

A watercolor-style background featuring a woman's face in profile, looking upwards and to the right. The colors are soft and blended, with shades of yellow, pink, and orange. The woman is wearing a large, ornate earring and a necklace with a circular pendant. The overall mood is warm and artistic.

POW **WOW** PITCH

Honing Your Presentation Skills

Learning Hub | **Module** **4**

In partnership with  **SKLAR WILTON**
& ASSOCIATES

Getting Started: Honing Your Presentation Skills



4

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ABOUT

How to be confident and inspire confidence as a presenter.
Helping entrepreneurs' passion shine through.

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A decorative graphic consisting of a watercolor splash in shades of pink and orange, centered on a light gray diamond shape. The splash has a soft, blended appearance with varying intensities of color.

Presentation skills and why they matter

Presentation skills, what **are** they?



Presentation skills are an asset in business

They help us clarify our ideas and make them easy for others to understand quickly.

They enhance engagement: elevating your ideas with a style that makes them more memorable for your audience.

Presentation skills, what **aren't** they?



Your job is not to impersonate a famous presenter: you will not be convincing to others if you are not yourself.

Your job is not to follow a formula other than having a beginning, middle and end. What content appears in the beginning middle and end is uniquely up to you and the goals that your presentation is trying to achieve.

Presentation skills, **why they matter**



Presentation skills help with expressing ideas that build your brand and your business.

An entrepreneur with great presentation skills:

- Will present their ideas in the best manner possible. Even the best ideas may not succeed without the ability to convey them clearly.
- Shows their audience who they are. They help people see the person as well as the idea.
- Leaves their audience with the messages they feel are most important, leaving no confusion in the minds of the audience members.

Presentation building blocks to **synchronize** with your audience



MATTER

(what you are saying)

You must decide **what information is vital for the audience to hear** and how that information should be structured to maximize impact.



MANNER

(how you choose to say it)

You are an individual. **The more you are genuinely yourself, the more credible you are to the audience.** Your presentation manner enhances (or detracts from) who people understand the matter you share with them.

Example Company: **BarkTies**



We will continue to use **BarkTies** (a company we made up) to help you see the Presentations Skills tools in action.

BarkTies is a small business owned by Réa, that makes bowties for dogs. Her target customer is dog parents who want to spoil their pets.

Réa is a proud dog parent herself and doesn't just want to sell bowties - she knows how special the relationship is.

Réa started BarkTies because she believes that moments of joy and playfulness between a dog and its parent also deepen the love between them.

A watercolor splash graphic in shades of pink and orange, centered on a white background. The splash is irregular and textured, with darker pink on the left and lighter orange on the right. It is partially overlaid by a large, faint, light gray diamond shape.

Synchronizing with your audience

Synchronizing with the audience is about having everyone understand the content you are sharing from the same perspective as you.



In order to take your audience on a journey with your presentation, you have to start everyone from the same place.

Creating context for your audience helps you synchronize with them (so you go on the journey together) and context increases the ability of the audience to remember what you said, and what it meant.

Ask yourself: What is essential for the people hearing your presentation to understand BEFORE you take them on the journey?

BarkTies Example:

When Réa presents her BarkTies business to a potential investor, she would want that investor to know about the world of pet apparel.

If the investor is an expert, they can understand Réa's perspective on shared knowledge about the opportunity in pet apparel.

If the investor is not an expert, she can elevate their knowledge so that they will be more engaged by the BarkTies idea.

Your presentation offers the audience added value. All of your written words may be powerful, but it is your performance that brings them to life.



The **opportunity** to **engage** enhances the value of the written word.

If presenting wasn't powerful, we would all just communicate in text. Our voice can make the written word easier to understand, and to remember.

Presentations give you the power to motivate others and to promote action, like investing in your idea or using your product or service.

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Matter

Matter starts with determining your story throughline. Throughline is the invisible thread that binds your story (arguments, sales data, consumer research, etc.) together.



Your goal is to create a master mix: where you have selected the 'right' content to share with that audience.

Your matter may include visuals, statistics, and stories, all coming together to form a complementary experience.

Like movies and books have subplots that complement the main story, having a clear throughline allows you to share any type of content you need, and then return to the main story.

Anchoring to your throughline will allow you to leverage any content that helps tell your story and then lead the audience back to what matters most.

No matter what your presentation topic is or how you like express yourself, all business presentations have three essential components that are meant to provoke a response.

INTRODUCTION

The focus here is on synchronization. Ask yourself:

What do I have to share with this audience to have them view my content the way I do? You are most effective when the audience shares a common perspective as you, from the start.

How do I frame the response I am seeking so it is clear in the minds of the audience? You want to tell them what conclusion you want them to draw. E.g.: "Based upon what you experience today, I'd like to invite you to invest..."

