the material. Carefully edit your presentation to eliminate unnecessary or repetitious points and avoid losing audience interest. When you're trying to communicate a complex message, you need it to be visually captivating, yet easy to follow.

The audio and visuals need to move together in a compelling package that lets your message come through loud and clear, without any distractions. Think about how you can replace words with graphics such as photos, illustrations, charts or diagrams. This will increase both comprehension and retention, but use it wisely - graphics should enhance and clarify your message, not simply be decorative.

Good handouts will serve as a valuable resource, and can insure that your audience will remember your talk tomorrow, next week or next month. When it comes to presentation handouts, think of them as a place to store overflow from your presentation notes. If your web site includes great collateral, make sure you provide a direct URL to these "e-handouts" that the audience can refer to and download after your presentation.

As you review your draft presentation, confirm that it is interesting, on track with your main objective, concise, and effectively uses targeted examples. Be sure you've connected yourself with the audience. Vigorous polishing will make your presentation tighter, more powerful and leave a lasting impression.

Practice, Practice, Practice.

Practice will always improve your performance no matter how experienced you are. Ask yourself: Will the audience understand my purpose? Do I have a clear opening and memorable close? Do I have back up statements with credible supporting data? Does my presentation have energy? Rehearse every aspect of your presentation from eye contact, to the pace and tone of your voice.

Great Presentations Don't Just Happen!

- Identify the presentation objective - it will drive everything else you do.
- Place the strongest point first or last. Don't bury your best ideas.
- Address your topic from the audience's perspective.
- Keep visuals simple. No one ever wants to be read to by a speaker.
- Rehearse with the equipment and visuals you'll be using & get feedback.

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**Presentation
Checklist**

Planning

- Analyze the audience
- Determine your objective(s)
- Make a content outline

Creation

- Create a storyboard
- Select the type of media
- Choose color scheme & typography
- Enhance with graphics

Delivery

- Organize your materials
- Speak clearly & distinctly
- Use appropriate non-verbals
- Involve the audience
- Keep within the time schedule

Evaluation & Follow-up

- Use an evaluation form of some type
- Determine ways to improve for the next session

Delivery Strategies

You can create a logical pattern of organization for your presentation that will help the audience understand more quickly, and retain your message for a longer period of time. Begin by dividing your presentation into 3 parts: the intro, the body and the conclusion.

The intro should catch their attention and give them some idea of what's to follow. Open with an intriguing or startling statement, tell a story, ask a real or rhetorical question, show them a visual, or give a quote from an expert. The introduction deserves special attention. In the first few minutes, the audience will form an opinion of you and your company, so provide them with a good reason to listen. Be succinct. This should take no more than 2-3 minutes.

The body should present the key elements of what you have to say and contain the facts, figures and substance of your presentation. Clearly state each point with explicit transitions from one idea to the next. Offer a clear, concise and convincing description of the benefits you can provide. Don't be afraid to repeat important points in a variety of ways to increase retention, or to use strong supporting stories to expand on your key points. Finally, remember that people prefer to play an active rather than a passive role - encourage people to express related experiences, use volunteers in demonstrations, ask questions throughout the presentation, and request specific feedback.

Closure is often the toughest part of a presentation. You should use this time to summarize the key points, restate your objectives, and emphasize the benefits of your products and services. The first and last 30 seconds have the most impact, so give them extra thought, time and effort. You should send people out energized and knowledgeable about how to take the next step.

Evaluation & Follow-up

The types of questions asked by the audience will give you a clear indication of their interest level, their need for more information, and if your presentation met your objectives. You may also want to distribute a brief evaluation form for further feedback. In between sessions, try to critique yourself objectively - determine what went well and what could be changed for the next Boardroom Session.



Additional Resources

Web Resources

The Art of Communicating Effectively
www.presentingsolutions.com/effectivepresentations.html

Preparing Your Talk
www.fripp.com/art.preparing.html

Presentation Tips
10 questions to ask yourself before you begin preparing your presentation
www.newentrepreneur.com/Resources/Articles/10_presenta_questions/10_presenta_questions.html

Presentations Magazine
www.presentations.com

Presenter's University
www.presenteruniversity.com/courses/index.cfm

Print Resources

101 Ways to Make More Effective Presentations
By Elizabeth P. Tierney

The Best Guide to Effective Presentations
By Jackie Jankovich

Effective Presentation Skills
By Steve Mandel

Knockout Presentations: How to Deliver Your Message with Power, Punch, and Pizzazz
By Diane Diresta

What's Your Point? The 3-Step Method for Making Effective Presentations
By Bob Boylan

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