MAIN BODY

The focus here is on building your case. Ask yourself:

What points (insights, descriptors, benefits, etc.) best reinforces the response I am seeking? Be selective in what you share—more isn't always better.

Are the points I am presenting complementary and additive, leading to the desired response from the audience? Put your content in the order, that most effectively ladders up to the conclusion you want them to draw.

CLOSING

The focus here is on leaving the audience satisfied. Ask yourself:

Have I reminded them of the conclusion I want them to draw? The audience is not thinking about your business as much as you are, so be very clear on what you want them to think.

Have I left them with a clear 'call-to-action' based upon my conclusion? You want to leave no opportunity for the audience to be uncertain what to do with what you have shared with them.

Guidelines for developing your content

Think about your content master mix: have you have provided enough context to get them synchronized, selected the 'right' content to share with that audience, and not overwhelmed them?



Be The Expert

An entertainer engages an audience.

An expert can change minds.

Your goal is to be an expert who also engages the audience (in your own way).



Language, Not Jargon

Jargon—language specific to an area of knowledge—is part of your expertise. But it is a separator between you and the audience you are speaking to. Don't use difficult to define terms that make it more difficult for your audience to connect with you.



Simplifying Content

Let the audience take the feeling with them by making your presentation easy to remember. Use linguistic tools like alliteration (words which start with the same sound), rhyming words or clever names for things you want to emphasize.

Guidelines for developing your content

If you are speaking for more than 3-4 minutes, you will lose your audience for a minute. It is just a matter of how you can get them back. Structure your matter to 'wake up' your audience with new phrases or stories that re-engage.



Everything is a Story

Your audience is made up of individuals. Sharing a story they can relate to will help them stay engaged with the content. A combination of stories at different parts of your presentation increases your ability to synchronize with the audience as individuals.



Make It Real

Connecting what you are saying to a well-understood part of life keeps your audience engaged.

BarkTies Example:

Réa can make her data about consumer interest in pet 'footwear' into a story, "Canadian winters can be challenging for anyone and that includes our pets. While 60% of pet owners have said that they would buy booties, it's the stories about walks that are too short and messy floors that stand out. Not having covered paws creates real problems for pet owners that they want solved."



Signposting

If you will be using a presentation software, like PowerPoint, it has title and heading slides. A good presenter uses these moments to signpost how a presentation is transitioning: "we were talking about x, which leads us to this important question to answer: and that is how we will begin the next section..."

Signposting gives a presenter a moment to re-engage with an audience.



Manner

The **MANNER** with which you deliver your content is what creates trust between you and your audience.



There is only ONE WAY for you to be compelling enough to bring an audience on your journey: YOUR WAY

You should not watch a great presenter and say, "I'm going to do that." If you try, you will look like an impersonator, not like yourself, and that makes you less believable.

You need to find your voice, which is honed from your personality and your knowledge.

Be deliberate in these choices: Whether it is the jokes you tell, the clothes you wear, the movements you engage in.

Be sincerely yourself, just the performance version of yourself.

When you know the content well enough, you should turn your attention to the best way to share it with an audience. Here are some considerations for your presentation.

INTRODUCTION

**The focus here is on synchronization.
Ask yourself:**

What kind of information is my audience most likely to be engaged by? Find the place where your personal style overlaps with your audience's interest and build a plan.

What kind of response am I seeking? For investors, the goal may be a strong rational case. For consumers, an emotional appeal may work best. It is always best to customize your approach based upon who is in your audience.

MAIN BODY

The focus here is on building your case. Ask yourself:

What are the best ways to share my points? If you are using data, you can choose to share one key number or a series of contrasting data points. If you are trying to explain a process, you may use an analogy, images or other technique. Consider all of these possibilities when determining how you share your content.

CLOSING

The focus here is on leaving the audience satisfied. Ask yourself:

What can you say that leaves them with a lasting impression? Think of the best phrase, image, metaphor, etc. that captures your through-line. You want them to have a clear message that they can always remember that can reconnect them to what they heard and how they felt in your presentation.

Managing Time

When offered the opportunity to engage an audience, it is important to respect their time. Plan in advance how you will use all the time you are given effectively.



Don't Fill Time, Use It

If your presentation is too long, you are either covering the wrong things (remember the importance of content selection) or going too far off-script.



Taking Questions

Think in advance about what questions your audience may have and be prepared to respond.

If you don't know the answer, it is best to say, 'I don't know'. Your audience will appreciate your honesty more than a fake/wrong answer.

Rehearsal

Reading your content to yourself isn't rehearsing. You have to deliver your content as you would the day of the presentation, out loud and in as similar an environment as possible.



Staging

Part of rehearsing is 'staging': knowing where you will be physically positioned and how you will be interacting with your content. This can range from standing behind a podium or at your desk over Zoom.

Rehearsals should recreate the true staging of the presentation as possible. Consider how you share content with a co-presenter as well.



Prepare Your Notes

Not only should you prepare notes in advance, but you should practice how you interact with those notes.

Depending upon the staging, you may be able to use notes within your presentation software or you may require them separately. Consider limiting the number of words you have in notes (so content is easier to find) and font size (depending on staging or if you wear glasses)



Visualization

To help you prepare for your presentation and enter the right mindset, practice visualization.

Close your eyes, and imagine yourself giving your presentation. Who is in the audience? How are you standing or sitting? How do you introduce yourself? Etc..

This can help you anticipate your presentation as well as feel more comfortable on the day of.

Rehearsal



Reading your content to yourself isn't rehearsing.

You have to deliver your content as you would the day of the presentation, out loud and in as similar an environment as possible.

BarkTies Example

Réa rehearsed her presentation by streaming over a free Zoom account and recording it. She was able to watch how she did, noticing that she used the same phrase between sections. This allowed her to add to her notes other phrases to use so she could avoid sounding nervous or repetitive.

Also, she realized that if she is describing BarkTies and telling stories about her dog, it would be memorable for there to be a picture of her dog—in BarkTies apparel—in her Zoom background.

Audience **Reading the room**

Get a background on your audience: are they investors? Experts in the same field? Consumers you are being introduced to? This knowledge is essential in determining the manner in which you present.



What You **See**

POSITIVES :

Audience is looking at your presentation / you.

NEGATIVES :

People leaving part way through.

Faces in phones.



What You **Hear**

POSITIVES :

Questions, but not interruptions.

Cross-talk—people want to work with what you have shared with them.

NEGATIVES :

Argumentative responses.

Silence.



What You **Feel**

POSITIVES :

In control. Your energy level reflects the content being shared.

People laugh at jokes. Visual or audible responses to key content that you share.

NEGATIVES :

Low confidence.

The Presentation Moment

Your presentation may have taken days of effort to get right but the actual presentation may only a few minutes.

Put yourself in a strong mental state when you start, and trust the work you put in to get to this point.



Minutes Before

Review only the essentials: What is your through-line and how will you get the audience to synchronize with you?

Trust your preparation.

Calm yourself with deep breathing.

Go to the bathroom.



As You Begin

Remember the basics:

- Dress appropriately
- Smile warmly
- Exude gratitude

Your audience is not a monolithic group but a series of individuals.

Talk to the people with the intent to engage each of them.



Pacing the Presentation

The speed of your talk is less important than giving time for people to consume it.

Talking faster equals more pauses (the audience can 'catch up').

Talking slower means fewer pauses are needed.

A presentation is not a song, it's a playlist: deliberately vary the pace where you can so that you can engage and re-engage.

A decorative graphic consisting of a watercolor splash in shades of pink, red, and orange, centered on a light gray diamond shape. The splash has a soft, blended appearance with varying intensities of color.

Tips for Better Presentation Skills

Tips for Better Presentation Skills



Your content won't speak for itself and you can't fool your audience with style alone. A great presentation is about the balance of excellent content and authentic personal style, all in service of the audience.

Your style: Your presentation should reflect your personality. You want to show the audience who you are: your ideas are more credible when you feel like a person the audience can trust.

Your content: If your audience truly understands your ideas then you have accomplished your goal. Even the best ideas may not succeed without the ability to convey them clearly.

Synchronizing With Your Audience: Synchronizing with the audience is about having everyone understand the content you are sharing from the same perspective as you. What is essential for the people hearing your presentation to understand before you take them on the journey?

Your Matter: The content you are sharing must be thoughtfully selected, purposefully organized and vary in format (arguments, sales data, consumer research, etc.) They must all serve your through-line, the invisible thread that binds your story together.

Your Manner: How you deliver your content is what creates trust between you and your audience. Be sincerely yourself, just the performance version of yourself.

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Additional Resources

Further Readings & Resources

TED Talks: The Official Ted Guide To Public Speaking

- <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/ted-talks-the-official-ted/9781443443005-item.html>

Pitch Perfect: How To Say It Right The First Time, Every Time

- <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/pitch-perfect-how-to-say/9780062472939-item.html?ikwid=pitch+perfect&ikwsec=home&ikwidx=0#algoliaqueryid=581fb4682ac875cf8a1cd5e9fc6a6e82>

Influence, New And Expanded: The Psychology Of Persuasion

- <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/influence-new-and-expanded-the/9780063136892-item.html?ikwid=INFLUENCE&ikwsec=Home&ikwidx=0#algoliaQueryId=a670e0f13f936a0e4d9cc9f5bcfd4850>



Thank you!